

Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Suriname; Carolyn Patricia Alsup, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of The Gambia; Daniel H. Rubinstein, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Tunisia; and Susan Coppedge Amato, of Georgia, to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Mario Cordero, of California, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for the term expiring June 30, 2019; Sarah Elizabeth Mendelson, of the District of Columbia, to be Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador; Sarah Elizabeth Mendelson, of the District of Columbia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations, during her tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America on the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations; W. Thomas Reeder, Jr., of Virginia, to be Director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation; Lucy Tamlyn, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Benin; Jeffrey J. Hawkins, Jr., of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Central African Republic; David R. Gilmour, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Togolese Republic; Edwin Richard Nolan, Jr., of Massachusetts, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Suriname; Carolyn Patricia Alsup, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of The Gambia; Daniel H. Rubinstein, of Virginia, a Career Member of

the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Tunisia; and Susan Coppedge Amato, of Georgia, to be Director of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, with the rank of Ambassador at Large?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator WYDEN and Senator MURRAY be added as cosponsors to S. 2165, a bill introduced earlier today to permanently authorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2165

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 2165, which is a permanent extension of the Land and Water Conservation Fund; that the bill be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, this Land and Water Conservation Fund has been around for 40 years. It has \$20 billion built up in reserve. The authorization, as it is expired at this point, only changes the amount of money coming into it.

We are still doing the same projects. Literally, this fund has 65 years worth of reserve built into it.

What we are trying to find is some way to be able to help protect the lands that we already have. We are adding more lands. We are not doing maintenance on the lands. We have an \$11 billion maintenance backlog just in our national parks.

So I do have a concern that we are continuing to add more lands, and we are not taking care of what we have. There is not an immediate emergency need for this because the fund continues to operate. We are just not adding new dollars into it in the days ahead.

But, again, we have about 65 years of reserve currently in it. So we are not

in a hurry. We do want to be able to get this right, though, on how we actually maintain our lands as well as actually do purchasing or State entities do—whatever it may be—so I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Washington.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, if I could continue, because I am very disappointed that these objections are now proceeding. Just to be clear, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has been around for 51 years, and this is the first time in the history of the Land and Water Conservation Fund that it has expired. So I hope that sportsmen, I hope that fishermen, I hope that everybody who loves the outdoors and participates in the outdoor economy will call their Senators and make sure they understand that these are important bills to pass.

We don't want to become the holdup Senate where you cannot get the Export-Import Bank finally past the finish line, where you cannot get the Land and Water Conservation Fund—things that have worked for decades and decades, that are bipartisan, and that the majority of Members on both sides support—and it is about making sure they can get a vote.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund has supported more than 6 million jobs nationwide as part of outdoor recreation, and it is credited with over \$900 million from, basically, Outer Continental Shelf drilling. So those gas receipts paid for this open space that then generates more to our economy by having outdoor recreation opportunities.

So every State, I am sure, will hear from cities, from counties, from organizations, and sportsmen who will say: Let's get this bipartisan legislation passed; let's continue our efforts as a conservation country to invest in the things that will help grow our outdoor economy.

I hope my colleague from the other side of the aisle will stop coming to the floor and objecting to this. I know there are Members on both sides of the aisle who have tried to get this passed. I hope that when we return in a week, we will find a path forward to say that this is a priority, that after 51 years of this legislation, we haven't lost our mind as it relates to how important outdoor recreation economies are to our country.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

TRAGEDY AT UMPQUA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I am on the floor of the Senate with my colleague from Oregon, Senator WYDEN, to share a few thoughts about the tragedy that has occurred in our home State.

One week ago today, a madman turned a quiet fall day in Roseburg, OR, into a day of horror and terror.

What occurred on the grounds of Umpqua Community College is an unspeakable, senseless innocent tragedy—nine innocent lives cut short.

Lucero Alcaraz was just 19 years old. She graduated from Roseburg High School this past year. She had received scholarships that would cover her entire college costs, and she had hopes of becoming a pediatric nurse working with children.

Quinn Cooper, 18 years old, also just graduated from Roseburg High School. Quinn loved dancing and voice acting. He was just on the verge of taking his brown belt test in martial arts.

Lucas Eibel, 18 years old, was a third graduate of Roseburg High School. He was studying chemistry. When he wasn't in school, he played soccer and volunteered at Wildlife Safari animal park and a local animal shelter.

Treven Anspach was 20 years old. He was a talented athlete, and he worked with the Douglas County Fire District when he wasn't in class. His parents referred to him as the "perfect son."

Kim Dietz loved the outdoors, her 18-year-old daughter, her two Great Pyrenees dogs, and she worked as a caretaker at the Pyrenees Vineyard.

Jason Johnson was 33 years old. Jason recently turned his life around. After completing a 6-month drug rehab program with the Salvation Army, he decided to continue his education. As his mother said, he had "finally found his path."

Sarena Moore. Sarena was in her third semester at Umpqua Community College, studying business. She was an active member of the Grants Pass Seventh-day Adventist Church and the proud mother of two adult sons.

Lawrence Levine was the professor teaching the writing class that was assaulted by the gunman. He loved the blues. He loved fly fishing. Writing was his passion.

Rebecka Carnes. Rebecka graduated just last year from South Umpqua High School. In this picture she is holding a graduation cap, and the graduation cap says "the adventure begins." She was full of zest for the life to come.

These were nine upstanding citizens of the community, nine promising lives cut short. Yet even in tragedy we saw in Roseburg examples of resilience and heroism. The law enforcement officers, the first responders proceeded to act quickly and to act competently.

There were students like Chris Mintz, who was shot five to seven times seeking to stop the gunman. The sheriff, the county commissioners, the mayor, the city manager all made decisions in a flash to respond and to address the unfolding crisis, and they did an incredible job, but there is no job that can repair the damage done, the tear in the fabric of the community or the broken hearts of the families and the community and all Oregonians. This mass shooting will be seared into our memories.

The name Roseburg will be added to a list that includes Charleston, New-

town, Aurora, Oak Creek, Virginia Tech, and Columbine. This is a list of communities and schools that no community or school ever wants to be on.

I was born in Douglas County, in the town of Myrtle Creek. I spent my early childhood there and then in Roseburg. That area is an incredibly beautiful place. It is home to one of the most beautiful rivers in the world, the Umpqua River, and a town that is just the right size, where everyone knows each other and everyone helps each other. I am shocked when I think of the community, that this could happen there.

If this can happen in Roseburg, it can happen anywhere in our country. That is something that becomes evident day after day, week after week. In the course of 2015, there have been 45 shootings in our schools across the country, 18 mass murders, or roughly 1 every 2 weeks. So we grieve the lives lost at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, and we grieve the lives lost in assaults across the country. We will search our souls to ask ourselves how we might diminish the odds of this occurring in another community, and that conversation will take place here in this Chamber in the weeks ahead.

I want to close with recognizing that if we can diminish the opportunity of a disturbed individual to get hold of a gun and we can increase the opportunity for them to get help, there will be fewer tragedies like this.

With that, I turn the floor over to my colleague, Senator WYDEN.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague, Senator MERKLEY, a son of Douglas County, and reflect for a few minutes on the horrendous events of the last week. My colleague has eloquently talked about this, and I am grateful for that.

Senator MERKLEY and I will be returning home tomorrow, but I want to talk a little bit about some of what was inspiring last Friday. My colleague and I and our colleague from the House, Congressman DEFAZIO, went to Mercy Medical Center, and we saw all of the staff. My own sense is that there is no way you can truly prepare for something like this. You can go through as many training programs, have as many drills, have as many handbooks as anybody can invent, but you are never truly prepared for it. When Senator MERKLEY and I and a colleague from the other body, Congressman DEFAZIO, walked into that mayhem, there were probably 150 staff there, and I said: This is the face of Douglas County. These are the people—the doctors and the nurses and the pharmacists and the volunteers—who were there in a time of extraordinary stress giving those individuals the very best of care and that little extra touch of Douglas County caring that my colleague knows much more about than anyone else here in the Senate.

I so appreciated what we saw at Mercy Medical Center because it told me that even at a time of such pain and after such carnage, we know Doug-

las County is going to come back. Roseburg is going to come back. The reason we know that is because of what we saw there at Mercy Medical Center—all of those committed, wonderful advocates who, against all odds, came through.

There is one other part of Douglas County I want to reflect on because it says so much about the community. My colleague and I have townhall meetings around the State. We have both been in Douglas County. I was at a townhall meeting at UCC just a couple of months ago. As I was driving in, all of the log trucks were parked out front because it is a community that cares a great deal about sensible natural resources policy. We had a spirited town meeting, as most of the town meetings in Douglas County are, because people have strong views, but on that day I saw much of what I saw at the Mercy Medical Center when my colleague and I visited—people who care about their friends and neighbors, who care about a whole host of issues, from the economy to charity to what the Congress is doing, that might actually be relevant to them.

I bring this up by way of saying I am so grateful my colleague made the presentation he did so that we understand what a huge loss this has been, but I also wanted to touch on what I saw with my friend at Mercy Medical Center and what I saw at the Umpqua Community College townhall meeting just a couple of months ago. Because at a time of great loss, we can also be inspired by what we saw at that medical center and the friends and neighbors of goodwill coming together to deal with some of the biggest challenges the community and our country face.

I look forward to going home with my colleague tomorrow, to once again talk about the challenges that are ahead after Roseburg. We talked a little bit about that on the steps, but I mostly want to say that what we saw last Friday in the middle of tragedy and great stress ought to send the message to all concerned that Douglas County is going to be back. Douglas County is a special place, and as horrendous as these losses were, those are people who embody the best of our State and the best of our country.

I look forward to working with my colleague and, with his leadership, providing whatever solace we can in the short term and then moving on to tackle the community's bigger issues in the days ahead.

I thank my colleague, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. KING. Mr. President, on September 11, 2001, 3,000 people were brutally killed in this country. The response of our Nation was overwhelming. We changed our laws, we increased our intelligence community's capacity dramatically, we fought two

wars, and we imposed vigorous inspection regimes at airports and in connection with transportation. We made huge changes in order to see that such a thing did not happen again. Why? Because we love each other. We are a compassionate people, and when American lives are threatened, we react. In that case, we reacted in an overwhelming way.

In 2014, we lost one American to a potential Ebola epidemic. One life was lost. Even though it was only one life, millions of dollars were spent across the country, and our entire health system was mobilized, again, because we love each other and we want to protect each other.

Over the last 10 years we have had disasters in this country that have affected our neighbors, most recently in South Carolina. Of course, the two great disasters of the last decade are Katrina and Sandy. Again, we responded. In money, \$100 billion was allocated for relief from those two storms. Why? Because we love each other and we take care of each other.

When we see a problem in this country, particularly a problem that threatens fellow Americans, we act. We do something. When there is a risk to our colleagues and our friends and our families, we address it. Yet we have one epidemic in this country, one disaster that we are deliberately ignoring. It is an epidemic which takes over 30,000 lives a year, 30,000 American lives a year, and that is gun-related violence. The breakdown on that 30,000 figure is over 10,000 homicides committed with guns and 20,000 suicides committed with guns.

Maine is a gun-owning State. Of any State, I think my State has the second or third highest percentage of gun owners in the country. Yet we have one of the lowest levels of gun violence. Why is that? I think it is because of our deep tradition of respect and care for firearms and the idea that is passed down from generation to generation that firearms are to be treated responsibly and with respect and with an understanding of their destructive capacity.

Thinking about this issue has made me reflect upon what is the proper response from what level of government. I do not think all problems in this country need to be solved by the Federal Government. I think this is one of them. I think there is an important role to be played by States and localities because they can adjust their rules and laws according to the needs in their States. The needs, responsibility, and the importance of this issue in Maine may be different than it is in New Mexico or Texas or Illinois or New York. Therefore, under the genius of our system, the principle responsibility should rest at the State and local level. However, I do think there are minimum standards the Federal Government can impose that will enable the States then to work within those standards to meet the requirements

that they see are most important for their citizens. This is a true role of federalism.

In our Federal Constitution we have the Second Amendment, and I respect and support it. It is a basic part of our governing document, but the Second Amendment, to me, not only imparts rights but responsibilities. Guns are dangerous instrumentalities. Anybody who has ever used one knows that, and there are responsibilities which come with the right to keep and bear arms.

Justice Scalia in the *Heller* decision—where the Court struck down the District of Columbia's total ban essentially on handguns, saying it overreached and violated the Second Amendment—was very clear and explicit where he said: The Second Amendment, like all other amendments in the Constitution, has limits. Interestingly, specifically he mentioned in that opinion—and nobody ever accused Justice Scalia of being a liberal. Justice Scalia pointed out: Of course you can limit the ability of felons and the dangerously mentally ill to obtain handguns. The government can limit it. And also, the government can reasonably place limits on the commercial transaction, the sale and purchase of guns.

We are here today because of one more in a depressingly familiar series of mass shooting incidents: Columbine, Newtown, and now Oregon. All over the country this is happening in a repetitive way. It is important to use this occasion to reflect upon the dangers we are ignoring, the epidemic we are ignoring, but I think we also have to realize that mass shootings, as horrendous as they are, are not the bulk of the crimes committed with guns and the deaths dealt by guns in this country; that those are everyday criminals, abusive spouses, and, sadly, people taking their own lives. Don't forget that those 30,000 deaths a year of our fellow citizens are not all in mass shooting situations, but they involve many other circumstances.

So what is the solution? A friend of mine in Maine coined the term, which I think aptly applies—in fact, it probably applies in this case more than any other: There is no silver bullet. There may, however, be silver “buckshot”—a multiplicity of solutions, no single solution. Nothing we do today in the way of background checks or anything else is going to solve this problem entirely. We must recognize that. So we must move in a comprehensive way—not only on the Federal level but on the State level as well—not to compromise the Second Amendment, not to take guns out of the hands of law-abiding citizens, not to make it inherently more difficult for law-abiding citizens to maintain them but to put into place commonsense solutions to deal with this epidemic of gun violence.

The first, of course—and I commend my colleague from Maine for emphasizing this today; that is, we have to deal with the failures of our mental

health system. In all of these mass shooting incidents, it appears that the perpetrators had some significant mental health issues. We have to deal with that. We have to have a better system that finds people in advance, before they act out their violent fantasies. We have to try to intervene and help those people before violence occurs.

So mental health has to be a part of this, but it is not the whole answer because people with those kinds of proclivities, whether they are violence-prone felons or people with dangerous mental health issues, we simply have to keep guns out of their hands.

That brings us to the second commonsense solution, which is background checks, which we already have. We have had them for 15 or 20 years. Some people say: Well, we are worried about background checks because it will lead to a Federal registry, and they will know who has the guns and then they will come and get them. We have had the background checks for a number of years. That hasn't happened. In the Manchin-Toomey bill that we voted on a few years ago, it was a felony for any Federal official to create a registry that would be available to the government.

The simple, basic, commonsense idea of a background check is to see whether someone is a convicted felon or has demonstrated a dangerous mental illness that should disqualify them from having a firearm. That is common sense. That has been supported—is supported—by a majority of gun owners and by the vast majority of the American people. It was even supported by some of the national gun organizations as recently as 10 or 15 years ago but no longer, for reasons I don't understand.

Another part of the package I think will be introduced in the next week or so is to add convicted spousal abusers to the list—which, again, is common sense. I mentioned in Maine we have a very low level of gun violence, but much of it involves spouse upon spouse. If we have a case where someone has been convicted of spousal abuse, to me, again it is common sense that they should not be able to obtain a gun.

Finally, if we are going to have a system of background checks that is nationwide—that, by the way, should be efficient—in this day and age, there is no reason it has to take any kind of long period to check, but if we have such a system, then it doesn't make sense to turn a blind eye to trafficking and straw purchases, which are essentially designed to get guns into the hands of people who otherwise couldn't buy them.

That is a modest package. To the express language of Justice Scalia, it doesn't violate the Second Amendment, and it will not solve the whole problem. Nothing is going to solve the whole problem. We are a human society, and humans, sadly, are often prone to violence, but it can make a difference. It can make a difference. Remember, we are talking about 30,000 people a year—30,000 people a year.

The American people send us to address issues, to address problems. On September 11, Congress acted. After Sandy and Katrina, Congress acted. During the Ebola crisis, Congress and the American health system acted. Why? Because we love each other and we value each other. It seems to me this is exactly the same case. We look out across the country, and one of the problems with this issue is it is slow motion and small. Every now and then we have one of these incidents, like we did last week, where a significant number of people are killed in 1 day, but the truth is, 10,000 people a year are murdered in the United States—10,000 people a year—not necessarily in a mass shooting. But 30,000 people a year altogether, if we include suicides, is a small American town disappearing every year. If all of these deaths occurred in one town or in Iowa or Illinois or Chicago or California, we would be on this. We would find the cause. We would be at least trying to prevent it, but because it happens in slow motion in small ways across the country, in small towns and large cities, we are ignoring it.

The incident in Oregon gives us an occasion to remind us once again of how serious this is and that we have an opportunity to do something about it, not by overreaching, not by violating the Second Amendment, not by impinging on the rights of law-abiding gun owners—of whom we have many in Maine—but simply by the common-sense imposition of a nationwide system to be sure that people who are felons or dangerously mentally ill can't get guns. I don't understand how anybody can object to that goal because I care about my fellow Americans, I love my fellow Americans, and I want to protect them from harm.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTH CARE EXCISE TAX

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I rise today to share my concerns with the devastating impact of the Cadillac tax, enacted as part of the Affordable Care Act. The Cadillac tax is a 40-percent excise tax set to take effect in 2018 on employer-sponsored health care plans around the country. This is precisely why I have authored the only bipartisan piece of legislation that would fully repeal this onerous tax. The reason I did so is that in Nevada, 1.3 million workers who have employer-sponsored health insurance plans will be hit by this Cadillac tax. These are public employees in Carson City. They are service industry workers on the Strip in Las Vegas, small business owners,

and retirees all across the State. Hardly anyone in Nevada will be shielded from the devastating effects of this Cadillac tax.

What I am most proud of on this piece of legislation is the fact that we have 14 other cosponsors here in the Senate. It is also sponsored and supported by 75 other organizations across the country. Some of those organizations include unions, chambers of commerce, small business owners, State and local government employees, and retirees, and they are all saying the same thing: The Cadillac tax needs to be fully repealed or our employees will experience massive changes to their health care.

We are talking about reduced benefits. We are talking about increased premiums. We are talking about higher deductibles. Over 33 million Americans who use flexible spending accounts, FSAs, and 13.5 million Americans who use health savings accounts, HSAs, may see these accounts vanish in the coming years as companies scramble to avoid the law's 40-percent excise tax. HSAs and FSAs are used for things such as hospital and maternity services. They are used for dental care, physical therapy, and they are also used for mental health services—something we badly need today. Access to these lifesaving services could all be gone for tens of millions of Americans if the Cadillac tax is not fully repealed.

I have heard from employers—from big business, to unions, to small businesses from all over Nevada—who are saying that they will inevitably have to eliminate services their workers currently enjoy. They will have to cut certain health care providers out of their networks.

This goes to the heart of the broken promises of ObamaCare; that is, if you like your health care, you can keep it; if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.

Earlier this week, I held a telephone townhall meeting with thousands of Nevadans from all walks of life. During the meeting, I asked the participants on the call "Should the Cadillac tax be repealed?" One of the best parts about these tele-townhall meetings is that you can do these surveys. We do this weekly. The question this week was "Should the Cadillac tax be repealed?" Almost 70 percent of them said "Yes, the Cadillac tax should be fully repealed." Let me repeat that. Almost 70 percent of Nevadans supported the repealing of the Cadillac tax. They see this as a burdensome and costly tax that will hurt hard-working Nevadans, hard-working Americans.

The onerous tax targets Americans who already have high-quality health care. No one claims that our health care system ever was or is perfect. The goal of health reform should be to help those who do not have health care coverage and lower costs for those who already have insurance. This tax does not achieve either one of these goals.

It is very rare these days to see this much agreement in Washington. Orga-

nized labor, the chamber of commerce, local and State governments, and small businesses have all come together with a bipartisan group of Senators putting forth a solution to fix a problem affecting so many hard-working Americans and their families.

Some Members on both sides of the aisle have tried to make this a partisan issue for different reasons, but this is not a partisan issue, which is evident by the fact that the companion legislation to my bill in the House enjoys more Democratic cosponsors than Republicans.

Fully repealing the Cadillac tax is an opportunity for Republicans and Democrats to join forces and work together to repeal a bad tax for one purpose; that is, to help 151 million workers keep the health care insurance that they like.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

GUN VIOLENCE

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, for 20 years one of the biggest billboards in America was next to Fenway Park, facing the Massachusetts Turnpike. It had a giant number counter on it.

When I was running for the Senate in 2012, I would drive past that billboard sometimes three or four times a day. Each time, I would look up at the counter to see how it had changed since the last trip—up 2, up 6, up 12. The billboard was from Stop Handgun Violence, and it showed the number of children killed by guns in the United States.

When the tragedy happened at Sandy Hook Elementary School, my first thought was of the 20 little children who would be added to the count on that billboard. I thought about how we, the grownups, had failed to keep safe the thousands of children counted there.

There are mass shootings, everyday shootings, drive-by shootings, random shootings, sometimes with big headlines and mostly with no headlines at all.

The facts are simple: Eighty-eight Americans die every day from gun violence. Seven of those people are children or teens. That is seven a day, every day, young bodies piling up by the thousands year after year. What has happened to us? If seven children were dying every day from a mysterious virus, our country would pull out all the stops to figure out what had gone wrong and to fix it.

Gun violence is an epidemic—an epidemic that kills children, kills them in schools, on playgrounds, and in our neighborhoods. But day after day, month after month, tragedy after tragedy, the Congress has done nothing—nothing. Republicans in the Senate have blocked even the smallest steps to protect our communities and keep our children safe.

This must stop now. Today, Senate Democrats are calling on Republicans to join us in supporting three measures

to reduce gun violence. First, end the gun show loophole. Everyone gets a background check. Second, end straw purchases. The one who gets checked has to be the true owner. Third, close holes in the background check database and stop domestic abusers from purchasing guns, period.

Look, let's be frank. These three steps will not be enough to stop all handgun violence in our communities, but these are meaningful steps in the right direction—steps that huge majorities of Americans support, steps that are calm and sensible. These three steps are a test—a test for every single Member of Congress. These three steps put the question to everyone in Congress: Whom do you work for? Do you represent the people who have lost children or sisters or cousins to gun violence and who have stood at gravesides and sworn that we will make change? Do you represent the people who don't want their loved ones to be the next victims? Do you represent the people who want some sensible rules about gun safety? Or do you represent the NRA? It is time to make a choice right here in Congress—the American people or the NRA.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I withdraw the motion to proceed to H.R. 2028.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

STOP SANCTUARY POLICIES AND PROTECT AMERICANS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 252, S. 2146.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 252, S. 2146, a bill to hold sanctuary jurisdictions accountable for defying Federal law, to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed, and to provide liability protection for State and local law enforcement who cooperate with Federal law enforcement and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 252, S. 2146, a bill to hold sanctuary jurisdictions accountable for defying Federal law, to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed, and to provide liability protection for State and local law enforcement who co-

operate with Federal law enforcement and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, David Vitter, John Barrasso, Dan Sullivan, David Perdue, Bill Cassidy, Ron Johnson, Steve Daines, James Lankford, James E. Risch, John Boozman, Mike Lee, Richard C. Shelby, John Cornyn, Jeff Sessions, Johnny Isakson, Patrick J. Toomey.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived and that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the cloture vote occur at 2:15 p.m., on Tuesday, October 20.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Senators will soon travel to their home States for the State work period. I ask colleagues to consider some important questions as they meet with constituents and take time to reflect.

In a time of limited Federal resources and tough choices, is it fair to treat localities that cooperate with Federal law enforcement or work hard to follow Federal law no better than localities that refuse to help or actively flout the law? When a deputy sheriff puts her life on the line every day, is it fair to make her live in constant fear of being sued for simply trying to keep us safe? When felons enter our country illegally and repeatedly, is it fair to victims and families to not do what we can now to stop them? The answer to all of these questions is no. No, it isn't fair—not to citizens and governments that do the right thing, not to law enforcement officers who risk everything for our safety, not to victims and their families.

The proponents of so-called "sanctuary cities" seem to callously disregard how their policies can hurt other people. That is not right. The bill I just filed cloture on this afternoon aims to ensure more fairness on this issue.

The ideas underpinning the Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act are supported by a great many Americans. The bill is supported by many law enforcement organizations as well. They have had some really positive things to say about it, such as this letter:

Thank you for introducing the Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act which will empower Federal and local law enforcement officers' cooperative efforts to better protect our communities and our citizens. Your proposal will ensure we do not dishonor the memory of Kate Steinle and the immeasurable grief her family is enduring.

The letter went on:

Ms. Steinle was killed in San Francisco by an illegal immigrant who had previously been deported from the United States five times, and had been convicted of seven felonies. The shooter chose to live in San Francisco because he knew it was a sanctuary city that would shield him from Federal immigration law. Tragically, his "sanctuary" gambit proved fatal for the Steinle family. Federal officials requested that San Francisco detain the shooter until immigration authorities could pick him up, but San Francisco officials refused to cooperate and released Sanchez three months before Kate's murder. We owe it to Kate and the American citizenry to fix this community safety issue now.

That is what the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association had to say about the bill that we will be voting on when we get back. Groups like the National Sheriffs' Association and the National Association of Police Organizations have sent letters in support as well.

I thank the sponsors of this legislation for all their hard work on this bill. I hope Senators will reflect on the questions I have raised over the State work period. The Senate will consider this bill when we reconvene.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

60TH ANNIVERSARY OF CRISPUS ATTUCKS CHAMPIONSHIP

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, earlier this year I was incredibly fortunate to be part of the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday, a moving and meaningful experience in Selma, AL. Fifty years ago, during the marches from Selma to Montgomery, civil rights leaders and everyday citizens of this country put their lives at risk in a passionate, nonviolent demonstration for a more equal and more just society. The passion and courage for equality reflected in the historic marches in Selma were the culmination of decades of struggle shown by men and women across this country.

In my home State of Indiana, a place that takes great pride in high school basketball, it is fitting that 60 years ago the civil rights movement played out on the hardwood of Indiana basketball courts. On March 19, 1955, at the Butler Fieldhouse, the Flying Tigers of Crispus Attucks High School became not only the first all-African-American high school team to win a State championship in Indiana but the first all-African-American high school athletic team to win a State championship in the United States. Led by future NBA Hall of Famer—and maybe the best basketball player of all time—Oscar Robertson, the Flying Tigers finished their 1955 season with a 30-and-1 record, capped with a 97-to-74 victory over Gary Roosevelt High School in the State final.