

each year for the following 10 years. In total, that is more than \$1 billion to secure our schools and train our students, teachers, and law enforcement.

Many of my colleagues have called for reforms and restrictions related to firearms—something this bill does not address. Those are important discussions, and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on these and other issues. In the meantime, we need to work with what we have, and what we have in the STOP School Violence Act is good, commonsense legislation that can save hundreds of lives. I will not pretend that my bill is a catch-all solution to the problem of school violence. It is not, but it is a start. Indeed, this bipartisan proposal is the catalyst to a critical conversation that will take place in the weeks and months to come.

For far too long, we have allowed politics to get in the way of real reform. For far too long, we have been holed up in our partisan foxholes, ducking the difficult issues of the day in hopes that the problem of school violence would solve itself. For far too long, we have clung to our rhetorical weapons, but now is the time to lay those weapons aside. Now is the time to reconcile our differences for the good of our Nation and for the good of our children. As I said last week, now is not the time for argument but for action.

Rather than letting the perfect be the enemy of the good, I implore my friends on both sides of the aisle to come together for the safety of our children. Rather than resorting to recycled talking points, I ask my colleagues to heed minority leader SCHUMER's call to "pass real legislation that makes a difference." I thought that was a good statement.

Mr. President, I wish to emphasize the singularity of the opportunity we have in front of us. My bill represents a respite from the anger and acrimony that far too often pervade our politics. It is a symbol of the great good we can accomplish when we come together in common cause. Already, dozens of my colleagues from both the left and the right have signed on to support this bill. The STOP Act is just the start we need to prevent violence in our schools, so let's come together to get this done, and I hope we can.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2018

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Tuesday, March 6; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed. I further ask that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2155 with the time until

the cloture vote equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; further, that following disposition of the Doughty nomination, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2155; finally, that the Senate recess from 12:30 p.m. until 2:15 p.m. and that all time during recess, adjournment, morning business, leader remarks, and the Doughty confirmation vote count postcloture on the motion to proceed to S. 2155.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator CASEY.

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

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION BY SPECIAL COUNSEL MUELLER

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I restate my support for the investigations by Robert Mueller into Russia's election interference, as well as to condemn the partisan attacks on the independent investigation being led by Robert Mueller, who has been an honorable public servant over many decades.

In 2016, our Nation came under attack by a hostile foreign power. Everyone knows that now. Our election process—the bedrock of our system of government—was targeted by Russian agents. They used a variety of measures to pursue their goals. The intelligence community's unclassified report concluded:

We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election. Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess Putin and the Russian Government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump.

That is from the unclassified report of our intelligence community.

These brazen and illegal actions have already resulted in the indictments of 13 Russian individuals and three Russian companies as part of Special Counsel Mueller's investigation.

Russia may not have used traditional military force against us, but the actions they took present just as serious a threat to our national security. Make no mistake, when a foreign adversary targets an American election, it has targeted America, itself. Yet the President, whose own campaign is being examined as part of the Russia investigation, has refused to enforce sanctions against Russia. He has refused to fight back against Putin and his regime, despite there being clear evidence that

they attacked us. The President's failure to take action against Russia underscores the urgent need for Special Counsel Mueller's independent investigation to continue unfettered.

In this investigation, Mr. Mueller has already amassed enough evidence to have a grand jury indict Russian operatives and high-ranking members of the Trump campaign, including former Trump campaign manager Paul Manafort and deputy campaign manager Rick Gates. Other Trump advisers, like Mr. Papadopoulos and Michael Flynn, have pled guilty to Federal crimes.

Unfortunately, as this evidence has come forward, unwarranted, dangerous, and partisan attacks on Mr. Mueller's investigation and on Mr. Mueller, himself, have accelerated; yet a brief glance at Mr. Mueller's lifetime of service reflects his commitment to serving the American people with honor, integrity, and courage that, I think, is unmatched by anyone I know in Washington. Here are a couple of examples.

As a young man, Mr. Mueller served with distinction in the Vietnam war and was awarded a Bronze Star, two Navy Commendation Medals, the Purple Heart, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry for his leadership and exemplary service.

Mr. Mueller received the Bronze Star for his "heroic achievement" after leading his fellow marines through an 8-hour battle, where, under enemy fire, "Second Lieutenant Mueller fearlessly moved from one position to another, directing the accurate counterfire of his men and shouting words of encouragement to them. . . . [H]e then skillfully supervised the evacuation of casualties from the hazardous fire area." After that battle, he was promoted to first lieutenant.

Just 4 months later, he sustained a bullet wound when he responded to an ambush by enemy forces on marines who were in his command. For his heroic response, Mr. Mueller received the Navy Commendation Medal with a citation praising him for rushing to save his fellow marines while "completely disregarding his own safety."

I will give a recitation of some of the record that Special Counsel Mueller developed long before he was named to this position. I was going through his actions as a marine in combat, and I have a few more parts of his record to review.

Mr. Mueller not only fought courageously on the battlefield, but upon returning home earned his law degree. He continued serving his country throughout his legal career.

After serving in U.S. attorney's offices in both Boston and San Francisco for over a decade, he later served at the Justice Department leading the Criminal Division of the Justice Department under President George H.W. Bush. There he oversaw cases ranging from the prosecution of the Panamanian dictator, Manuel Noriega, to the Lockerbie bombing.

In 1995, Mr. Mueller left a high-paying position in the private sector to join the DC U.S. attorney's office—in this case, the Homicide Division—working to hold violent offenders accountable for their crimes.

Three years later, he became a U.S. attorney himself, serving again in San Francisco and earning a reputation as a dogged and fair prosecutor committed to enforcing the rule of law.

In 2001, Mr. Mueller was nominated by a second Republican President, President George W. Bush, to be the Director of the FBI. He was then confirmed unanimously by this body. His tenure at the FBI included leading the response to the September 11 attacks, spearheading the Bureau's efforts to combat cyber crime, which has been widely praised. In fact, in 2011, when his 10-year term was scheduled to end, we in the Senate voted 100 to 0 to extend his term as FBI Director through 2013, another 10 years.

Though our political system has become more polarized, each time Mr. Mueller has been named or nominated for a new position, he has received unqualified praise from people across the political spectrum and rightly so.

With Mr. Mueller's record as a war hero, a dedicated public servant, and an expert in law enforcement, it is hard to imagine anyone better suited to lead the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election. There is no one in Washington, DC, or, frankly, in all of America better prepared to do this job.

Serious congressional oversight of executive branch operations is always

appropriate. However, the reckless partisan attacks on Mr. Mueller's investigation and on Mr. Mueller himself are not the same as congressional oversight. Such attacks have made us less safe as a nation. The political smears like those we have seen undermine our rule of law and strike at the heart of our democracy. They are a disservice to the brave men and women in law enforcement who put their lives on the line to keep all of us safe.

As Members of the U.S. Congress, we have a duty to uphold the rule of law and the principles of fairness and independence that American democracy is built upon.

I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to defend the integrity of Mr. Mueller's investigation and reject the politically motivated attempts to discredit the investigation and its underlying conclusions. I call on the House and Senate majority to give us a vote on legislation to protect Special Counsel Mueller's independence and ensure that he can continue his investigation free from interference.

To ensure the integrity of our elections and our democracy, we must make sure we never allow a hostile foreign power to interfere in our electoral process again, and to do that we must allow the special counsel to get to the bottom of what Russia did in 2016 and whether it was aided by American individuals. That is what the whole investigation is about—those two parts.

History, of course, will be our judge. We will be judged about how we handled this crisis. We know that in 1787, when the Constitutional Convention

had just adjourned, Benjamin Franklin was asked what kind of government the Convention had chosen for our young nation. He responded that the Convention has given us “[a] Republic, if you can keep it.”

Democratic principles are only as strong as those elected to uphold them. I hope my colleagues will stand together and stand strong to preserve the rule of law and the institutions of this Republic we have been given, and we must “keep it,” as Franklin said.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:17 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, March 6, 2018, at 10 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 5, 2018:

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

JEFFREY GERRISH, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A DEPUTY UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE (ASIA, EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST, AND INDUSTRIAL COMPETITIVENESS), WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

THE JUDICIARY

KAREN GREN SCHOLER, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS.

TILMAN EUGENE SELF III, OF GEORGIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF GEORGIA.