

would tell you that is not how criminal investigations operate. It is hard to view these requests as anything but a coordinated campaign with the White House to interfere with or impede Mr. Mueller's investigation. Frankly, these kinds of actions are enabling and encouraging the President to test the bounds of the rule of law in this country. When the President sees Republicans in Congress go after the special counsel investigation, he feels even more emboldened, and that is a shame for our country, broadly defined in history.

There is a disturbing trend emerging. Chairman NUNES and the Republicans on the Hill concoct a plan to tear down the chain of command of the Mueller investigation. They feed it to the right-wing press, which churns out innuendo-laden and often factually inaccurate story after story. The President tweets, and the fringe conspiracy theories of far-right Republicans in Congress land themselves on the front pages of mainstream media outlets, all in the service of the President's despicable attempt to distract and deflect from the legitimate probe into Russia's interference in our elections.

Republican, Democrat, Independent—it shouldn't matter—all Americans should want Deputy Attorney General Rosenstein and Special Counsel Mueller to continue the Russia probe and follow the facts to their conclusion without interference and without intimidation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. ERNST). Without objection, it is so ordered.

SANTA FE HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTING

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, to my shock and surprise, 10 people were killed Friday in a little town outside of Houston known as Santa Fe, at Santa Fe High School, about 20 miles northwest of Galveston, TX. As we know now, a male student walked into an art class with a pistol and a shotgun that he got from his parents, perhaps without their knowledge. After stashing makeshift explosives elsewhere, he then engaged in a killing spree. The dead included eight students and two teachers. A brave police officer was among the 13 wounded.

When I heard of the shooting, I made plans to immediately go to Santa Fe, where I met with Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, Senator CRUZ, and others, and we spoke to the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, and the FBI representatives, as well as the Santa Fe Independent School District officials to find out what happened. The families there, of

course, remain in shock that something so terrible could happen in their small, tucked away little community—one that was recently shaken by Hurricane Harvey last fall and had previously seemed far removed from the violence that has touched other parts of the country.

As I said last Friday, we have seen this before. Just last fall, we saw a similar story unfold in Sutherland Springs, outside of San Antonio, when a man opened fire at a Sunday church service. Then we saw it in Florida earlier this year at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, in Parkland. Unfortunately, in recent years there have been plenty of examples—too many examples, actually—with too many lives lost and far too few solutions for families reeling from the aftermath.

There are two things that strike me are clear, though. The first is that we need to better protect our students, secure our schools, and keep weapons out of the hands of those who are a danger to themselves and others. The second thing is to acknowledge that we haven't yet been able to do this effectively. Something is wrong, because these school shootings keep happening.

It is no coincidence that these shootings mostly happen at public schools—or soft targets—and the shooters are usually male teenagers who attended these schools. These young people, I should add, are surrounded by a culture that condemns violence, on one hand, excoriating public officials for not doing more to prevent it, but celebrating violence on television, in movies, and in video games, which at least has the potential to desensitize especially vulnerable young people.

Many proposals on how to address this pervasive problem focus on the guns themselves, not on the individuals who actually use them. They focus on restricting access to guns or banning specific firearm components for even law-abiding citizens. But any proposed fixes must also consider the root nature of the problem; that is, the deranged minds, the twisted rationalizations, and the tragic decisions of the people who commit these terrible acts of violence.

These shooters are obviously incapable of self-regulating their own behavior. How could we possibly address that? That is part of what we need to be thinking about. A gun can kill someone only if a person—a very sick or a very bad person—pulls the trigger.

So what have we done here in Congress to try to respond, as incompletely as I know we have? Well, last year, we introduced a bill called the Mental Health and Safe Communities Act, which was signed by President Obama in 2016. It is part of the answer. It provides more resources for communities and schools and mental health providers to deal with people before they become a danger to themselves or others. But there is more we can do, certainly in that space. The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Cen-

ter has expanded the use of technology that can help us better utilize telemedicine to reach out to those in a mental health crisis and offer them an alternative course of treatment when they don't otherwise have access. We should consider that and other ideas in the days ahead.

The parents that lost their sons and daughters at Santa Fe High School are obviously still grieving today, and we should be grieving as well, not only for the people who lost their lives but also for the state of our Nation—one that continues to watch its young people self-destruct, engaging in violence that takes the lives of brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, friends, and classmates.

We have been told in recent days that grief and prayers are not enough. I agree. It is not enough to send our condolences to communities like Santa Fe. We need to look the families of the victims in the eyes and say: Here are the concrete steps we have taken and intend to take to make sure something like this never happens again.

I believe we did that earlier this year on a broad, bipartisan basis by passing legislation called the Fix NICS Act. Passing that bill was important because the last time I saw a major shooting in my State, it was at Sutherland Springs, where a man who had been discharged less than honorably from the Air Force for domestic violence convictions fell through the cracks of our background check system. He was able to lie and buy a firearm, even though, under existing law, he was disqualified and prohibited from doing so. But because of the broken background check system, he was able to get away with it. Our Fix NICS Act will help to fix that broken background check system. It was widely supported by Republicans and Democrats. We had 78 cosponsors in the Senate alone, demonstrating that solutions can enjoy broad bipartisan support if they actually make sense as opposed to engaging in ideological battles.

I am glad Congress worked together also to pass the STOP School Violence Act earlier this year, which I was proud to cosponsor. This legislation will help to provide our schools with the tools and resources they need to prevent violence through better equipment, planning, training, safety infrastructure, and law enforcement presence on campus. In this year's appropriations bill, we were able to allocate \$75 million to start getting this initiative off the ground.

Now, people wonder: Can we possibly do this? Can we succeed in making our schools a safe place for mothers and fathers to send their children and where they are confident that everything humanly possible is being done to protect them? Well, I am not suggesting that we turn them into an airport, but my colleagues will recall that post-9/11, we have hardened our airports and our Nation's air travel in such a way as to make it virtually impervious to terrorist attacks. I think given the proper

attention, the creative thinking, and the proper resources, we can also come together and make our schools impervious to this sort of attack in the future. If we can do it at our Nation's airports against terrorist attacks, we can do it in our communities and in our local high schools.

Finally—and thank goodness—we have seen the Justice Department prioritize firearm prosecutions with the number of defendants charged with unlawful possession increasing significantly over the past few years. This is because of Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who has made this a priority, and thank goodness for that. It has long been overdue. U.S. attorneys are now focused on enforcing laws that criminalize gun buyers who lie on their Federal background check. Previously, somebody could come in and lie on the background check, get caught, and nothing would ever happen to them. Now, thanks to the Attorney General and the U.S. attorneys, people are being prosecuted for lying, acting as a further deterrent on people who are felons or otherwise disqualified from legally purchasing firearms. And vehicles like Project Safe Neighborhoods, which the Senate passed unanimously last week, would fund task forces that target serious firearm offenders and get them off the streets.

All of this is a good start, but the shooting in Santa Fe shows we have a long way to go because every one of these shootings seems to be a little bit different.

Obviously, in Sutherland Springs, the failure seemed to be a background check system which allowed the shooter to buy a firearm, lie on the background check system, and not get caught. In places like Las Vegas, the bump stock allowed the person to essentially turn a semiautomatic rifle into an automatic weapon, which was otherwise illegal. We all learned about bump stocks. As an avid shooter and hunter myself, I had never heard about it before. Now the President has taken care of that problem.

We have acted in the wake of Parkland, FL, to try to ensure we get resources to our schools so they can better protect their students and deal with other aspects of this challenge, but we need to be more methodical in figuring out the solutions, then seeing what, if any, solutions would have actually prevented a shooting, and then look to see if those same proposals would have prevented other similar events.

In the case of Santa Fe, we know the shooter was somewhat socially withdrawn, but he was also a high school athlete and involved in his church. He posted troubling pictures and statements on social media, but as Governor Abbott said, he was not your typical troubled youth who people guessed one day might snap.

We also know Santa Fe High School had lockdown drills recently and that police officers were stationed on cam-

pus. Both of these likely prevented the event from becoming much worse; so good for them for the lockdown drills and having police officers on campus. We should be grateful for that, even in the wake of so much violence that leaves us with so many unanswered questions.

One of the two officers who rushed in to stop the shooter was John Barnes, who was, himself, shot by the gunman. He is a former Houston police officer who now works for the Santa Fe Independent School District. I am told his heart stopped twice while doctors and paramedics were trying to stem his bleeding, but he is a fighter and he held on. He is now in critical but stable condition in Galveston. We, of course, appreciate him and all other first responders and the other officers who courageously confronted the shooter and saved other lives. We wish Officer Barnes and his entire family the best as he fully recovers from his injury.

Another hero who has emerged, from accounts of the shooting, is Christopher Stone, a 17-year-old junior who, once the shooting started, blocked the classroom door, protecting his fellow students from the gunman. Tragically, when the gunman shot through the door, Christopher Stone was hit, and he did not survive, but we will remember him and all the other lives which were lost this week as we pledge to do better, to work harder, to work together, and to find new ways to protect our schools and our children from harm.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I rise to speak today in the wake of another tragic school shooting. This time, it was in Texas. Ten innocent people—eight students and two teachers—were gunned down Friday when a gunman walked into a high school in East Texas and opened fire.

Tragedies such as this are becoming too common in our society. At some point, we have to say enough is enough. How many times have we said that? Just 3 months ago, I stood right here on the Senate floor after 17 people were killed at MSD High School in Parkland, FL. I pleaded with our colleagues to set aside partisan politics and work together to enact commonsense reforms that will help make what happened at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School a pivotal moment in our Nation's history—not because it was one of the deadliest school shootings, but because back then, 3 months ago, it was the last one. I hoped it would be the last one.

I am so proud of the students who spoke out and the parents who spoke

out, such as Fred Guttenberg, whose daughter was gunned down as she was trying to flee at the other end of the hall. That bullet from that AR-15 caught her right in the spinal cord just as she was about to exit the hall. I thank Fred and others who have been speaking out, especially the students—so eloquent, so bold.

We all hoped that the shooting in Parkland was going to be the last one, but it was not. Here we go again. With the tragedy that took place in Parkland so fresh in our minds, here we go again. Our students deserve better. You have seen the articles since Friday's shooting about how students are frightened that their school will be next. Our schools and our communities deserve better. America deserves better than this. Our students certainly deserve better.

Since the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting, this Congress has passed two bills into law—only two. While this Senator supported both of those, they alone are not nearly enough. We can and we must do more.

You have heard me say over and over that we need to ban assault weapons and the long clips. We need to close the gun show loophole. We need a comprehensive, universal background check for the sale or the transfer of any firearm, regardless of where it is purchased.

By the way, those comprehensive background checks would have picked up red flags on the shooter in Parkland, who had some real mental problems. They would have also picked up the shooter in the Orlando Pulse nightclub 2 years ago because he had been on the terrorist watch list and had been taken off. If those kinds of things are picked up in a comprehensive background search, then—when a person goes to buy a gun, those kinds of things will be picked up.

We also need to do more to provide our students with access to the mental health professionals they need. Because of the NRA locking down their votes, if we are not going to get anything on assault weapons or the gun show loophole or a comprehensive background check, then surely we ought to be able to come together in a bipartisan way to do something about mental health.

I have met with parents and teachers and students across the State of Florida, and the one topic that keeps coming up is the lack of mental health services available to our children. How true is that in society at large? We are talking about school violence perpetrated by other students.

You will not like this statistic. Florida has 1 school psychologist for about every 2,000 students. That is according to a report from the Florida Association of School Psychologists. If you compare that to the nationally recommended ratio of 1 psychologist for every 500 to 700 students, that means Florida only has about one-fourth of the number of school psychologists it needs to properly care for its students—one-fourth, 25 percent. And that

is just Florida. Nationally, 35 million children in this country have had at least 1 traumatic experience, and nearly two-thirds of children have been exposed to violence. That is why we have another piece of legislation that Senators cosponsored to provide better care to children and their families who have experienced trauma.

We have finally done something with regard to PTSD and our veterans. Everybody understands that you don't actually have to get an injury to have PTSD. As a matter of fact, it can manifest itself years later. We are getting mental health counseling for our veterans, particularly those who have come home from a war zone.

Are these children now experiencing a war zone? Is the trauma they are experiencing at ages 12 through 17, at that tender age, not comparable to some of the trauma our young soldiers are now experiencing?

If we are going to be serious about curbing this type of violence that we are going to continue to see in children's schools—oh Lordy, we hoped that Parkland was the last one, but it was not, and there are going to be more. If we are going to be serious about this, we must hire more school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and other mental health professionals to get ahead of the problem and ensure that any student who needs help is able to get it.

Later this week, midweek, I will be introducing legislation aimed at doing exactly that—increasing the number of mental health professionals in our children's schools across the country. Kids suffering from trauma or depression or any other sort of mental problems shouldn't be denied the help they need because the school or the school district can't afford it.

The bill I will file on Wednesday—I hope with a whole bunch of Senators sponsoring—will provide grants to colleges and universities that set up programs to train future school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and other mental health professionals in the school districts that need them the most. It will create a Federal student loan forgiveness program for mental health professionals who take jobs in the districts that need them. That has often been a problem—not only the supply but getting the supply in the school districts that need them. This is not unlike the loan forgiveness we give to government workers or to, for example, doctors who will serve, practice, in an underserved area, such as a rural area. We do it for those professionals; let's do it for the mental health workers who are desperately needed in underserved areas, such as—which is obviously becoming apparent—our schools.

When we give our students the tools they need to succeed, such as access to mental health treatment, everyone is going to benefit. Our students know this. They have been asking for our help to make these services more available. Parents, teachers, and school ad-

ministrators across the country know this, too, and they are pleading for Congress to act.

Let's give our schools and our communities the help they need, the help they have been asking for. Let's start taking steps today to change the course in which the country finds itself with another school shooting last Friday. I hope many Senators cosponsor this legislation. We can't allow what happened in Parkland, FL, and in Santa Fe, TX, to become the new normal in this country. We have to do more to protect our kids in school and ensure that any student who needs mental health services is able to get those services.

I yield the floor.

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

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

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Dana Baiocco, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of seven years from October 27, 2017.

Mitch McConnell, Thom Tillis, Pat Roberts, John Cornyn, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Ron Johnson, Mike Rounds, Lindsey Graham, Johnny Isakson, John Boozman, James E. Risch, John Thune, Todd Young, John Hoeven, Cory Gardner, David Perdue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Dana Baiocco, of Ohio, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 102 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Alexander	Gardner	Perdue
Barrasso	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Risch
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Burr	Heller	Rounds
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Rubio
Collins	Inhofe	Sasse
Corker	Isakson	Scott
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Crapo	Lankford	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Tillis
Daines	Manchin	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	Moran	Young
Fischer	Murkowski	
Flake	Paul	

NAYS—45

Baldwin	Harris	Murray
Bennet	Hassan	Nelson
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Peters
Booker	Heitkamp	Reed
Brown	Hirono	Sanders
Cantwell	Jones	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Coons	Leahy	Udall
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	Menendez	Warren
Feinstein	Merkley	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden

NOT VOTING—6

Capito	Hoeven	Shaheen
Duckworth	McCaIn	Tester

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 49, the nays are 45.

The motion is agreed to.

The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, all postcloture time on the Baiocco nomination be considered expired at 12 noon tomorrow; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. For the information of all Senators, there will be two rollcall votes at 12 noon tomorrow: a vote on the confirmation of the Baiocco nomination for the CPSC, followed by a cloture vote on the veterans' healthcare bill.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING BILL MILLER

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to a true legend in South Louisville, KY: Pleasure