

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

and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Reverend Graham will be deeply missed. I send my condolences to his children, his grandchildren, and his numerous great-grandchildren. Yet Graham himself said: "My Home is in heaven, I am just passing through this World." Today, we honor the life that he lived, his faithfulness to the calling, and his impact on millions of individuals around the globe.

If I may take just another moment before my colleague from North Carolina speaks, I will read some remarks that were made by individuals who played important roles in American history.

President Bill Clinton said: "Some were pressuring Graham to segregate his audiences by race but he refused." Clinton remarked: "Graham would cancel the crusade rather than preach to a segregated audience" because everyone deserved the chance to hear God's Word.

President Obama said this in his condolences: "Billy Graham was a humble servant who prayed for so many—and who, with wisdom and grace, gave hope and guidance to generations of Americans" and, I would say, Americans to come.

Lastly, Martin Luther King, Jr., said: "Had it not been for the ministry of my good friend Dr. Billy Graham, my work in the civil rights movement would not have been as successful as it has been."

The country mourns the loss of Dr. Graham, but the country understands the impact of his life—that life as a servant of God, to preach His Word to everyone he could find, and a career of 84 years. He exhausted the opportunities that were given to him and will proudly affect generations that have yet to be born by the work that he did as a disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I thank my friend and colleague, the senior Senator from North Carolina, for his words about Reverend Billy Graham. I will only add a few comments.

At one level, mine are very personal. I was telling someone just yesterday that I have two very distinct memories of times with my father. One of them was of watching Walter Cronkite, and the other one was of watching Billy Graham. I was talking to my mother earlier this week, and she talked about how much my father loved Billy Graham. I remember, vividly, sitting in front of that console TV with my father, watching him as he preached the Word of God.

This week is amazing because I find, when one loses somebody so precious like Reverend Graham, it is a very sad time, but in his case, America's pastor had brought so much joy to everyone's lives that it really is a celebration.

Earlier, Senator BURR and I had had an opportunity to offer our condolences

to the Graham family. What was remarkable was that in the face of every one of them was, maybe, a hint of sorrow but, really, just a fullness of joy in knowing what their father did when he was on this Earth and now what he will do in the Kingdom of Heaven.

I think that today is a day we should all look back and ask ourselves: Could we actually come anywhere close to living the kind of life that this man lived? With his ministering in some 180 countries, with over 200 million people actually attending some of his unbelievable celebrations of the Gospel, and then his touching the lives of hundreds of millions of people—and billions of people like me who were watching on TV—the Graham legacy is something that is going to live on for generations.

I am happy to be a proud Senator from the State in which he was born. In fact, I live only about 20, 30 minutes from where he lived his early years. I look forward to going to the funeral on Friday to celebrate his life, to celebrate his legacy, and to celebrate the many lives that were changed because he had brought the Word of God to them wherever they may have been on this planet.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the opportunity to speak about America's pastor.

To the Graham family, all of them—the sons, the daughters, the children, the grandchildren—God bless you all. Thank you for sharing the gift of your family member with so many people across this great Nation and across this world.

I thank Senator BURR for his kind words. I thank him for his leadership and for moving forward with the resolution that honors Reverend Billy Graham's life and legacy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, on behalf of Senator TILLIS and me, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S.J. Res. 53, introduced earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 53) honoring the life of William "Billy" F. Graham, Jr.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the joint resolution be considered read a third time and passed, the preamble be passed, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 53) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The preamble was passed.

The joint resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S.J. RES. 53

Whereas William "Billy" F. Graham, Jr., was born on November 7, 1918, in Charlotte, North Carolina;

Whereas, in 1939, Reverend Graham was ordained by Peniel Baptist Church in Florida;

Whereas Reverend Graham studied at Florida Bible Institute and graduated from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, in 1943;

Whereas Reverend Graham married his wife of nearly 64 years, Ruth McCue Bell, in 1943;

Whereas Reverend Graham had 3 daughters, 2 sons, 19 grandchildren, and numerous great-grandchildren;

Whereas, in 1950, Reverend Graham founded the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, which is based in Charlotte, North Carolina;

Whereas Reverend Graham preached to nearly 215,000,000 individuals in more than 185 countries and territories on 6 continents;

Whereas Reverend Graham provided spiritual counsel for every President since Harry Truman;

Whereas Reverend Graham prayed with members of the Armed Forces in combat zones in South Korea and Vietnam;

Whereas Reverend Graham spoke against the communist Soviet Union, saying, "Communism has decided against God, against Christ, against the Bible, and against all religion.";

Whereas Reverend Graham—

(1) fought for racial integration;

(2) invited Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to preach with him in New York City in 1957; and

(3) bailed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., out of jail when Dr. King was arrested for protesting segregation;

Whereas, following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Reverend Graham spoke words of hope and comfort to the people of the United States at the Washington National Cathedral;

Whereas Reverend Graham authored 34 books, including the bestselling autobiography, "Just as I Am", which began by discussing his early days on a dairy farm in North Carolina and continued through his career as a preacher and evangelist; and

Whereas Reverend Graham received numerous honors, including—

(1) the North Carolina Award for Public Service;

(2) the Presidential Medal of Freedom;

(3) the Ronald Reagan Freedom Award; and

(4) the Congressional Gold Medal: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress—

(1) extends its sympathies to the family of William "Billy" F. Graham, Jr.; and

(2) honors—

(A) the life and ministry of Reverend Graham; and

(B) the contributions of Reverend Graham to—

(i) the State of North Carolina;

(ii) the United States of America; and

(iii) the moral and religious lives of millions of individuals.

Mr. BURR. I thank the Presiding Officer.

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

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

GUN SAFETY

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I hope we rise to the moment before us and get something done, over the course of the next week or two, to try to make this country safer. I am glad to be joining the President in a few hours to hear more about his thoughts on how we can put the safety of our kids ahead of any political considerations and try to figure out how to make sure that Parkland is the last.

As I have told some of the kids from Parkland who have come into my office, the ripples of grief will never, ever end. Newtown, CT, is a place that has been fundamentally changed. When you lose that many young lives in a short period of time, there is no true recovery. Unfortunately, Parkland will find that as Charleston did, as Orlando did, and as so many did before them.

We need to remember that while the country tends to pay attention to the epidemic of gun violence when there is a mass shooting, this is an epidemic that doesn't take a day off. Yesterday, it is likely that 80 to 90 people died from gunshot wounds. The majority of those were suicides. That is an epidemic in and of itself. A chunk of those were accidental shootings, another chunk of those were gun homicides; but the rate of gun deaths in this country just has no parallel anywhere else in the world. There is not another First World nation that has the rate of gun violence we do. In fact, it is not even close. The rate of gun violence in our country is 20 times higher than the average in the OECD.

We have to remember that when we try to craft a public policy response, it just cannot be about school shootings. One is much more likely to die from an accidental gunshot than in a school shooting. We have to be comprehensive in our approach, which is why the Fix NICS Act just isn't good enough.

I am proud Senator CORNYN and I and many others in this body came together to put forward a piece of legislation that will improve the background check system. It will make sure people who shouldn't buy guns aren't able to buy guns, but it is a modest change. In fact, it is really just about making sure people who are in law enforcement and inside the NICS system comply with existing law. It doesn't actually add any new background checks, it doesn't solve the gun show loophole, and it doesn't solve the internet loophole. So my hope is, we can bring this bill before the Senate, but then we can have a debate on other measures that might enjoy bipartisan support that will do 10 times more than fix NICS to keep this country safe.

Let's talk about expanding background checks to make sure everybody who is buying a gun in a commercial sale has to prove they are not a crimi-

nal and prove they are not seriously mentally ill. Let's talk about the experience that Connecticut and Indiana has had in allowing courts to use protective orders to take away guns from people who are showing evidence of doing harm to the people around them. Let's have a conversation about whether we think it is right for people to be able to walk into schools with a gun equipped with a 30-round or 100-round magazine.

I don't know if any of those measures will get 60 votes, but I think we owe it to the American people to not limit debate, to not shut down debate in the U.S. Senate Chamber.

I know it is probably a scary thing for some Republicans that votes are changing. Many of my Republican colleagues have acknowledged they might be thinking about supporting things today that they might not have supported before. Because minds are changing, it behooves us to make sure we have a full debate on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

I am supportive of the bill that Senator CORNYN and I have worked on. I hope it can become the foundation of a much more comprehensive set of measures that we take a look at in the coming days. I think we have to pay attention to where the American public is on this issue. I understand polls shouldn't dictate all of the decisions we make here. We pay attention to public opinion, we respond to it more often than not, but it doesn't guide every single decision we make because public opinion changes.

On this issue, it has been a slow and steady build, the number of Americans saying the U.S. Congress bears responsibility for the epidemic of mass slaughter in this country because we have not changed a single gun law, except to make them weaker, since Sandy Hook. Remember, the only thing this Congress has done since Sandy Hook is allow hundreds of thousands of seriously mentally ill people to get weapons. That law was passed last year by the President—nothing to restrict guns.

In fact, 97 percent of Americans want us to pass universal background checks. Apple pie isn't as popular as background checks are in this country today. No other public policy we are considering gets a 97-percent approval rating from the American public than universal background checks. Let's listen to that. Let's listen to them.

I encourage Senator MCCONNELL not to limit debate, not to constrain the Senate. Let's use this week and next week to have a set of measures we can debate and have up-or-down votes on, and let's hope, in the meantime, the President fleshes out what he is for and against.

The President tweeted that he is in support of comprehensive background checks. Maybe later today we will find out if that is really true. Comprehensive background checks tend to mean the closing of the loopholes that exist,

but hopefully the President can help lead us to a conclusion that is something much more than Fix NICS. As my colleague from Florida who has lived through the last several mass shootings in his State remarked, Fix NICS is simply not enough to meet this moment. I hope we build upon it in the coming days.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2464

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2464) to improve border security and to provide conditional provision residence to certain long-term residents who entered the United States as children.

Mr. CORNYN. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

FIX NICS BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, my colleague from Connecticut is here in the room and mentioned the bill we have been working on together, the Fix NICS bill. I want to remind all of us what the motivation was, at least on my part, for introducing this legislation and express my gratitude to the Senator from Connecticut, as well as the Democratic leader Senator SCHUMER, and others who have cosponsored this legislation.

It was just a few short months ago when someone murdered 26 people worshipping in a small church just outside San Antonio in Sutherland Springs. He had purchased these firearms having lied on the background check when they asked him whether he was a convicted felon, whether he was honorably discharged from the military, and whether he had ever committed any domestic violence. He lied.

If he had told the truth, he would have been prohibited from buying those firearms and perhaps—maybe, perhaps—he would have been dissuaded, slowed down, or perhaps would not have committed that terrible atrocity that day when 26 people lost their lives, and 20 more were injured.

We have come to find out that the Air Force, which had convicted him of two of those offenses—domestic violence and the felony—failed to upload the information that was required in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. If they had, then he would not have gotten away