

consciousness of America so that now more than 90 percent of Americans support universal background checks.

A comparable number support emergency risk protection orders known as red flag statutes. Seventeen States now have them and increased substantially after Parkland, and they are not alone. They are joined by survivors from countless communities—too many communities. They are joined by law enforcement officials, first responders, and emergency room nurses and doctors who have the firsthand education about what gun violence does to a human body and a human mind. They are joined also by advocates and activists and community leaders from every community across the country because this epidemic affects everyone. They are the true leaders of this movement, and I am proud to stand with them today as I do every day.

My hope is that a new Congress will break this complicity and that we will move forward, that a new Congress will break the inaction, and then a new President will change the dynamic, not only in this Congress but in the country, and take advantage of the historic opportunity we have.

With a new administration, we have not only this momentous opportunity but also a moral imperative. We have that opportunity to enact strong, commonsense gun violence prevention measures and, in addition, although no substitute for legislative action, strong Executive action to enhance the effectiveness of background checks, to stop the spread of ghost guns, to take other measures that are within the power of the President alone, and to make sure that we explore and use every possible opportunity.

The States will continue acting alone if the Federal Government fails to join them. States like Connecticut and others around the country who want to protect their citizens will continue to be proactive.

We mark this painful anniversary with renewed resolve—resolve to continue to honor, with positive action, those whose lives were lost at Sandy Hook but also to redouble our efforts to educate and enlist our fellow citizens. It is long past time; 8 years is a long time—much too long for this inaction.

Our hearts still ache. Our anger still burns. Our grief and pain are still there. For those families, they will never go away. But make no mistake, this pandemic is no excuse for inaction. If anything, COVID-19 has raised the number of gun purchases and increased the number of guns posing dangers in our neighborhoods. It has heightened the stress and anxiety of people who might use those guns in incidents of domestic violence. It has expanded the jeopardies of suicide and self-destructive behavior.

We have no excuse for inaction because of the pandemic. We have every reason to feel a greater sense of urgency now, in the midst of this pan-

demic, to stop the epidemic of gun violence.

Let us draw from the strength and fortitude of these brave families and loved ones—not only in Sandy Hook but survivors and loved ones everywhere—and say, finally, boldly, unapologetically, that enough is enough. Enough is enough.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

COLLEGIATE ATHLETE AND COMPENSATION RIGHTS ACT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, those of you who have taken time out to watch college sports this fall—and I know there are many in this Chamber who have, and they know that the games this year have looked very different when you compare them to previous years' games. A lot has changed for these young players, but they are no less popular with their fans and no less important to the success and prominence of the academic institutions they represent.

For a while now, I have been joined by other members of the Commerce Committee as we have tried to resolve the tension that exists between the NCAA and college sports stars over a student athlete's right to earn compensation for the use of their name, image, or likeness. This is called the NIL issue.

Last week, Senator WICKER, who is chairman of the Commerce Committee, introduced the Collegiate Athlete and Compensation Rights Act, which would finally create a uniform national framework to allow student athletes to receive that compensation without the risk of losing their amateur status and without falling into traps set by dishonest outside parties looking to exploit their fame.

Normally, we don't make too much hay over a bill introduction, but just getting everyone to the table is a first step that student athletes have wanted to see happen for a while. And I thank Chairman WICKER and Senator MORAN for backing this legislation.

I do want to point out that the reason the Senate has stepped in is because the NCAA just never could get around to addressing this issue. They kept kicking the can down the road. They kept sending it to one committee and to another committee, and the NCAA has shown very little determination to solve this issue for these young athletes. Because the leadership at the NCAA has proven unable and has shown an inability to address this, we have stepped up to address this issue. Our student athletes deserve more respect than they have been shown by the NCAA.

(Mr. BOOZMAN assumed the Chair.)

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Now, Mr. President, on another topic, 2020 has been a very difficult year, but there have been a few rays of sunshine this year in spite of the quarantines and the social distancing.

We were still able to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amend-

ment and the suffragists who fought so diligently and consistently for 72 years for passage of the 19th Amendment. Much of this celebration of activism and equal rights focused on Nashville, TN, where the suffragists gathered in the summer of 1920. At the center of that battle for the votes sat the Hermitage Hotel, which served as the headquarters and played host to some of the most important negotiations surrounding the Tennessee Legislature's final vote on the amendment.

This year, the National Park Service honored the Hermitage Hotel and the suffragists who fought those battles by designating the site as a national historic landmark. As a female lawmaker, this designation was especially important to me. This Congress, I had the pleasure of serving here in the Senate alongside a fantastic group of women who were living proof of how far we have come since August 18, 1920.

Unfortunately, this year we were also reminded of how far we yet have to go.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. President, even before President Trump officially nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to fill Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's seat on the Supreme Court, liberals in the media and many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle unfortunately—well, they took it upon themselves to be the first to question Judge Barrett's fitness. But rather than attacking her record, they launched some truly insulting attacks on her religion, her family, her relationship with her husband, and her choice to balance a stunning career with a large, blended family.

You can count on the left to choose intellectual isolation, and you can count on them to look at a woman on the political right and say: If you are pro-family, pro-religion, pro-business, pro-military, pro-life, we do not want to hear from you.

Those attacks may have made the American people cringe, but they certainly didn't turn public opinion against Judge Barrett's confirmation. That campaign failed miserably. If anything, it provided a much needed reminder that, just like the fight for suffrage in the 1920s, the modern woman's fight for equality in 2020 is about more than succeeding in a single job or engaging in a single civic action; it is about exercising our right to participate in democracy and engage in the public square without having to throw ourselves at the mercy of the left's moving goalpost that they use to arbitrarily define what is and is not an acceptable way of life.

Justice Barrett is now the third Justice President Trump has placed on the Supreme Court. She is in good company because she is part of a class of 229 Federal judges confirmed so far under President Trump, 144 of them during this Congress. And I expect that we will see a few more join the ranks before we adjourn for Christmas, including two Tennesseans who are on this list.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. President, I would be remiss if I did not remind my colleagues that we still have a lot to do before we adjourn. This weekend's announcements about the first round of COVID-19 vaccines heading out for delivery were a very welcome addition to the news cycle. We owe a great deal of credit to the doctors and scientists who developed the vaccines; to those working behind the scenes through Operation Warp Speed to get those safe, effective vaccines approved; and to the truck-drivers, the shipping professionals, cold storage developers, and other essential workers pushing through a whole lot of overtime to get these vaccines in the hands of healthcare providers.

This morning, I was fortunate enough to stop by the grand opening of Cold Chain Technologies' Wilson County, TN, facility. The technology they have developed to preserve and transport these vaccines in a thermal container is truly impressive.

But don't forget that all across this country, millions of small business men and women and struggling workers are still waiting for us to agree on and pass another targeted—and I will say targeted—COVID relief legislation.

When I talked to Tennesseans this weekend, they aren't worried about politics or optics or unassociated wish list items. They want to see another round of PPP. They want to see a plus-up in unemployment insurance. They want to see money for vaccines, for testing, and for schools so that people can get back to work and children can get back to school. That is the relief Americans are looking for. And, I will add, the hesitancy from some across the aisle and over in the House Chamber, where they have admitted to playing politics with people's lives, has not set well with Tennesseans as we enter this Christmas season.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO THOMAS WILSON

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, this evening I want to take just a moment, in front of my colleagues, to recognize the contributions of a member of my staff: Thomas Wilson. Mr. Wilson has spent the last year working in our personal office as part of the Department of Veterans Affairs Congressional Fellowship Program.

As Thomas departs my office and returns to the Department of Veterans Affairs, I want to express my appreciation to him for his hard work and the dedication to serve veterans in Kansas and across the Nation. Thomas has served at the VA for more than 18 years. His selfless approach to service

has helped countless veterans receive the care and support that they have earned. He has surely been an asset to my team as we work to serve Kansans, servicemembers, and veterans.

Before joining our office, Thomas served as the legislative director to Congressman Harold Baker, a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. He served on the Bush transition team after leaving congressional service and then went on to serve in numerous roles at the VA. These included roles as a congressional liaison for the VA and, most recently, in the Veterans Experience Office.

He is a graduate of the National Defense University and has used his experience to benefit those who serve our Nation in uniform.

Thomas is fortunate to have his loving wife Ashley and son Chase by his side. They undoubtedly contribute to Thomas's altruistic nature, and he is blessed to have their support.

Thomas joined my office in January 2019, just as I was assuming the gavel of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. His experience navigating the VA proved immensely helpful to my personal and committee staffs as we set off to advocate for veterans from all walks of life.

He was especially helpful in advocating for women veterans. Thomas led the effort to study the employment rates of post-9/11 female veterans, a cohort of veterans that experiences higher unemployment rates, more than any other demographic.

His efforts will lead to policies to support female veterans and to make certain that they have the tools necessary to succeed after their service to our Nation.

It is sad to see Thomas leave the office, but I know that his return to the Veterans Experience Office next month will produce lasting results for the many veterans who regularly interact with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Thomas is an impressive public servant, and it has been a privilege to work with him. I hold him in the highest regard. He is a significant asset to our veterans and represents some of the best that our Federal Government has to offer.

Once again, thank you, Thomas, for all you have done for Kansans and for American veterans this year in association with us and our work. You have been a model of selfless service and leadership, and I know you will continue to do great things throughout your career and your life of service, wherever that path may lead.

WAIVING QUORUM CALL

Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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 Thomas L. Kirsch II, of Indiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit.

Mitch McConnell, James E. Risch, Mike Crapo, Roy Blunt, Shelley Moore Capito, Tom Cotton, John Cornyn, Chuck Grassley, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Cory Gardner, Lindsey Graham, Todd Young, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, John Barrasso.

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

The question, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on nomination of Thomas L. Kirsch II, of Indiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Seventh Circuit, 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. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS), and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) are necessarily absent.

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 265 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Ernst	Murkowski
Barrasso	Fischer	Paul
Blackburn	Gardner	Portman
Blunt	Graham	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Braun	Hawley	Romney
Burr	Hoeven	Rounds
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Collins	Johnson	Shelby
Cornyn	Kelly	Sinema
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cramer	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Tillis
Cruz	Manchin	Toomey
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	Young

NAYS—42

Baldwin	Hassan	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Jones	Schatz
Booker	Kaine	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Smith
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Coons	Menendez	Udall
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warren
Feinstein	Peters	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Reed	Wyden