

and he shot both of these brave officers. Tragically, Officer Shuping died at the scene. Thankfully, Officer Robinson is recovering at the hospital. Officer Shuping was just 25 years old—the same age as the officer we memorialized this week, Tyler Herndon.

I am just devastated by this. These brave officers had begun their careers in law enforcement and had nowhere to go but up. They were serving our community, and they were doing it with honor.

We talk a lot about the sacrifice given by law enforcement officers who day in and day out are serving our communities and putting themselves in harm's way, and it is dispiriting to think that these fallen officers, at the very beginning of their careers, have already made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of public safety and community safety.

Families in North Carolina and in each of our States are about to endure their first Christmas without their loved ones. We owe so much to these families whose parents, spouses, siblings, children, and grandchildren have given everything in the line of duty.

On Tuesday, when I spoke on Officer Herndon, I said that in the next Congress, I would be moving forward with the Protect and Serve Act again. This act increases penalties for people who murder or assault police officers. But in light of another police officer's death—the second one in a week in North Carolina, in the suburbs, just around the corner from where I live, 10 or 15 minutes away—I think we have to elevate the discussion now and send a very clear message to those who would harm police officers that if you do, then there are going to be dire consequences to pay for it. We owe it to the police officers to let them know that Congress cares about them. We should send this message.

This is a simple bill. It only focuses on those who are so brazen that they would murder a police officer in the line of duty, assault them, ambush them—all the things you have seen; now 48 murders in this year alone.

The best thing we can do is to pass this commonsense legislation and send a message to these people who are taking away the men and women serving our communities.

Mr. President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 4605 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, the Protect and Serving Act of 2020 that has been offered by my colleague and friend Sen-

ator TILLIS creates a new Federal crime that would punish assaults on law enforcement officers, including State and local officers, by up to 10 years and up to life if death results from the offense or the offense involves kidnapping, attempted kidnapping, or attempt to kill.

Let me say at the outset that I had a few seconds to communicate with my colleague before this official colloquy on the floor.

I say to the Senator, I sensed in your voice and what you told me how personal this is to you. This just isn't the killing of a law enforcement officer, which is a tragedy all of itself. It is your neighborhood. It is your community. As you said, some of these officers, you know their families, and it is very personal.

I want to say first, I offer my condolences to the families and colleagues of Officer Jason Shuping, who lost his life in Concord, NC, and Officer Tyler Avery Herndon, who lost his life in Mount Holly in the line of duty in North Carolina in the last few weeks. These are terrible tragedies.

We had a similar situation, of all places, in the Loop in Chicago just a couple of years ago—Commander Paul Bauer. What a spectacular man he was in service to the city of Chicago and the State of Illinois. He was murdered in the Loop. Unfortunately, his poor young family had to go through the ordeal not only of the funeral but also, then, of the trial of the suspect. I raise that only because Paul Bauer's assailant was successfully prosecuted by the State of Illinois and was given a life sentence just recently.

As is the case in most of these situations, to my knowledge, I would say to the Senator from North Carolina, every State, including his own, takes this very seriously and prosecutes cases of harm involving law enforcement officers.

The individual responsible for shooting Officer Shuping is dead. If he had lived, he would have been prosecuted for a capital offense in North Carolina. The individual who allegedly shot Officer Herndon has been indicted for first-degree murder in North Carolina.

So it raises the question, why is it necessary to create a Federal crime for something already being successfully prosecuted in every State in the Nation? Assaults on police officers are already criminalized with enhanced penalties, as they should be, and assaults on Federal officers are already Federal offenses. I have a lengthy list here, which I will not read to you, of all of the Federal statutes that already provide for punishment up to death and a life sentence for those Federal officers who would be shot or harmed in any way.

So let me say this to my friend and colleague from North Carolina: I thank you for standing up on the floor and bringing this matter to our attention. We should never overlook the fact that these men and women serve us self-

lessly and risk their lives in the process. It has happened here in the Capitol. It happens in every corner of America, sadly. But let's save this for another day. Let's take this up in the new Congress, which is about to start in just a few days. Let's address this issue, as well as the issue of how to make the plight of our law enforcement officers safer and more effective. To deal with issues involving that, I think, would be a balanced approach to this, which would serve justice.

For those reasons, I will object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I am obviously disappointed in the objection from my friend and colleague from Illinois, but I do believe that we have to start recognizing that something bad is happening—48 murders, hundreds of assaults, ambushes, premeditated attacks.

I do understand the idea that maybe you could prosecute it through existing law, your Federal or State law, but we have an epidemic of "abolish the police, defund the police," marginalizing the police, that suggests to me that even if there are pathways now to properly prosecute these brazen criminals, we have to cut through some of the rhetoric that, honestly, I believe is the responsibility for some of these unprecedented numbers of murders and assaults.

So although I am disappointed with the objection today, I look forward to working with my colleague on the Judiciary and others to do everything we can to pass the Protect and Serve Act and to send a very clear message to these increasingly less safe communities and more threatened law enforcement officers that we are going to do everything we can to make our communities safe and to make a police officer's job as safe as it can be.

Thank you.

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

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

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, there is a lot going on and not enough of some things we really need to go on going on.

But I think it is worth noting again—lest the moment be lost somehow in all the back and forth and all the chaos—that we have reached a watershed moment in the war against COVID-19.

As you know, the first successful vaccine was approved last week. I watched online as the Vice President of the United States and his wife received the vaccine. I applaud them for demonstrating their confidence, which should be all of our confidence, that this vaccine is not only effective but also safe.

In my State of Texas, it is estimated that there will be a million people vaccinated by the end of this month. That is a modern medical and logistical miracle.

Yesterday—the news keeps getting better—the FDA's expert advisory panel recommended the Agency approve a second successful vaccine, meaning millions more doses, over and above the Pfizer vaccine, could be headed out the door in a matter of days, if not hours.

The light at the end of the tunnel is getting bigger and brighter every day, but we are not out of the dark yet. As we know, tragically, more than 300,000 Americans have lost their lives to this virus. Millions have lost their jobs and their livelihood. Countless small businesses have permanently closed their doors, and the devastating impact of the virus across the country is growing day by day.

Earlier this year, we were able to come together in four separate pieces of legislation in a bipartisan—nearly unanimous—manner and respond with the sort of alacrity and speed and with the scope that I think our constituents expected us to. We didn't exactly know how big we needed to go. We just knew we needed to go big and we needed to go fast.

We appropriated more than \$3 trillion of coronavirus relief. We didn't know how long the virus was going to last. And when we tried to offer additional aid to the American people, unfortunately, the partisan dysfunction that sometimes creeps in—particularly, in the days leading up to a national election—prevented us from providing that relief.

But the election is over, and it is time for us to do our jobs. Really, we need to build on our past success.

The bills culminating in the CARES Act in March bolstered our healthcare response by making testing free of charge. Remember that used to be the watchword, what people would continue to say day after day after day: testing, testing, testing. You are not hearing that anymore because testing is ubiquitous.

We provided vital funding for hospitals and armed our medical workers with the personal protective equipment they needed to sustain this fight on the frontline. We poured funding into research and development of vaccines, therapeutics, and treatment. And by any measure, those efforts have been a success.

While, as I said, the number of people testing positive has gone up pretty dramatically, the death rate has remained much lower than it was in the early days of the virus. That is because, I believe, the treatments have improved, the therapeutics are working, and our healthcare providers are learning how to treat people with the virus in ways that are saving lives.

The work we did up through March buoyed the workers and families who needed the help with direct payments,

bolstered unemployment insurance benefits, and even gave the option to defer student loan payments with no penalty. We knew people needed help, and we acted responsibly, I believe.

We also supported our wobbly economy with the assistance for the Main Street businesses through the Paycheck Protection Program and loans for the industries that our States and Country rely on.

But as time has gone on, much of the funding provided by those bills has run out. As I said, we didn't know in March how long this was going to last, either the public health challenges or the economic challenges associated with it. But we have a better picture of what is needed now and we need to act and act soon—money for schools, vaccine distribution, and for airlines, which, through no fault of their own, are seeing their ridership plummet. They need help. Each of these are worthy of our best efforts to help.

Critical provisions that supported everything from unemployment benefits to the Paycheck Protection Program have already lapsed or are within just a few days of doing so. I know people wonder: Why does Congress wait so long, to the 11th hour to act?

Well, call it human nature, call it stubbornness, call it politics, call it what you will, but deadlines do force action, especially here in the Congress. I believe we are on the cusp of positive results for the American people.

For months now, disagreements on what the next relief bill should look like have stopped us from making progress. Unfortunately, I think it was more about the election and stoking the fears and anxieties of the American electorate in the run up to the election. I think that is what prevented us from passing additional bills after the CARES Act in March.

Then NANCY PELOSI and the House passed the Heroes Act, which everybody recognized—the mainstream media and even Democrats acknowledged—was not going to go anywhere. That was another \$3 trillion bill that helped the nascent marijuana industry, providing tax cuts to the wealthy people living in high-tax jurisdictions like New York and San Francisco. It was clearly not designed to pass, but rather to send a message.

Well, we knew we needed a targeted bill to send relief to those who needed it most, without driving up government spending even higher than necessary. Over these last several months, too much of the discussion has been focused on the areas where we disagree and, truthfully, there is no such thing as a perfect bill. You can always find a reason to say no.

But I don't believe that is the reason our constituents have sent us here. They want us to be responsible. They want us to be careful with their tax dollars, but they do want us to act in their best interests by trying to find ways to build consensus—even when we can't agree on everything, to at least

agree on the things we agree on. I think they expect us to do that.

We all understand that our workers and many people have had the rug pulled out from under them. They had no money coming in the front door. They are worried about paying the rent or mortgage. Their kids are at home going through virtual schooling. I mean, it is tough on a lot of people. It is not so tough if you are a Member of Congress and are receiving a paycheck. But for millions of our constituents back home, they have been waiting and waiting, and they have been hurting because we have not been able to get our act together.

The second round of the job-saving Paycheck Protection Program would help a lot. It would help our small businesses, throw them another lifeline. That was really one of the most popular parts of what we were able to do in March.

As the Presiding Officer will remember, we appropriated \$350 billion and it went in 2 weeks. So we appropriated another \$320 billion to provide loans to small businesses and incentives for them to maintain their payroll so people would have income and so that those small businesses, once we got the virus in the rearview mirror, would still be around and help rebound our economy.

In Texas alone, there were 417,000 Paycheck Protection loans—\$41 billion worth. The average loan was \$115,000; although, I was on a Zoom call with some in the Texas Bankers Association, and one of them told me that their smallest loan was \$300. I am sure there is an interesting story behind that. The point is this was needed help, and it has run out.

Then we need another investment in vaccine distribution. The logistical challenge of getting this vaccine around the country is mind-boggling, but we can see it is already working because of thorough planning and good execution, but they need more money to make sure that we get the job done. We also need to make sure that schools, particularly as people feel more comfortable going back to school in person, get additional support so they can bring the children back into the classrooms and keep them and the teachers and other employees healthy at the schools.

We know virtual learning has been a disaster, particularly for low-income students. Unfortunately, broadband is not universally available in the United States, and there are parts of my State wherein as many as a third of the students don't have access to broadband. So how in the world are they going to continue their educations? Local officials and State officials have tried to help, leaving parking lots outside of the school libraries available so you can drive up and gain access to the Wi-Fi from the schools, or they have distributed hotspots so that, if you get access to cellular service, you can actually tie into Wi-Fi and get online and

continue your studies. Yet, for many of our young people, these school lockdowns have been a disaster in terms of their educations. So we need to do more in that area as well.

Common sense tells us that, when you are sitting across the table, negotiating with somebody, if 80 percent of what you are talking about is agreed to, the process should move along pretty quickly because nobody gets 100 percent of what one wants around here. It is just not possible. While it is unfortunate it has taken us so long to reach this point, I am encouraged that maybe, just maybe—now with the deadline for government funding running out tonight at 12 midnight—this is forcing action and that a deal is in sight.

There has been more bipartisan cooperation and communication over the last several days than there has been in the last several months. A lot of people have put a lot of effort into this on a bipartisan basis, and now the decision is with what we call the “four corners”—rank-and-file Members of the House and Senate. We are not going to have a chance to amend this deal. It is going to be proposed by Speaker PELOSI, Democratic Leader SCHUMER, Leader MCCARTHY, Majority Leader MCCONNELL, and the White House. So I am sure it is not going to be perfect. Unfortunately, we will not have a chance to make it better. I hope the partisan divisions that have paralyzed Congress for much of the year do not rear their ugly heads in these final hours and at this critical stage of negotiation.

There is too much at stake for us to go home for the holidays emptyhanded. There are too many people who are hurting, too many people who are anxious. The number of people having overdosed by self-medicating since the virus hit is, I think, about 80,000, I read. You can imagine people self-medicating, whether it is with alcohol or drugs or people who are trapped with an abuser, either a spousal abuser or a child abuser. Because they are not going to school, their teachers can't look for signs of that abuse and get them help. Reports of child sexual abuse are down 40 percent. It is not because it is not happening; it is because kids aren't in school, where teachers and others can come to their aid.

I can only imagine a single mom, say, with three kids of different ages at home, trying to continue their educations, but she is worried: How do I keep working—maybe she is an essential worker—so she can pay the bills to put food on the table and pay the rent. Can you imagine the chaos and stress?

There is too much at stake for us to go home for the holidays emptyhanded. We need to remember we are not here for our benefit; we are here for the benefit of the people we are honored to represent—in my case, 29 million Texans. We have a fiduciary responsibility. We are in a position of trust. They have entrusted us with their welfare.

The American people have waited long enough. We can't let them down again. We are on the 5-yard line, and we need to deliver. We need to get this done and get this done soon.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 8428

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, we had a hearing this week, the Immigration Subcommittee of Senate Judiciary, and Senator BLUMENTHAL was there with me and others. We listened to people from Hong Kong tell the story of what is happening because of the repressive regime in Beijing and what is happening to those in Hong Kong who are demonstrating in favor of democracy.

This hearing on the crisis in Hong Kong also raised a lot of questions about the United States and our own immigration and refugee policy toward those who are being persecuted.

At the hearing, there was some powerful testimony. I recall one of the witnesses, Mr. Chu, who said that he was aware of students—Chinese students—currently in the United States who have already been designated as enemies of the state by China and who, if they are forced to return to China, will face prosecution, imprisonment, and who knows. It was a very personal story because these people are friends of his who, through no fault of their own, only speaking out against the regime in Beijing, now will face long prison sentences if forced to return to China.

I am amazed, as I meet these people from China and Hong Kong, at the courage they show. Mr. Chu, for example, had come to the United States—been sent to the United States by his father at the age of 12 because his father had made a practice of helping the Chinese who had demonstrated on Tiananmen Square and providing the equivalent of an underground railroad for them to escape China. I guess the people in Beijing were on his heels, and so to protect his family, he sent his 12-year-old son to the United States, who has lived here for a number of years. He is an American citizen now.

This repression and the Chinese Government meddling in the lives of the people of Hong Kong are appalling. Thousands of protestors in Hong Kong have been persecuted for fighting for the liberties that we Americans routinely say we enjoy—freedoms of assembly and speech, the right to vote, due process, and the rule of law.

The national security law imposed on Hong Kong by the Chinese Communist Party in June has enabled the ruthless abuse of protesters, political leaders,

journalists, and teachers. Despite its name, the national security law is not about security; it is about fear—fear of the voices in Hong Kong calling for reform of democracy and freedom.

I believe my colleagues on both sides of the aisle share my feelings about the crisis in Hong Kong, but the question today is, What are we willing to do about it?

Last week, on a unanimous voice vote, the House of Representatives passed the bipartisan Hong Kong People's Freedom and Choice Act, which would grant temporary protected status to Hong Kong residents currently in the United States and provide an opportunity for refugee status to Hongkongers facing persecution.

At Wednesday's Judiciary Committee hearing, we received a clear message: Congress needs to pass the Hong Kong People's Freedom and Choice Act in the Senate now. We can do it. In fact, we can do it today. Think about the message it would send from the United States to Hong Kong and to the world if we sent this bill to the President's desk to be signed into law. It is bipartisan. It was unanimous in the House. It is timely, and it addresses a real problem.

Under the bill, Hong Kong would be designated for TPS for 18 months. To qualify for TPS status, eligible Hongkongers currently in the United States would need to first clear a criminal history and national security screening and pay a \$360 filing fee.

Some of the critics have said: We can't trust the Chinese in the United States. They may be spies.

That is why we require, under the TPS, that anyone applying for this TPS status has to go through a criminal background check and a national security screening.

I want America to be safe—we all do—but just to categorically say “If you are from China or from Hong Kong, you are a suspicious character, and we don't want you to stay here” isn't fair. It isn't realistic.

Sixty-seven hundred students are here now legally in the United States from Hong Kong and China, and they were admitted to the United States under standards and investigations. They are students at our universities, and they would qualify for this important temporary humanitarian protection so that they aren't forced to return to a literally dangerous situation.

TPS can be granted by the President if he wishes, but the Trump administration has failed to protect Hongkongers in need.

This bill also establishes expedited refugee and asylum access for qualified individuals and their family members. This would enable persecuted Hongkongers to register with any U.S. Embassy or Consulate, or with the Department of Homeland Security if they are in the United States.

Refugees and asylees would be required to meet all legal requirements and pass background checks before