

corruption inside Mexico but, also, because these cartels are very often more heavily armed than the police. And this ability of the cartels to control so much space inside of Mexico because of corruption but also because they are often carrying more firepower than law enforcement, this is not just a nightmare for Mexico; this is a nightmare for the United States of America. There is a straight through line between the power of the cartels and the fentanyl trade that is killing American citizens.

Fentanyl is a plague in my community in Connecticut, in my colleagues' communities. And it is not enough for us just to tell Mexico to do better. No doubt, Mexico does not have clean hands. Mexico needs to get in the game to take on these cartels.

But on this question of heavily armed cartels, Mexico has actually acted. It surprises many people to know that there is one single gun store in all of Mexico. Mexico has essentially eliminated the commercial trade of firearms. You can't buy a firearm in the commercial market, for all intents and purposes, in Mexico today.

So why on Earth is Mexico flooded with weapons? Why on Earth do the cartels trade weapons like water? It is because somewhere between 70 to 90 percent of the guns that are found in crime scenes—mostly crime scenes connected to the cartel business—in Mexico can be traced back to the United States.

This is absolutely stunning. It is U.S. guns bought here in the United States, transited to Mexico that is fueling the violence that ends up in fentanyl being made, produced, and transported freely into the United States.

So it is time for the United States to recognize that if we want to do something about fentanyl coming into the United States, if we want to save our citizens from ruin, then we have to do something about the guns that move from the United States into Mexico.

Now why is this happening? Why have the cartels been able to get their hands on these weapons?

Well, there is a handful of reasons. First, without a universal background check law in the United States, these cartel members, most of whom have criminal records, can easily buy guns at gun shows and online, even though they are criminals, because in those settings there are not background checks applied in many of our States. So the cartel members go into these gun shows in places like Texas; they buy the guns; and they bring them to Mexico.

Second, there is no comprehensive effort to stop the trafficking. It is largely Americans that are doing the trafficking—dual citizens, often. We do lots of checks of cars and trucks going from Mexico to the United States, but we don't do significant serious checks on vehicles going from the United States to Mexico. And so the guns, along with the cash, move freely north to south.

And so as long as this gun trade continues, the Mexican authorities, even if they clean up their act, have very little chance to stop these cartels. And what is so maddening is that this is just a choice. We know what to do to stop these guns from being trafficked to the cartels in Mexico, but we choose not to do it.

So for those of us that have relationships with leaders in the Mexican government, we have very few good answers when the Mexican government looks us in the eye and says: Do your part. Stop these guns from moving into Mexico.

The things we can do are all politically popular. Universal background checks are supported by 95 percent of Americans, first and foremost because it will cut down on crime in the United States. But 41 percent of the guns that go into Mexico come from Texas; 15 percent come from Arizona; the lion's share of these weapons comes from States that don't have universal background check laws on the books and so they have all of these loopholes and these ways for criminals to buy guns and transfer them to Mexico.

Second, we can fund DHS to actually do the checks on the cars and the vehicles that are moving into Mexico. Last year, for the first time, because of an initiative that I pushed, we funded 200 more CBP officers to do these outbound inspections. Yet we are still only doing the inspections at a handful of ports of entry, and we should be doing them all across the border. That is something that Republicans and Democrats can come together on.

Last year, we did make progress. With the help of Senator CORNYN and others, we made gun trafficking a crime in this country. It is amazing that it wasn't. We made straw purchasing a crime, which makes it a little bit harder for the traffickers to move weapons from north to south, but it is just a start.

It is really important for us to own the mistakes we have made that have allowed for these cartels to get so big and so powerful. There is no doubt that the lion's share of work lands squarely with the Mexican Government. The corruption there that is endemic is the biggest gift to the cartels.

Second to the corruption is the flow of weapons that the United States has permitted and, at times, facilitated. We need a massive, laser-focused effort to stop the flow of fentanyl into the United States. It is killing thousands of Americans. In my State, there have been 10,000 overdose deaths just in the last 10 years.

We can't just lecture the Mexican Government to do better; we need to do our part. So I am here on the floor today to ask my colleagues to join me in taking some big, bold steps to stop the flow of these weapons from the United States to the Mexican drug cartels.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

PROTECTING HUNTING HERITAGE AND EDUCATION ACT

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I rise today in support of my bipartisan legislation to protect funding for hunter safety programs.

Senator CORNYN is going to make a UC here in a bit. I just want to thank him and Senator MURKOWSKI for the work that they have done on this bill. It has been incredible.

You know, in Montana and across rural America, our schools have long offered hunter safety classes and taught our kids gun safety and personal responsibility, but recently the Biden administration and the bureaucrats here in this city who really don't understand rural America very well decided to block funding for these important education programs.

I want to be clear. That was a poor decision that will hurt thousands of students who benefit from these resources and these programs every year. That is why I am pushing for this bipartisan fix that would require the Department of Education to restore a school district's ability to use Federal dollars for school archery or gun safety or hunter education programs.

Look, folks, when Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, we did so to ensure that our kids are safe when they go to school. This common-sense bill will make sure that we stay true to that intent by educating future generations on the importance of responsible gun ownership and hunting, which will only make our students and our communities safer. It will protect Montana's longstanding and proud tradition of hunting and shooting sports, which are essential to Montana's way of life.

I would urge my colleagues in this room today to support this bipartisan solution.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, following the devastating shooting in Uvalde just a little over a year ago, Congress passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. As we know, this legislation invested in mental health, school safety, and commonsense measures to prevent dangerous individuals—namely, those with mental health problems or with criminal records—from carrying out acts of violence.

Importantly, it did all of this without impacting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens. That was a red line. Unfortunately, the Biden administration has misinterpreted a section of this law and is using it as a pretext to defund hunter education and archery programs, which is ironic because one of the things that many people have advocated is, let's teach people how to safely use firearms for recreational or hunting purposes. Yet they want to somehow stop those very programs?

Well, these programs are offered in school districts across Texas and equip

students with invaluable skills, including, as I suggested, firearms safety and wildlife management. They are teaching students to be responsible gun owners and good stewards of the environment, something I would think we would all want.

These programs have overwhelming bipartisan support, and Congress had no intention of impacting them or curbing their availability in any way. Members of Congress worked together in good faith to pass this legislation that will build stronger, safer communities. But the fact that the administration is stretching the law—the words of the law—beyond any meaning that we intended is unjustifiable. When this happens, it undermines the good will between Congress and the White House. It makes it difficult, if not impossible, to legislate on important and contentious issues like this.

The Biden administration is attempting to take creative license with the law, and Congress needs to step in and correct the situation immediately. That is what we are doing today. Senator SINEMA, Senator TILLIS, and Senator MURPHY were my partners in negotiating this Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. We came together with Senator CAPITO and immediately started working on a new bill to clarify congressional intent on this legislation given the overreach by the administration. We worked with our colleagues on the House side to craft a bill that could pass both Chambers of Congress.

The Protecting Hunting Heritage and Education Act clarifies that Federal funds can be used to support archery, hunting, and other valuable enrichment programs in schools.

This legislation passed the House yesterday evening by a vote of 424 to 1, an overwhelming show of bipartisan support. I hope the Senate will follow suit today and send this legislation to the President's desk to clarify, once and for all, that the Biden administration cannot ignore the express will of Congress.

This is the Biden administration, not the Biden kingdom. The wishes and whims of the President and his staff do not outweigh Congress's intent. I am eager for President Biden to sign this legislation and acknowledge that this interpretation of the clear words of the legislation that we passed on a bipartisan basis were totally in conflict.

Once again, Congress has reclaimed its right as a separate, coequal branch of government in a bipartisan way to pass legislation that expresses not the will of the staff at the White House or some administrative Agency but the will of the Members of Congress. I am glad the House acted quickly to correct this shameful behavior, and I hope now the Senate will follow suit.

Madam President, I see the Senator from Arizona here on the floor, and I yield to her.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Ms. SINEMA. Madam President, I join the senior Senator from Texas in

support of our commonsense bill today that ensures the administration follows the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act as we wrote it.

When we wrote this law last year, this was historic legislation to reduce community violence, improve mental health services, and save lives. When we wrote this bill, we were clear in our intent. We wanted to make our schools safer places to learn, our communities safer places to live, and our mental and behavioral healthcare system among the strongest in the world, and we did that with broad bipartisan support.

Our law prohibits the use of new Federal funding for weapons for school staff, but our law very specifically does not prohibit the use of funds for archery classes, hunting safety classes, or any other extracurricular activities of the sort.

What is at issue here is a misinterpretation of this section of our law by the White House, and it is a symptom of a larger issue: the alarming tendency of this administration to ignore the will and intent of Congress when carrying out the very laws that we pass.

Time after time, Congress has come together to pass historic legislation with bipartisan support just to see the current White House interpret provisions—repeated provisions of repeated pieces of legislation—not in line with congressional intent. We pass the laws; that is our job. The administration is supposed to follow and implement those laws; that is their job. But this administration routinely fails to do its job correctly. This creates distrust; it delays meaningful solutions for our constituents; and it wastes taxpayer money.

Enough is enough. We shouldn't have to be here today. We shouldn't have to pass a bill today telling the administration to do its job and follow the law, but here we are.

So, once again, Congress will come together in a bipartisan, bicameral way to pass a bill. We will hold the administration accountable, ensure the accurate interpretation and implementation of our Bipartisan Safer Communities law, and we will allow students in Arizona and all across the country to continue enjoying school-based hunting and archery programs, just as our law intended.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. TILLIS. Madam President, I want to thank my colleagues from Arizona and Texas for, really, the first historic activity.

It was a historic month last year. In the wake of the Uvalde shootings, we came together in one meeting—and this is a very diverse group of people, Senator MURPHY from Connecticut being one of them. We came together in one meeting, and we developed enough trust to say that we thought we could do something that hadn't been done in a generation: trying to come up with a

bipartisan bill that addresses what we considered to be some of the root causes of community safety. We did it in 30 days with bipartisan support, and we sent it to the President's desk.

I am sure Senator CORNYN and Senator SINEMA are doing the same thing, but I watch it virtually every day. I watch what is happening on the ground. I look at funding for school safety, funding for school hardening, funding for veterans courts, funding for VA courts, funding for family courts, more funding to make sure that background checks are done quickly, and identifying young people who, yes, a couple of hundred should not have a gun out of about 150,000 who have actually tried to purchase a gun over the last year. The short story is it was a very successful bill.

I have been involved, in the last Congress, in every bipartisan bill that went to the floor. I took the heat back home, and Senator CORNYN took the heat back home, but we worked on it, and we had trusted partners who understood the intent. It goes to the President's desk, and what does somebody in his administration do? Get in our heads. All they needed to do was call us. They knew this wasn't our intent. Hunter safety? Archery training? Teaching a young person how to respect and handle a gun safely? They really thought that we did not want to train them on that; that we didn't want to train them about conservation and wildlife stewardship? That is what you also learn when you go to hunter safety.

As a matter of fact, even if you never want to own a gun, I encourage you to go to a hunter safety course. You are going to learn a lot of stuff. You are going to learn a lot of stuff about conservation, wildlife stewardship, and also the safe handling of a gun. It is the same thing for archery.

So I can only assume that the reason we are here today and the reason the House had to cast a vote is that somebody in the administration wanted to play politics—"gotcha."

Well, let me tell you why that is dangerous. It is because it makes people like me question whether or not I should trust the administration to implement a bill in the manner that we intended to implement it. If I am going to get a "gotcha" at the end for something like this, what encourages me to do it again?

So, today, I think we are going to right this wrong, but I really hope the administration recognizes that some of us are sick of the polarizing environment in Washington. Some of us are willing to work on a bipartisan basis to make things different, but we have to have a willing and trusted partner down the street. This rights a wrong now, but I hope the administration recognizes, in the future, if you want to see more people like me stick our necks out for things that need to be done, you had better behave differently.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I am really very pleased to be on the floor with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to talk about this.

As my colleague from North Carolina has pointed out, it was pretty clear—it was more than pretty clear; it was crystal clear—what the intent of this provision was. The intent was really designed to prevent gun violence. What this administration is doing with this interpretation is so far afield of where we were with the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act that it is almost breathtaking.

I had an opportunity less than a week ago to be back home in Fairbanks, and I went to the Tanana Valley shooting range. I was greeted by about probably 25, maybe even 30 high school students from Hutchison, from West Valley, and from Lathrop who were all part of the rifle team. They were there, pretty proud of what they were doing and how they were doing it; but they wanted to know, they wanted to understand how we could possibly—we here in Washington, DC, we in the Congress could possibly be doing something that was going to be limiting or restricting opportunities to understand more about firearms and firearm safety and hunting safety.

This is hunting season in Alaska. It is moose season. It is duck season. We all have our firearms out as we are providing for our families. In my family, one of the first things that you learn in a household that has firearms is about gun safety, firearm safety. Those schools that have those programs that provide for hunters' safety, those are the ones we all want our kids to be part of. It is not just the hunters' safety, it is the archery programs.

Again, when you are thinking about programs that help build young people in strong ways—in leadership skills, in safety, in discipline—that is what these kids from the Fairbanks area schools were telling me.

I said: What else do you learn other than, really, being a sharpshooter?

They said: A sense of discipline—discipline and respect. They said: Every single one of us—there is not one of us in this room here who has been subject to any kind of discipline from within the school. We kind of look out for one another. There is a respect that comes when you are operating around a rifle.

The other issue that they raised was, they said: We understand that the way the Department of Education is interpreting this is not only hunters' safety programs would be at risk, not only archery programs would be at risk, but culinary programs where you have to use a knife with a blade that is in excess of 2½ inches, I believe it is.

So how do you work with a student when you are trying to chop celery in a classroom if you can't use a chopping knife? What do you do in a rural school where all aspects, practically, of your curriculum surround those matters

that are relevant to you, subsistence? So as part of your science class, you are cleaning or preparing a skin from a seal or a walrus, and you are using an ulu. Believe it or not, the Department of Education would say that that ulu that, basically, is preparing your food for your family, would be a dangerous instrument and you can't teach that in the classroom.

Trying to explain what the Department of Education has interpreted this to mean as separate from what we, as the lawmakers who help put this into law—trying to explain to them made no sense.

Do you know what their message was? Can you just fix it? That is what we are here on the floor to do today.

It has not only been the work that Senator TESTER has done with his bill, the work that Senator CORNYN has done with his bill, the work that Senator BARRASSO has done with his bill, the letters that have gone out—we have given the Department the ample opportunity to fix it on their own. But if they don't, we have got to do the legislative fix, and I am standing with my colleagues to do just that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5110, the Protecting Hunting Heritage and Education Act, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5110) to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to clarify that the prohibition on the use of Federal education funds for certain weapons does not apply to the use of such weapons for training in archery, hunting, or other shooting sports.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. CORNYN. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 5110) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SECURING GROWTH AND ROBUST LEADERSHIP IN AMERICAN AVIATION ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

NOMINATIONS OF ROBERT G. TAUB AND THOMAS G. DAY

Mr. CARPER. Good afternoon, Madam President. I am here today to urge my Senate colleagues to join me in considering the confirmation of two excellent people to serve on the Postal Regulatory Commission, which is the governing body for the U.S. Postal

Service: Robert Taub, who is currently a commissioner and we are seeking to reconfirm him; and also Thomas Day, who has come through our Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee and, I think, unanimously recommended for a position on the Postal Regulatory Commission.

Both of these public servants have spent literally decades bettering our country.

Mr. Taub has served on the Commission since 2011, and he actually served as its chairman for, I think, more than 6 years.

Mr. Day has spent—listen to this—over 35 years at the Postal Service—35 years at the Postal Service—and another service, as I recall, in uniform for our country.

I would like to add that we have unanimously confirmed Mr. Taub not once but twice previously, and there is no doubt that he has served our country well.

I want to share three stories with you, if I could: a little bit about the history and the importance of the Postal Service; another about Mr. Taub's role in making the Agency what it is today; and a third about Mr. Day's influence on the function of our postal system across this country.

In 1787, the Founding Fathers of our country gathered in Philadelphia literally to draft a constitution to be able to outline how a new country might be formed and actually operate and work for the betterment of people who lived here then and in the future. They drafted the Constitution, and they sent that Constitution out across the 13 colonies and asked the colonies to look at it, kick the tires, find out what they liked and what they thought ought to be changed.

The first State to actually take it up and affirm—ratify, if you will—that Constitution was the colony that is now Delaware, the State of Delaware.

On December 7, 1787, after a week or so of debate at the Golden Fleece Tavern, the Founding Fathers of Delaware said: We like this Constitution. They maybe tweaked it a little bit and sent it on down to the other colonies, who followed suit. Delaware was, for one whole week, the entire United States of America. Then we opened it up. We let in Pennsylvania and Maryland. And the rest, I think, has turned out pretty well, for the most part, until now. Hopefully, we will continue to exist for many, many years, decades, centuries into the future.

One key element of the Constitution was the creation of the Postal Service. Our first Postmaster General was actually, believe it or not, Ben Franklin. Ben Franklin.

The establishment of the Postal Service represented an important early effort to bind us together as a nation—to bind us together as a nation—to unite us in communication with one another. That work continues today as postal workers cover all 50 States. They did it today; they will do it at