

Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He had been going from community to community. In some places, they were able to desegregate public accommodations relatively easily. Other places were tough but none tougher than Birmingham. At drug stores and department stores, Dr. King and others would have adults go sit in—African Americans and their allies—and be arrested. Yet wave after wave of arrests notwithstanding, including the arrest of Dr. King, the city leaders would not back down. They would not shed the discrimination that violated the equality provisions of the Constitution.

As this was going on, children in the Birmingham schools started to come to Dr. King and say: We want to march too.

Dr. King and his lieutenants really struggled with this. They were parents. They didn't want their kids to be arrested. They didn't want their kids to face guard dogs attacking them. They didn't want their kids to face firehoses directed at them. They had a natural parental reaction: We are going to do this; we want to protect you.

But the children kept coming and saying: We want to march too.

Finally, they said: Isn't this about us? As much as it is about adults, isn't this about us, your children? And if it is about your children, why can't we march?

Dr. King, after a lot of prayer and discussion, finally said: It is about you.

Mr. President, you know this, and for our pages especially, it was those children advocating—and they marched, and they did have firehoses turned on them, and they did have guard dogs released on them. The photos of those children braving that ugly face of discrimination landed on the front pages of papers all over the United States and all over the world, and it was transformative of the civil rights movement.

Adults in the United States knew there was discrimination, but they had become complacent to it or indifferent to it or had even said: I think it is wrong, but it will probably never change. But their children demanded of them: Adults, just be adults. Adults, you say you care about children; prove to us you care about children. And when the adults of America were confronted with the example of their own young people, they had to shake themselves out of their complacency and indifference and shoulder the burden that adults must shoulder.

That is what these students at Parkland are saying to us now. That is what these students all over the country are saying to us now. They are saying: This is about our future. This is about your children. And they are asking us whether children matter more or political contributions matter more.

I urge my colleagues, finally, let's not produce another goose egg in this body. Let's not come together after a horrible tragedy—when there are

meaningful steps, such as background record checks, that we can put on the table to make us safer—and fail them yet again.

I ask my colleagues and especially the majority leader to enable us to have this debate on the floor so that we can take meaningful steps of the kind that we know will make our communities safer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

YEMEN WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, there should be no issue of more importance to Members of Congress than the issue of war and peace and when it is appropriate to send the young people of our country into harm's way, knowing that some of them will not return home alive.

It goes without saying that every armed conflict the United States of America is engaged in must be consistent with the Constitution of the United States and be lawful.

Let's make no mistake about it—article I, section 8 of the Constitution states in no uncertain terms that "Congress shall have the power to . . . declare war." The Founding Fathers gave the power to declare war to Congress because Congress is that body most accountable to the people.

For far too long, Congress—under Democratic and Republican administrations—has abdicated its constitutional role in authorizing war. The time is long overdue for Congress to reassert its constitutional authority. If you think that a military intervention makes sense, then let's have that debate on the floors of the Senate and the House and cast a vote. But that is not what we have been seeing for a number of years.

What Senator LEE and Senator MURPHY and I are doing with privileged resolution S.J. Res. 54 is demanding that Congress once again take its constitutional responsibility for war and peace seriously. I thank Senators DURBIN, WARREN, and BOOKER for coming on board that resolution. I hope this bipartisan resolution will gain more and more support in the coming days.

Many Americans are unaware that the people of Yemen are suffering today in a devastating civil war, with Saudi Arabia and their allies on one side and Houthi rebels on the other.

In November of last year, the United Nations emergency relief coordinator said that Yemen was on the brink of "the largest famine the world has seen for many decades." So far, at least 10,000 civilians have died, 3 million have been displaced, and over 40,000 have been wounded in this war. Fifteen million people lack access to clean water and sanitation. More than 20 million people in Yemen—over two-thirds of that country's population—need some kind of humanitarian support, with nearly 10 million in acute need of assistance. More than 1 million suspected cholera cases have been re-

ported—1 million cholera cases have been reported—representing potentially the worst cholera outbreak in world history.

Many Americans probably are not aware that U.S. forces have been actively engaged in support of the Saudis in this terrible war, providing intelligence and aerial refueling of planes whose bombs have killed thousands of people and made this crisis far worse.

We believe—and I speak for Senator LEE and Senator MURPHY—that as Congress has not declared war or authorized military force in this conflict, U.S. involvement in Yemen is unconstitutional and unauthorized, and U.S. military support of the Saudi coalition must end. Without congressional authorization, our engagement in this war should be restricted to providing desperately needed humanitarian aid and diplomatic efforts to put an end to this terrible conflict. That is why yesterday we introduced a joint resolution pursuant to the 1973 War Powers Resolution calling for an end to U.S. support for the Saudi war in Yemen.

The War Powers Resolution defines the introduction of U.S. Armed Forces to include "the assignment of members of such armed forces to command, coordinate, participate in the movement of, or accompany the regular or irregular military forces of any foreign country or government when such military forces are engaged, or there exists an imminent threat that such forces will become engaged, in hostilities." That is from the War Powers Resolution. Assisting with targeting intelligence and refueling warplanes as they bomb those targets clearly meets this definition.

This is not a partisan issue. Support for the Saudi intervention in Yemen began under a Democratic President and has continued under a Republican one. Senator LEE is a conservative Republican. I am a progressive Independent who caucuses with the Democrats.

In November of last year—and it is important that Members of the Senate hear this—the U.S. House of Representatives, by a vote of 366 to 30, passed a nonbinding resolution stating that U.S. involvement in the Yemen civil war is unauthorized. Every Member of the Democratic leadership voted for this. Democratic Leader NANCY PELOSI voted for it. Minority Whip STENY HOYER voted for it. The ranking member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, ELIOT ENGEL, voted for it, as did the Republican chairman of that committee, ED ROYCE.

Here is the bottom line: If the President or Members of Congress believe that support for this war is in the U.S. interest and that we should be involved in it, then let them come to the floor of the House and Senate, make their case, and then let's have a vote.

I believe we have become far too comfortable with the United States engaging in military interventions all over the world. We have now been in

Afghanistan for nearly 17 years—the longest war in American history. Our troops are now in Syria under what I believe are questionable authorities, and the administration has indicated that it may broaden that military mission even more.

The time is long overdue for Congress to reassert its constitutional role in determining when and where our country goes to war. I am very proud to be working with Senators LEE, MURPHY, and others on this vitally important issue.

Thank you very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the mass murder in Florida this month, and I rise to ask a simple question that millions of Americans in every part of this country are asking at their kitchen tables right now: Is Congress finally going to do anything meaningful about gun violence? When will enough be enough? What will it take for this body to move beyond the same talking points that we hear after every mass shooting and actually do something to prevent more deaths? Will Congress finally see what the vast majority of Americans see—gun owners and non-gun owners alike—that America's gun problem isn't going away unless Congress musters up the courage to take it head-on, or will Congress continue to give the lipservice of thoughts and prayers and then do absolutely nothing?

We have to act because once again there was a massacre on American soil. Once again it was inside a school. Once again American children were gunned down. We keep living through a nightmare of gun violence that repeats itself in schools, movie theaters, churches, nightclubs, concerts, and every single day on the streets of cities in every State around this country—Sandy Hook, Aurora, Charleston, San Bernardino, Orlando, Las Vegas, Sutherland Springs, and most recently, Parkland, FL.

We can help stop this. We have the power to help stop this. The question is whether Congress has the political will to do it, whether this institution will finally put families first, our children first, and stand up to the gun manufacturers and the NRA.

I urge every Member of Congress to reflect on why they first ran for office. We are here as public servants to serve the people who sent us here, not to serve the gun industry's profits, not to serve the organizations and companies and lobbyists who demand political retribution when we do the morally right thing. Does Congress have the will to act? Does Congress have the basic courage this country needs? I am sorry to say, I don't know, but we can put it to the test.

There has been a lot of talk—more than normal even—about our need to act in this Chamber. So I will say this to my colleagues: Let's make this time

different. Let's listen to the children from Stoneman Douglas High School. Let's seize this moment. Let's take action.

I implore my colleagues to listen to what the country is saying about gun violence today, listen to the families, listen to the survivors from Parkland and tune out all the other noise. I did. It is possible.

Ten years ago, I had an A rating from the NRA, just like many of my colleagues today, but then I met the mother of Nyasia Pryear-Yard. Then I met her classmates. Nyasia was an honor student from Brooklyn. She was dancing with her friends, having fun, loving life. She was killed by a stray bullet in her community. Now I have an F rating from the NRA.

I don't understand how, after meeting with all of these families, after meeting with all of these children whose lives have been destroyed and torn apart by gun violence—I don't understand how any public servant would not vow to do what is necessary to make sure it never happens again.

It is what we do after a terrorist attack, rightfully so. It is what we do as a country. We come together. We say never again, and we do whatever it takes to protect our country. We have to have the very same sense of urgency now.

Plain and simple, it is a lie to say we have to choose between protecting law-abiding gun owners' rights and protecting our children from being murdered by assault rifles. It is a false choice to say we cannot end gun violence without violating people's constitutional rights. It is time for Members of Congress to stand up for what is right for America and do what is right for our communities, and say no to the NRA.

I commend one of our colleagues in the House of Representatives—a Republican from Florida and an Army veteran—who is seeing this crisis differently now too. He wrote:

I know that my community, our schools, and public gathering places, are not made safer by any person having access to the best killing tool the Army could put in my hands. I cannot support the primary weapon I used to defend our people, being used to kill children I swore to defend.

That is what leadership looks like.

I implore my colleagues in the Senate to see our gun violence problem differently. See it with your heart. See it for what it is. It is a matter of national security, of public health, of public safety that will never go away unless Congress does its job.

So, once and for all, let's pass laws that actually are meaningful, that actually can do something, not just something simple so we can say we did something and move on. I strongly agree with my colleagues that we need to improve the mental health system. Let's make those investments, but it should not stop there.

We have to address the fact that we have weapons of war on our streets

today. We have to address the fact that it is so easy for people to buy a gun—people who should never have that privilege. Let's vote to ban semiautomatic assault rifles.

Congress has already banned fully automatic weapons. Congress has already recognized that some weapons have no place in the civilian world, and a weapon of war that was designed for military use, that can fire up to 100 rounds in 1 minute or 100 rounds if you just add a bump stock, a weapon that can completely outgun a police officer has no place in the civilian world.

Will my colleagues vote with me to ban semiautomatic assault rifles?

Then, let's vote to ban the high-capacity magazines that go with them. They are made for wars; they are not made to be in our schools, not in our cities. High-capacity magazines let killers fire dozens of rounds without having to frequently stop and reload. They are designed to let someone fire bullets at as many people as possible in the shortest amount of time.

Let's vote to ban high-capacity magazines, and let's vote to pass universal background checks. That is something that is so commonsense, so obvious. Too many people who should not get their hands on these weapons are easily able to get them, and there are so many loopholes that allow people to buy semiautomatic assault rifles online, where there are no background checks. They allow people to buy semiautomatic assault rifles at gun shows, where there are no background checks.

It simply doesn't make sense that every person who buys a firearm doesn't go through a basic background check system. Do you know who agrees with that? Ninety-seven percent of the American people. I can't think of any other issue where there is such near-universal agreement across our entire population.

So let's do what our constituents are demanding from us—not what the NRA is demanding from us—and vote to pass universal background checks. When we do it, let's make sure the effort is actually sincere. If we are only voting on universal background checks, when it is tied to the issue of concealed carry reciprocity, then that is not a sincere attempt to fix our broken background check system. If Congress is saying we will only pass universal background checks if we pass a new law that says a stranger from one State has to be allowed into my State or your State when he has a gun hidden under his jacket, that is an insult to 97 percent of the American people who want Congress to pass universal background checks now.

Then, let's finally vote to overturn the outrageous law that has banned the Centers for Disease Control from even studying the issue of gun deaths. The CDC can study any other cause of death—heart disease, cancer, car crashes, plane crashes—unless it involves a gun. Don't you think it is strange that when we debate this issue, the two