

world, including the famous Human Genome Project, which Dr. Francis Collins headed up at that time. It was one of the greatest scientific breakthroughs of the 20th century, and it happened because John Porter and the Senators I mentioned decided to make certain that the NIH had the resources when they needed it.

The mapping of the human genome continues to transform medicine on a daily basis and has provided lifesaving cures all around the world. It is the leadership of NIH Director Dr. Collins and the inspiring example of John Porter that convinced me to try to team up with Senators on the other side of the aisle and do the same in my time in the Senate. I admired John's success so much that I decided to try to make it my own. So I teamed up with ROY BLUNT, a Republican from Missouri, and also, of course, with PATTY MURRAY, a Democrat from the State of Washington, and we started our effort to see if we could increase dramatically the National Institutes of Health's budget. We did. We increased it by over 40 percent in the period of time that we have taken on this assignment and more to follow.

The NIH recognized Congressman John Porter's invaluable contributions in 2014 by naming its new Neuroscience Research Center in his honor.

Loretta and I send our condolences to his wife Amy, their children, stepchildren, and grandchildren, to John's friends and colleagues, and to all who were inspired by his example to make our world and our Nation a better, healthier, safer place.

GUN VIOLENCE

Madam President, 23 years ago, after the massacre at Columbine High School left 12 students and a teacher dead, the gun lobby and its allies insisted that "Now is not the time" to talk about gun laws. In shooting after shooting since, as America has been stunned and grieving and burying its children, the gun lobby has demanded that we not "politicize" the issue of gun violence. They say we should wait until passions have cooled before taking any action to reduce gun violence in America.

Well, the grim reality is this: It is no longer possible to wait months or weeks or even days after a mass shooting for passions to cool. The shootings just keep happening. So far this year, we have seen 246 mass shootings in 157 days—more than 1 mass shooting every day. Just this past weekend, a string of 11 mass shootings left at least 15 people dead and more than 60 others wounded in Tennessee, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Arizona, Texas, Georgia, New York, and Michigan. No other developed nation on Earth has even a fraction of the mass shootings we have in the United States.

President Lincoln once said famously that "we cannot escape history." This Senate cannot escape its responsibility to do something. We cannot allow ourselves to grow numb and resigned to this mass murder.

Negotiations are underway on a bipartisan basis to help reduce gun violence in America. I want to thank Senators CHRIS MURPHY of Connecticut, JOHN CORNYN of Texas, and the other Democrats and Republicans who are trying to find a way to reduce gun violence. But it takes 60 Senators for that to happen. I hope in good faith we can at least take a step forward from this awful situation.

The House of Representatives already acted last year to close gaps in the gun background check system. This week, the House will vote on bills to support extreme-risk protection orders, or "red flag" laws, and other important measures.

Tomorrow, the Senate Judiciary Committee, which I chair, will hold a hearing on the mass shooting that took place in Buffalo on May 14, just a few weeks ago, and the domestic terrorism threat it exposes. One of our witnesses is Garnell Whitfield, Jr., whose mother Ruth was murdered at Tops grocery store in Buffalo.

Gun violence is now the leading cause of death among America's children and teenagers. It replaced automobile accidents.

Next week, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing to hear from experts about the lasting trauma that gun violence leaves on children.

Next month, the Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing on the growing danger of gun violence to police, who increasingly find themselves outgunned on the streets.

There was a retired police officer in that grocery store in Buffalo. His name is Aaron Salter. He served the community and the police force, and he was there to bring security to that grocery store. When the shooter came in with his military style weapon, this policeman did his duty. He pulled his handgun. He was outgunned by this killer and lost his life.

Let's consider a few basic truths.

No. 1, this crisis is not simply about school safety. It wouldn't be solved by turning every school into an armed fortress. It is much bigger than schools alone.

Last Friday, I went to a grade school in Chicago. I won't name the name, but I have a granddaughter who is in the fourth grade there. There are 100 kids in the fourth grade in this school, and they all came to the assembly hall, where I gave them a little talk and answered their questions. I couldn't help but think as I stood there talking about my job and what is the hardest part and what is the best part. And I looked at those wonderful kids and I thought to myself, they are exactly the same age as the kids who died in Uvalde, TX. I couldn't imagine for a second the horror that the families must have felt when they heard the news that there was a shooter on the premises in their school. I can't imagine that this Nation is so cold and callous that it would ignore the reality of human suffering—not just the deaths

of those children and the teachers but what it meant to those families and still means to them to this day.

But it isn't just schools. Some people say: Well, if we just make a fortress out of the school, we will only have one door, and we will have metal detectors. And if the custodians and cafeteria workers and all the teachers and principals are all carrying guns, then we can keep our kids safe.

Think about that for a moment. Is that the answer in the United States of America to gun violence, that we are going to outgun any madman who comes on the premises carrying an assault-type weapon? Is that as good as it gets in the United States of America? I think we can do better.

Let's not kid ourselves. As heart-breaking as it is to hear of any violence in a school, schools are not the only places where this happens—grocery stores, Walmarts, Waffle Houses, bars and night clubs, hospitals, doctors' offices, churches, synagogues, Sikh gurdwaras, movie theaters, subways, street corners, baby showers, graduation parties, weddings, funerals, big cities and small towns, north, east, south, and west. Gun violence can be found in every corner of America. It can happen anywhere to anyone at any time.

Point No. 2: As horrific as they are, mass shootings are only a small part of America's gun violence crisis. In 2020, the most recent year for which the CDC has statistics, 45,222 Americans died by gun violence in 2020—45,222.

That total number of gun deaths was 14 percent higher than the year before, 25 percent higher than 5 years before, and 43 percent higher than 10 years. Counting only homicides, the 2020 deaths were 34 percent greater than just 1 year earlier, 49 percent over 5 years earlier, and 75 percent greater than a decade earlier. How can we look at those numbers and do nothing?

In 2020, 79 percent of murders in the United States were carried out with guns—79 percent. How about Canada? What percentage of their murders in 2020 were the result of guns? Thirty-seven percent. In the United States, 79 percent; Canada, 37 percent; Australia, 13 percent; United Kingdom, 4 percent. But it is 79 percent in the United States of America. It is horrible, and it is getting worse.

Point No. 3: The changes the Senate is likely to consider pose no threat to the lifestyle of any law-abiding gun owner. Our goal is to save lives through responsible gun ownership.

There is a website, and I am not going to mention its name, but it is sometimes viewed as the most prolific place to buy a gun on the internet. If you buy a gun on that site from a licensed firearms dealer, you have to pass a background check. But there are also what they call private sales on this site, one person selling to another person. Private gun sales on this website and at gun shows and other places require no background check.

The two parties meet, and the buyer hands over money and leaves with a gun.

A recent investigation by the gun safety organization Everytown found that in 2018, there were 1.2 million ads on this website to sell guns without a background check.

Last week, it listed an ad—listen to this—for a private sale in Buffalo, NY, of an AR-15—the same kind of weapon that that madman took into the grocery store and the same kind of weapon that was used against the schoolchildren in Uvalde, TX. Through that website, you could buy an AR-15 last week—no background check required. How long do these background checks take? In most cases, they take less than 5 minutes, and no law-abiding citizen needs to worry about passing this test. We should close the deadly “private sale” loophole to help keep guns out of the hands of people who are legally prohibited from owning firearms.

I support “red flag” laws that allow law enforcement to temporarily remove firearms from a person who is determined by the court to be at risk of hurting himself or others. There are 19 States, including Illinois, that have these laws, and they are an important tool for preventing violence. Even Florida’s Republican-controlled legislature enacted a State “red flag” law after the Parkland massacre. We should support similar efforts.

I will close with a story from my State.

Three years ago, a convicted felon was fired from a job at a small manufacturing plant near Chicago. He went back a few hours later with a handgun. He shot and killed five of his former coworkers and wounded five police officers before killing himself. I attended the memorial services of several of those victims. Those murders happened in a town called Aurora, IL.

Seven years before that, a gunman in another Aurora—this time in Colorado—opened fire in a movie theater, killing 12 people and wounding 70 more—killing 12 and wounding 70 more. When the police chief of Aurora, CO, heard about the Illinois rampage, he said to a reporter: Months from now, as people talk about the mass shootings of the world, some will ask: Which Aurora mass shooting are you talking about?

Think about that. In nearly any other nation on Earth, the name of a town in which a mass shooting has taken place would be remembered and mourned for years or even decades. In America, gun deaths and even mass murders now happen with such sickening regularity that some people have a hard time keeping the tragedies apart or of even remembering them.

I might say to the Presiding Officer at this point, I know of the terrible shooting in your State over the weekend where one of your State judges was gunned down. It is happening everywhere. I am so sorry that it touched your State this last weekend.

Over this past week, I met with people across Illinois to discuss gun violence. I met with police officers, youth in Chicago who had been affected by gun violence, and doctors at Stroger Hospital and at Lurie Children’s Hospital. I spoke to so many people, and this was always the first topic they mentioned: gun violence.

They asked me a basic question: When is Congress going to do something about this?

The American people are sick and tired of gun violence, and they are desperate for us to bring change. This Senate has it within our power now to make changes that respect our Constitution and the rights of law-abiding citizens that will literally save lives. The question is whether we have the conscience and the courage to take these numbers of steps forward together. Lives depend on it.

When I left my granddaughter’s grade school last Friday, I thought about it all-day long—those beautiful kids and the kids down in Texas and the kids at Sandy Hook and the kids at Columbine and the kids at Parkland. All of these kids are being butchered by gun violence.

Many people think, because the Constitution and its Second Amendment gives us the right to bear arms, that we can’t touch this issue. They are wrong. The Supreme Court, in the Heller decision Justice Scalia wrote, made clear that we still retain the power to regulate the guns that are sold and how they are going to be used. We have got to take that and seize that opportunity. We have been elected to the U.S. Senate to respond to American crises. This is at the top of the list. After what we have been through in the last several weeks and what we are likely to go through in the weeks to come, how dare we say this is too big and too tough. How could anything be more important than the safety of our children and of our families across America?

I will join in the Senate Judiciary Committee, in any way that I can, to support this bipartisan effort. I hope that it is meaningful. I hope, when it is all said and done, we can point to it and say: We achieved something in the names of those families of survivors and of those who lost their lives—who have given so much to this madness that has become part of life in America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The senior Senator from Iowa.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, Congress has a constitutional responsibility to ensure that the executive branch executes the laws and uses taxpayer money that has been appropriated to do it according to congressional intent. Now, around here, we refer to seeing that the laws are faithfully executed as the constitutional responsibility of oversight of the Con-

gress of the United States. In furtherance of that constitutional responsibility, Congress has an obligation to investigate the executive branch for fraud, waste, abuse, and gross mismanagement. I take my constitutional responsibilities of oversight very seriously.

From time to time, I receive information that requires me to ask questions of the executive branch in efforts to better understand whether any wrongdoing has occurred and, if so, what remedial actions will be taken and employed to cure the damage done. That is what brings me to the floor of the Senate today, focusing on Assistant Special Agent in Charge Timothy Thibault at the FBI’s Washington Field Office.

Last week, while I was meeting with my constituents in Iowa, I sent a letter to the Justice Department and the FBI and also a letter to the Department of Justice’s inspector general. In those letters, I provided evidence of extreme leftwing bias shown by Special Agent Thibault. Now, in his position, he is a very powerful agent within the FBI—so powerful that he can open and close Federal public corruption cases and investigations. He is a shining example, at the same time, of what is wrong with the FBI.

Andrew McCarthy wrote about Mr. Thibault last week and wondered what the heck has happened with the FBI. This FBI agent’s leftwing political bias was exposed by his very own LinkedIn and Twitter accounts. There, in those accounts, he posted highly partisan material related to his superiors, matters under the FBI’s purview, and matters under his own purview. His LinkedIn network includes current and former FBI personnel. The general public is able to review his social media content, which includes his political views, his political biases, and objections.

Thibault, under the title of Assistant Special Agent in Charge, directly posted a partisan article related to the LTG Michael Flynn case to his LinkedIn account. The article was a September 3, 2020, opinion piece from the Washington Post, entitled “Why the Michael Flynn case still matters,” which was about the “Trump administration’s abuses of the justice system.” He also “liked” other politically charged articles relating to then-President Trump and his superior, then-Attorney General Barr.

Thibault’s public political association doesn’t even end with those examples.

According to his Twitter feed, which is also under his name, he mocked the election of one of our new colleagues, Senator TUBERVILLE, and the State of Mississippi at the same time.

He said:

Thank God for Mississippi—state motto of Alabama.

I am not sure exactly what that means, but it is pretty clear that he is making fun.