



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162

WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2016

No. 96

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, You are from eternity past and future, the same yesterday, today, and forever. We are Your children seeking to understand the destinies You have choreographed for our lives. Lord, we stand weak and mortal, surrounded by the immensities of Your power and the unfolding of Your loving providence.

Today use our lawmakers as servants for Your purposes. May they remember that life is a dress rehearsal for eternity and a time of training and testing. May their world be centered not in themselves but in You as they better comprehend the vanity of the temporal and the glory of the eternal. As many recover from burning the midnight oil, lift their minds beyond all time and space to You, the Author and Finisher of our faith.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ROUNDS). The Democratic leader is recognized.

GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, for 14 hours and 50 minutes, beginning late Wednes-

day morning and ending early Thursday morning, the entire Nation watched as the junior Senator from Connecticut gave our Republican colleagues a lesson in a number of things, not the least of which was courage.

Senator MURPHY stood here for 14 hours. We talk a lot about filibusters in the Senate. They don't happen very often. I have been in Congress for 34 years. I have probably been involved in two more filibusters than anyone else. We have talked about them and there are fake filibusters, but this one was real.

I admire and appreciate the junior Senator from Connecticut very much. Four days after 49 innocent Americans were gunned down in cold blood, Senator MURPHY stood here on the Senate floor, as I have already indicated, for 14 hours, pleading with Republicans to join us in doing something to help stop our Nation's scourge of gun violence—and it is a scourge. Thirty-eight other Democrats joined him on the floor, all of whom, without exception, echoed Senator MURPHY's call to keep guns out of the hands of terrorists and criminals.

All 46 of us were united together, led by Senator MURPHY in support of what he was doing. We all believe that he echoed the words that we wish to speak—to keep guns out of the hands of terrorists and criminals. It was an inspiring reminder to Americans that the Senate Democrats will not cave in to the National Rifle Association or Gun Owners of America. We will not cave in to them, and the people of this Nation responded to Senator MURPHY's stand against gun violence in an overwhelming way.

Throughout the course of Senator MURPHY's filibuster, hundreds of our constituents came and watched from the Senate gallery. There were nearly 100 people still sitting in the gallery at 2:12 a.m. this morning as Senator MURPHY brought his filibuster to a close. Thousands and thousands and thou-

sands of constituents called Senate offices demanding that Congress do something to address this gun violence.

Senator MURPHY's filibuster took over social media. "Hold the floor" was the top-trending topic nationally and globally. Senator MURPHY got the world's attention and certainly America's attention, and I hope the attention of the Senate Republicans.

In the early morning hours, the Republican leader and I spoke. He indicated that he would commit to a vote on the Murphy-Booker-Feinstein legislation to expand background checks and the Feinstein measure to close the terror loophole, preventing terrorists from walking into a gun store and buying all the firearms and explosives they want.

Why the passion by Senator MURPHY? Why? Could it have been the deaths of these little babies by some madman walking into Sandy Hook Elementary School? Of course it was. He has indicated that he can't get that out of his mind. He thinks about that every day—not 24 hours a day, but every day.

Why was CORY BOOKER here every minute of the time with Senator MURPHY? He was here because he lives in an area where people are killed—several a week. He gave one of the most passionate speeches on Tuesday in our caucus about holding a little boy who was shot in the head and died in his arms.

Senator SCHUMER, the third sponsor of this legislation, has been involved in gun issues since his early days in the House of Representatives. DIANNE FEINSTEIN—doing something about guns has been on her portfolio since she was a member of the board of supervisors of San Francisco. She became mayor as a result of the mayor being murdered. DIANNE FEINSTEIN led the charge a number of years ago to pass legislation on this floor when filibusters were not the way we did things around here, stopping every piece of legislation from going through. She persevered and

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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passed legislation to stop the easily obtainable assault weapons.

Does anybody think these assault weapons are good for hunting or protecting your family? This evil man that went into this nightclub in Orlando, FL—I don't personally know how many clips he had, but he had at least three 30-bullet clips. It took less than 3 seconds to shoot those victims. They were all gone in less than 3 seconds. If you are really not very good at it, it takes a couple of seconds to reload. So to fire off 90 shells would take 10 or 15 seconds if that was what he wanted to do.

DIANNE FEINSTEIN was right many years ago, and she is still right today. These assault weapons are not for the American people's entertainment, and they shouldn't be, but the NRA and Gun Owners of America love to sell these guns. We are going to vote on the Murphy-Booker-Schumer legislation to expand background checks, and we are going to vote on the Feinstein measure to close up terrorist loopholes to prevent a terrorist from walking into a gun store and buying all of the firearms and explosives they want. These are commonsense safety measures that the American people overwhelmingly support.

According to a December poll—December, September, October, August, it doesn't matter; it has been this way for years—almost 90 percent of Americans are in favor of expanding background checks. Ask anyone: Do we want a criminal or someone who has problems with their mental capacity to purchase a gun? Of course we don't. That is what background checks are all about. More than 80 percent of Americans want to close the so-called terror loophole preventing suspected terrorists from purchasing firearms, and legislation by Senator FEINSTEIN will cover just that.

I am glad that there will be votes, and I appreciate that very much. I shouldn't have to be appreciative about something that should just happen, but I am because around here we don't get votes on a lot of stuff.

I want to be very clear: It is not enough for Republicans to simply let us vote. Democrats can't pass the gun safety legislation by ourselves. We are the minority party as a result of the elections 2 years ago. It will change, and there will be a new majority in the first part of next year, but for now we are in the minority in this Chamber and Republicans must join us in order for those measures to pass. That will not happen if the Republicans continue to take their orders—and I mean orders—from the National Rifle Association and Gun Owners of America. We need Americans to understand that we need Republicans to follow Senator MURPHY's and Senator FEINSTEIN's lead and show courage in standing up to the gun lobby.

In the aftermath of the worst shooting in modern American history, our constituents elected us for help. They want to feel safe, and they want to be

safe. We can help provide that safety by closing the terror loophole and expanding background checks today and do it immediately. I hope Republicans will do the right thing and work with us to protect Americans from this gun violence. We need gun safety, not more guns. We must take a stand in the Senate and say enough is enough.

CELEBRATING JUNETEENTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this Sunday, June 19, is Juneteenth, a day we celebrate each year as a reminder that liberty and justice must reach all corners of our great Nation.

On June 19, 1865, nearly 2½ years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and more than 2 months after General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, a number of slaves in Galveston, TX, learned that the institution of slavery was no longer. There was no media, no press, no Internet, and no television at that time.

As we celebrate Juneteenth, I hope we take a moment to reflect on what it represents, the celebration of liberty and freedom for all Americans. Sadly, 151 years later, we have much work to do to ensure that all citizens are treated equally, no matter their race, religion, national origin, or whom they love.

We must ensure all of our citizens can assert their right to vote. Our Nation continues to struggle to make the ballot box more accessible for those who continue to be disfranchised in a number of areas, including ex-felons. They have done their time. Let them be a part of society. We want them to come back and be citizens and a part of the network of our great communities. Let them vote.

Here in our Nation's capital, Washington, DC, more than 600,000 residents in the District of Columbia—that is how many live here—continue to face taxation without representation. I have been here a long time, and I have always supported Statehood for DC. Why not?

As we celebrate Juneteenth this year, I hope that all Americans will look at the example Lincoln set when he sent troops to Galveston, TX, which is, no matter who you are or where you may be, this Nation is a land of liberty and justice for all.

Let the record reflect, I understand protocol here, and I was told that Senator MCCONNELL may be a little bit late. So I was told to go forward.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of debate only until noon today.

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

FIGHTING TERRORISM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, over the past few months, terrorists inspired or directed by ISIL have committed mass murder in Brussels, in California, and in France. When ISIL issued a call for lone-wolf attacks against the West during Ramadan, its followers heard the call.

This week, just outside Paris, more innocent lives were ended brutally by a terrorist who broadcasted news of the attack over the Internet.

This week in Orlando, Americans were targeted deliberately and taken forever from their families by a terrorist ISIL has claimed is "one of the soldiers of the caliphate."

It is clear from his behavior that this was not a random act of violence. This was a calculated act of terror.

As CIA Director John Brennan testified this morning before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: Islamic State militants are "training and attempting to deploy operatives for further attacks on the West." He also called this terrorist attack an assault on the values of openness and tolerance that define the United States as a nation.

Well, of course, he is absolutely right. It throws into stark relief the troubling reality we now face.

ISIL is not the JV team. ISIL is certainly not "contained." ISIL is the personification of evil in the world, and it will continue to bring tragedy after tragedy to our own doorsteps until it is defeated.

President Obama needs to finally lead a campaign to accomplish this objective or, at the very least, prepare the military and intelligence community to help the next President do it if he won't. This is his primary responsibility in the wake of this terrorist tragedy.

Here is ours. Here is what we need to do. Our responsibility in the Senate is to make a choice: work on serious solutions to prevent terrorist attacks or use the Senate as a campaign studio—as a campaign studio. Yesterday, the FBI Director came to deliver a critical briefing on Orlando and explain what is needed to prevent similar terrorist attacks in the future. Senate Republicans attended and asked serious questions. A rather significant group of Senate Democrats skipped it—skipped the briefing all together—for a campaign talkathon out here on the Senate floor, which also prevented us from going forward on the bill, offering amendments and votes.

It is hard to think of a clearer contrast between serious work for solutions on the one hand and endless partisan campaigning on the other.

Doing what we can to fight terror beyond our borders and to prevent attacks within our border were priorities of ours well before the terrorist attack