

changes. But reasonable people disagree sometimes, and I believe this body will come together.

I hope we get some Democratic votes because I think that in their hearts, some of our Democratic friends want to vote for this bill. They do. We will see whether or not they do, but I believe they do. But we are going to pass this legislation, and the American people are going to be better off. It is not going to add to the deficit. I would not vote for this legislation if I thought it would hurt us long term in terms of our deficit.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield to my colleague from Connecticut.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SANDY HOOK MASS SHOOTING

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am on the floor this afternoon to mark 5 years since the unthinkable—since 20 6-year-olds and 7-year-olds and 6 of their educators were killed in an elementary school in Connecticut. It changed the town of Newtown. It changed this country in the way that we think about gun violence. And it certainly changed me. I want to offer a few thoughts today as we once again memorialize those beautiful children whose lives were cut far, far too short.

It is easy to spend today—especially those of us who come from Connecticut, who are very intimately connected to the tragedy and to those families—drowning in sadness. There is really no way to conceive of what it is like as a parent to lose a child that young, in that manner, in 5 short minutes in a hail of bullets emanating from a tactical assault weapon. Twenty kids who had just walked into their classroom, bright and cheery, were gone.

It is easy to hang your head, thinking of all of the things that haven't happened. I have been down to this floor over 50 times, often at my wit's end, raising my voice at my colleagues in frustration at our quiet and unintentional endorsement of the slaughter that happens in this country because we haven't passed a single piece of legislation trying to make sense of our Nation's gun laws. In fact, to the extent we have made changes in gun laws, it has compounded the problem, not remedied it.

But I want to spend my brief time here today not focusing on the sadness of today—it is there; it is inescapable—and not focusing on what we haven't done but focusing on so many miracles, big ones and small ones, that have occurred in and around the lives of those who have been affected in Newtown, CT, over the last 5 years.

First, there are these individual miracles that have happened within these families. Again, very few people understand the kind of crippling pain that comes with this loss. While these families will never be the same, they have found ways to rebound. They have

found ways to still capture joy in their lives. Some have added to their numbers by welcoming new children into their family since then. They have rediscovered passions. They have made sure that the surviving children—the siblings—have been able to live lives of optimism rather than live lives of perpetual fear.

I have gotten to know so many of these families. The parents and the kids are now close, personal friends of mine. Watching the rebirth of these families instills a sense of faith in the human spirit that is hard to explain. Those are small miracles, but they are important ones to remember on this 5-year anniversary.

The miracles also come in ways that lives have been changed and saved through the efforts that have sprung forth out of this tragedy. So many of the families joined together with their friends and started up small charitable organizations in the wake of the Sandy Hook shooting, trying to find a way to take the beauty of these kids and transfer it to others. They are almost too numerable to mention.

The Ana Grace Project gives out a scholarship every year at Western Connecticut State University for incoming freshmen who are interested in studying music because for her whole life, Ana Grace was surrounded by music.

The Vicki Soto Memorial Fund donates five books every year to every K-6 classroom in her hometown of Stratford. She was one of the teachers—heroes of that day. Kids have the opportunity to read and to learn to love reading—which is what she taught to these kindergarten kids—because of her foundation.

The Charlotte Helen Bacon Foundation pays for therapy dogs for kids and families in need, reflecting Charlotte's love of dogs.

The Catherine Violet Hubbard Foundation opened an animal sanctuary on 32 acres in Newtown to help animals that had been rescued from abusive or neglectful environments because of Catherine's love of animals.

The list goes on and on. These are small, beautiful miracles that are happening all across Connecticut and all across the country in trying to honor the memory of these kids and their educators.

Then there are miracles that have happened in the context of public policy. A year ago this week, I sat at the White House with a few of the Sandy Hook parents, quietly in the back of an auditorium, as President Obama signed into law the 2016 Mental Health Reform Act, which would not have become law without the input and activism of the Sandy Hook parents and many other survivors of gun violence.

Our gun violence problem is not a mental health problem, *per se*. There is no inherent connection between mental illness and gun violence. But there is no mistaking that the shooter in Newtown—as has been the case in so many other of these mass slaughters—had

deep mental health problems that went untreated. There have been public policy victories.

So today, on the 5-year anniversary, I hope that my friends here will celebrate these small but meaningful miracles that have happened over the last 5 years, and I hope that you will be reminded that we cannot take one day or one moment for granted. Those moms and dads who sent their kids to school that morning never imagined that would be the last time they would be able to interact with their children. So none of us should think that we will have another chance to say what we want to say to somebody we care about. None of us should think we can put off saying “I love you” for another moment. Those small things that we do for each other matter desperately.

I think about one story that I will leave you with from that morning. Daniel Barden is one of the young boys killed in that elementary school. His older brother went to school at a different time than he did. He would get up earlier and go down to the bus stop earlier than Daniel would, so they normally wouldn't really see each other in the morning. For some reason, the morning of the shooting at Sandy Hook, Daniel got up earlier than he normally did. He saw that his brother was at the end of the driveway waiting for the bus. He ran out of the house and down the driveway to say goodbye to his brother—goodbye for the day. It was just a small, tiny act of kindness that Daniel thought probably would be forgotten by his brother by the end of that day, but it has meant the world to that family, the idea that Daniel got the chance to walk down the driveway and say goodbye to his brother before he went to school that day and never came back.

Don't ever think you will have another chance to say what you want to say to a loved one, to someone who means something in your life.

A few months ago, one of the Sandy Hook parents arrived unexpectedly in my office. I got word from the front desk that she was there. She just wanted to stop in for a few minutes. I said: Of course, send her back. This mom had lost her child. I have come to know her very well. She burst into my office and she flung her arms around me and she whispered into my ear: Keep going. She unclasped her arms and looked at me and said: That is all I wanted to come and tell you. After a few pleasantries, she walked out the door.

Keep going. That is what Newtown has done over the last 5 years. That is what those families have found the courage to do over the last half a decade.

For those of us who believe the laws of this country must change in order to protect kids like those who lost their lives in Sandy Hook, it is what we do. As we mark 5 years since the violence at Sandy Hook Elementary School, we keep going.

I yield the floor.

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

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

Under the previous order, all postcloture time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Ho nomination?

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 317 Ex.]

YEAS—53

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Portman
Boozman	Grassley	Risch
Burr	Hatch	Roberts
Capito	Heitkamp	Rounds
Cassidy	Heller	Rubio
Collins	Hoeven	Sasse
Corker	Inhofe	Scott
Cornyn	Isakson	Shelby
Cotton	Johnson	Strange
Crapo	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cruz	Lankford	Thune
Daines	Lee	Tillis
Donnelly	McCaskill	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	

NAYS—43

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Reed
Bennet	Harris	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hassan	Schatz
Booker	Heinrich	Schumer
Brown	Hirono	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaine	Stabenow
Cardin	King	Tester
Carper	Klobuchar	Udall
Casey	Leahy	Van Hollen
Coons	Markey	Warner
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Warren
Duckworth	Merkley	Whitehouse
Durbin	Murphy	Wyden
Feinstein	Nelson	
Franken	Peters	

NOT VOTING—4

Cochran	McCain
Manchin	Murray

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Utah.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for 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.

NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, earlier today, the FCC voted to reverse a major impediment to a free and open internet—the title II internet regulations that were imposed under President Obama in 2015. These regulations are commonly referred to as net neutrality. For the sake of convenience, that is what I will call it.

I want to congratulate FCC Chairman Ajit Pai for his brave accomplishment today. He has fought for what he knows is right, and he has done so in the face of tremendous pressure and, at times, overwhelming opposition. I also want to use this opportunity to correct the record about what it is that the FCC has actually accomplished.

There is an astonishing amount of misinformation about this issue, and there is a lot of hyperbole surrounding it. If you believe the passionate voices defending these regulations, then you may believe that the FCC just jeopardized the entire internet as we know and love it and sometimes loathe it. These activists tend to paint a scary vision of America without net neutrality—a vision in which large internet service providers prey on ordinary consumers and startup businesses, a vision in which internet access would be rationed or bundled up in very expensive, unaffordable packages. One viral tweet even suggested that Google would start charging two bucks apiece for internet searches.

These are falsehoods, every one of them, and they will be exposed as such in the coming days, weeks, and months, when the internet hums right along just like usual and skyscrapers in all of our major cities remain standing. In the wake of that, we are going to look back at these dire predictions, these mere hysterics, like the Y2K bug or the Mayan apocalypse of 2012. In the present, these exaggerations have real-world consequences that go far above and beyond scaring the public.

In the last 6 months, Chairman Pai and his family have been attacked in the grossest and most unacceptable terms. Even his children have been singled out for intimidation. These kinds of attacks have absolutely no place in our public discourse. Why don't we tone down the rhetoric and see if we can get to the truth about net neutrality. We can start with a little background.

In 2015, the Democratic-controlled FCC issued the so-called open internet

order. This order made dramatic changes to how the internet is classified for purposes of Federal regulation.

Until 2015, broadband internet was classified as an information service. As such, it was subject to light-touch regulations that allowed innovators to build without seeking permission from the Federal Government. This classification reflected common sense, and it reflected the intent of Congress.

The internet is a fast-moving information superhighway. If slow-moving government regulators had gotten involved decades ago, it could have inhibited innovation—the same kind of innovation that keeps service fast and keeps prices low for all Americans.

Not only was this a commonsense arrangement, it facilitated a virtual renaissance of innovation and discovery in this increasingly important part of our economy. This renaissance gave us things like smartphones, ridesharing, and super-fast fiberoptic internet services. It gave us 3G, 4G, and then, soon, 5G wireless service. This period also gave us Twitter. One could argue that maybe this wasn't all good but mostly good.

Overall, the light-touch regulatory arrangement works pretty well for ordinary users, big companies, and entrepreneurs who are just starting out in their garages. Contrary to net neutrality's most aggressive defenders, the internet of 2014 was not some sort of hopeless hellscape; it was actually pretty awesome.

The FCC threatened all of that in the early weeks of 2015 when it reclassified broadband internet as a "telecommunications service." This innocuous-sounding change subjected the internet to a whole host of regulations that were originally meant for New Deal-era telephone monopolies like Ma Bell. In essence, the government imposed 1930s-style regulations on 21st-century technology. This outdated arrangement has worked about as well as one might expect. Broadband internet investment has fallen significantly since the net neutrality regulations were proposed in 2011. Dr. George Ford of the Phoenix Center estimates that between 2011 and 2015, just the threat of internet regulation scared off \$200 billion in investment.

Since the regulations were imposed in 2015, broadband internet investment has declined by 5.6 percent. That is billions of lost dollars over just 2 years. As Chairman Pai has noted, this is the first ever decline in broadband investment outside of a recession, and this recession just happens to be self-imposed. It may not seem like a big deal to you that government is squeezing out billions in internet investment, but it hurts you and it hurts your fellow citizens in material ways, in ways that might not always be obvious. Less investment means less fiber optic cable, fewer towers, and fewer wi-fi hotspots. This translates into spottier coverage and slower speeds for Americans, especially those living on the periphery of