

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding rule XXII, the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 1 occur at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, 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 proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of William Pelham Barr, of Virginia, to be Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

HONORING THE MEMORY OF THE
VICTIMS OF THE SENSELESS AT-
TACK AT MARJORY STONEMAN
DOUGLAS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, a year ago this afternoon, I was sitting in my office in the Russell Office Building when a news report began to flash about a shooting at a high school in South Florida. I was the father at the time—in the case of one of my two older children—of a child who was still a high school student in South Florida. You would normally be interested, just in being a Senator from the State, but you would be most particularly interested as a parent. As it turns out, the incident and the shooting took place at a school that was about 50 miles—about 50 minutes—from my home, and we all know of the story and of the lives that were lost in this terrible tragedy.

On a personal level, it is clearly an issue that has affected me, first, because I am one of two Senators who represent the State. Every person who was impacted—every victim, everyone who was wounded—is a constituent of ours. Yet, as I have also pointed out, my two oldest children are the same ages as the victims. When you see the pictures and you hear the stories, you can't help but recognize the stories and the pictures, maybe just not individ-

ually. I didn't know any of the victims personally, but the stories are familiar. They are the stories of my children and their friends, who are of the same age and are at the same times in their lives.

It is impossible to fully comprehend unless you have gone through the loss of a child—by the grace of God, I have not—particularly under such tragic and traumatic circumstances. Throughout the last 12 months, as we have reached different milestones in my two daughters' lives, whether it was their proms or graduation days, or whether it was dropping off my oldest at college or attending a class ring ceremony for a junior, we have been almost reminded, for just a moment, of the parents who had expected to have been doing the same during this time of the year but have been unable.

I have learned a lot from those parents, many of whom I have gotten to know personally and have worked alongside, in the last year, on a number of issues. In the year that has passed, they have, as have the students, turned their grief into effective activism. The parents, in particular, are the ones with whom I have interacted the most here in Washington on a regular basis, and it is why I thought it appropriate to come to the floor today. I think they would say that the best way to honor the memories of the children they lost is to take actions that will work to make sure that no other parent will ever have to face this again.

Several of the parents have publicly described what happened a year ago today as the most avoidable mass murderer in American history, but what was it that enabled this to happen? Why was it avoidable? What could have been done to address it?

In the brief moments that we have here—my colleague from Florida will have additional statements as well—I want to point to some of the things we now know that we didn't know a year ago today or in the days that followed.

From it, not only should that spark outrage, but it should also spark ideas about how to fix those things so never again will any parent have to face what they did and none of my colleagues will have to stand here and give a speech like the ones my colleague from Florida and I have to give today.

At the outset, let me say that the credit for much of what I am about to speak about belongs to the extraordinary journalists at the South Florida Sun Sentinel, who have done a remarkable job over the last 10 months of revealing to the public many facts that would have been unknown otherwise.

At a time when there is so much debate about journalism and its role in our society and in public service and in politics, they deserve tremendous credit for bringing this to light, and I think it is an example of why journalism remains an important institution in our country.

A lot of the attention in this debate has been paid to the issues that we are

familiar with and have been debating long before this tragedy: a ban on certain weapons, universal background checks, taking on what is described as the gun lobby. These issues dominated the national media coverage, and support for these positions is not new. They predate this tragedy.

In our Republic, people most certainly have the right to advocate for this or against it. They have the right to lobby for it. They have the right to vote for candidates who support these positions and to vote against those who do not. They are valid issues to debate on public policy, but at the end of the day, neither go directly to the heart of this particular case and to the facts that led up to it.

At the heart of this is that the killer, the perpetrator of this terrible tragedy, was known to be dangerous for a long time by many people in positions of power and authority at the school district, the sheriff's office, and at the FBI, and no one did anything about it. This is now a documented fact.

Early in the days after this, we saw images of the sheriff and the superintendent lecturing people and talking about what a great job they had done, but the facts will show that it was their incompetence that allowed this to happen, and, then, even worse, they tried to cover it up.

There is an article entitled “Schools culture of tolerance lets students like [the killer] slide,” by Megan O’Matz and Scott Travis, reporters at the South Florida Sun Sentinel. I am going to read from it, and then I am going to introduce it into the RECORD. I am not going to read the whole article.

Here is how it opens:

Broward schools have grown so tolerant of misbehavior that students like [the killer] are able to slide by for years without strict punishment for conduct that could be criminal.

The culture of leniency allows children to engage in an endless loop of violations and second chances, creating a system where kids who commit the same offense for the 10th time may be treated like it’s the first. . . .

[The killer] was suspended at least 67 days over less than a year and a half at Westglades Middle School, and his problems continued at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. . . .

The South Florida Sun Sentinel obtained the killer’s discipline records, they reviewed discipline policies, and here is what they found:

Students can be considered first-time offenders even if they commit the same offense year after year.

The district’s claim of reforming bad behavior is exaggerated.

Lenient discipline has an added PR benefit for the district: lower suspensions, expulsions and arrests along with rising graduation rates.

It goes on to say:

Many teachers and parents say Broward has created a culture in which teachers are expressly told or subtly pressured not to send students to the administration for punishment so a school’s image is not tarnished.

One teacher who taught for 37 years in the district before retiring said she

retired early due to her concerns about student discipline.

Here is a quote:

It was so many things. I had three students bring knives to my classroom. One was out of the classroom for one day. Another had so many things on his record, he was gone for five days. None were expelled.

Part of this leniency is a program called the Promise program, which the superintendent of the district claims has a 90-percent success rate by keeping students from reoffending. That is a misleading statistic because, “A student can commit a subsequent infraction without being considered a repeat offender as long as it’s not the exact same violation, in the exact same year.

Each year they start with a clean slate.

In the interest of time, I ask unanimous consent that the rest of this article be entered into the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Sun Sentinel, May 12, 2018]

SCHOOLS' CULTURE OF TOLERANCE LETS STUDENTS LIKE NIKOLAS CRUZ SLIDE

(By Megan O'Matz and Scott Travis)

Broward Schools have grown so tolerant of misbehavior that students like Nikolas Cruz are able to slide by for years without strict punishment for conduct that could be criminal.

The culture of leniency allows children to engage in an endless loop of violations and second chances, creating a system where kids who commit the same offense for the 10th time may be treated like it's the first, according to records and interviews with people familiar with the process.

Cruz was suspended at least 67 days over less than a year and a half at Westglades Middle School, and his problems continued at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, until he finally was forced to leave.

The South Florida Sun Sentinel obtained Cruz's discipline records, reviewed discipline policies and found:

Students can be considered first-time offenders even if they commit the same offenses year after year.

The district's claim of reforming bad behavior is exaggerated.

Lenient discipline has an added PR benefit for the district: lower suspensions, expulsions and arrests along with rising graduation rates.

SCHOOL DISTRICT SHUTS DOWN INFORMATION AFTER STONEMAN DOUGLAS SHOOTING

The forgiving attitude goes beyond the schools' controversial Promise program, the target of considerable public scrutiny for enabling students to avoid criminal charges for misdemeanor offenses.

The program, the pride of Superintendent Robert Runcie, was designed to use counseling and mentoring to help students avoid the school-to-prison pipeline. Under former zero-tolerance policies, black students ended up suspended, expelled and arrested at rates that were widely disproportionate to their peers.

Desmond Blackburn, then Broward's chief school performance and accountability officer, specifically instructed teachers and staff in a video years ago to challenge and nurture students, while using suspensions, expulsions and arrests as “absolute last resorts.”

Now, many teachers and parents say Broward has created a culture in which teachers are expressly told or subtly press-

sured not to send students to the administration for punishment so a school's image is not tarnished.

Mary Fitzgerald taught for 37 years in the district before retiring from Sunrise Middle in Fort Lauderdale in 2016. She said she retired a year early due to her concerns about student discipline.

“It was so many things. I had three students bring knives to my classroom. One was out of the classroom for one day. Another had so many things on his record, he was gone for five days. None were expelled.”

NO ONE HEDED WARNING SIGNS ABOUT NIKOLAS CRUZ BEFORE SCHOOL SHOOTING

Safety concerns at Sunrise were brought up at faculty meetings. “The message out there is that the students are untouchable. Habitual negative behavior means nothing anymore,” state the minutes of a Faculty Council meeting on Feb. 2, 2015.

“My principal basically would tell me it was his job to market the school. He was adamant about not looking bad,” Fitzgerald said.

Runcie, in an interview with the Sun Sentinel, acknowledged there are complaints that discipline isn't consistently enforced.

In a memo to principals Wednesday, Runcie said he reinforced that “we have to be vigilant in reporting every incident so that we can ensure our students who are victims, as well as offenders, get the appropriate intervention and support.”

“We're going to try to make sure, from the top, we're sending the right message related to discipline and holding our schools accountable,” he said.

The superintendent said in the memo that he will propose the School Board create a Climate and Discipline Department to “better monitor and support school teams as they address students with major challenges and concerns.”

THE PROMISE PROGRAM

The Pine Ridge Education Center, just outside Fort Lauderdale, houses the Promise program, as well as secure classrooms for other children who have been expelled from their regular school but need supervision and guidance.

The principal describes it as a “school of promise and encouragement, not a school of punishment.” Students call it the “Zap School,” as in you've been “zapped” and sent there as punishment.

Runcie claims the Promise program has a 90 percent success rate at keeping children from re-offending, but that statistic can be deceiving.

A student can commit a subsequent infraction without being considered a repeat offender, as long as it's not the exact same violation, in the exact same year.

The following year, they start with a clean slate.

“It's extremely problematic,” said Tim Sternberg, a former assistant principal at Pine Ridge Educational Center who administered the Promise program. “You can develop a psyche that it is OK to commit crime because you can refresh the clock every year.”

Sternberg says he doesn't have confidence in the district's data. “They aren't tracking kids over time.”

Asked about kids starting each year anew, without marks against them from prior semesters, Runcie told the Sun Sentinel he will review it.

“We'll make whatever adjustments we need to. We review the discipline policy every year and have made some adjustments and continue to take feedback.”

INSIDE THE MATRIX

The district's Student Code of Conduct, first created in 2004-05, includes a com-

plicated discipline “matrix” that lists the prescribed punishment for a litany of offenses: skipping school, violating rules, being disruptive, having drugs, fighting, destroying property, committing a crime.

It was designed to help staff make fairer and more equitable decisions in handing out penalties. But potential punishments have become more lenient over the years.

More than five years ago, a high school student who used profanity toward a staff member would receive a three- to 10-day suspension. That was reduced to one to two days after the discipline chart was revised.

The first violation for disruptive classroom behavior called for an in-school suspension of one to five days. Later, it was reduced to a suspension of under one day.

Since the 2012-13 school year, suspensions have declined 27 percent, according to the Florida Department of Education. Incidents reported to law enforcement have fallen 8 percent. The number of arrests per 1,000 students: down 64 percent.

The district's menu of choices for dealing with rule-breaking students include detention, internal suspension, out-of-school suspension and expulsion, where children can be sent to an alternative education center.

Or another option: the Promise program.

UNDER ATTACK

Runcie is proud and protective of the program, which was launched under his leadership in November 2013 when the Broward Sheriff's Office, the Public Defender's Office, the NAACP, the state Department of Juvenile Justice and the State Attorney signed an agreement to reduce school-based arrests.

But the program is under attack because of widespread allegations that Cruz, the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooter, benefited from it.

Runcie had insisted that Cruz was not in the Promise program, but he did an abrupt shift this week and said Cruz had been referred to it in 2013 for vandalizing a bathroom. Cruz did not complete the three-day stint, the district said, but administrators haven't said why.

BROWARD SCHOOLS BACKTRACK ON GUNMAN NIKOLAS CRUZ'S PROMISE PROGRAM CONNECTION

A couple of months later, he was sent to a special school for children with severe emotional and behavioral disorders. As a tot, he was found to be developmentally delayed and had been considered a special needs child in school, entitled to certain services and protections under law.

Some parents and community leaders have criticized the superintendent for misleading the public about Cruz, and the school district appears not to be able to make sense of all of the records it has on him.

“To me, it's an indication that the various discipline programs in place at the district are confusing, poorly implemented and executed, and clearly if we take the district at its statement, they've been difficult to track,” said Ryan Petty, whose daughter Alaina was one of 17 people shot to death in Cruz's Valentine's Day massacre. “If the records are this difficult to find, clearly it would be difficult to know whether this is helping students or not.”

Despite Cruz's history of discipline problems, neither the schools nor police ever steered him to the justice system.

Mr. RUBIO. The second article—I will be brief on this—is from the Sun Sentinel, by Scott Travis: “Broward schools fought against 2013 plan for more security money.”

They turned down a proposal to levy \$55 million in tax dollars for school safety, and one of the quotes is this:

One of the school board members slammed the proposal. They said they'd rather ask voters for money to improve technology and renovate old schools, which they did in November of 2014.

In hindsight, that was a terrible mistake.

There is another article from the Sun Sentinel: "What's being done to stop another school shooting." Again, it is a very long article. I will just say this:

Once he decided to shoot up a school, there wasn't much to stop [the killer].

His threats were ignored, the campus was wide open, the school doors were unlocked and students had nowhere to hide.

What has changed after 10 months since the shooting? This was back on December 29, 2018.

At least a quarter of campuses do not have single-entry points to control intruders. Safe spaces to protect children in classrooms haven't been identified.

The killer wasn't welcome at that high school, by the way.

He was known by former classmates and even administrators as a potential school shooter. And still he walked right onto campus.

It goes on to say:

[The killer] didn't keep his homicidal urges quiet. But the schools incompetently handled the threat he represented to his fellow classmates and teachers.

[The killer's] lust for violence had been documented officially 69 times in his life. At least 30 people knew of his troubling behavior before the shooting.

In fact, I have here with me the record of those 69 discipline points. It is extensive, and I ask unanimous consent that that record be entered into the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

The table below shows the history of incidents involving Nikolas Cruz as reported by school officials during his time at Westglades Middle School and Marjory Stoneman Douglas High. In between those schools, Cruz attended Cross Creek, a public school in Pompano Beach for students with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Date	School	Type of incident
5/15/12	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
5/17/12	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
5/30/12	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
6/5/12	WESTGLADES	DISOBEDIENCE/INSUBORDINATION
8/12/12	WESTGLADES	Profanity towards Staff
8/28/12	WESTGLADES	FIGHTING
2/20/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
2/20/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
2/25/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
3/4/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
3/4/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
3/11/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
3/11/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
3/20/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
4/8/13	WESTGLADES	FALSE ALARM/911
4/10/13	WESTGLADES	OUT OF ASSIGNED AREA
4/10/13	WESTGLADES	RULES VIOLATION (Includes Classroom Rules)
4/17/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
4/17/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
4/22/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
5/6/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
5/20/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY DIRECTED TOWARDS STAFF MEMBER
5/21/13	WESTGLADES	OUT OF ASSIGNED AREA
5/22/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
8/23/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTION ON CAMPUS (MINOR)
8/27/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
9/3/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
9/11/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
9/16/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
9/18/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
9/23/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
9/24/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
9/30/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
10/1/13	WESTGLADES	LEVEL 3 BUS VIOLATION
10/2/13	WESTGLADES	LEVEL 3 BUS VIOLATION
10/3/13	WESTGLADES	VANDALISM <\$1000
10/15/13	WESTGLADES	DISOBEDIENCE/INSUBORDINATION
10/22/13	WESTGLADES	DEFIANCE OF AUTHORITY/HABITUAL
10/29/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
10/29/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
11/4/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTIVE (UNRULY) BEHAVIOR
11/8/13	WESTGLADES	LEVEL 3 BUS VIOLATION
11/12/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY DIRECTED TOWARDS STAFF MEMBER
11/12/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY DIRECTED TOWARDS STAFF MEMBER
11/19/13	WESTGLADES	PROHIBITED/DISTRACTING ITEMS-POut-of-School Suspension
11/19/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTION ON CAMPUS (MINOR)
11/20/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTION ON CAMPUS (MINOR)
11/25/13	WESTGLADES	VANDALISM <\$1000
12/1/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY DIRECTED TOWARDS STAFF MEMBER
12/12/13	WESTGLADES	ASSAULT (VERBAL)/THREAT—LOW LEVEL NON CRIMINAL
12/17/13	WESTGLADES	DISRUPTION ON CAMPUS (MINOR)
12/19/13	WESTGLADES	PROFANITY DIRECTED TOWARDS STAFF MEMBER
1/29/14	WESTGLADES	FALSE ALARM/911
2/24/16	STONEMAN	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
9/20/16	STONEMAN	FIGHTING MEDIUM
9/29/16	STONEMAN	PROFANITY/USE OF INSULTING/OBSCENE LANG
12/22/16	STONEMAN	PROFANITY DIRECTED TOWARDS STAFF MEMBER
1/19/17	STONEMAN	ASSAULT (VERBAL)/THREAT—LOW LEVEL NON CRIMINAL

Mr. RUBIO. Wrapping up on this point, there is another article from the Sun Sentinel entitled "Hide, deny, spin, threaten: How the school district tried to mask failures that led to Parkland shooting." It talks about efforts that were made by the school district to keep from the public the sorts of things that we are now finding out.

Finally, "Here's what the [school district] knew about the Parkland shooter" is another article that talks about, time and again, how this killer told people he was going to do this—not just one person, but multiple people—

and nothing was in place to do anything about it.

I wrap up with a couple of points. The first is that the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission empaneled by the State looked at these shootings and from it, I think, are pretty instructive of some of the things I hope we can work on together. It looked at a 20-year period and found that 48 individuals committed 46 of these attacks, and 35 were students, and 10 were former students. So 45 of the 48 were either students or former students.

It found that the most typical weapon used was a semiautomatic pistol. It found that 50 percent of these attacks were done with weapons that were taken from the home—not even purchased, but taken from the home. It found that in four of five incidents, at least one person had some knowledge that they were going to do this, and in more than half of the cases, at least two people knew they were going to do this.

It is on the basis of these discoveries, working with many of the parents whose children lost their lives a year

ago today, that last year we pursued on a bipartisan basis and passed the STOP School Violence Act, which provides, over a 10-year period, \$100 million a year for strengthening school security, providing school training to identify threats before they take action, and creating school threat assessments and crisis intervention. That has passed.

It is why this year I have reintroduced the Extreme Risk Protection Order and Violence Protection Act, which will dedicate the Department of Justice funds to incentivize States to give law enforcement the authority to prevent individuals that pose a threat to themselves or others the ability to purchase or possess firearms, so that if information like what was available to authorities in Parkland is available to people now, they can actually go to court—to prove their case with due process, and take the guns away from this person before they go out and commit this crime. More importantly, they can alert their parents to secure the guns at home so they don't use that gun to commit the crime.

I have also introduced a bipartisan bill, the Threat Assessment Prevention and Safety Act. It creates a task force of experts to provide recommendations for a national strategy to keep our communities safe from targeted violence through threat assessment and management, which experts say is the best way to identify potential killers before they act.

If something like this had been in place, it is highly likely that authorities, putting all this together—what we know today—would have said this individual is a serious threat and we need to do something about it before they take action.

And, finally, yesterday, Senator GRASSLEY and I reintroduced the EA-GLES Act, which would reauthorize and expand the U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center to help communities proactively mitigate threats of violence in schools.

It is my hope that this terrible tragedy and what we have learned about it will guide us and will provide us a road map of concrete steps that we can take to empower communities, schools, and police departments and parents and families with the tools they need, not just to identify people who are potentially violent but to prevent it from happening and to get out ahead of it—maybe it is a risk assessment or maybe it is institutionalized mental health or wraparound services, but anything that can be done.

I raise all of this today because if you were to speak to the families, as I know my colleague from Florida and I often do, they will tell you that the most important thing we can do to honor the memory of their children whom they lost in this terrible tragedy is to make sure it doesn't happen to anybody else.

Now, there is one more thing we would like to do to honor the victims of this tragedy. My colleague Senator

SCOTT and I have put forth a resolution that commemorates this day. It honors the survivors. It pledges continued support for their recovery. It recognizes the strength and resiliency of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and the community that surrounds it. It expresses gratitude to the emergency medical and healthcare professionals of the community for their efforts in responding and caring for the victims and survivors. Most of all, it commemorates the victims who were killed in the attack, and it offers the Senate's heartfelt condolences and deepest sympathies to the families, loved ones, and friends of the victims.

Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 71, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 71) honoring the Memory of the Victims of the Senseless Attack at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School 1 Year Ago.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. RUBIO. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, 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 resolution (S. Res. 71) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

Mr. RUBIO. I yield the floor.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senator from Florida be given 3 minutes to speak on the resolution of his colleague from Florida, and then I speak on leader time, to be followed immediately by Senators WHITEHOUSE, SCHATZ, and MERKLEY.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, I thank my colleague Senator RUBIO for standing with me to remember the victims and their families on this tragic anniversary and for his unwavering commitment to school safety.

Alyssa Alhadeff, Scott Beigel, Martin Duque Anguiano, Nicholas Dworet, Aaron Feis, Jaime Guttenberg, Chris Hixon, Luke Hoyer, Cara Loughran, Gina Montalto, Joaquin Oliver, Alaina Petty, Meadow Pollack, Helena Ramsay, Alex Schachter, Carmen Schentrup, Peter Wang—one year ago today, these 17 souls were taken from us in a brutal act of violence. They were sons and daughters, brothers and

sisters; they were students and athletes and musicians and teachers. Not a day goes that I don't think about that day and the amazing people who were snuffed out by the deranged actions of a madman.

Over the course of the last year, I have spent countless hours with the families of the victims. Unfortunately, I wish we had never met like this. They have been partners in our efforts to ensure that this never happens again. We worked together, along with educators, mental health professionals, and law enforcement, to pass the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act, to make sure our State does everything in its power to prevent tragedies like this from happening again.

Today, the State of Florida stands united with heavy hearts. Nothing we say here today can bring back the lives that were lost. Nothing we do can replace the angels of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School who were taken from us too soon. But we must never forget them. We must honor their memory every day, and we must rededicate ourselves to the goal of ending violence in our schools.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, later today we will vote on the agreement by the conference committee to keep the government open, as well as provide additional border security. Once again, I applaud the members of the conference committee and their staffs. They were the nub here, and they did outstanding work, nights and weekends, to reach an agreement. We knew that if the conference committee were allowed to work, they could bring this together. The agreement is a validation of the idea that when you put Members of both parties in a room to negotiate in good faith, when everyone is willing to give and take, progress is never out of reach. So, again, I thank the members of the committee.

The agreement is a reasonable compromise. It provides additional funding for smart, effective border security. It does not fund the President's wall, but it does fund smart border security initiatives that both parties have always supported, including increased security at our ports of entry and humanitarian assistance at our border. Most importantly, it will keep our government open.

Everyone, I believe, including the President, wants to avoid a repeat of what happened before Christmas. Everyone wants to avoid another senseless government shutdown. I expect Congress will pass this bill sometime this afternoon, and President Trump should sign it immediately.