

PROTECT AND SERVE ACT

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, across the country, Americans watched in horror as news stations reported the shooting of two sheriff's deputies in Los Angeles, who were brutally targeted by a murderous, violent criminal.

In North Carolina, just 2 days earlier, sheriff's deputy Ryan Hendrix, a father of two young children, a man planning to get married, was murdered in cold blood while responding to a family under siege by an evil criminal.

So far in 2020 alone, 37 law enforcement officers have been murdered by violent criminals and hundreds have been wounded while protecting our communities.

Despite these senseless deaths and the gruesome violence against police, there are those who support radical ideas like defunding or abolishing the police. These dangerous policies would allow criminals to roam free throughout our communities, unchallenged and unafraid.

The agitators pushing to abolish the police have sown the seeds of discord in our country by disrespecting law enforcement and disregarding their brave service to our Nation. Just look at Asheville, NC. Since June 1, over 30 police officers have left the law enforcement profession. These brave men and women are tired of being attacked physically, emotionally, and personally, simply for trying to keep their communities safe, every single damn day.

They put on a uniform to go protect their community, not sure if they are going to come back safe, and they do it anyway, and we owe them a debt of gratitude. But they are sick of the opportunistic politicians like the Democratic leader and AOC attacking them for just doing their jobs.

Worst of all is the specter of targeted attacks like those against the deputies in Los Angeles. The harmful rhetoric being used by the radical, anti-police leftists encourages an environment of hostility, which emboldens criminals and murderers. The result is brazen attacks against law enforcement officers in broad daylight.

In light of the toxic environment being created in this country, which devalues police, I believe the Senate must act to protect law enforcement officers and show them our support. That is why I have introduced the Protect and Serve Act with 16 of my Republican colleagues.

The Protect and Serve Act would punish criminals who target law enforcement officers and harm them. These criminals will receive up to 10 years in prison, and if they murder or kidnap a law enforcement officer, they will get a life sentence.

It is sad that Congress even needs to consider a bill to protect police officers, but let me be clear: Attacks against any law enforcement officers are no laughing matter. Congress must pass the Protect and Serve Act immediately and boldly say there is no es-

cape from justice for dangerous criminals who intentionally assault or kill a law enforcement officer.

Today, I call on every single Democrat to support this commonsense legislation. The question is simple: Do you support the men and women in blue who fight every day to keep our communities safe or do you support lawless, reckless, liberal mobs who want to defund the police?

It is a yes-or-no question. You either back the blue or you back anarchy.

As long as I am a U.S. Senator I will do everything I can to protect our men and women who protect our communities every single day. I expect and they deserve no less.

I hope my Democratic colleagues can stand up to AOC, the Squad, and their radical liberal base and do the same. It is time to back the blue. It is time to restore safety in our communities. It is time to end the killing of law enforcement officers and people just trying to protect us every single day.

I yield the floor.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. LOEFFLER). 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.

ELECTION SECURITY

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I want to talk for a few minutes about securing our election process.

At various times, in the last 4 years, there have been different levels of reasons why the Federal Government needed to take over the election process. For a while, it was that the process was too easily infiltrated by outside influences, and then it was COVID-19, and it was important that everybody vote in different ways than they have ever voted before, and somehow only the Federal Government could manage that.

I would say that, in that, just as we look toward the 2020 elections, we have spent over \$1 billion. I think it is \$1.2 billion in funding from the Congress. We have had dozens of hearings in the Rules Committee, the Judiciary Committee, and the Homeland Security Committee. There was a 3½-year bipartisan investigation that I was part of as part of the Intelligence Committee, and we have looked at this about every way we can.

Right now, people across the country are beginning the process of casting their votes. This year, more than any other year up until now, we will have election day, but, really, we will have more like "election month," and, in some States, it is going to be "election 6 weeks" or "election 7 weeks."

So this process is starting right now. It is a process where people will decide who represents them in the White House and the Congress; or, in some

cases, in city hall; in many cases, the Governor's mansion; and in almost all cases, the general assembly; and in all cases, the U.S. House of Representatives.

Confidence in the voting process is the thread that holds the fabric of democracy together. Every time we needlessly get into a discussion about whether this process is fair or safe, I think it is harmful. Every time we need to have that discussion about whether it is fair or safe, it is, of course, not only helpful but totally appropriate.

This is the time when we need to be sure that our work has brought us to a good conclusion, rather than talking about the fact that the system is not going to work. The system is going to work. As the chairman of the Rules Committee, where we have the principal election jurisdiction, or as a member of the Intelligence Committee, I spent a lot of time looking at this. I think we have been very serious in the Senate, particularly, in considering these issues and at looking at the threats to our election system itself.

I am not going to talk much in the next few minutes about false information and other things. In my view, all you have to do is turn on the television to find some false information and watch the campaign commercials. There is a nugget of truth, perhaps, but most of them—many of them have little more than a nugget of truth in them.

Sure, I am concerned about false information. I am particularly concerned about it if it comes from foreign governments, from those who wish our country ill. But there is a lot of information out there—a lot more information than there has ever been before—and people should be very thoughtful about the information they take in.

I am not going to talk a lot about that. I want to talk about the election system itself because, in my view, the election-day system is as secure as it has ever been. The registration system is as secure as it has ever been.

Four years ago, the Obama administration—a little later than this—said: There is a big problem, and we are going to declare the election structure a structure of national significance, and we are going to play a different role than we have ever played before.

There was no anticipation that this was going to happen and not much discussion.

Election officials all over the country immediately said: Oh, no, you are not. You are not going to just decide in October of an election year that you are going to take over the election system and declare it a system of national significance, a system of critical significance to the future of the Nation.

Of course it is, but it didn't become that in October of 2016.

But the message was clear that we needed to build those stronger ties with local and State election authorities. We needed to do everything we

could, as we saw the efforts by some foreign actors and some people in their basements trying to see if they could get into the voter registration system and do something with it. We have done more of that—well, we have done all we can think of, in my view. We did a lot of it before 2018, and that never stopped.

For 20 years, Congress has done all we can think of to help make the system work better. We have spent over \$1 billion in the past 4 years. We have encouraged them to update, and we have seen updates of antiquated systems. Systems that didn't have a ballot trail and other things have all been generally replaced, and where they haven't been, I think they are on even higher alert. We have helped them increase their cyber security. We have responded to COVID-19 with help to local governments, which in some cases was used for establishing polling places and even maybe paying extra to election judges.

While we provided those resources, it has been for a long time and still is up to local and State officials, who are the closest to the people they work for, to do everything they can to secure those elections. I spent about 20 years doing that, part of it as a local election official in Missouri, a county official, and part of it as the Missouri secretary of state, the chief election official.

Earlier this month, I had a chance to be in Kansas City when the county clerks and election authorities were all meeting. Most of them were there at a distanced meeting to talk about election responsibility. Others were virtually there to talk again about the absolute commitment they have made to the people they work for to conduct elections in a way that is both free and fair. I think that is what is going to happen.

Clearly, again, there are efforts by foreign adversaries—Russia, China, Iran, North Korea, and others—to interfere with our elections, but we want to be sure and I believe have been sure that Federal agencies have been providing the resources they needed to investigate bad actors, to punish bad actors, and to do everything they could to protect the American election system.

We are in a much different place than we were 4 years ago. Election authorities—State and, in many cases, local—know the name of the person at Homeland Security with whom they have had now a 4-year relationship or a 2-year relationship or a 1-year relationship, and when they get a call the day before the election, they are going to know that is a call from somebody who not only is there to help them that day but has been there to help them up until now.

The Rules Committee has held four hearings since the 2018 election—one on election security, one on how we are preparing for the 2020 election, one on oversight of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission, and in addition to

that, putting people on the Federal Election Commission to fill vacancies that had been there for a long time.

The Judiciary Committee has looked into things like the social media companies that are trying to stop disinformation.

Homeland Security has drawn out a roadmap and has put the kinds of protections into the system that you want to have in the system for equipment that counts votes, the registration system that is available on election day.

The Intelligence Committee, as I said before, conducted a 3½-year investigation on foreign meddling in the last election, and the administration is holding those perpetrators accountable.

The Justice Department has secured indictments against three Russian companies. Twenty-six people involved with Russia's influence campaign in 2016 have been impacted by that. The Justice Department has sanctioned 46 other people and 18 businesses.

One of the things we didn't have in 2016 was a cyber offense. We had a cyber defense and I think the best in the world at that moment—I hope it still is—but we didn't have a cyber offense.

I remember being in an Intel hearing in 2017—this was early 2017—when the question was put to our intel community: Have you ever been told by the President of the United States that you should have offensive action taken against these bad actors? The answer by all of them was no. But it was March or April of 2017. The President of the United States who hadn't given that direction for the previous years was not the current President, who, not too long after that, did give that direction.

By 2018, when we sought cyber offense, we had our own cyber offense. They know who they are, and they know the price they paid and the price they would pay again. Thousands of members of the intelligence community have been working to keep an eye on that part of keeping our elections secure.

Providing Federal support to State and local officials is the right approach. Frankly, I have been in favor of providing a little more yet this year, but that appears to be part of a bill that we just can't seem to agree to even though somewhere between the targeted Senate bill and the Problem Solvers' bipartisan bill in the House that was released a week or so ago, there is clearly a settlement there that would likely include a little more election security assistance. But we are getting pretty late to add much to the system; we need to now be sure that what is in the system really works. We don't need a Federal takeover.

Many of you heard me say before that late in 2016, President Obama said: "There is no serious person out there who would suggest somehow that you could even rig America's elections, in part because they're so decentralized in

the numbers of votes involved." I think he is exactly right. The diversity of the system is the strength of the system.

I personally think the best place to vote is at a polling place on election day. I don't always get to vote that way. But if you want to have all the information that happens between the start of the campaign and the day you vote, the only way you get that is voting on election day. If you want to see your ballot go into a ballot box or into the counting system and know that happened, you better get that on election day.

But many people will vote in other ways, particularly this year. Usually, the other ways are a little more complicated, but they are still protected by comparison of signatures in most States. Usually, there is still going to be included an indication on the voter roll that goes to the polling place that somebody has already received another ballot. There are safeguards there.

For reasons we all understand, more people are going to vote earlier in this election than ever before. I know our election officials in our State and I suspect all over the country are planning for what they can do to still have the most information available possible on election night, but it is unlikely that we are going to know everything we want to know on election night.

If you don't want to vote at a polling place on election day or can't vote at a polling place on election day, you should still vote. Confidence in everything you hear or read should not be complete, but I think confidence that the election system itself is going to tabulate the results that came in and the votes that were cast is a pretty safe bet.

Politics can become heated and noisy during an election season, but at the end of the day, the American people need to understand that we are doing all we can to give them the ability to cast their ballots with minimal obstacles and maximum confidence that what happens on election day is what the voters voted to do on election day.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PERDUE). The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 20 minutes.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, this is a "Time to Wake Up" good news-bad news speech.

The good news from last week is on business community support for carbon pricing. What is carbon pricing? Well, remember that IMF—the International Monetary Fund—pegs the fossil fuel subsidy in the United States at more than \$600 billion per year, so the energy market is dramatically tilted to favor fossil fuels. Carbon pricing helps