

other fronts relating to the VA. His efforts, such as the VA MISSION Act, have helped bring accountability, efficiency, and trust back to the department.

As the junior Senator from Georgia, I have had the great pleasure of working directly with JOHNNY on a number of other issues affecting our State. Each time, I saw firsthand how effective JOHNNY ISAKSON really is. I have likened him to the Howard Baker of our era. He speaks softly, but when he speaks, people listen.

Working with JOHNNY, we broke the politic logjam to provide much-needed disaster relief for farmers in south Georgia just this year. We secured funding for the deepening of the Port of Savannah after 20 years of trying to get that port deepened just 5 feet. We solved the tax problem under his leadership for Plant Vogtle, which secured funding for the first two nuclear reactors built in this country in the last 30 years, and he helped pass the First Step Act, which makes our justice system fairer, while still deterring criminal behavior.

These achievements would not have been possible without JOHNNY's steady hand and his leadership. When he speaks, people listen. He gets the job done. He understands what priority means; yet JOHNNY isn't the kind of leader who gives orders and makes demands. He is someone who leads from a place of respect, compromise, and understanding with both sides of the aisle. With JOHNNY, it doesn't matter who you are or what party you are in or where you are from. He is always there to talk and always ready to listen.

JOHNNY ISAKSON is exactly the kind of servant leader that the Founding Mothers and Founding Fathers envisioned for our country. It is what makes him a true statesman, and it is a model I am sure our Founding Mothers and Founding Fathers would indeed be very proud of today.

Of course, the road has not always been easy for JOHNNY—not every battle has been won, not all news has been good. What I have always admired about JOHNNY, though, is his stalwart resilience. Whenever circumstances have tried to knock him down, he always gets back up with a smile, and he keeps serving others. You know you feel guilty when you are around JOHNNY ISAKSON when you are having a bad day and JOHNNY says: How are you doing? You better say great because he is going to give you that same answer.

As he and Dianne head into this next chapter of their life, I have no doubt that JOHNNY will continue to serve others and help make our world a better place because that is exactly who he is.

Scripture tells us in Matthew 23 that "The greatest among you will be a servant." When you consider all that JOHNNY has done, it is clear to me that JOHNNY ISAKSON truly is the greatest among us.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

#### GUN CONTROL MEASURES

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, to my right is an August 11, 2019, cover from the Washington Post. It shows the faces of the 423 people killed in mass shootings between the Sandy Hook massacre in 2012 and the recent shooting in Dayton, OH. This is more than a third of the 1,196 people killed in mass shootings since 1966, so shootings have grown dramatically in this country. This should not be the face of America.

I think we have got to do much more to stop the plague of gun violence that continues to take the lives of the most innocent among us, including the 20 small beautiful children who lost their lives that December in Newtown. I have their photo at home, and I look at it almost every day, and it is indeed a heartbreaker.

Today, I would like to speak about a few bills that I believe the Senate should be voting on right now. Specifically, we should be voting on requiring universal background checks, banning assault weapons, banning high-capacity magazines, and supporting enactment of extreme risk laws.

The House passed a strong bill on universal background checks that has been sitting on Leader McCONNELL's desk now for more than 200 days. According to a Washington Post-ABC News poll, 89 percent of Americans support universal background checks, and that includes 83 percent of Republicans; yet that bill sits on Leader McCONNELL's desk.

We have seen even more lives lost in the last several weeks while this bill languishes on the Senate calendar. The shootings in Gilroy, Dayton, El Paso, Midland-Odessa took the lives of 41 people, including a 6-year-old boy named Steven Romero. A background check could have prevented the shooter in Odessa and Midland from getting his gun.

Unfortunately, he was able to purchase a firearm through a private sale that does not require a background check, and still, we wait for a vote on this bill to close the gaping loopholes of our background check system. Please, Leader McCONNELL, let us vote on this bill.

Sadly, what has become all too common is that each of the shootings I mentioned involved an assault weapon. The Gilroy shooter used a WASR 10, which is an AK-47 style semiautomatic weapon. The rifle was equipped with a 75-round drum magazine. In this case, the shooter intentionally crossed into Nevada to purchase the gun, as the sale of assault weapons is banned in California. The Dayton shooter used an AM15 assault rifle equipped with a 100-round drum magazine. The El Paso shooter also used a WASR 10 rifle, and the shooter in Midland and Odessa used an AR-15-style rifle.

These are weapons of war, plain and simple. Their main function is to kill as many people as possible. In fact, in

two of these shootings—Gilroy and Dayton—law enforcement arrived in less than a minute, but in that time, dozens of people had been injured or killed.

I strongly believe that reinstating the Federal ban on assault weapons could have saved some of the lives that have been recently lost. As the New York Times reported in an op-ed titled, "That Assault Weapons Ban? It Really Did Work," data shows that, compared with the decade before its adoption, the Federal assault weapons ban, in effect from September 1994 through 2004, was associated with a 25-percent drop in gun massacres—a massacre is from 6 to 8 people—and a 40-percent drop in fatalities from 81 to 49. We need to reinstate the Federal assault weapons ban. It worked before, and it will work again.

We also need to ban high-capacity magazines. My legislation to ban assault weapons includes this provision, and there are standalone bills as well. Just a few weeks ago, at Northern Police Station in San Francisco, I had the opportunity to examine a 100-round magazine personally—two rounds that fit on a rifle or a revolver. I couldn't believe it, 100 rounds that could be used just round after round after round so easily. It is lightweight. It is simple to use. It is diabolical. And the only purpose of it is to kill as many people as possible as fast as possible.

Keeping high-capacity magazines out of the hands of mass shooters is particularly important because, many times, shootings are only stopped when the shooter has to pause and reload. In 2011, the shooter in Tucson, who shot then-Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, was only stopped when bystanders wrestled the shooter to the ground after he stopped firing to reload. Civilians have no use for these devices, so all they are doing is costing innocent life.

Finally, the Senate should be considering legislation on extreme risk laws. Seventeen States and the District of Columbia already have them. These laws allow family members and law enforcement to go to court before a judge and get a temporary lawful order to keep a gun out of the hands of someone who is dangerous. These orders involve judicial findings, presentation of evidence, and court proceedings that protect people's due process rights. There is legislation, too. It is called the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2019. It would create new grants to incentivize States to enact their own extreme risk laws.

The House Judiciary Committee recently passed companion legislation, and polls have shown the majority of Americans support these measures.

According to the same Washington Post-ABC News poll I mentioned earlier, 86 percent of Americans support these measures—86 percent, including 85 percent of Republicans.

I hope Members will listen to this because these are needless deaths and

needless murders. They need not have happened. Simply put, this body and the Senate Judiciary Committee should really be taking action today to protect against gun violence.

Last week, the House Judiciary Committee passed three bills that would ban high-capacity magazines, would prohibit people convicted of hate crimes from possessing firearms, and would incentivize States to create extreme risk laws. I am so disappointed our colleagues on the other side of the aisle have blocked these commonsense measures for years, and I would appeal to them: Please, it is time for us to act. We cannot let another mass shooting go by and not take even these simple steps.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I come to the floor to recognize the critical moment that is before us as a country. We have an opportunity to make real progress on bipartisan gun reforms that will help keep our communities safer while respecting our treasured Second Amendment rights.

America's epidemic of gun violence continues to devastate communities and families across our Nation. Last month, in just August alone, mass shootings in El Paso, in Dayton, and in Odessa claimed the lives of more than 50 innocent Americans. Individual Americans, meanwhile, fall victim to gun violence every single day. Whether through suicide or homicide, they take far too many lives far too early. Just this past weekend, four Delawareans in my hometown were shot, and in 2017, up and down my home State, 111 Delawareans were killed by firearms. Guns are now the third leading cause of death for Delaware's children under age 17.

Folks, these are not just numbers; each gun death is a son, a daughter, a neighbor, a congregation member, or a friend.

In a recent meeting with Moms Demand Action in my office in Wilmington, I listened to young parents who were confronting for the first time the reality of active shooter drills in schools as they sent their children to school for the first time and had them come home and ask questions about why we as parents could not do more to keep them safe in school.

Viewing this ongoing crisis through the eyes of our children—those who are told to be quiet, to hide in a closet, to wait out a moment of sheer terror—is a reminder that our children are scared, that our families are scared, that our neighbors are scared, and that we can

and must do more to address this epidemic.

Some of the most crucial steps we take must be taken at the Federal level. Yet, to make progress, the party that controls this body and this floor has to join hands with those of us in my party—those willing to work across the aisle in a responsible way—and lead. Frankly, more than anything else, as has been said by the Republican majority leader, President Trump needs to take a clear and firm position and stick to it. The American people deserve no less. If this body is going to take up and pass gun control legislation, it will require our President to lead.

I think bringing bipartisan bills to the floor here for a vote is a great place to start. I want to talk for a few minutes about one of those bills that I introduced with Republican Senator PAT TOOMEY, of the neighboring Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, called the NICS Denial Notification Act.

It has a simple objective. For those who are prohibited by law from owning a weapon—those who are convicted felons or who have been adjudicated mentally ill—but who go to a firearms dealer, fill out the background check form, lie on it, and say they are able to buy a gun but get denied, get turned down once that NICS background check is run, what do you think happens with that information? Where does the information go showing that convicted felons are trying to buy weapons once they have been denied?

In my home State, it goes nowhere. In 34 States, it goes nowhere. In States across the country, not just in Delaware but in New York, Kentucky, and Texas, local law enforcement may never learn about a convicted felon who is actively trying to buy a gun and who is often committing another offense by lying about it in that attempt. Our bill would fix that.

It requires Federal authorities to alert State law enforcement of any background check denial so State authorities can decide whether to investigate or to prosecute or to go and pay a visit to someone given this important and imminent sign of an intention to engage in criminal activity.

It also requires our Federal Department of Justice to publish an annual report with statistics about its prosecution of background check denial cases so we in Congress and so folks around the country can better enforce our existing gun laws.

What I hear, time and again in townhalls back home in Delaware, is that folks want us to enforce our existing gun laws more thoroughly and more wisely, and that is exactly what this proposal would do.

In Delaware, I have met with and heard from law enforcement leaders up and down our State. The chiefs of police from our State police, our county police, and our municipal police have uniformly said they would welcome the information of those convicted felons

in their towns, in their counties, or in our State who are trying to get their hands on guns.

At a hearing back in May in the Senate Judiciary Committee, Chairman LINDSEY GRAHAM said this proposal was a painfully obvious bipartisan bill that we should take up and pass. He has committed to me that he would like to see it pass committee. There are a lot of other Senators who agree, not just Democrats like Senators DUCKWORTH, JONES, and KLOBUCHAR but also friends from across the aisle. Senators PERDUE, RUBIO, and COLLINS have joined in cosponsoring this, and I know there are other Senators who are eager or who are willing to join in the days ahead. The NICS Denial Notification Act is exactly the sort of commonsense, narrowly crafted bipartisan bill that would pass the Senate tomorrow if Leader McCONNELL would bring it to the floor for a vote.

Simply put, bills like this and bills such as we discussed at that hearing on the Committee on the Judiciary regarding extreme risk protection orders provide an appropriate way for there to be due process protections for demonstrably mentally ill individuals who threaten harm to others by having their guns removed from them for a brief period or for there to be universal background checks, such as legislation that advanced in the House 6 months ago on a bipartisan basis. These sorts of proposals can help to keep guns away from people who should not have them.

It is clear to me, from poll after poll, survey after survey, and tragic story after tragic story, that the American people want us to act, and they want us to act on background checks. We should vote on the Senate companion to H.R. 8. It is long past time for our leader, the majority leader, to join with the majority of the country and put that bill on the Senate floor.

Just last week, the House Committee on the Judiciary passed the Keep Americans Safe Act, which would prohibit the high-capacity magazines that have been used in so many of these recent, tragic mass shootings. If the leader were to bring this to the floor and it were to pass, it, along with all of the other bills I just referenced, would help to save lives.

It is my hope that our President will see this moment as an opportunity for real leadership and will listen to the majority of Americans, the majority of Democrats, the majority of Republicans, and the majority of gun owners who would like to see us act in a responsible and bipartisan way in order to reduce the easy access criminals have to guns and will take an important step forward in making our country, our schools, our communities, and our families safe.

What I hear back home in Delaware is that the overwhelming majority of Americans are sick and tired of our thoughts and prayers after every shooting. They would be so much more

inspired if we actually took the risk of enacting legislation together. I think it is long past time for us to do just that, and I hope we will in the days ahead.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Howery nomination?

Mr. LANKFORD. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 32, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 285 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Barrasso	Grassley	Paul
Blackburn	Hassan	Perdue
Blunt	Hawley	Portman
Boozman	Hoeven	Risch
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Romney
Burr	Inhofe	Rounds
Capito	Isakson	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Sasse
Collins	Sasse	Scott (FL)
Coons	Kaine	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Shah
Cotton	King	Shelby
Cramer	Lankford	Tester
Crapo	Lee	Udall
Cruz	Manchin	Van Hollen
Daines	McConnell	Warner
Enzi	McSally	Whitehouse
Ernst	Moran	Wyden
Fischer	Gardner	
Gardner	Murkowski	
Graham	Paul	
Graham	Grassley	

NAYS—32

Baldwin	Feinstein	Rosen
Bennet	Gillibrand	Schatz
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Schumer
Brown	Hirono	Smith
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cardin	Leahy	Tester
Carper	Markey	Udall
Casey	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murray	Whitehouse
Duckworth	Peters	Wyden
Durbin	Reed	

NOT VOTING—6

Alexander	Harris	Sanders
Booker	Roberts	Warren

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the remaining votes in this series be 10 minutes in length.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. 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 Robert A. Destro, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

Mitch McConnell, David Perdue, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, Shelley Moore Capito, Kevin Cramer, John Boozman, Steve Daines, Richard Burr, James E. Risch, Roy Blunt, Thom Tillis, Martha McSally.

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 Robert A. Destro, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) would have voted “yea.”

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 49, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 286 Ex.]

YEAS—49

Barrasso	Blunt	Braun
Blackburn	Boozman	Burr

Capito

Cassidy

Hyde-Smith

Romney

Cornyn

Inhofe

Rounds

Rubio

Cotton

Isakson

Sasse

Cramer

Kennedy

Scott (FL)

Crapo

Lankford

Scott (SC)

Daines

Lee

Shelby

Enzi

McConnell

Sullivan

Ernst

McSally

Thune

Fischer

Moran

Tillis

Gardner

Murkowski

Toomey

Graham

Paul

Wicker

Grassley

Perdue

Wicks

Hawley

Portman

Young

Hoeven

Risch

NAYS—44

Rhoeven

Reed

Baldwin

Rosen

Bennet

Schatz

Blumenthal

Brown

Cantwell

Jones

Cardin

Kaine

Carper

King

Casey

Klobuchar

Collins

Leahy

Coons

Manchin

Cornyn

Markey

Cotton

Menendez

Cramer

Duckworth

Durbin

Merkley

Feinstein

Murphy

Gillibrand

Murray

Hoeven

Peters

Roeven

Reed

Booker

Roberts

Cruz

Sanders

NOT VOTING—7

Alexander

Harris

Booker

Roberts

Cruz

Warren

Thune

Whitehouse

Wyden

Wyden

McSally

Thune

Casey

Whitehouse

Wyden

Wyden

McSally