



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 164

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018

No. 36

## House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Thursday, March 1, 2018, at 1:30 p.m.

## Senate

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2018

The Senate met at 12:45 p.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.

Almighty God, we praise and thank You for the gift of this wonderful day. Your wondrous works can be seen in the world around us. Even in the storms of life, You keep us steady and fill us with Your peace.

Continue to use our lawmakers for Your glory. Make them people who live to honor Your Name, Lord, give them strong minds, brave hearts, true faith, and ready hands. Make them willing to stand for right though the Heavens fall. Challenge them to become salt and light to their generation, daring more boldly and venturing more widely to ensure that Your will is done on Earth even as it is done in Heaven.

And Lord, we thank You for the life and legacy of Your servant, Evangelist Billy Graham.

We pray in Your great 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.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

### GUN SAFETY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, yesterday, I met with a group of survivors from the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, FL. Two weeks after losing classmates, friends, and teachers, these kids have not given themselves over to grief or cynicism. They organized and resolved to change their country. They went to Tallahassee. They traveled to Washington. They are committed, and they are inspiring.

We just went to the observance of Billy Graham's death in the Capitol Rotunda, and a man of the cloth probably would have said that instead of cursing the darkness, these kids are lighting a candle, which is a beautiful thing to do.

As I was sitting with them, I remembered meeting with the young people who survived the shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando. I remember sitting with parents of the kindergartners and first graders killed at Sandy Hook Elementary. I still ache for them and their parents, parents who had presents stashed under the Christmas tree that were never opened. Photos of those beautiful children still sit on my desk.

All of them—the students of Stoneman Douglas, parents from Newtown, parents of the victims in Orlando, Las Vegas, Columbine, Charleston, and everyday gun violence in cities and towns all across our country—all of them are calling on us to act. The slow-motion massacre of American children must end. The time has come to make meaningful changes to our laws to keep Americans safe from the epidemic of gun violence.

Let me tell you, the students of Stoneman Douglas will not stop until we achieve meaningful change. They know small measures will not get the job done. That is why they told me, every one of them: The Fix NICS bill is not close to enough of what we need to do. Fix NICS has wide support in this Chamber. I am a cosponsor. But it is just the first tiny step that addresses one specific issue. We have a whole host of other issues to address, not one.

It is true that the records of NICS need to be fixed, but it is also true that we need to close the gun show loophole. It is also true that we need to make sure online sales go through background checks so that felons or those adjudicated as mentally ill or spousal abusers can't get guns. Over 90 percent of America agrees with that. But our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are so afraid of the NRA that they can't even embrace universal background checks, which 90 percent of America addresses. Special interest lobbying—the kind of thing President Trump campaigned against, the NRA is doing it. The NRA is doing it.

We need to stop writing bills that address only the last shooting and start

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



Printed on recycled paper.

S1257

making laws that prevent the next one. When you have a sick patient, you don't just treat one symptom; you cure the disease. That is what universal background checks will do. Fix NICS would be a good thing to do, but it is a tiny step when we need a giant leap. It can't be the only thing we do. In fact, the only reason it hasn't cleared this Chamber already is that the Republican Senator from Utah objected to it. Such is the vice grip that the ideologues from the gun lobby have on the entire Republican Party. They are so against what America wants. They are so against what rank and file Republicans want. Even on something as limited as Fix NICS, the gun groups find a way to get in the way.

I believe the priority of this Chamber should be to pass universal background checks. That would accomplish what Fix NICS does and a lot more. President Trump has said that he would push "strongly comprehensive background checks" in the wake of Parkland. We Democrats are calling on him today to keep his word. We sent him a letter asking him to support existing legislation, bipartisan legislation, to close the loopholes that allow anyone to purchase a gun at a gun show or on the internet without a background check. These loopholes make no sense. Leaving these loopholes unclosed would be as if we checked someone's ID at the liquor store but not at the bar. That is what you could say about Fix NICS. It would be as if we checked someone's ID at the liquor store but not at the bar. We should have the same checks across the board.

Today, I call on President Trump to come out in support of legislation that would close dangerous loopholes in our background check system. The NRA vehemently opposes that, but I say to President Trump: Show some leadership, buck the NRA. They are way out of touch with the American people, with gun owners, and rank and file Republicans. I say to the President: Show some leadership, buck the NRA, endorse these policies, and you can finally break the gridlock and get something meaningful done.

#### RUSSIA'S INTERFERENCE WITH AMERICAN DEMOCRACY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, there is one other matter. I know my colleagues from North Carolina are waiting, and I salute them for being here in praise of a former member who just passed from their State, Billy Graham.

Yesterday, the commander of the U.S. Cyber Command, ADM Michael Rogers, testified that Putin's efforts to interfere with American democracy have not abated since the 2016 election and likely have intensified. According to several reports, Kremlin-linked bots continue to stoke political divisions in the United States via misinformation on social media. Here is what Admiral Rogers said:

President Putin has clearly come to the conclusion that there's little price to pay and that therefore [he thinks] 'I can continue this activity.' Clearly what we have done hasn't been enough.

He is absolutely right. It is extraordinary, confounding, and dangerous how little the Trump administration is doing about Putin's campaign to undermine our grand democracy. President Trump refused to punish Putin after he took office, despite the consensus view of 17 American intelligence agencies that Putin interfered in our elections. President Trump has still refused to fully implement the package of sanctions passed by this Congress with only five dissenting votes combined in both the House and Senate, two here and three there. Yesterday, when my friend, the Senator from Rhode Island, asked Admiral Rogers, the Director of NSA, if the Trump administration had directed him to counter Russian meddling, he replied: "No, I have not [been directed]."

That is astonishing. A hostile foreign power interferes in our election, continues to interfere with our democracy, is planning to interfere in our next elections, and the President of the United States is hardly lifting a finger. It is as if they were preparing for war and tanks or planes were lining up, and we decided to do nothing. Cyber attacks and manipulation of the news media are other ways that hostile powers attack us.

People have to wonder why President Trump is so soft on Russia, so unwilling to criticize President Putin, and so slow to stand up for America and protect our democracy.

#### NOMINATION OF MARVIN QUATTLEBAUM

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, finally, one final word on a pending judicial nomination, Marvin Quattlebaum. First, for the benefit of the Senate, I would like to note that the only reason the current nomination is up, the nomination of Quattlebaum is up is because the two Republican Senators from South Carolina refused to return a blue slip for two judges nominated for the same vacancy by President Obama. Their right as the home State Senators to not return a blue slip was respected by the Democratic majority, Chairman LEAHY, in 2013, unlike the Republican majority, which has already ignored the blue slip precedent and confirmed a circuit judge without the approval of both home State Senators. I want my colleagues on the other side to remember that their blue slips were respected during the Obama administration and to think long and hard about continuing to ignore them now that their party is in the White House.

Second, the nomination of Marvin Quattlebaum speaks to the overall lack of diversity in President Trump's selection for the Federal judiciary. Mr. Quattlebaum replaces not one but two scuttled Obama nominees who were Af-

rican American. As of February 14, 83 percent of President Trump's confirmed nominees were male; 92 percent were White. That represents the lowest share of non-White candidates in three decades.

It is long past time that the judiciary starts looking a lot more like the America it represents. Having a diversity of views and experience on the Federal bench is necessary for the equal administration of justice. After years of improvement, the Trump administration, as in so many other areas, is taking a giant step backward—this time, when it comes to the diversity of their nominations. I will be voting no on the Quattlebaum nomination.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF WILLIAM "BILLY" F. GRAHAM, JR.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, I rise with my colleague from North Carolina, my colleagues in the U.S. Senate, and the American people to honor the life of a North Carolinian, Billy Graham—a man whose life has literally reached millions around the globe.

Reverend Graham's grace marker will be inscribed this way: "Preacher of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

As the son of a minister myself, I am uniquely aware of the sacrifices and the responsibility that come with this calling. Indeed, this is a calling that Reverend Graham fulfilled honorably and nobly, bringing hope and comfort to millions around the globe. Reverend Graham was someone who was shaped by his roots on a North Carolina dairy farm, who committed his life to Jesus Christ at the age of 15, and who lived the commitment with faithfulness for the next 84 years.

He was married for 64 years to Ruth Bell Graham and was the father of 3 daughters, 2 sons, and now 19 grandchildren. As his casket was laid in honor in the Rotunda, all of a sudden, I realized that one of those grandchildren was a graduate of West Point, one of my nominees, and a soon-to-be lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Army. It was certainly good to see him.

Reverend Graham preached to almost 215 million people in more than 185 countries and territories on 6 continents. He prayed with soldiers on the battlefields of South Korea and Vietnam. He preached in poor villages and at Britain's Windsor Castle, and he provided counsel to every President from Harry Truman to Barack Obama. He also stood up for what was right—denouncing segregation and oppression and preaching jointly with the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., in the 1950s. He lived a life of integrity and of honor.

He spoke words of comfort and hope at the National Cathedral following the September 11 terrorist attacks, reminding America: "God is our refuge