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Senate

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, You have made of one blood all the nations of the Earth. As hate crimes rise nationwide, deliver us from permitting evil to triumph because we do nothing. Lord, make us a people who refuse to remain idle during a crisis. Inspire us to avoid the paralysis of analysis. Remind us that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere and that we are diminished by every death.

Keep our lawmakers vigilant, providing our Nation with profiles of courage through their striving. Lord, use our Senators to cause justice to shine upon those who sit in the shadows of despair.

And, Lord, thank You for the safe return of our lawmakers from Ukraine.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

ADDITIONAL UKRAINE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2022—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 7691, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 368, H.R. 7691, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for assistance for the situation in Ukraine for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Ms. HIRONO assumed the Chair.)

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 Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The majority leader is recognized.

BUFFALO, NEW YORK, SHOOTING

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, 2 days ago, barbarism descended upon the city of Buffalo. At about 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, in a predominantly Black neighborhood on Buffalo's east side, a lone gunman, driving from 200 miles away, equipped with an assault rifle, body armor, and a video camera in his helmet, carried out a targeted attack against unarmed civilians inside a Tops Friendly supermarket. His goal? To kill as many Black Americans as possible. In a matter of minutes, 10 people were killed, including a former Buffalo Police officer who worked as a security guard. At least three more were wound-

ed. It was the deadliest shooting in the history of Buffalo and the worst mass shooting in America this year.

Today, we hold in our hearts every single New Yorker whose life was tragically cut short during Saturday's violence. We weep, knowing nothing—nothing—will ever be able to bring them back. We mourn with their families and with their friends, and with the entire community still shellshocked by this shooting.

Tomorrow, I will join with President Biden, the First Lady, and others to travel to Buffalo in order to pay my respects to those who died, as well as to visit with the families and to visit with the local officials still investigating the attack. We also, of course, thank our brave first responders who were at the scene moments after the shooting. Without them, more undoubtedly would have been killed.

We stand—we stand strongly and proudly with the community of Buffalo, known as the “city of neighbors.” Buffalonians during times of crisis have always pulled together, and that is happening today.

The East Side community, where the shooting occurred, is strong in faith. And I know it, along with the entire city and region, will overcome this tragedy. I say that because I know this community. Years ago, I worked hard to bring that grocery store to the east side of Buffalo because the community deserved a full-fledged supermarket. It was a much-needed oasis in what was then a total food desert.

I know many in the community shop at that grocery store, whether to buy food on their way home from church or before the Bills games. It is where people see friends and relatives and catch up on things in between errands. It has become a community center. Buffalo is the “City of Good Neighbors,” and nowhere is that truer than on the East Side.

Now, I don't know what could possess someone to bring violence to a place

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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like that. What I do know is that this weekend's shooting is part of an ugly pattern—one that dates to the earliest days of this Nation. Racism has always been—and, unfortunately, still is—a poison—the poison of America. The original sin of slavery and the decades of racial terror, discrimination, separate but equal, White supremacy, and bigotry that followed, unfortunately, continue to exert poisonous influence on our society—an influence so poisonous that even today, after America elected a Black President, after America marched for racial justice, after the Senate confirmed a Black Supreme Court Justice—a Black woman Supreme Court Justice for the first time ever—we must still reckon with unspeakable acts of racial violence like what happened Saturday on Jefferson Avenue.

As I said, the community is strong in faith, and I know they will overcome this tragedy. I know that because I know Buffalo.

Madam President, over the next few days, I will continue my conversations with local officials and Federal investigators to get to the bottom of this harrowing massacre. But while there is much that we don't know yet about Saturday's shooting, there are a few things that are already clear and which demand action.

First, the victims on Saturday were not targeted at random, nor was this particular grocery store in this particular neighborhood of Buffalo a haphazard selection. It was not. No, this was a racially motivated attack. The shooter made his choice by seeking the most predominantly Black neighborhood in the region. Online, the shooter proudly professed himself as a neofascist, White supremacist, anti-Semite. His views, shared extensively online, embraced a dangerous ideology known as "the Great Replacement," which asserts that a conspiracy exists to replace White Americans with immigrants and people of color.

Racially motivated shootings are, sadly, not new in our country. The last decade alone holds too many examples of too many lives that have been extinguished at the hands of shooters harboring White racist, White supremacist views. It is the same hatred that motivated the shooting at a Walmart in El Paso; the same poison that possessed the shooter at a synagogue in Pittsburgh; the same bigotry that murdered eight people in Atlanta last year; and the same evil that took the lives of nine worshippers at a church in Charleston. It was the same evil at play this Saturday in the beloved City of Buffalo, NY.

Not long ago, views like replacement theory were only found in the darkest places in deranged minds. Then they came to be found in hardly viewed trenches of the internet and in chat rooms that most Americans never visit. To most Americans, these ideas are transparently repugnant and an affront to our core values. They directly

contravene the message of welcome and opportunity symbolized by the Statue of Liberty. But, unfortunately, with each passing year, it seems harder and harder to ignore that the echoes of replacement theory and other racially motivated views are increasingly coming out into the open and given purported legitimacy by some MAGA Republicans and cable news pundits.

The message is not always explicit, but we have all seen the pattern. Every time MAGA Republicans or pundits wrongly vilify immigrants and call them invaders, every time they falsely claim that millions of undocumented people cast ballots in our elections, every time loud, bigoted voices bemoan the disintegration of an imagined "classic" America, the subtext is clear. These hard-right MAGA Republicans argue that people of color in minority communities are somehow posing a threat—a threat—to the American way of life. This is replacement theory in a nutshell. It is dangerous and a deeply anti-American world view. It is poisoning minds—people's minds—who spend hours wandering the darkest wastelands of the internet.

And let's be clear. It is a message that has also found a special home in several right-wing outlets and on one cable news channel in particular—FOX News. In a craven quest for viewers and ratings, organizations like FOX News have spent years perfecting the craft of stoking cultural grievance and political resentment that eerily mirrors these messages found in replacement theory.

According to one measure by the New York Times, FOX's top political pundit—most widely watched—Tucker Carlson has spewed rhetoric that echoes replacement theory at least 400 times on his show since 2016.

Let me repeat that. According to one measure by the New York Times, FOX's top political pundit, Tucker Carlson, has spewed rhetoric that echoes replacement theory at least 400—400—times on his show since 2016. Four hundred times. This is a poison that is being spread by one of the largest news organizations in our country.

Now, to its credit, this morning the Wall Street Journal Editorial Board—which is run by the same elites who run FOX News, owned by the same people—the Wall Street Journal Editorial Board wrote:

Politicians and media figures have an obligation to condemn such conspiratorial notions as "white replacement theory."

Those are the words of the Wall Street Journal editorial page. They are right. Condemning racist ideologies and violence is necessary, but it is hardly sufficient. It is not enough for outlets like FOX News to simply condemn Saturday's violence and condemn the shooter's racist views and then return to their regularly scheduled program. To have an impact in the fight against domestic violence and extremism, FOX News and their hosts need to actually stop spreading dangerous

ideas like replacement theory on their shows.

Let me say that again. If organizations like FOX News truly want to condemn this weekend's violence, they need to stop spreading ideas like replacement theory on their shows. We see, sadly, unfortunately, and on several all too many occasions what happens when these views are given a platform.

Every single media pundit, every single elected politician, and, indeed, every single voice of influence in this country should band together to stomp views like replacement theory out of existence. These views should have no place in American society and certainly no place in the segments of our most-watched news channels. What we need to do instead is to respond to tragedies like this one, like the one that occurred this weekend, with the resolve to root out hatred in our country; and we must leave no stone unturned in pursuing solutions that make these attacks less likely—these tragic, awful, horrible attacks. Just look at the pictures of the people who died.

To be clear, denouncing and rooting out racist conspiracy theories spread by the hard-right is only one step we must take and certainly not a substitute for passing other meaningful legislation to address the gun violence epidemic.

But as we mourn those lives that were taken away this weekend, as we grieve with the survivors, we must also make a commitment as Americans to oppose the old poisons of racism and White supremacy that have been with us far too long that inspire these violent attacks to begin with.

If we don't do that—if we don't do that—I fear these attacks will continue and even multiply, and true justice in a Nation that aspires to E Pluribus Unum will continue to evade our great Nation.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 847.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Barbara A. Leaf, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Near Eastern Affairs).

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. SCHUMER. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.