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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.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.

O Lord our God, as our lawmakers take up the duties of this day, give them Your wisdom and guidance. Remind them that You already know their needs, motives, hopes, and fears. Lord, keep them from being awed by difficulties and frightened by problems, as You provide them with wisdom in their decisions and harmony in their interactions. May the work they do today on Capitol Hill have eternal significance.

We pray in Your mighty 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 (Mr. YOUNG). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of A. Marvin Quattlebaum, Jr., of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 1865

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1865) to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify that section 230 of such Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sexual exploitation of children or sex trafficking, and for other purposes.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

REMEMBERING BILLY GRAHAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday we welcomed the President, the Vice President, and the family of the late Reverend Billy Graham as he lay in honor in the Capitol. This is a very rare tribute—even rarer for an American without government or military service—but it perfectly suits the remarkable man whose preaching inspired millions worldwide, who counseled Presidents and world leaders across generations, and whom an entire nation came to know as America's pastor.

Billy Graham's powerful preaching and his historic revivals brought so

many closer to God because his work was not ultimately about him. "The secret of my work," he explained, "is God. I would be nothing without him." His personal strengths and talents were mighty, but it was his kindness, his humility, and his total fidelity to faith and family that defined his life and his ministry.

I am glad that Congress could honor the great Reverend Graham in this way. Yesterday, thousands—thousands—of Americans packed the Rotunda down the hall to pay their respects. All across the country, people are giving thanks for the extraordinary contributions of this good and faithful servant.

TAX REFORM

Mr. President, on another matter, it has been just over 2 months since the united Republican government delivered historic tax reform to middle-class families all across the country. How is it working? We have all seen the national news. Walmart is giving raises or new benefits to more than 1 million hourly workers. Boeing is investing \$300 million in workforce development and corporate giving. Apple is bringing hundreds of billions of dollars back home. But no less important are the stories making front-page news in hometown newspapers all across our country.

Thanks to tax reform in North Lima, OH, Sheely's Furniture & Appliance is planning to issue \$1,000 bonuses to full-time workers and expand the sales floor by 4,500 square feet.

In Cushing, OH—population of 220 people—tax reform is allowing John Anfinson to give \$1,000 bonuses and 5 percent pay raises to all of his employees at the farm store that his grandfather founded in 1918, 100 years ago.

"I work every day shoulder to shoulder with everyone," Mr. Anfinson explained. "When you work every day with a group of people, you know them and their family. . . . They are the most valuable asset in any business."

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



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His customers will also likely be breathing easier. Tax reform is enabling farmers and ranchers across America to immediately expense the cost of important investments, and it is taking a big bite—a big bite—out of the death tax.

Senators heard stories just like these during last week's State work period. Just ask Senator TOOMEY what tax reform is doing in Pennsylvania. He stopped by New Hudson Facades, a manufacturer in Linwood. Tax reform enabled them to increase wages by 5 percent, and a partner company is contributing \$3,000 to every factory worker's 401(k).

How about in Montana? Senator DAINES' trip across his State took him to Pacific Steel in Great Falls, where sales are up 25 percent—sales are up 25 percent—since tax reform passed.

In West Virginia, Senator CAPITO joined a roundtable at the Huntington Regional Chamber of Commerce. She heard from local business leaders about "increased optimism."

In Nevada, 90 percent of the small business owners Senator HELLER recently spoke with said they plan to raise wages, increase benefits, award bonuses, hire more workers, or invest in their operations.

It is a shame our Democratic colleagues still haven't been able to extract themselves from their lockstep opposition to this historic law. If they had gotten their way, none of this good news would have happened—none of it. Only one of the Senators from Pennsylvania voted for the law that is allowing that Linwood manufacturer to expand. Only one Senator from Ohio voted for the new law that is helping those workers in North Lima. Only one Senator from Nevada voted to give small businesses the flexibility to invest more in their employees. Only one Senator from West Virginia and one Senator from Montana voted to take money out of Washington's pocket and put it back in the pockets of the middle class.

Every single Senate Democrat—every one of them—did all they could to block tax reform. Fortunately, every Republican voted to pass it. And because Congress passed tax reform and the President signed it into law, workers and small business owners are already reaping the benefits.

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.

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

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

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on Friday, I visited Wilde Lake High School in Columbia, which is located in Howard County, MD, between Washington and Baltimore. I wanted to talk to students about the tragic Valentine's Day shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas

High School, in Parkland, FL, which left 17 students and faculty members dead. This is the deadliest high school shooting in American history. I went to Wilde Lake because one of their own teachers, Laura Wallen, was shot to death in September 2017, and her former boyfriend is now on trial for her murder.

I was extremely impressed by the passion of these students. They had a great deal of interest in the subject matter; they were extremely articulate; and they asked great questions. I found it extremely encouraging for the future of Howard County, MD, and this Nation. These students are rightfully concerned about their safety and the safety of their classmates. It has been 2 weeks since a disturbed young man invaded Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

The reaction seems to be like clockwork after each shooting. There is bipartisan shock, anger, and horror. Predictably, the question comes out: Will this time be different? The answer for the Republican leaders in Congress has always been "no" as the outrage and call to act quickly falls back to NRA talking points versus reality. This time, the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and the students in Maryland and across the country are not taking "no" as the final word. This time, the survivors are leading the way and are speaking out in a forceful way like we have not heard before.

Students like Ryan Deitsch, a senior at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, want to know why these students—the children—need to be the ones to speak out "just to save innocent lives," he said. He wants to know why the adults cannot be the adults and do what is necessary to protect children.

I think the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School have had a clear, articulate message that this carnage needs to stop. They want to feel safe in their schools again. Armed with their cell phones and their stories, they have taken up the banner of hashtag "never again" and are changing the face of this debate to make this country safer from gun violence.

Alex Wind, another survivor from Stoneman Douglas, laid out the larger problem of why students are mobilizing:

We're marching because it's not just schools. It's movie theaters, it's concerts, it's nightclubs. This kind of stuff can't just happen. You know, we are marching for our lives, we're marching for the 17 lives we lost. And we're marching for our children's lives and our children's children and their children.

So what can we do?

There are several pieces of legislation that are ready to go. The Democrats and some Republicans have been willing and ready to act. Leader MCCONNELL could move any one of these bills right now. Let's start by

making it clear that weapons of war are not needed by civilians of any age. I have cosponsored S. 2095, the Assault Weapons Ban of 2017, offered by Senator FEINSTEIN.

This legislation would, one, ban the sale, manufacture, transfer, and importation of military style assault weapons; two, ban any assault weapon that accepts a detachable ammunition magazine and has one or more military characteristics; three, ban magazines and other ammunition feeding devices that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition, which allow shooters to quickly fire many rounds without needing to reload.

The bill also requires a background check on any future sale, trade, or gifting of an assault weapon that is covered by the bill, and it prohibits the transfer of high-capacity ammunition magazines. It also bans bump fire stocks and other devices that allow semiautomatic weapons to fire at fully automatic rates. Congress should also pass the Background Check Expansion Act, S. 2009, which I have cosponsored and has been offered by Senator MURPHY.

This bill would expand Federal background check requirements to include the sale or transfer of all firearms by private sellers, just as licensed dealers are required to conduct checks for sales under the existing Brady Law. The bill requires background checks for the sales or transfers of all firearms from one private party to another even if either party is not a federally licensed dealer. This requirement extends to all unlicensed sellers whether they do business online, at gun shows, or out of their homes.

According to a recent poll, a record 97 percent of those surveyed said that they support requiring background checks for gun buyers—97 percent. Why can't we get this done? It is not a heavy lift. Americans are with us on this. We need to recognize that saving children's lives is more important than the National Rifle Association.

Congress also should ease restrictions on gun violence research and prevention efforts by removing onerous restrictions on the Centers for Disease Control research. We can improve States' sharing of information with Federal databases that screen gun buyers.

At a townhall last week, Senator RUBIO, when questioned by an audience of students and parents from Stoneman Douglas, said that "the problems we are facing here today cannot be solved by gun laws alone." With that, I agree, but these gun laws will make a difference. Yes, there is no single solution, but we should be united in our willingness to do what we can to save lives.

I agree with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle that we must devote more resources to mental health priorities to identify young people who may be about to cause harm to themselves or others.