

For his life thereafter, Joe could keep you entranced with his war stories and what shipboard life was like in the frigid waters of the North Atlantic.

Joe was so proud of his service and his fellow World War II comrades. He was truly one of the “Greatest Generation” of young Americans.

Joe passed away on January 31, 2013, with his loving wife June by his side. He was just about 2 months shy of his 94th birthday.

Up to his 93rd birthday, Joe always marched every year in the Veteran’s Day parade wearing his original World War II Navy blues, a white sailor’s cap jauntily placed on his head, a chest full of ribbons and medals, and his cherished boatswain’s pipe hung around his neck. At age 88 he participated in one of the honor flights from Denver to Washington, DC, for World War II veterans to see the World War II Memorial.

After my mother died and Joe had married my sister Sylvia, I went to live with them, and Joe became almost a surrogate father to me. I was 13 years old. As we both grew older, we took many trips together and he became more like my older brother. Joe was so unique. He was a gifted observer of human behavior and interactions. He could fix anything. He made beautiful objects out of wood, some of which I still have in my home. He was also the best storyteller I have ever met.

Many years after my sister died of cancer, Joe met and married June, a talented artist in her own right, and they had a wonderful, loving life together.

Joe is survived by his wife June; his sister Mary Ann; his four children, Theresa, Joe Kelly, Danny, and Mary; four grandchildren, Sean, Ryan, Erin, and Ciera; and four step grandchildren, Terry, Kristen, Shauna, and Dawn.

“Big Joe” led a full, challenging, and interesting life. He was truly one of our “Greatest Generation,” a true patriot who loved his country, his family, and his many friends.

He helped to make America a better nation for all.

Mr. President, with that, I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, we are now deep in the heart of summer vacation for millions of families and students all across this country. It is a wonderful time, something families look forward to—maybe some parents more so than others. But it is a very strange summer in Newtown, CT. It is

the first summer that 20 families are waking up every morning without a 6- or 7-year-old they planned on spending days at the beach or afternoons at the park with or mornings getting ready for what would have been their second-grade year. It is a very different summer, this summer in Newtown, CT.

A lot of people ask me: How is the community recovering? How are they coming back? And while there is some rebound happening, it is still very much a community in crisis. When students go back to school in the fall, they are not going to be going back to Sandy Hook Elementary School. That school is going to be knocked down. There is no way families, teachers, and administrators can return to that place. So once again this fall the students of Sandy Hook Elementary School will be bused one town over to a school that was, up until January of this last year, a place none of them had seen, and they will once again be in a year of transition—once again, for many families, still a year of crisis.

I am not sure any of those families could imagine in the days and weeks after the shooting on December 14 of last year that when they sent their kids back to school—their surviving brothers and sisters—in the fall of 2013, that in that intervening time, in response to the most vicious mass school shooting in this country’s history, the response from the Congress would be nothing, zip, zero.

This is a summer of crisis in Newtown. It will be another difficult fall. But what leaves people in Newtown shaking their heads is that this place has done absolutely nothing; that when their kids return back to school, the laws of this Nation will be no different, will do nothing more to protect their sons and daughters when they and millions of other kids across the country return to school in September.

And it is not as though we have not seen since Newtown more evidence for why we need to change our laws. I have come to the floor virtually every week since this horrific incident to remind people that the tragedy has not ended; that since December 14, 5,893 people have been senselessly killed by guns. Since December 14, 5,893 people have been killed through gun violence.

I think we should continue to talk about who these people are; that we should give voices to these victims, so that it is not just the 20 6-year-old and 7-year-old children we have all heard so much about—about Jack Pinto and Dylan Hockley, and Noah Pozner and Grace McDonnell. We know these kids, and I will continue to talk about who they were and who they could have been, but every single day we lose about 30 more people to gun violence.

Last June we saw a mass shooting that was eerily similar to the one in Newtown—a mass shooting in Santa Monica, CA, in which five people were killed; the father and the brother of the gunman, but also three completely unrelated and innocent bystanders who

just happened to be in and around the school when this young man, 23 years old, deeply disturbed, started firing, almost indiscriminately and randomly, on his way to and at the campus.

It was eerily similar because, once again, it was an assault weapon, an AR-15 model, the weapon of choice for mass assailants in this country these days. And once again he had high-capacity magazines. Reportedly, 1,300 rounds of ammunition were on his person. Every case is unique, but over and over these mass shootings are occurring with the same type of weapons and the same type of high-capacity ammunition. Yet we do nothing to acknowledge this trend.

Let me talk a second about who these people were who were killed that day in California, because they have stories that are not unlike the 5,800-plus stories I could tell on the floor, if we had time, with respect to the people who have died since December 14.

Carlos Navarro Franco was 68 years old. He was the groundskeeper at the college for 22 years. He was dedicated to two things above all—that college and his family. That is what the president of the college said after his death—everything Carlos did was for the college and for his family. He was truly a family man, the president of the college said. He was a dedicated husband, a father, and an integral part of Santa Monica’s college family. He dedicated his work to the campus grounds and was enjoyed by students and visitors for two decades.

He was with his daughter that day. Marcela Franco was 26 years old and pursuing a degree in psychology at California State University. She had registered to take summer classes at the school where her father worked and she was on her way with her father to buy textbooks that day. She initially survived the gunfire but she never regained consciousness after the attack. She was described by her aunt as smart, beautiful, and outgoing. Her aunt said, “She was daddy’s girl.” So the blessing is they went together.

Margarita Gomez was the same age as Carlos Navarro Franco. She lost her life that day. She was fondly referred to on campus as the “recycle lady” because she could be seen almost every weekday walking around campus, rolling her cart, picking up used bottles and cans. She would plop them in her cart and then take them to get recycled. Obviously, most people thought she was homeless and that she was collecting these bottles and cans as a means to be able to survive, but that wasn’t the case. Margarita had actually been diagnosed with diabetes, and it was her doctor’s recommendation that she exercise more. She was also an active member of a senior Latino club that met every Thursday at the Virginia Avenue park and she was very interested in the St. Jude’s Children’s Research Hospital cause—a charity the senior Latino club happened to give money to. So she put these two things

together—a recommendation she should exercise more and an interest in helping this club and the charity it was affiliated with—and decided she would take this cart around town for exercise, pick up cans and bottles, recycle them, and then donate the money to charity.

The “recycle lady,” Margarita Gomez, was walking around campus that day picking up cans and bottles so she could donate the money to help sick kids, and she was gunned down by an assailant using an assault weapon with high-capacity ammunition clips. It is a pretty unbelievable story. These three special individuals, along with the father and the son, are among the 5,893.

But it is not just the mass shootings that we are talking about. Frankly, the vast majority of these killings are one-off deals over some of the most petty arguments or disputes one could imagine. But because guns are so easily found, so readily accessible in our neighborhoods, these silly arguments end up in deaths, such as one that happened in my State of Connecticut just a couple weeks ago on June 16.

Isaac Smith was a couple days away from graduating from New Britain High School. He was a great athlete, played football and baseball, and he was hoping to continue playing those sports after high school when he went to college. He apparently talked to his friends a lot about how proud he was going to be to graduate.

On the night of June 16, police received a call around midnight about gunshots. They arrived at the scene and found Isaac Smith—a couple days away from graduation—in his driveway with a gunshot wound to the back of his head. Police are still trying to figure out what happened. Apparently, he was involved in a transaction for a pair of high-end sneakers when something went wrong and the other guy he was either selling the sneakers to or buying the sneakers from, 26-year-old Jonathan Gibbs of Meriden, shot him—over a pair of sneakers.

These are who these 5,893 people are: They are victims of mass violence, they are victims of senseless gunfire, and they all share something in common. They deserve a response from the Senate and the House of Representatives. They deserve us doing something more than nothing.

At least the Senate brought up a bill on the floor earlier this year. We got 55 votes for a bill that wasn't perfect, but it at least said criminals shouldn't have guns and that we should have a system that makes sure that is the case; that gun trafficking—when someone buys a messload of guns legally and then sells them illegally on the streets of our cities—should probably be a Federal crime; that we should have more resources in our mental health system to take care of people who want and need help. We got 55 votes for that, which is pretty unbelievable given the fact that 90 percent

of the American public support all of those things. One would think we could have gotten more than 55 votes.

The House of Representatives has done nothing. It hasn't even had a debate.

These numbers will continue to mount. Next week I will be down here, and the number will probably be north of 6,000. Then, after the August recess, it will be creeping up to 7,000. We can't get rid of every single one of these deaths.

I will admit to you that Jonathan Gibbs who shot Isaac Smith was a legal gun owner. He didn't even actually have a criminal history. The fact is, while not every single one of these deaths is preventable, many of them are.

So I will continue to come down and talk about these victims with the hope that someday—perhaps this fall, perhaps next year, perhaps the year after—we can take action in the Senate that will maybe not stop the growth of this number but will at least slow its acceleration.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

STUDENT LOANS

Ms. WARREN. The interest rate on student loans doubled on July 1. Because Congress failed to act, our lowest income students are now paying twice as much on these new loans. While students are paying more, the Federal Government is boosting its own profits—\$51 billion in profits from the student loan programs in 2013 alone. This is just plain wrong.

The government is making obscene profits on these loans—profits we can and should cut back on to help our kids who are struggling to pay for college. But Republicans have repeatedly blocked our efforts to pass a short-term fix that would save students from higher interest rates.

This week the Senate will vote to fix this problem. The bill, Keep Student Loans Affordable Act, was introduced by Senators JACK REED and KAY HAGAN. It would drop the rate on direct student loans back down to 3.4 percent for 1 year, retroactively as of July 1, and give Congress time to develop a plan to do the three things we need to do: Reform student loan interest rates on new loans, refinance \$1 trillion in existing debt, and lower college costs for all of our kids.

Republicans have a different approach. Despite the obscene profits of the current program, they propose to make even more money from students. Their current proposal would bring in

an extra \$1 billion in profits off the backs of our students.

Listen to the numbers. New loans will produce \$184 billion in profits for the U.S. Government over the next 10 years. That includes the 6.8 percent interest on direct loans, all the borrowing costs, all the administrative costs, and all the bad debt losses for the program.

Let me say that again: The new student loans, including direct loans at 6.8 percent, will make \$184 billion in profits for the government over the next 10 years—and the Republican solution is to increase those profits for the U.S. Government. In other words, their solution to the rising interest rate problem is to make students pay even more.

Some of my colleagues are telling students the plan they have is a great deal. But their argument is the same argument that was used by the slick operators who sold teaser rate mortgages and the ones who sold zero interest rate credit cards. Sure, the first couple of years will be cheaper, but they don't want anyone to look at what happens after that.

Fortunately, our students are smarter than that. They read the fine print. They know in the end this debate boils down to simple math—math that our students understand, even if some people in Congress wish they didn't.

Our students sent a letter to Majority Leader REID and Minority Leader MCCONNELL with a clear message: A bad deal is worse than no deal at all. Our students need a plan that costs them less money, not a plan that costs them more.

I talk a lot about math, but the Senate's decision about student loans is a decision about our values and a decision about how we build a future. Investing in our students will allow them to get good jobs and give them a shot to make it in America, but that same investment will also create new industries and grow the economy for everyone.

We shouldn't treat our students like a profit center. We shouldn't ask them to pay an extra tax to go to school. And we shouldn't try to trick them by shuffling numbers around, hitting them with teaser rates, and declaring a problem is solved while the students just keep paying more and more.

There are real problems in higher education today: Skyrocketing college costs, historic levels of student debt, and high borrowing rates. It is going to take time to develop a solution that works, and there is no magic math that will make student loan profits disappear or make college tuition shrink without some sacrifice. But right now, students are the only ones who are sacrificing. They are giving up the dream of owning a home or being able to retire just so they can keep paying for college.

Congress can ease the burden on our students, and we should be committed to doing just that because this is how