

so because not only are the victims victimized, but it sends a message of terror and hate throughout a community to all people who share characteristics with the victim or who love people who share the characteristics of the victim. They are terrifying, and they deserve, as we have chosen to do in the United States, to be treated very specifically as hate crimes.

It is only recently that the United States recognized hate crimes against members of the LGBT community or against women or people with disabilities with the passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

There are too many of these hate crimes in the news these days. We are still grieving the massive numbers of dead and injured in Orlando. It was not all that long ago that Charleston had a mass murder in a church. The African-American community was targeted. In Wisconsin, in another place of worship, in a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, WI, a gunman came and targeted the congregation during Sunday worship.

In America, hate crimes overall are declining. That is good news, and that says something about what we can do together when we pass strong laws and try to prevent these crimes, educate, and enforce our laws. But I am sad to share that while overall our hate crimes are declining, those against some groups—most notably Muslims and members of the LGBT community—are on the rise. LGBT people are more likely than any other group to be targeted for hate violence, and LGBT people of color, particularly transgender women of color, are at the very greatest risk.

The amendment I have offered, along with my colleagues, Senators MIKULSKI and HIRONO, would provide, in the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill, additional funding for the Civil Rights Division to focus on hate crimes prevention on the one hand but also enforcement and prosecution of those crimes when they occur. This amendment will provide important tools to the Justice Department that they need to combat discrimination and crimes of hate in communities across the country. I am pleased to have a large number of human rights organizations in this country endorse this as an important step forward.

We need to take action. We need to do more to address terrorism, to address gun violence, and to address hate crimes. I urge my colleagues in the Senate to join me in calling for a vote on this amendment and supporting it when we get that opportunity.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ZIKA VIRUS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am on the floor to focus on some very frightening news we got late last week about the Zika virus, news that shows just how important it is that we get emergency funding to the President's desk right away.

Last week, three babies were born in the United States with birth defects linked to Zika. Three other pregnancies didn't make it to term as a result of this virus. As a mother and grandmother, my heart goes out to these families, and as a U.S. Senator, I am extremely frustrated that 4 months since President Obama first asked for a strong emergency funding package to respond to this frightening virus, Congress still has not sent anything to the President's desk because, unfortunately, the longer we wait to act, the more those numbers are going to grow.

In fact, Tom Frieden, Director of the CDC, has said in Puerto Rico alone, hundreds of babies could be born with birth defects related to Zika. There are already nearly 2,200 reported cases of Zika in the United States and the territories, and more than 400 expecting mothers are being monitored for possible infection.

Without question, this is a public health emergency. What makes it all the more frustrating is we have an agreement that could go to the President to be signed into law right away. While it shouldn't have taken so long, Senate Republicans did finally agree to work with us on a downpayment on the President's emergency funding proposal.

The agreement we have reached would give communities more resources for vector control. It would help accelerate development of a vaccine and, critically, provide much needed preventive health care, including family planning services, such as contraception, to families who ask for it.

This package has support from both sides of the aisle. All Senate Democrats and nearly half of Senate Republicans voted for it. It has now been a full month since that agreement passed in the Senate. Unfortunately, instead of acting on it, House Republicans chose to move to conference with their own underfunded, irresponsible proposal that offers just one-third of what is needed to combat this virus and drains much needed resources from the ongoing Ebola response effort.

With the health and well-being of women and babies on the line, now is not the time for nickel-and-diming. It is not the time for debates about taking from one health care priority to support another. This is the time to act because every infection prevented is a potential tragedy prevented, and there is no good reason why we cannot get a strong emergency funding proposal to the President's desk this week.

Families are looking to Congress for action on Zika. It is well past time that we delivered, and I hope we can

get this done without any further delay.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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.

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

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

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for a few moments before the gavel comes down at 12:30 p.m.

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

GUN VIOLENCE

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to speak about three amendments to this bill that I think would help keep America safe from gun violence. After so many tragedies, including the mass murder earlier this month in Orlando, this Chamber has had one opportunity after another to do something about the gun violence crisis, and last night was our most recent chance.

The American people are watching us, waiting to see what we will do, wondering if this time, after yet another mass shooting, after yet another hateful, angry person was able to have such easy access to a weapon of war to use it to quickly kill a crowd of innocent people—maybe this time the Senate would act.

But, no, this Chamber did nothing. The Senate didn't pass a single bill, not even a bill to prevent someone on the terror watch list from buying an illegal gun—not one. How many innocent people have to be killed by guns in this country before Congress is actually convinced to act?

The Senate failed the American people last night, and there is no other way to put it. We aren't listening to our constituents who are desperate for Congress to act.

This Chamber hasn't done anything to help keep the American people safe in the aftermath of so much violence. Every time a mass shooting happens somewhere in America—just like the one that occurred in Orlando—we hear the same calls for stronger, better, tougher laws. The American people overwhelmingly support them and nearly every time the gun industry and its powerful lobby do whatever they can do to block these bills to protect their own profits.

It is the same cycle over and over again. Someone with no business handling a powerful deadly weapon of war has easy access to that weapon and then uses it to kill many people—quickly. We have to make it harder for hateful, violent, radicalized people to get their hands on weapons of war. The only way to change this—the only way—is if Congress fulfills its responsibility to protect the American people

and pass new laws that help keep us safe.

I have three amendments, new amendments, that have not been voted on this session. They are three amendments that actually could keep more Americans free of gun violence.

First is a law enforcement bill. It is a bipartisan gun trafficking amendment which would finally make gun trafficking a Federal crime. One would assume that bringing weapons up I-95 and selling them out of the back of a truck to a gang member in New York City would be illegal, that it would be a Federal crime. It is not. It is not a Federal crime to do that.

This bill is called the Hadiya Pendleton and Nyasia Pryear-Yard Gun Trafficking and Crime Prevention Act. It is named after two teenage girls who lost their lives because of gun violence in their neighborhoods. They were playing with friends, minding their own business, and a stray bullet shot them both down. Nyasia was killed in Brooklyn. Hadiya was killed in Chicago. These were two young girls. I met Nyasia's parents. They do not understand why their daughter had to die.

Right now, there is no Federal law preventing someone from loading up a truck in Georgia, driving it up I-95, and reselling those weapons in a parking lot in Brooklyn to a gang member or other dangerous people who aren't eligible to buy guns anywhere else. This amendment would change that. It would give our law enforcement the tools they need to get illegal guns off the street and to prosecute those who are trafficking guns.

The second amendment I would offer would require weapons dealers to keep physical inventories. This is something law enforcement has asked for. Without accurate inventory, it is impossible for law enforcement to know whether illegal gun sales are taking place or even if weapons have been stolen from that store.

There are just a small number—a very small number—of bad gun dealers, but our law enforcement officials have a right to be able to find out who they are, why they are selling these weapons out of the back of their gun sales places and then selling them directly to criminals who drive them up I-95 and sell them to gang members in Brooklyn or the Bronx or in Harlem or in Buffalo.

The third amendment is also a law enforcement amendment, something asked for by law enforcement. It would allow the ATF to ban foreign imports of military-style weapons, which tend to be used in crimes.

Right now, many weapons with military-style features not intended for hunting, including those with high-capacity magazines and laser sights, are being dumped into the U.S. marketplace by foreign arms manufacturers. This amendment would help prevent those dangerous, military-style weapons from flooding our streets and ending up in the hands of criminals.

No one in America should have to go through his or her daily life in fear of an angry, radicalized citizen who can easily buy a weapon of war and use it on innocent Americans. All of these amendments would help law enforcement do their jobs—be able to find criminals who are trafficking weapons, be able to find that small percentage of bad gun dealers and shut them down, and make sure foreign companies aren't flooding our market with illegal military weapons. These three changes would make a difference. They would help our law enforcement community keep our communities safe.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:34 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 2578, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2578) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Shelby/Mikulski amendment No. 4685, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell (for McCain) amendment No. 4787 (to amendment No. 4685), to amend section 2709 of title 18, United States Code, to clarify that the Government may obtain a specified set of electronic communication transactional records under that section, and to make permanent the authority for individual terrorists to be treated as agents of foreign powers under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978.

McConnell motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Appropriations for a period of 14 days.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah, the President Pro Tempore.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to complete my remarks.

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

SOCIAL SECURITY TRUSTEES' REPORTS

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, a few weeks ago I came to the floor to discuss the situation surrounding President Obama's nominees to serve as

public trustees on the board of trustees for the various Social Security and Medicare trust funds. At that time, I noted that these nominations had become the center of a political firestorm. Sadly, that firestorm has continued in the weeks since I last spoke about this issue. While I have little desire to delve into what is a manufactured controversy, I do want to take some time to note how some events taking place this week should impact this particular debate.

Tomorrow, the Social Security and Medicare Boards of Trustees will release their annual reports, providing their assessment of the past, present, and projected future financial conditions of the trust funds. For decades, these reports have largely been devoid of politics, which is important because it allows policymakers and the general public to trust the numbers that are reported.

Currently, there are four senior Obama administration officials who serve as trustees on these various Boards. There are also two positions for public trustee—one from each party according to the law—that are currently vacant. While it is not unheard of for the Boards to issue their reports without confirmed public trustees in place, this administration has issued more trustees' reports with vacancies in the public trustee positions than any other administration.

In a recent article in the Huffington Post, Senators WARREN, SCHUMER, and WHITEHOUSE put forth some serious allegations of political tampering with recent Social Security trustees' reports, stemming, according to their arguments, from the supposed undue influence of one particular public trustee. That trustee, Dr. Charles Blahous, has been renominated by President Obama.

Specifically, these Senators alleged in their article that, due solely to the presence of this single public trustee on the Board, nefarious assumptions were somehow inserted into the trustees' report analysis, leading the report to overstate the financial challenges facing Social Security. My good friend, Senator SCHUMER of New York, echoed the very same allegations in a recent Finance Committee markup where we favorably reported President Obama's nominees for public trustee. And, I emphasize, these are President Obama's nominees.

In the words of these prominent and outspoken Senators, the 2014 Social Security trustees' report, "curiously incorporated a number of assumptions playing up the potential of future insolvency of the program—a key talking point in the right-wing war on Social Security." Moreover, according to those Senators, the assumptions "were so troublesome that the independent Chief Actuary for Social Security took the unprecedented step of writing a public statement of actuarial opinion disagreeing with the report." They go on to say that "after similarly questionable elements appeared in the 2015