

ANTI-SEMITISM

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, on a recent matter, I have spoken recently about the existential choice facing America's most elite universities. In the wake of October 7, an alarming surge of anti-Semitic hate swirled around the loftiest campuses in our country. And, as we are all painfully aware by now, the responses of university administrators were not exactly profiles in courage—from the equivocations and weak public statements to the absurd double standard invoked in testimony before Congress.

After months of alumni uproar and pressure from the public, Harvard and Penn appeared to recognize that it was time for new management. As I have said, universities shopping for presidents would do well to focus their search on rigorous scholarly integrity, moral clarity, and a rock-solid commitment to the even enforcement of free speech.

Unfortunately, we are still waiting to see any real signs that these universities have actually taken the lessons of the past few months to heart. Harvard, for its part, rolled out a new Presidential Task Force on Combating Anti-Semitism to much fanfare. It sounds promising—that is, until you learn that the choice for the cochair of the panel has a record of calling Israel a “regime of apartheid.”

The university has also made no plans to terminate an exchange partnership with the university in the West Bank that proclaimed “glory for Martyrs” in the wake of October 7 and whose students have even been arrested for planning a terrorist attack with weapons supplied by Hamas.

So you would be forgiven for assuming that cutting overt ties with terrorist-affiliated organizations would be step one in any serious effort to reform a university. These responses would be laughable if they didn't have such clear, measurable, dangerous consequences.

Just last month, a poll showed one in five Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 doubts—doubts—that the Holocaust happened. Let me say that again. Just last month, a poll showed 1 in 5 Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 doubting that the Holocaust happened. Perhaps this shouldn't surprise us when we look at young people in post-modern critical theory that subjectivizes norms and endlessly deconstructs the wisdom of the ages and problematizes and assails the very notion of objective truth.

The Holocaust is not an alternative fact. It is not simply a narrative to be questioned by a student's lived experiences; yet 20 percent of the young people in this country doubt whether the most vile and systematic genocide of Jews in the history of the world ever happened.

The most elite universities vying to shape their minds have now spent months in an embarrassing public struggle to avoid reckoning with their

role in a rise in anti-Semitic hate. If these institutions ever hope to reclaim any mantle of cultural authority they once held, they might want to start with taking the world's oldest form of hate a bit more seriously.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

NATIONAL GUN VIOLENCE
SURVIVORS WEEK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to honor the sixth annual National Gun Violence Survivors Week.

This week, we recognize the unbelievable toll of gun violence in America, and we offer our support to the survivors who are left behind.

No State or city is safe from the epidemic of gun violence. Just yesterday, in Joliet, IL, less than an hour outside of Chicago, seven lives were taken within minutes by a shooter with a gun.

Joliet Police Chief Bill Evans said:

I've been a police officer for 29 years, and this is the worst crime scene I've ever been associated with.

In Highland Park, IL, a shooter with an assault rifle fired 83 rounds in less than 60 seconds at a Fourth of July parade in 2022, killing seven innocent people and wounding dozens before law enforcement could finally even identify where he was. So much for the theory of a good person with a gun stopping a bad person with a gun. When it comes to assault rifles, that is not even in the realm of possibility.

Katie Gillman is one of many of my constituents who was there in Highland Park. She was with her husband and two daughters to see the Fourth of July parade when the shooter opened fire on the crowd. She and her children ran for their lives. Katie still lives in fear that what happened that day could happen again and that she may not be able to protect her kids this time.

She recently wrote to me and said:

For close to a year, I have had a deep-seated fear that my children won't make it through the school day due to gun violence. And each week in the news, there is proof of these fears.

The unfortunate reality is that Americans are forced to worry about whether their kids will be safe from gun violence at school, at the movies, at concerts, and at church—virtually everywhere.

Since 2020, the United States has suffered more than 600 mass shootings each year—almost 2 a day. There is no place in America that has been spared. And guns are now the No. 1 cause of death for American kids and teenagers. Think of that. In the entire world, it is in America that the No. 1 cause of death of kids and teenagers is guns. It is not auto accidents, not cancer—guns.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that an editorial opinion, published this morning in the Sun-Times, entitled “Illinois' ban on assault weap-

ons is working,” be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Chicago Sun Times, Jan. 23, 2024]

ILLINOIS' BAN ON ASSAULT WEAPONS IS
WORKING

(By Kathleen Sances)

One year ago, the Protect Illinois Communities Act effectively and immediately stopped the sale of assault weapons in the state.

There was no sunset, no grace period. Just an immediate halt to the manufacturing and sale of assault weapons that have increased the number of mass shootings across the country, high-capacity magazines that fire multiple rounds in quick succession without needing to be reloaded and switches that convert legal handguns into military-style assault weapons.

And here's how you measure the success of that law on the heels of its one-year anniversary: Our analysis of data from the Gun Violence Archive shows 10% fewer mass shootings in Illinois between 2022 and 2023; gun dealers haven't sold assault weapons in Illinois in the past 12 months and there isn't any evidence of violations by dealers.

Gun dealers are complying with the ban, and that's evidenced by their complaints about the loss of sales, collectively costing dealers millions of dollars, and saving an untold number of lives. In fact, when assault weapons or high-capacity magazines are used in shootings, 155% more people are shot and 47% more people are killed.

Just this week, after multiple public meetings that took place in the fall, the rule-making committee for the Legislature approved permanent rules clarifying how existing assault weapons owners can register their firearms. This makes the process more specific and easier to understand, leaving no room for excuses for not complying with the law.

The reality is that Illinois voters overwhelmingly elected a governor and representatives who were clear on their support for the assault weapons ban to stop the needless bloodshed happening in every corner of our state. They did what we elected them to do, and Illinois became only the ninth state to ban assault weapons.

But the gun lobby doesn't want to talk about the immediate success of the assault weapons ban. Instead, they're using extremists like Darren Bailey to tell people to break the law and not comply, in a flurry of bullets no less. This may rally the conservative base, but there's no doubt that the assault weapons ban is doing exactly what it's intended to do: stop the sale of these deadly weapons in Illinois.

In fact, the only people who will be harmed by not filing these affidavits of ownership are the existing owners, whose assault weapons were grandfathered in. If owners successfully file an affidavit, then there will be no question as to the legality of their possessing the firearm. Those who refuse are subject to misdemeanor charges upon first offense and felony charges after that. Thousands of responsible gun owners have already complied.

One year later, we know that the assault weapons ban has saved countless lives from the devastating so-called “everyday gun violence” that has become ingrained generational trauma for predominantly Black and Brown low-income communities, and from the threat of mass shootings that have repeatedly killed and maimed children, teachers and families just trying to go about their daily lives. That's why we passed this

groundbreaking piece of legislation: to stop people from dying.

One year later, the assault weapons ban is fulfilling its promise.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it reflects the fact that Illinois decided to change its law a little over a year ago. We decided to finally come to grips with the assault weapons scourge that hit Highland Park and continues to threaten America.

This is an article that was written by the CEO of Gun Violence Prevention PAC, Kathleen Sances. In it, she makes note of the fact that the new law in Illinois is being measured as to whether it has been successful on its 1-year anniversary.

The analysis and data from the Gun Violence Archive shows 10 percent fewer mass shootings in Illinois between 2022 and 2023. She writes:

Gun dealers haven't sold assault weapons in Illinois in the past 12 months, and there isn't any evidence of violations by dealers.

Gun dealers are complying with the ban, and that's evidenced by their complaints about the loss of sales, collectively costing dealers millions of dollars, and saving an untold number of lives. In fact, when assault weapons or high-capacity magazines are used in shootings, 155 percent more people are shot, and 47 percent more people are killed.

That simple, commonsense effort to put an end to gun violence is working in Illinois, thank goodness, but we must do more.

We cannot lose hope. Instead, we should focus on what we can do to address the gun violence crisis. In cities like Chicago, dealing with the drumbeat of gun violence has turned public health professionals into battlefield experts. I heard from doctors in Chicago who were sick of treating gunshot victims on the operating table, 50 percent of whom, if they survive, would leave the hospital and return as gunshot victims again.

They wanted to prevent this gruesome injury scenario from happening in the first place and then repeating. So, in 2018, I brought together the CEOs of the 10 largest hospitals serving in Chicago to talk about how we could help. We formed a group known as the Chicago HEAL Initiative, which has emerged as a national example of how hospitals can collaborate and reach outside their walls to prevent gun violence. Most importantly, they aren't just stitching up physical injuries; they are addressing the emotional scars of their patients.

We must do more for survivors. That means providing resources like the HEAL Initiative to help those who have experienced trauma and preventing weapons of war from causing bloodshed in the first place.

It is time for us to build on the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act and come together to create real change. Congress must pass commonsense legislation to help keep America's children and communities safe.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to turn briefly to another urgent topic. We must restore order at our southern border and enforce our immigration laws in a fair and humane way. That is why the Senate has been engaged in bipartisan talks on a path forward for weeks.

The Republican Governor of Texas takes a much different view. He has implemented cruel—even deadly—and ineffective immigration policies that sow chaos, risk lives, and prevent Federal border officials from doing their jobs.

Last week, a woman and two children tragically died in the Rio Grande River while Mexican authorities rescued other migrants in distress. The U.S. Border Patrol could not reach these migrants in need because the Texas National Guard actively blocked access to the Rio Grande River. This is just the latest tragedy resulting from Governor Abbott's policies.

As part of its so-called Operation Lone Star, Texas has strung razor wire along the border which has seriously injured migrants, and it has dropped migrant children off at truck stops in Illinois in subzero temperatures. We warned him. The Governor of Illinois warned Governor Abbott of Texas that if you haphazardly drop these migrants off in Chicago at this time of year, terrible things can occur. A few weeks ago, a little boy died. God knows who others were in danger because of the Governor of Texas and his strategy.

Texas passed a new law that makes it a State crime to cross the border without inspection and recently began arresting immigrants who crossed the border, placing them into State custody. Governor Abbott defends these policies, even though there is zero evidence they deter migrants from crossing the border.

We must discourage migrants from risking their lives by approaching the United States between ports of entry, but we cannot stand by while Governor Abbott increases the likelihood of injury or death. Despite their desperation to reach safety, most migrants wish to enter the United States lawfully. Many wait months at our border for appointments to make asylum claims.

In defending his policies, the Governor of Texas recently bragged:

[T]he only thing that we're not doing is we're not shooting people who come across the border, because of course the Biden Administration would charge us with murder.

This is a direct quote from Governor Abbott.

His actions are not only dangerous and cruel, they are unconstitutional. Under our Constitution, States do not have the right to pass their own laws preempting Federal laws on immigration.

Just yesterday, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Federal Government, allowing Border Patrol agents to cut through or remove razor wire that

the Governor of Texas installed on the border.

As former Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote in his opinion in *Arizona v. United States*, which found parts of Arizona's anti-immigration law unconstitutional:

[T]he history of the United States is in part made of the stories, talents, and lasting contributions of those who crossed oceans and deserts to come here.

With that sentiment in mind, Congress must do its job and pass immigration laws that honor our history as a nation of immigrants and provide the critical resources necessary to address the challenges at our border.

I guess I pretty well know, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee in favor of immigration—legal immigration—to this country, I believe immigration is a critical element of who we are and what we will become. It is part of our past, and it should be part of our future.

My mother was an immigrant to this country, and I have never forgotten it. I am lucky to be standing here today as a U.S. Senator, because her parents had the courage to come to a country where they didn't speak the language in the hopes of a better life for her and her children. One of her children is now standing in the U.S. Senate.

I believe that is part of America's history, but there are certain elements which we must acknowledge. No. 1, the United States cannot absorb all of the people who want to come to this country at this moment. We have to have an orderly process that makes sense not only for the migrants but that also makes sense for America, first and foremost. We have to be cognizant and sensitive to our Nation's safety and security. That is No. 1. We should never knowingly allow anyone to come to this country who would cause us harm.

Secondly, we have to make sure that those who come will add to America, and I believe most will. If given a chance, they will become part of our economy, even starting at the lowest levels and working their way up. It is the story of immigration in America.

In addition to that, we need to work with other countries to regulate the flow of refugees. The refugee crisis in the world today is the worst it has ever been, and we are seeing it evidenced in the fact that those who present themselves at our southern border are often from places like China and Asia and Africa, and they find their way to the Mexican border with the United States in the hopes of a future. We need an orderly process.

We also need to make sure that we have the legal authorization of people to come to this country to work. I can't tell you how many people in Illinois have come to me and said: We are desperate for workers. Americans won't fill these jobs, and we need people who will. All the way up from farming to industry, that is the story, and that is the reality.