

earned many badges for his marksmanship, including one for hitting his target 73 out of 75 times.

Kevin also had a love for old cars. He bought a 1965 Pontiac Le Mans and rebuilt it from the ground up. He attended countless car shows and won several trophies.

In July 2007 Kevin fulfilled a lifelong goal and honored the service of his father Daniel, who earned a Purple Heart for his service in Vietnam, by enlisting in the U.S. Army. He completed basic training that November.

One of Kevin's closest friends, Tristan Miller, joined the Army within months of Kevin. Kevin "was enlisting in a time of war and he chose to enlist as an infantryman," Tristan recalls. "Kevin knew what he was going into. This was something he volunteered to do. Kevin knew something was wrong out there, and he was going to take a stand about it."

Kevin was later based at Fort Lewis, WA, where he met the woman who would become his wife, Krystal, in the fall of 2008. On March 22, 2009, they were married, just a few days before Kevin's 27th birthday. Kevin also grew very close to Krystal's son Brian and enjoyed spending time as a dad.

Then, in July, Kevin was deployed to Afghanistan—his first deployment. He deployed as part of 4th Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, based out of Fort Lewis. He was promoted to specialist and assigned to be a mortar carrier driver, a responsibility given to those soldiers among the best able to remain calm in the face of a crisis. No doubt Kevin's lifetime of preparation, going back to his boyhood neighborhood patrols, served him well for his greatest and final role.

"It was an honor to be his parents," says Sandra Graham, Kevin's mother. "Truly an honor."

We are thinking of Kevin's family and friends today, including his wife Krystal, his stepson Brian, his mother Sandra, his brothers Daniel, Sean, and Scott, and many other beloved family members and friends. Kevin's father, Daniel Graham, a hero in his own right, has sadly passed on.

Mr. President, I know my U.S. Senate colleagues join me in expressing our deepest condolences to the family of SPC Kevin J. Graham and great gratitude for his life of honorable service and his enormous sacrifice in uniform. Without heroes like Specialist Graham, our country could not be free. I hope it is some small measure of comfort to his family that the life of Specialist Graham has been remembered and appropriately honored here in the U.S. Senate.

Those of us in this body must never forget the men and women such as Specialist Graham who built the foundation upon which our democracy stands.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Under the previous order the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12 noon, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, 14 dead, 82 wounded—that grim statistic was reported this weekend. It was not from Baghdad. It was not from Damascus. It was not from Gaza. No, it was not from the Middle East. It was from the Midwest. It was from the city of Chicago—14 dead, 82 wounded over the Fourth of July weekend.

This morning the Chicago Tribune headline read: "2 dead, 9 hurt in shootings on the South, West sides"—last night. A 17-year-old boy who would have started college orientation Thursday was shot to death Tuesday night in the Brainerd neighborhood, one of at least 11 people shot across the city since Tuesday afternoon. A boy was struck in the chest and back and died on the scene. Four minutes later, on the West Side, a 23-year-old man was fatally shot as he rode his bicycle in a Humboldt Park neighborhood.

The story goes on to recount each and every incident. These numbers cloak the grief that families are now going through as someone they love is either gone or seriously injured. When you listen to their voices, you understand what life is like in the mean streets on the South Side and West Side of Chicago.

Greg Baron, a 20-year-old from Chicago's South Side, has already been a victim of gun violence once. He spoke to the Chicago Tribune yesterday and said: "I have to watch my back every day because I do not want to get killed or shot again."

Marsha Lee, a Chicago mother, has already lost one son to gun violence. She recently described how she had to teach her three little girls how to take care of themselves when it came to the gunfire. She told National Public Radio: "You have to get down low, get down on the ground, and stay on the ground until it's over, and when it's over you have to check yourself and check one another to see if anybody has been hit."

Life in Chicago, life in America—I agree with Mayor Rahm Emanuel of Chicago. This type of violence is absolutely unacceptable. While the number of murders in Chicago statistically is, thankfully, down compared to last year, there are still too many deaths

from gun violence and too many people living in fear. Who pays the price? The families do, but all of us do.

The University of Chicago Crime Lab calculates the total cost of gun violence in America at around \$100 billion a year—\$100 billion. That is a staggering number. Cook County, which, of course, contains the city of Chicago, estimates the trauma care for each shooting victim costs \$52,000 on average. So for last weekend, with 80 wounded Chicagoans, we just added \$4 million in health care costs, assuming that they can be treated and released at some point in the near future.

It is time to do something about it. It is time to stop talking about it. I did some polls across our State, and even more important, as I visited the State, I asked questions from one end to the other. We are quite a diverse State. Southern Illinois is the South. As the late Paul Simon used to say: Southern Illinois is the land of grits and gospel music—small town America. It is rural. It is where my family roots are. I know what they think about guns. Guns are part of the culture. Guns are part of the family experience. A father taking his son or even his daughter out to hunt is an important moment in each of their lives.

They value the ownership of guns and overwhelmingly use them responsibly and legally for hunting and for target practice. Still, when you speak to those people about gun violence in the cities and ask them a very basic question, these proud gun owners respond in a way that I am proud of. They agree that no convicted felon and no person mentally unstable should be able to buy a gun, period.

We considered that on the floor of the Senate—the Manchin-Toomey amendment. Close the gun show loophole. Ask the question: Have you been convicted of a felony? Is there something in your background that suggests a mental instability that should prohibit you from owning a gun? We could not pass that measure.

But I offered another measure as well. It is one that relates to this basic issue. If we want to keep guns out of the hands of those who would misuse them, if we want to protect the rights of law-abiding, respectful citizens who own firearms and follow the law, then we should take care and make sure we do everything in our power to keep guns out of the hands of folks who will use them to hurt and kill innocent people.

The superintendent of police in Chicago is Gary McCarthy. I like Gary a lot. He came to Chicago from New York, hired by Mayor Emanuel. He really has rolled up his sleeves and gone out in the streets and tried to tackle this terrible issue of gun violence. They asked him about this weekend, with 14 dead and 82 wounded in Chicago.

He said: "Something has to happen to slow down the straw purchasing that happens in this State." Let me explain

that. Here is what the Superintendent meant. The law says that if you are a convicted felon you cannot buy a gun. So how do they get their hands on guns? Many of them send someone else who does not have a history of criminal convictions to buy the guns. That so-called straw purchaser, a third-party purchaser, purchases the firearm, walks out the door, and either gives it or sells it to the person who can go use it in the commission of a crime. Superintendent McCarthy identifies that as one of the key problems in the city of Chicago. It is a problem across America. Mayor Emanuel pointed out yesterday we need tough Federal gun laws "so that the guns of Indiana and Wisconsin are not flowing just into the streets."

Well, I agree with him. We have a bill before us, pending before us in the Senate. It is not technically a bill about guns and firearms. It is about sportsmen. A lot of provisions in there are good provisions. Some I may question. But by and large, it is all about sportsmen. Now we are being told that colleagues are going to come forward and offer amendments related to firearms and guns.

I may be an exception, but I welcome this debate. I want this debate. I want an opportunity to raise important issues about gun violence and gun safety in America. I am going to offer an amendment, an amendment which stiffens the penalties for those who purchase guns to give them to another person or sell them to another person to commit a crime.

What I said in Chicago I will say on the floor of the Senate. Girlfriends, wake up. When that thug sends you in to buy a gun, under this amendment you run the risk of spending 15 years of your life in a Federal prison. So think about it. Is he really worth it? Are you willing to take that risk and give away 15 years of your life so some gang member or thug can have a gun to go out on the street and kill an innocent person—so that another 15-year-old child can be gunned down, killed in the streets of Chicago or any other city and see their dreams absolutely disappear in the blood on the sidewalk?

I want to offer this amendment. I hope my colleagues, whatever their views on guns, will agree with me. This is no violation of a basic right under the second amendment to the Constitution. This just says that if you are going to buy a gun to give it to a thug to commit a crime, we are going to put you in jail for 15 years. Think about it. It is the only way that we can address this in a manner that will start to shut down this pipeline of guns flowing into the city of Chicago and cities across America.

Some of my friends in Illinois see this issue a lot differently. They think if everybody carried a gun then good people would shoot down the bad people. I am skeptical. History tells us that most of the time the guns that good people carry are not used as effec-

tively as they hoped they would be used and sometimes even injure the person carrying it. I still trust law enforcement as a first line of defense for families and neighborhoods all across my State. Law enforcement has told us loudly and clearly: Stop wasting your time in Washington. Address the issues that make a difference in the neighborhoods and lives of families of Chicago and Illinois and this Nation. Make this a safer Nation—14 dead, 82 wounded over the weekend in Chicago.

I guess the question to be answered by the Senate is: Do we care? Will we do anything? This Senator is going to offer this amendment. I hope I get my chance. I hope the filibusters on the other side and from other people do not stop me. Is this a guarantee that this will become law? No, but it is a guarantee this week will not go by without an effort from this Senator and I hope from others to address this issue of gun violence.

I hope it is evidence that many of us believe the Senate is still an important part of American government that can address the problems that threaten good, decent law-abiding families all across America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

COAL PRODUCTION TAX CREDIT

Mr. WALSH. Madam President, I rise today regarding the Indian coal production tax credit that is being held up by bipartisan politics in the House of Representatives and this body. I have supported this important provision from my first days in the Senate. Chairman WYDEN and Ranking Member HATCH did commendable work to bring the tax extenders bill to the floor in May. But since then, political brinkmanship has won out at the expense of good-paying jobs and certainty for millions of American businesses and taxpayers.

This particular provision not only helps tribes responsibly develop their natural resources, but it also creates and sustains jobs and economic development in Indian Country to support self sufficiency and self determination for several American tribes. This tax credit will help to employ more people at a good wage and continue a policy that has a track record of working for Montanans.

The Crow Nation in Southeast Montana relies on this tax credit to drive their economy. Like many of our tribal nations, the Crow Nation suffers from a much higher unemployment rate than the rest of the country. Unemployment for the Crow Nation is around 50 percent. That is unacceptable. I was proud to work with Chairman WYDEN to have this provision added to the EXPIRE Act. The political games being played to bring down an important piece of bipartisan legislation are a clear example of why Washington is broken. Congress must take action now. This vital

provision will keep tribal jobs and revenue intact. Extending this provision also means more money for our schools and public infrastructure in Indian Country. When I traveled to Montana's tribal nations in my first week as a Senator, Crow leaders, including tribal chairman Darin Old Coyote, shared with me how important this tax credit is for the future of the Crow Nation.

I urge my colleagues to set partisan differences aside and support the tax extender legislation put forward by Senators WYDEN and HATCH.

The bill they put forward contains some provisions that I would not support as stand-alone measures, but overall the bill will be a driver of economic development for small businesses. This bill contains many provisions that are essential for job creation, and the 2-year timeframe helps give individuals and businesses the certainty they need to move our economy forward.

Small businesses across Montana rely on many of the provisions in this bill to keep their companies going, from the new markets tax credit, which spurs development in economically distressed and underserved communities, to the work opportunity tax credit, which creates incentives for hiring veterans. These provisions are driving Montana's economy.

It is irresponsible for Congress to continue to keep these businesses in a state of uncertainty. We must move forward with a real plan to encourage business investment and innovation. I urge my colleagues in both Chambers to put aside their political gamesmanship and show the courage our constituents expect and deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. First, let me commend my colleague from Montana. Since he has been here he has been one of the strongest and most stalwart voices in defending the rights of Native Americans, and I know they populate his State in large numbers. I know he has made it a passion and he has been extremely effective and I compliment him for that.

ISRAEL

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I rise to dispel a dangerous notion, one I have seen too frequently in newspapers, heard on TV and among people, commentators and others in the wake of the violence in Israel.

The dangerous notion is that there is a moral equivalence between the actions and reactions of Israel and the Palestinian State to the violence and response in the Middle East—or the Palestinian people more so than the State. It must be said there is no moral equivalence between the actions and reactions of Israel and Hamas and the Palestinian Authority to the violence that has occurred there.

Two instances make that very clear. We all witnessed terrible tragedies occurring in that tortured region of the