

could this week. After these two bills, his promises to working people are in tatters.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I thank the leader for his remarks, especially with respect to the new addition of the healthcare bill. It is a disaster for Americans. It is immoral. It doesn't work. It doesn't address any of the problems that remain in the underlying healthcare system. Hopefully the Senate can rise above it and work together to do something better for the American people.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. President, I rise today because tomorrow President Trump is going to become the first President in about 30 years to address the National Rifle Association. He will address the NRA tomorrow, and I thought it would be appropriate to come down to the floor to talk a little bit about the epidemic of gun violence in the context of this speech.

A lot of us were thrown off by the tone of the President's inaugural address. It was very different from a lot of inaugurals we have heard—not uplifting, really. There was much more of a dark, dystopian picture of America, one that was frankly unfamiliar to a lot of us. Maybe the most memorable line from the President's inaugural address was that after describing this dystopia that he believed most persons lived in, he said: “This American carnage stops right here and it stops right now.”

I wanted to come down to the floor today to talk about that idea of American carnage, what it really is. I mean, this is American carnage. It is 31,000 Americans, mostly young men and women, who die every year from gunshot wounds—2,600 a month, 86 a day. That is an enormous number. There is no other country in the first world, in the industrialized world, that has numbers like this. They happen for a variety of reasons. Two-thirds of those are suicides. That is an epidemic in and of itself. A lot of them are homicides. A number are accidental shootings. But America has this problem uniquely. There is no other industrialized competitor where this happens. That is the face of American carnage.

President Trump is going to address the National Rifle Association tomorrow—an organization that is, frankly, dedicated to continuing this real carnage that is happening in America. You can't explain these numbers through mental illness. There is just as much mental illness in all of our economic competitors around the world. You can't explain this through exposure to violent content on TV or movies or video games. There are plenty other countries that have rates that are much lower than this and the kids see that same content. You can't explain this away by law enforcement. We spend an awful lot of money put-

ting cops on the streets. What we have in this country that is different from any other nation is loose and lax gun laws that allow for criminals and people with serious mental illness to get their hands on weapons that are more powerful than those that are available in other nations. That was the case in Sandy Hook, too—enormous destruction in a short amount of time.

I want to talk a little bit today about two things—first, about the real scope of this carnage, and second, about the real story of gun owners.

The President is going to go talk to the NRA—a group that is increasingly wildly out of step with gun owners not just in my State but across the country.

First, I want to talk about this idea of carnage in America—the central focus of the President's inaugural address. I commend to my colleagues an article that appeared earlier this week—maybe late last week—called “What Bullets Do to Bodies.”

We don't like to talk about that a lot because today the popular image of a gun is almost divorced from its actual function. People collect them. People buy them in order to convey a certain image or lifestyle. People certainly have weapons to protect themselves, but very few Americans actually understand what these guns are designed to do. They are designed to kill people. They are designed to gravely hurt people. In particular, the AR-15 and AR-15 variants are dedicated to killing people as fast and as gruesomely as possible.

This article, “What Bullets Do to Bodies,” follows a trauma surgeon in Philadelphia. I want to read a few paragraphs from this article. It says:

The main thing that people get wrong when they imagine being shot is that they think the bullet itself is the problem. The lump of metal lodged in the body. The action-movie hero is shot in the stomach; he limps to a safe house; he takes off his shirt, removes the bullet with a tweezer, and now he is better. This is not trauma surgery. Trauma surgery is about fixing the damage the bullet causes as it rips through muscle and vessel and organ and bone.

The bullet can stay in the body just fine. But the bleeding has to be contained, even if the patient is awake and screaming because a tube has just been pushed into his chest cavity through a deep incision without the aid of general anesthesia (no time; the patient gets an injection of lidocaine). And if the heart has stopped, it must be restarted before the brain dies from a lack of oxygen.

It is not a gentle process. Some of the surgeon's tools look like things you'd buy at Home Depot. In especially serious cases, 70 times just at Temple last year, the surgeons will crack a chest right there in the trauma area. The technical name is a thoracotomy. A patient comes in unconscious, maybe in cardiac arrest, and Goldberg has to get into the cavity to see what is going on. With a scalpel, she makes an incision below the nipple and cuts 6 to 10 inches down the torso, through the skin, through the layer of fatty tissue, through the muscles. Into the opening she inserts a rib-spreader, a large metal instrument with a hand crank. It pulls open the ribs and locks them into place so the surgeons can reach the inner organs. Every so often, she may have to break the patient's

sternum—a bilateral thoracotomy. This is done with a tool called a Lebsche knife. It's a metal rod with a sharp blade on the end that hooks under the breastbone.

The surgeon in this case is Dr. Goldberg.

Goldberg takes out a silver hammer. It looks like—a hammer. She hits the top of a Lebsche knife with the hammer until it cuts through the sternum. “You never forget that sound,” one of the Temple nurses told me. “It's like a tink, tink, tink. And it sounds like metal, but you know it's bone. You know like when you see on television, when people are working on the railroad, hammering the ties?”

“It's just the worst,” one nurse told the writer of this story. “They're breaking bone. And everybody—everybody—has its own kind of quality. And sometimes there's a big guy you'll hear, and it's the echo—the sound that comes out of the room. There's some times when it doesn't affect me, and there are some times when it makes my knees shake, when I know what's going on in there.”

The article goes on to talk about what happens to those who survive.

The price of survival is often lasting disability. Some patients, often young guys, wind up carrying around colostomy bags the rest of their lives.

They go to the bathroom through a stoma, a hole in their abdomen.

“They're so angry,” Goldberg said. “They should be angry.” Some are paralyzed by bullets that sever the spinal column. Some lose limbs entirely.

AR-15s are designed by the military in order to kill people even more quickly so that you don't ever have the chance of going to an emergency room. That is what happened at Sandy Hook. What is remarkable is that not a single one of those kids ever made it to a trauma surgeon. All of those kids died on the spot—20 of them.

You sort of have to think about bullets like running fingers through the water: When you run your fingers through the water, it causes ripples, it causes disruptions in the water around them. Well, a bullet coming out of an AR-15 rifle moves three times faster than a bullet coming out of a handgun. So just look what happens when you run your hand through water. You run it through at this speed versus running it through at that speed. The ripples and the disruptions get bigger, right? And they spread further. That is what happens when the bullet from an AR-15 enters the body of anyone, but it certainly does something different when it enters the body of a 6-year-old. One trauma surgeon said that when it hits bone, it likely will just turn it to dust. If a bullet from an AR-15 hits the liver, well, this surgeon says that “the liver looks like a Jell-o mold has been dropped on the floor.”

I know some people think AR-15s are fun. They are fun to show off to your friends. They are neat to fire. But that is carnage. A little kid's bones turning to dust in the middle of a first grade classroom is not sport; that is American carnage. Do you know what? A lot

of gun owners get this. A lot of gun owners understand that this has gotten out of hand.

There was a poll that was conducted just about 2 weeks ago of gun owners across the country. Eighty percent of them support requiring a background check before you buy a gun. That is pretty similar to the number you would find when you ask gun owners and nongun owners, but the gun owners in my State were frankly just as shocked and horrified at what happened in that classroom at Sandy Hook as my nongun owners were.

Gun owners in this country increasingly are not represented by the National Rifle Association, the group Donald Trump is going to go talk to this week, because the National Rifle Association, which claims to be speaking for gun owners, opposes background checks. They don't want a single additional gun sale to go through a background check. They are just fine with the fact that almost half of all guns sales in this country occur without a background check, meaning criminals and people with serious mental illness can get a gun so easily in this country that they don't even have to make much of an effort.

Eighty-six percent of gun owners in this poll support prohibiting anyone who is convicted of stalking or domestic abuse from buying a gun. The NRA opposes that. Eighty-five percent of gun owners support prohibiting those who are on the Federal terror watch list or no fly list from buying a gun. The NRA opposes that.

Eighty-eight percent of gun owners believe you should have a permit to carry a concealed handgun in a public place. The NRA opposes that. So it is no secret that 67 percent of gun owners feel the NRA used to be an organization dedicated to gun safety, but it has been overtaken by lobbyists. Fifty percent of gun owners feel the NRA does not represent their interests.

When President Trump goes to talk to the NRA tomorrow, I hope he understands they are not advocating for the views of gun owners in my State, they are not advocating for the gun owners in most all of your States. They are a radical political organization. They have to start answering for why they don't square with the views of gun owners.

Finally, here is a story of American carnage. Keon Huff, Jr., was 15 years old when he was shot on March 17 of this year in Hartford, CT. Here is what Keon said to one of his mentors in the North End of Hartford. He said: "I'm either going to go on to college and play basketball or I'm going to die on the streets."

Can you imagine there are kids who think that in this country? Can you imagine there are kids in this country who think their choices are to go play basketball in college or die on the streets of Connecticut? Most Americans cannot imagine a little kid saying that, but Keon thought that. He was

right—because he was a great basketball player. He lived at the North End YMCA. He devoted all of his energy to basketball. He wanted to be the next Michael Jordan. If you told him otherwise, he just did not want to hear it. He was committed to playing basketball in college, but it was the other one that got him. He died in the hallway of his apartment complex when he was shot in the head on Friday, March 17. He died on the streets of Hartford. He did not end up going to college to play basketball. He is just one of 2,600 a month who die from guns, 31,000 a year, 86 a day.

A lot of gun owners in this country get that. They understand the flow of illegal weapons into our streets. They understand there are some weapons out there that are way too powerful that do those terrible things to bodies when the bullet enters.

When Donald Trump talks to the NRA, I hope he takes them on and asks why they refuse to stand up for policies that will end this American carnage that the President talked about in his speech and why they will not start actually representing the views of American gun owners.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SUL-LIVAN). The Senator from Wyoming.

FOREIGN POLICY

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, people around the country know the world continues to be a very dangerous place. It became more dangerous over the past 8 years. I believe that is particularly related to what I saw as unwise and unsound policies by the Obama administration, certainly when it comes to foreign policy.

Every President's foreign policy should secure America's national interests and demonstrate America's leadership around the world. That was not the case under President Obama. The last President and his team followed a policy, what has been called strategic patience—strategic patience—when dealing with hostile countries all around the world: Iran, North Korea.

Any time there was a belligerent, aggressive, cunning dictator on the move, President Obama's position was strategic patience. It was a terrible approach—a terrible approach for us in dealing with reckless regimes.

I always thought President Obama was completely focused on signing a nuclear deal with Iran, not because it actually was a great deal but maybe because it might reflect well on his legacy. I thought he wanted a deal so badly that he ended up getting a deal that was a bad deal. Well, as part of the deal, the former President accepted Iranian demands—and he accepted all of them—to lift an arms embargo that the United Nations had put into place.

This was an embargo that said that Iran was not supposed to be selling weapons to other countries. The embargo was going to disappear in 5 years, whether Iran complied with it or not. We already know Iran has no in-

tention of playing by the rules. They haven't played by the rules all the way through. Last week, the Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, said Iran has already been violating the embargo. That is why I believe they have no intention of playing by the rules.

The Secretary of Defense tells us they are not playing by the rules now. He said we have seen Iranian-supplied missiles—our Secretary of Defense said: We have seen Iranian-supplied missiles being fired into Saudi Arabia by the rebels in Yemen. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson was even more clear. He said last week that Iran is "the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism."

He said that Iran is "responsible for intensifying multiple conflicts"—"intensifying the conflicts and undermining U.S. interests in countries such as Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and Lebanon." Now, this is a direct result of President Obama spending 8 years being strategically patient. It is the result of sending the signal that Iran would be rewarded for its bad behavior.

So let's look at what happened last year when the Obama administration was bragging about the nuclear deal—and they were high-fiving, bragging about the deal.

Just when the deal went into effect, President Obama arranged to send to Iran \$1.7 billion in cash—\$1.7 billion is an astonishingly large amount of money. It is a million and a million and a million—it is 1,700 piles of \$1 million. Remember—try to visualize this. You may remember the news reports about pallets of cash stacked up going to Iran. President Obama sent \$400 million as a downpayment.

Within 24 hours, the Iranians agreed to release a group of Americans whom they had been holding hostage. The Obama White House said it was not a ransom payment to free the hostages. The Obama administration actually thought the American people were naive enough to believe it was just a coincidence in timing. Well, you can bet the Iranians did not believe it was a coincidence because they actually said it was not a coincidence.

The Iranians described the money as for the release of the hostages. We know from experience that the Iranians see hostage-taking as a valid way of conducting their own foreign policy. Right now, North Korea also has taken hostages—three American hostages written about today in the papers.

We know from experience the Iranians see hostage-taking as a valid way to conduct foreign policy, and they have also gotten the message, at least from the previous administration, that it can be a very profitable policy as well. President Obama played right into their hands. There is something else President Obama did that we just learned about, and that is why I wanted to speak about this today.

Politico had a major expose on Monday of this week. The headline was: "Obama's hidden Iran deal giveaway"—