

Victoria Soto, 27 years old; Rachel D'Avino, 29; Lauren Rousseau, 30; Dawn Lafferty Hochsprung, 47 years old; Anne Marie Murphy, 52; and Mary Sherlach, 56 years old.

When we remember those children and adults who were killed on that day, unfortunately for the Nation, it didn't stop there. And just as I have read those names, we could continue reading names from other cities and other years under different circumstances but all leading to the same place: death and darkness because of the scourge of gun violence all across America.

The children of Newtown, CT, came before the most recent massacre of children in a school in Uvalde, TX. There were many front-page newspaper stories in 2012 on this day—or I guess tomorrow; it would be tomorrow's newspapers—across the country. We had little, small pictures of each child and each adult.

I saved one from the Wall Street Journal. It was on my desk for a long time, and then I ultimately had it matted. But I still have one just from May of this year that is still in its newspaper form from Uvalde, TX—the same newspaper, the Wall Street Journal. But you could pick any paper in the country in 2012 or this past year. That tells us all we need to know.

So, as we remember and reflect upon that loss, I believe today it is also important to remember and commend what the parents did, what the families did, what their friends and relatives and supporters did, what volunteers did, all these years, who didn't know these families.

But let me start with the parents. These parents, of course, were consumed by grief, as anyone would be. But somehow—somehow—although they were consumed by their grief, somehow, by way of their own courage and the grace of God, they figured out a way to come together in common purpose, remembering and trying in their own way to pay tribute to their children, to form organizations which have been highly successful in making the case as to why we have to take action here on the Senate floor and not far away on the House floor, to take action on gun violence.

For example, groups like Sandy Hook Promise and Newtown Action Alliance and so many others and related groups that have sprung up got involved in the debate and made the case to legislators personally. Parents burdened by their own grief made the case to legislators. The progress has been all too slow, but because of the courage of the parents of those Sandy Hook children and because of so many other families and parents who have loved and lost, we made some progress just this past year.

But, unfortunately, in the last 10 years, it took thousands more mass shootings and hundreds of thousands of gun deaths for Congress to finally act. Let me say that again—hundreds of thousands of gun violence deaths for Congress to finally act.

This past summer, we even had Republican Senators join us—not enough but enough to pass a bill in the Senate—to pass a bill that had common-sense gun safety measures in the bill. This bill that passed this summer not only will save lives, but there is some evidence it is already doing that, by some of the data and analysis done by law enforcement.

But this bill, if anyone is being honest about it—this bill, this effort, this ongoing effort to reduce gun violence deaths, has to be just the very beginning of our work. People are still being killed and injured by gun violence every day in cities and communities all across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and across the Nation. We owe it to the families of those 20 children and those 6 adults who died in Newtown, CT, at Sandy Hook Elementary School, and so many other places that we can name and catalog here today. Because of the length of that list, we don't have time to go through all of them today.

We have work to do to make sure that we not only pay tribute to those families who have loved and lost and done so much to help other families, but we owe so much to them in the form of passing legislation.

We have to continue to make sure that those who lost their lives on that awful day—a day that most Americans will never forget—we have to make sure that all the efforts that their parents undertook and that their family members undertook will not be in vain.

We have more work to do to pass commonsense gun safety measures. My God, a background check supported by 90 percent of the American people has not yet been passed into law, but it will be. We are going to get there here in the Senate and across the country.

So we have more work to do, but on this day, as we commemorate and reflect on those young souls we lost, we also have to be positive about what their families have done since that day, showing uncommon courage and dedication to not just the memory of their children but to the betterment of the country as a whole.

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

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

The senior Senator from Alabama.

FAREWELL TO THE SENATE

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, today I come to the Senate floor for what will probably be one of my last times—perhaps not my last time but close. I want to start off by thanking the people of Alabama, my home State. They have put their trust in me for more than 50 years. It is more than I could ever wish for, and this has been truly been an experience of a lifetime—something I could have never dreamed.

I came to the House 44 years ago and served 8 years as a Democrat coming from the State of Alabama. I had a good run in the U.S. House, and I appreciate that. I am grateful for that. However, I always wanted to come over here to the U.S. Senate.

In 1986, I ran for the Senate against the incumbent, Jeremiah Denton—a prominent war hero, a great man—and I won that race by 6,854 votes. It was razor, razor thin, as you can imagine.

In 1994, after years of being told to join the Republican Party and that I should be there, from President Reagan and all the way down, I decided to switch parties. I joined the Republican Party. Some people would say that I was in the vanguard of the realignment of the Republican Party in the South. That is for history to decide.

During my time in the Senate, I have been given the great opportunity of chairing four committees—four committees—something I couldn't have believed. In these positions of leadership, I have tried to influence legislation that will have a lasting impact, creating conditions to improve our country.

On the Select Committee on Intelligence, I served there for 8 years and was chairman of the full committee.

On the Banking Committee, where I am grateful to still serve after 36 years, I was chairman for three Congresses and was ranking member for three Congresses. On that committee, I worked with various Senators.

I had the opportunity, as some of you have had, to chair the Rules Committee, which is important to the running of the Senate. We worked together and instituted some very serious legislation.

But, finally, after many years of work, I chaired the Appropriations Committee. Working across the aisle in a bipartisan way, we passed and enacted the most on-time spending bills in 2018 for the first time in 22 years. We did that, I believe, by working together.

As I look back on the Senate, I think of some of the people who were here who are not with us anymore, but they have had a lasting impact on this body—the Senate.

I think of Senator Bob Dole—Presidential candidate, Vice Presidential candidate, majority leader, minority leader, friend, mentor—I thought had a lasting impact.

I think of Senator Byrd—Democrat of West Virginia, former majority leader, later chairman of the Appropriations Committee. He had strong views and was a man of the Senate.

We also had Senator Mark Hatfield—a Republican, former Governor of Oregon, distinguished chairman of the Appropriations Committee—whom I had the opportunity and privilege to serve with here in the Senate.

We had Senator Ted Stevens—Republican of Alaska, well known, strong views, Appropriations chairman, and a good role model for me on the committee. He spent 40 years in the Senate.

We had Senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii—a Democrat, a war hero. He was a great Senator and chairman of the Appropriations Committee and powerful chairman of the Defense Subcommittee of Appropriations for years.

We had here in the Senate—who we called the lion of the Senate—Senator Ted Kennedy, a Democrat. He was involved in a lot of stuff. A lot of it I voted against; some of it I didn't. But he would reach out. One thing about Senator Kennedy—if he told you something, he kept his word. That is so important, not just in the Senate, but everywhere.

I remember my good friend Bob Kerrey—a war hero, Congressional Medal of Honor winner, former Governor of Nebraska, Senator. We served together on the Intel Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

On the Banking Committee was Paul Sarbanes of Maryland—a stalwart here, a Democrat. We had our differences, philosophically. I was ranking and then chairman of the Banking Committee, and he was ranking, and he was chairman. But we made things work because we worked together toward that end.

Senator Harry Reid was here—former majority leader, right here, an old friend of mine from our House days, a personal friend. People knew that. People knew. They would see us talking and say: Why are you all speaking today?

And I would say: Well, we are talking about everything. It may be personal; it may not be. We may be trying to get something done.

We had Senator Cochran from Mississippi—a nice man, a real gentleman, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, who served here 40 years.

And my friend from Maryland, Barbara Mikulski, a Democrat—what a fighter—chairman of the Appropriations Committee. We worked together, when I was ranking on the Appropriations Committee, to get things done, and we did.

I would like to touch on some of my colleagues whom I served with from my State of Alabama. First I want to mention that today is the 203rd birthday of my State of Alabama. Today, they became a State 203 years ago. I was not there then.

As for some of my colleagues from Alabama—Senator Howell Heflin, who some of you will remember, was bigger than life and larger than life. He served 18 years here in the Senate.

Jeff Sessions—a lot of you remember Jeff—he served 20 years in the Senate.

Luther Strange, who is here on the floor now—his tenure was short, but we remember him well. He is a dear friend.

Doug Jones served here for 3 years in the Senate. He was a Democrat from Alabama, and we had a good relationship. We did a lot of things together in a bipartisan way.

My current colleague, TOMMY TUBERVILLE—he is doing well. He is ending his second year in the Senate. He was a great coach—too great a

coach when he played Alabama. He beat the dickens out of us a few times. So I said: Let's keep him in the Senate.

I want to mention my friend PAT LEAHY—chairman of the Appropriations Committee, President pro tempore of the Senate, long-term serving member of the Appropriations Committee. When I was chairman, he was ranking. We worked together on the committee, and we got things done.

I told him that I would rather be chairman, but if a Democrat is going to be chairman, it had to be him because he was the only one in the room when I said that.

PAT and I have worked together to get some things done. We have got work to do before this year is out, and we, hopefully, are on the right track.

MITCH MCCONNELL is sitting right here—friend, accomplished leader, the longest serving Senate Republican Leader, majority leader, minority leader now, a long-term friend with deep roots in Alabama, but from Kentucky.

MITCH, I have said to other people that I have seen a lot of people work, but you know how to work the Senate and you know how to make it work. I consider you a friend, and I have enjoyed my time with you.

During my time in the Senate, I have had the great privilege to serve with eight Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter; Ronald Reagan; George H. W. Bush; Bill Clinton; George W. Bush; Barack Obama, who was a former colleague of ours; Donald Trump; and Joe Biden now, former colleague and Senator. That is a great honor.

I want to speak just a few minutes here to what I think is important here in the Senate. We are in the Senate, but we are the Senate. I want to speak about why bipartisanship is important. It is important because it is good for the country. It is important because it brings people together. It is important because we all have our differences in philosophy, but the country, I believe, should be first, the Nation should be first. It is important, I also believe, because of the oath we take—all of us—when we are sworn into the Senate.

And I want to share this with you. You have done it, you have taken it—all of us do—you take that oath and you swear:

I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic—

That is a lot—

That I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God.

That covers a lot of ground. Everybody here knows that. As I look back on my years here this afternoon, a lot of it was at a time when we did things together here. We ate together. We socialized together. We worked together. But today I think we have become too polarized, and there are a lot of reasons for that. We understand.

But I can say that we need to get back to the basics and put the country first. We must not put ourselves or our party first. We must put America first. We have to. And many of us—a lot of you—have tried to do this at times. We all have, in our own way. Senator LEAHY and I have worked toward that end.

I have always believed—and this goes back—that we should strive for Plato's instruction to all of us—to strive to work for the ideal. I know that he means the utopia. That is probably never going to happen, but that is the goal.

In the Senate, having taken that oath of office, I have always thought that the security of the Nation is the No. 1 obligation of the Senate and the House, the Congress, and the President of the United States. My parents taught me this, and I believe this, and it is referenced in the oath of office that I just shared with you.

It is important to have, I believe, priorities. I have done my best to focus on things that will have a big impact on America and also my home State of Alabama. I always look at it that—being in the U.S. Senate, I am a Senator from Alabama, but I am also a United States Senator—for America. We all are.

Some of my priorities have been national security. As you well know, I have chaired the Intel Committee. I have worked and I was on the Armed Services Committee with Senators Nunn and Warner.

Education is a high priority for all of us, on both sides of the aisle. It has to be. Creating manufacturing and workforce development—that is education and training. You have to have it.

Infrastructure is so important. It covers everything from communications to roads.

Outstanding Federal judges that we vote on here are very important.

Also, as my days are ticking away, I want to mention my successor that is coming, Senator-elect Katie Britt. She is here today. She will be coming into office. I think she will serve the Nation and all of us well. She has a lot of promise.

Lastly, toward the end, I also want to thank my family for their enduring support. I want to thank my wife Annette, who is here, my wife of 62 years. My service here would not have been possible without her. I am also immensely grateful for her dedication to my career, and her ambition and ability to break her own glass ceiling in academia along the way.

I want to thank my two sons, Richard and Claude. I want to thank them for their support and perseverance while growing up in political times and in a political family. It was tough on them.

I also want to thank my two grandchildren. One of them, Anna Shelby, is here, and my grandson William—he better be in the library studying.

I want to thank my parents for everything—I mean, everything.

I also want to say thank you to my staff over the years. Many of them are here today, and there have been many of them. They are outstanding people. I couldn't have done anything without them.

I don't know where I would start calling the staff roll, but I do want to thank Anne Caldwell. A lot of you know Anne. She has been with me 44 years. Wow. I thank her for her loyalty, her perseverance, and for getting me to meetings on time.

Anne, thank you, very much. Thank you.

Also, lastly, I have had a lot of chiefs of staff. I have had good ones—many good ones. But I have a young man working for me now, and he took a leave of absence from a big job with a big pay to work the last 2 years up here, Watson Donald. Thank you, Watson.

I want to thank my friends back home in Alabama for their support over the years, as well as my friends here in the Senate.

And, importantly, I want to thank the people of Alabama for electing me 12 times to public office. It has been the honor of my lifetime.

I yield the floor.

(Applause.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Vermont.

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD C. SHELBY

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I am going to take the prerogative as President Pro Tempore to speak because I know the distinguished Republican leader has already spoken, and I, of course, would have yielded to him had he not.

It is always hard to say goodbye to friends, especially one as good as Senator SHELBY, and one with whom I will walk out of here arm in arm.

But I would say that we have to think about the time when this body and Nation are as divided as ever, Senator RICHARD SHELBY's tenure exemplifies a commitment to cooperation and fairness.

I have seen that not only in his public life, and what we see on the floor, but I see it in meetings we have in his office or my office, quiet meetings between the two of us, knowing we will always keep our word.

And so I would say at the conclusion of the 117th Congress, the Senate will lose a skilled leader and a true Senator of his word. That has been the way with our decades of service together.

Senator SHELBY's legacy, one marked by his intellect, his integrity, will undoubtedly persist in this body and throughout the country.

My great mentor when I came here as the junior-most Member of the Senate was Robert Stafford of Vermont. Senator Stafford was Mr. Republican from Vermont, and he took me under his wing, and he said to me: Patrick, always keep your word, but you find you will be the best Senator if you learn to work across the aisle. You can work with people of integrity, both Repub-

licans and Democrats, and you will find, among both parties, you will develop close friendships.

But more than a fellow Senator, I am proud to consider Senator SHELBY one of those great friends.

The reference we have seen before to distinguished Republicans and Democrats—of course, we are all called distinguished Senators, but we consider in my family, in my house, some more distinguished than others but for different reasons. And a devotion to public service is ingrained in Senator SHELBY's character.

After he obtained his juris doctorate, Senator SHELBY served as the Birmingham city prosecutor—I always like Senators who have been prosecutors—and an Alabama State senator.

I never got elected—or the opportunity to be elected as State senator.

But he began in 1978 his congressional career by serving Alabama's Seventh District in the House of Representatives, and for the last 36 years, Senator SHELBY tirelessly served Alabamians in the Senate—a person when they think of whom they look to, they look to him.

And he has been fortunate to serve with some very good Senators from his State that have been friends of mine, a couple on the floor today.

He built an impressive resume. He served on the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Intelligence Committee and the Banking Committee and the Rules Committee. And on the Appropriations Committee, Senator SHELBY fought to allocate Federal dollars to key institutions and infrastructure across Alabama, but he did it openly and honestly. He should take great pride in his reputation as a leader who has truly improved the lives of his constituents—something Senators should do.

And as two of the most senior Members of the Senate, I worked alongside Senator SHELBY for decades. We spent countless hours working to pass the annual appropriations bills.

Together, we negotiated the end of the longest government shutdown in U.S. history.

And I remember, Senator SHELBY, you and I sitting there and deciding: OK. We have an agreement ending the longest shutdown, and we told our leaders—a Republican leader and a Democratic leader—that we had worked out an agreement and here are the details. And they said, if you two have worked it out, that is good enough. And within hours, the longest shutdown ended—Senator SHELBY coming on the floor announcing and me having the honor of joining him.

We also share memories from traveling the world together on a variety of key diplomatic missions.

Now, during that time, we had long discussions, candid discussions, open discussions. Thank God, discussions did not have a record, as we discussed what could be done better and should be done better in the Senate.

We formed a great friendship. Our wives—his wife, Dr. Annette Shelby, my wife, Marcelle—also had that friendship. And Dr. Shelby was able to quietly give history lessons on every single place we went to and would have—you remember this, Senator SHELBY. The Senators and spouses were with us of both parties and would just sit there and quietly listen to Dr. Shelby—Professor Shelby.

This came in very handy once in a visit to Cuba, where the leader in Cuba, President Raul Castro, was looking at us with suspicion, concern. Dr. Shelby talked about the Cuban students she taught at Georgetown, and, you remember, the whole atmosphere changed, and we all got along well after that.

I could say so much more, and I will later, but I wish both you, my dear friend, and Annette the best in the next role of life. I will miss you. This will not be the same place without you, and it makes my leaving here that much easier.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Alabama.

Mr. TUBERVILLE. Madam President, as we near the end of the 117th Congress, we are also preparing to say farewell to some of the body's most dedicated public servants.

Among those is Alabama's own RICHARD CRAIG SHELBY.

I have known Senator SHELBY for many years, but I have most enjoyed getting to know him as a colleague and a friend in Congress.

You know, his help and guidance have been invaluable to me since I came to the Senate 2 years ago. It was quite the transition from college football to politics, but I jumped into the ring because I care deeply about the future of our Nation, and I realized very quickly so does RICHARD SHELBY.

My transition to public office was supported by some great advisers who shared my belief in America. Chief among those allies is Senator SHELBY.

Even though he is a lifelong Alabama fan and pulled against me for 10 years, we still became friends.

Congress is like a football team. It has a lot of great players in different positions, but to come together, form a game plan, and get some wins for our country, those players need good coaches.

Senator SHELBY has been one of the best.

Born in Birmingham, Senator SHELBY graduated from the University of Alabama and the Birmingham School of Law, becoming a city prosecutor in Tuscaloosa. For all my Auburn folks back home, at least we can all agree that Senator SHELBY is one of the finer things to come out of Tuscaloosa.

Senator SHELBY has represented Alabamians in Congress since 1979 and has served in the Senate since 1987—always keeping an eye on the future and the other eye on the people he has been serving.