

where the puck will be, not where the puck is. Think about that. I go where the puck will be, not where the puck is.

One of the other things Wayne Gretzky said that I especially like is: I miss 100 percent of the shots—talking about taking a shot on the goal—he said: I miss 100 percent of the shots that I never take. Think about that. I miss 100 percent of the shots I never take.

I am convinced this is a shot worth taking. I am going to push very hard to make sure somebody is here, and DICK DURBIN and my guess is some others, too, will come along and will encourage folks to join us in this effort. This is a just cause.

I don't see anybody else waiting in line to speak, so with that, 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. 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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.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.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO SIEGFRIED AND ROY

• Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to recognize two incredible entertainers and individuals in the Las Vegas community, Siegfried Fischbacher and Roy Horn, better known as Siegfried and Roy.

For more than 35 years, this duo shared their captivating magic show with visitors and residents of Las Vegas. Their stage presence and the participation of their trained white tigers kept audiences coming back for performances unlike any other. Siegfried and Roy's award-winning show at the Mirage Hotel and Casino was enjoyed by children and adults, and it opened the door to family entertainment on the Las Vegas Strip.

Through their celebrity and love of animals, Siegfried and Roy have been working to raise awareness for animal conservation and are educating others about endangered species. The white tiger, an animal that became an icon of Siegfried and Roy's performances, is among those listed as endangered and facing extinction. By establishing the Siegfried and Roy Masters of the Impossible Foundation, they are taking their efforts to educate, protect, and conserve animals that are endangered and threatened across the globe.

For the first time in 5 years, Siegfried and Roy's Secret Garden at the Mirage is welcoming four tiger cubs,

Hirah, Maharani, Liberty, and Justice. Siegfried and Roy are calling these cubs "ambassadors of conservation," as they hope these animals will help them share the important message that we must continue to work together to protect endangered species.

I appreciate Siegfried and Roy's dedication to the Las Vegas community and animal conservation. I wish them the best in their future endeavors. •

POLITICAL PRISONERS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, much of our international focus in recent months has understandably been on Iran and Syria. Both will require further attention as we make sure Iran complies with the nuclear agreement and try to bring an end to the catastrophic human suffering in Syria. And we must continue to insist that Russia abide by the Minsk agreement in territory it so brazenly seized in eastern Ukraine.

But amid these important foreign policy challenges, I would like to make sure we do not lose sight of smaller but also important battles for human rights occurring around the world.

First, let me start with a small nation straddling the lines of Europe and Asia, which many had hoped would strengthen its ties with the community of democracies—Azerbaijan. Since 2014, the government has arrested close to a hundred political prisoners representing some of the strongest voices for democracy and transparency in the country.

Many of those who currently sit in prison on trumped-up charges such as tax evasion, fraud, and even treason include noted human rights defenders like Leyla and Arif Yunus, Rasul Jafarov, Intigam Aliyev, and Anar Mammadli. They worked tirelessly before their arrests on issues trying to strengthen the country's democratic institutions.

Just recently, the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe, or OSCE, announced that it is canceling its mission to monitor the upcoming parliamentary elections due to restrictions imposed by the government. Without the OSCE's mission, the likelihood for free and fair elections in November is obviously diminished.

The Azeri Government has been particularly aggressive in quashing freedom of the press, notably arresting in 2014 Khadija Ismayilova, one of the country's top investigative reporters. For years she exposed secret connections between President Aliyev's immediate family and business dealings, including the privatized state airline, the nation's biggest telecom provider, and massive construction projects.

As a result of her work, she faced repeated threats, hidden cameras in her home, and even attempted blackmail by crudely posted videos of private moments with her boyfriend; yet as the Washington Post recently reported on its front page, she pressed forward, be-

lieving that the Azeri public had a right to know about corruption at the highest levels of their government.

Two weeks later, Khadija's employer, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, was raided and shut down. Its staff has faced repeated harassment and some have even left the country out of concern for their safety. Recently she was sentenced to 7.5 years in prison on what can only be seen as a blatant attempt to halt her work.

The U.S. State Department, the OSCE, and the European Union Parliament have all called on Azerbaijani to release its political prisoners. And in July, 15 of my Senate colleagues joined me in a letter to Azeri President Aliyev expressing concern that the space for civil society and the freedom of press within the country is diminishing. I call on Aliyev here today to not further jeopardize his ties to the West by continuing these authoritarian actions against his own people.

Next, let me turn to Latin America where we continue to see democratic backsliding in a number of countries.

First, Ecuador, where President Correa has seemingly no tolerance for criticism and a troubling habit of harassing the media and restricting freedom of association and the press. It is not clear why Correa, who has a large majority in the parliament, has to take such draconian and undemocratic measures.

For example, over the years, the police have raided the homes of journalists working to expose government corruption and shut down an environmental organization critical of the regime's extractive policies. Government thugs have harassed and intimidated Twitter users who criticize the government. And Correa recently seemed set to force the closure of Fundamedios, a respected NGO that promotes freedom of the press.

The NGO's crime? Tweeting links to two political editorials critical of the Ecuadorian government.

Facing strong international condemnation, it now appears Correa has decided to back off this ill-suited vendetta against Fundamedios.

And in Venezuela the other week, leading opposition figure Leopoldo Lopez, who had already been sitting in jail for 19 months on absurd political charges, was sentenced to almost 14 years.

Equally troubling is what the Venezuelan regime has done to Judge Maria Lourdes Afiuni, who tried to maintain a semblance of judicial independence. She was shamelessly jailed after releasing a defendant who had been detained for 3 years without charges and swiftly charged with corruption and abuse of authority. Afiuni sat in jail for 2 years next to violent prisoners she had once sentenced.

While in prison, she was brutally raped and became pregnant—her body terribly destroyed by the violence. She was granted house arrest to recover from emergency surgery. And today

she must still report to the authorities every 15 days and cannot leave the country or speak to the news media. Incredibly, Venezuela's Attorney General denied in Geneva there was a complaint for sexual abuse and torture involving Afiuni.

I know U.N. Ambassador Samantha Power has taken on this case. I want to join that effort and call for her unconditional release and exoneration.

Venezuelan President Maduro is presiding over the near collapse of his once proud nation, manufacturing internal and external enemies to explain his own government's economic mismanagement.

Not only has his government sentenced Lopez to jail, but it has also started a border dispute with Colombia, embarrassingly trying to further deflect attention from its own disastrous policies.

Furthering more division and repression will only make things worse. I know this administration and others in the region have tried to offer paths forward for Maduro, but I fear he is heading in the opposite direction with Lopez's sentencing.

Now, some of you may remember the international outrage that occurred when writer and activist Raif Badawi was sentenced to 1,000 public lashes and 10 years in prison on blasphemy and apostasy charges in Saudi Arabia.

You may also recall his brother-in-law and lawyer, human rights activist Waleed Abu al-Khair, who was sentenced to 15 years in prison by Jeddah's specialized criminal court for inciting public opinion and undermining the state.

These imprisonments—and both their dubious charges and inhumane punishments—were denounced around the world by reputable human rights organizations, foreign governments, and many others.

Our State Department called for the release of both Raif and Waleed, and in Congress, I was joined by seven of my Senate colleagues in writing to the late King Abdullah urging their release. Sixty-seven of my colleagues in the House did the same months later when King Salman became the new leader of Saudi Arabia. And just the other day, Badawi was awarded the PEN Literary Award.

We have a longstanding friendship with the Saudi regime, and friends do at times disagree. But it is because of the nature of our friendship that I believe we have an obligation to encourage Saudi Arabia to do better—to uphold basic human rights for free speech, for women, for religious minorities, for foreign workers, and countless others.

I hope the new King, King Salman, will show compassion and bring an end to Saudi Arabia's troubling human rights record.

And last, let me mention some hopeful steps in Belarus, where recently the last candidate who ran in 2010 for President against strongman President

Lukashenko, was finally released from jail.

Michael Statkevich was released after nearly 5 years and, coincidentally, just days after he had passed the deadline to be an eligible opposition candidate for the next Presidential election.

You see on the eve of the 2010 election—an election that could have brought an end to the distinction of being the last dictatorship in Europe—Lukashenko had seven candidates arrested and thrown in jail—not much of an incentive to be a candidate.

Sadly, such repression and election manipulation has been the norm in Belarus which incredibly still operates its own KGB to enforce political repression.

However, Belarus has another election coming up next week on October 11. I want President Lukashenko to know that the world is watching and hoping that this time it will be a free and legitimate election worthy of the Belarussian people.

REMEMBERING PAT JOHNS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last month, Illinois—and America—lost a legend. Pat Johns passed away at the age of 66. Pat Johns was from my home State of Illinois. He was born in Aurora and raised in Plano. Known as the “Master of Disaster,” Pat was employed with Catholic Relief Services, based in Baltimore, for 30 years. In that time he was on the ground in some of the world’s most dangerous war zones and humanitarian emergency areas.

Pat Johns was a soldier, but not in the traditional sense—he didn’t even carry a gun. He was a soldier of peace, armed only with the virtue of his mission. And his mission took him to places like the killing fields of Cambodia, the Ethiopian famine, the Rwandan genocide, Somalia, Kosovo, and Eritrea. And when natural disasters occurred like the Asian tsunami, Hurricane Katrina, or the earthquake in Haiti, Pat Johns was there—with energy, hope, and solutions.

In 1974, Pat joined Catholic Relief Services and was posted in Cambodia. Two years later, he was managing a staff of 400 people. To say that Pat faced a challenge in Cambodia would be a gross understatement. The Khmer Rouge Army was storming its way toward the capitol of Phnom Penh and the Vietnam war was raging next door. Pat’s job included working shifts of 50 hours or more and getting food and supplies to nearly 2 million refugees seeking safe haven from the Khmer Rouge’s advances. He endured miserable tropical weather and survived malaria, all while keeping tens of thousands of refugees alive. When asked about the experience, he said, “The whole experience, in Cambodia really drove home my niche in life.”

Many may have quit, but not Pat Johns. Instead, he dedicated his life to

serving those in desperate need in the most dangerous parts of the planet. In doing so, Pat Johns saved millions of people from war-torn countries, fed the starving, and promoted peace and justice all over the world—what an inspiration.

Last spring, I gave the commencement address at my nephew’s high school graduation. I asked the students to think about what they wanted people to say about their lives. I asked them, “What will you be remembered for? What service did you render to your community? Your nation? Your world?” The great thing about living in America is we can choose the answers to those questions.

Pat Johns will be remembered for many things: living through war, famine, natural disasters, incredible human suffering; and for bringing hope to victims everywhere he went. But Sean Callahan, chief operating officer for Catholic Relief Services, put it best. He said, “Perhaps the greatest thing about Pat was that he was a gentleman and a greatly caring person. He could work nonstop for 50 hours in terrible conditions, but still have the heart to offer comfort and friendship to those around him.” That’s a legacy to be proud of.

Today, the best way we can honor Pat Johns is by continuing his life’s work. We need this generation of Americans to live up to the example set by Pat Johns. We have big shoes to fill, but Pat showed us that, with the right commitment, we can get it done.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we have all been deeply shaken by the horrific tragedies in Charleston and Roseburg and by all the mass killings that now occur with alarming regularity. The American people overwhelmingly support commonsense reforms that will keep firearms out of the hands of criminals and dangerous individuals; yet in response to mass shootings, too often Congress slips into a familiar cycle of shock, sorrow and, ultimately, inaction. Some in Congress pretend that there are no solutions; others claim that any restriction aimed at keeping guns out of the hands of dangerous people represents an affront to the Second Amendment. They are wrong.

Many, many Americans have had enough. We will not be satisfied by those who only offer their sympathies. And we will not be lulled into inaction.

While I was chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee last Congress, we addressed gun violence head-on. In the wake of the horrifying and senseless murder of 26 people, including 20 children, at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, CT, I and all Democratic members on the committee resolved to pass sensible reforms to protect our communities. We were moved by the powerful words of former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords calling on us