

But it is a bedrock promise to all of us. You pay in; you get those benefits.

Last year, I introduced a resolution—the Senator from Nevada cosponsored it—affirming the Senate's commitment to protecting and expanding Social Security. It was pretty simple. It simply said we affirm, we pledge we will protect Social Security and Medicare from any kinds of cuts from the far right that doesn't believe in the program. Almost every Democrat signed on. Not one Republican signed on. Not one Republican committed to our promise, re-committed to our promise to the American people, that if you work hard all your life, Social Security will be there for you.

So Americans shouldn't have to worry that politicians, secure with their government pensions, are going to try to take away their retirement. I urge my colleagues to do what the American people want us to do overwhelmingly. They want us to protect and expand Social Security and Medicare.

As I said, just look down the hall in the House of Representatives. There is a new majority there—a new majority controlled by the far right—of what used to be a pretty centrist Republican Party, from the far right, that—when ever they try to privatize Social Security and Medicare, they get all kinds of contributions from the rightwing and from Wall Street and from some big healthcare companies and some big energy companies and all that, and it is wrong. We know it is wrong. Whether it is Nevada, whether it is Las Vegas or Cleveland, whether it is Reno or Columbus, whether it is Carson City or Dayton, we know that overwhelmingly people in this country want a strong Social Security that will always be there for our kids and our grandkids and our great-grandkids. They want a Medicare that will provide healthcare to people regardless of your wealth, regardless of your income, regardless of your station in life.

That is my pledge. I know the Senators on the floor from Connecticut and Nevada also support that commitment and pledge. It is where we are as a country. It is not, unfortunately, where some of my colleagues sit.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

MASS SHOOTINGS

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, this week, the country has been riveted again by scenes of mass shootings, this time in California. I spoke on the phone to my seatmate Senator PADILLA just a few days ago, and it is a conversation that I have had with the Presiding Officer. It is a conversation I have had with Senators from Colorado and Virginia. We all now increasingly come from States where we have seen dozens of people murdered at one time in these horrific, horrific mass shootings.

I am proud that in the wake of the Uvalde massacre and the shooting in Buffalo, last summer this Congress came together and finally passed, after 30 years of inaction, legislation that begins to make our communities safer, but what we saw in Monterey and Half Moon Bay is just confirmation—reaffirmation—that we have enormous work to do.

Let me first tell you the good news, and that is this: The legislation we passed last summer, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, is saving lives as we speak. If you recall, that legislation set up a new background check process for younger buyers of weapons in this country. It eliminated the boyfriend loophole so that no domestic abusers in this country can get their hands on weapons. It gave funding to States to set up red flag laws. It strengthened our background check system. It is a set of really important changes.

A bipartisan group of us went out to West Virginia just a few weeks ago—Senator CORNYN, Senator TILLIS, Senator CAPITO—three Republicans—and myself and Senator MANCHIN—to see the background check system at work. We went out and sat right next to the background checks operators in their cubicles, and we watched them process these new background checks that are required because of the law we passed.

We got briefings from the FBI in which they laid out for us the details of incredibly dangerous individuals, individuals who were in crisis, many of them under 21, who would have gotten a weapon in their moment of crisis had it not been for the legislation we passed.

I also saw how diligent these background checks operators were, how serious they were about their job, how proud they were of their job, because they knew that in their hands they held the safety of the American public; that every time they click that button, there was an individual walking out of the store with a gun, and they wanted to make sure of two things: First, they were protecting the American public—make sure that only those who were qualified under the law, who weren't deemed to be too dangerous, were getting those weapons. The second thing they were concerned about—and every single one of them told us this—they were there to uphold the Second Amendment as well. They were there to make sure—to make sure—of the guarantee that if you are a law-abiding citizen, you can get a legal weapon.

I think all of us who visited were really impressed by the work that our background checks operators do and were confident that the bill we passed last summer is saving lives as we speak. But everybody in this country knows it is not enough. Everybody in this country knows it was just a start. I hope this year we will be able to build on the progress we made last year to find additional common ground because what you are seeing in California

and what you have seen all across the country are individuals—largely men, mostly younger men—whose brains are breaking, and in that moment of crisis, they are reaching for a weapon, they are seeing their path to exorcise those demons as running through an episode of mass slaughter.

But it is important to note that this is not the only country in the world where brains break. This is not the only country in the world where people have paranoid ideas. This is not the only country in the world with severe mental illness. So the story of American mass murder is not a story of mental illness; it is not a story of paranoia; it is not a story of grudge or grievance because every other country has that. But only in the United States does that grudge, grievance, paranoia, and mental illness lead to mass assassination. That is because in this country we are flooded with weapons—and not just any weapons but weapons of mass destruction.

These killers, they use the same set of weapons, semiautomatic weapons with attachable clips that can fire 300 bullets out of 1 cartridge. They all use the same set of weapons because they are trying to kill as many people as quickly as possible. Only in this country can those individuals, who have decided to take out their anger, their grudge, and their grievance through mass murder, get their hands on a weapon that will allow them to do that. Other countries don't allow that to happen.

I have told this story many times before, but on the same day that Sandy Hook occurred, there was an equal number of students attacked in a school in Henan Province, China. Every kid who was shot in Sandy Hook died. Why? I won't describe it for you on the floor today, but the damage that a bullet fired from an AR-15 does to the body of a little child is irrevocable. It literally tears you apart, the bullet is going so fast through your body. So none of those kids survived. But in Henan Province, China, every child who was attacked survived. Why? Because in Henan Province, the attacker, who was just as unhinged, likely, as the attacker in Sandy Hook, had a knife and not a gun. Knives can do damage, too, but not as much damage as an AR-15.

So States that are more serious about keeping assault weapons off the streets and guns away from dangerous people have a lot less gun crime—a lot less. Countries that are more serious about making sure that people who have these grudges, grievances, and paranoid ideas don't get their hands on dangerous weapons—they have almost rock-bottom levels of gun violence.

I think we are at a moment in time where Americans know this. Americans are sick and tired of the status quo. That is why we were able to pass this law last summer. It was a start—a really important start—but it was not a result of any of the advocates in the Senate perfecting their argument; it was a

result of parents and students and families out there in America compelling Congress to do something because this country has had enough.

This country has not just had enough of the mass shootings but of the hundred-plus people who die every day from gunshot wounds—suicides, accidental shootings, homicides—all of which can be prevented through limiting the access by dangerous people or people who are going through a crisis to weaponry and particularly weaponry of mass destruction.

So I think that message from the American public we heard last summer—it is not going away. The good news is, we found common ground. And right now in the U.S. Congress, you have no choice if you want to get something done but to find common ground. We found it. I don't think that anybody who voted for it paid any substantial political price. I think there was only political upside to supporting a compromise that was wildly popular.

If you remember, Senator McCONNELL showed a PowerPoint presentation to the Republican caucus in May of last year and showed his Republican colleagues how popular all of the things that we voted on last summer were—red flag laws, stopping domestic abusers from getting guns—no political downside in continuing to make progress when it comes to making our communities safer.

As we live amidst another moment in American history where the country is recognizing the unique problem of mass shootings; as we think about 20-some-odd days gone in the year with 40 mass shootings already; when we think about the fear that our kids live in when they go to school, wondering whether they will be next, and now the fear that workplaces have and churchgoers have of whether they will be next, it is more reason for us to make 2023 a year in which we don't follow the pre-2022 precedent of doing nothing but we follow the 2022 precedent of finding the common ground between Republicans and Democrats to make this country safer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT S. RES 13

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that S. Res. 13, submitted earlier today, be held at the desk; that following morning business tomorrow, the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that at 1:45 p.m., the Senate vote on adoption of the resolution; that if the resolution is agreed to, the preamble be considered agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 81, S. 82, and H.R. 300

Mr. MURPHY. I understand there are three bills at the desk and I ask for their first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 81) to provide a moratorium on all Federal research grants provided to any institution of higher education or other research institute that is conducting gain-of-function research.

A bill (S. 82) to protect social security benefits and military pay and require that the United States Government to prioritize all obligations on the debt held by the public in the event that the debt limit is reached.

A bill (H.R. 300) to amend chapter 3 of title 5, United States Code, to require the publication of settlement agreements, and for other purposes.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask for a second reading and in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bills will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

MORNING BUSINESS

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING WALTER ULLOA

• Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise today to honor the life of Walter Ulloa, a trailblazing figure in the media and entertainment industry, a role model to many in California, and my personal friend.

Walter grew up in Brawley, CA, at a time when Latinos were still segregated in his community. He graduated from the University of Southern California in 1970, before earning his law degree from Loyola School of Law in 1975.

After earning his degrees, Walter embarked on what would become a nearly five-decade career in media, playing a pivotal role in the growth of Spanish-language television and radio across the United States.

At KMEX in Los Angeles, there were some early signs that Walter's work ethic, intellect, and mind for media would make him successful. During his 13 years there, he worked as operations manager, production manager, news director, local sales manager, and account executive before venturing out to create his own projects.

In 1996, he cofounded Entravision, a now global Latino media, marketing, and technology company. For over 25 years, he served as chairman and chief executive officer at Entravision, where he grew his young company to own over 100 television and radio stations, as well as digital platforms throughout the United States. Whether in Los An-

geles or across the country, if you watched or listened to Spanish-language media in the last five decades, there is a very good chance you have Walter Ulloa to thank.

But away from his industry impact, communities in California knew him for his generosity and his commitment to public service. So respected was Walter for his expertise and appreciation of the arts, that President Barack Obama appointed him to the board of trustees for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

For more than 20 years, I had the privilege of knowing and working with Walter. I always admired how he generously gave his time and contributed resources to help increase Latino civic engagement and voting in California. The fact that after growing up in a segregated community in the 1950s, Walter could go on to not only an extraordinarily successful career, but to help future Latino communities prosper time and time again is a testament to his character.

The life of Walter Ulloa is nothing less than the American dream come true, from his educational and economic success, his philanthropy, and his service to our country. He will be missed.

Angela and I send our love to his wife Alexandra Seros and son Bruno Seros-Ulloa and to all those whose lives were touched by his service.●

REMEMBERING DR. ROBERT COPE

• Mr. RISCH. Madam President, today I would like to pay tribute to Dr. Robert Cope, a public servant and cattle veterinarian of Lemhi County, ID, who lost his battle to cancer last month. I had the great fortune of being friends and working with Dr. Cope through the many public and private roles he served. Those who knew Dr. Robert Cope affectionately called him "Cope."

Cope dedicated his whole life to serving agricultural families after he received his doctorate in veterinary medicine from Kansas State University in 1975. Shortly, thereafter, he moved to Idaho, where his clients became his extended family. Cope owned and operated the Blue Cross Vet Clinic in Salmon, ID, for 44 years. He loved children and the youth of his community, and he supported them through 4-H and his veterinarian practice. Idaho ranchers can share countless stories of Cope's service at all hours of the day and night. Even as his cancer progressed, Cope offered his advice and expertise to his loyal clients.

Cope served as Lemhi County Commissioner for 14 years and sat on many committees related to natural resources and environmental challenges. In March of 2002, he was inducted in the Eastern Idaho Agricultural Hall of Fame.

With wisdom, common-sense, and humor, Cope tackled life head-on and was never afraid to address tough issues and find collaborative solutions.