

where their loved ones were captured. I can only imagine what the last 8 months have been like for these courageous souls, not knowing if their loved ones are even alive.

I was particularly glad to meet with some of the families from New York, including the family of Itay Chen, who was murdered on October 7 and whose body is still being held hostage. I also met with the family of Omer Neutra, who remains in captivity and whose family will be attending the speech as my guests.

Omer was serving as a tank commander near Gaza when he was taken, but back home he had his whole life ahead of him. He is a student athlete, a Knicks fan, the captain of his school's basketball team, and was set to attend Binghamton University, one of the finest universities in the country, after his service. And there are many, many just like Omer whom we still need to bring home.

There is simply no time to waste with a deal within reach. Yesterday, another hostage family member told me the tragic story of her family. Her mother and brother were both taken captive by Hamas on October 7. Today, her mother is home, released in the November hostage deal, but her brother is dead, murdered in captivity. As she told me, "the difference in fates of her mother and her brother lies at the negotiating table."

The survival of the hostages depends on closing a deal now. The Prime Minister must make bringing the hostages home a top priority, and I promised the families that is what I will tell him when we meet this afternoon.

KOSA-COPPA

Mr. President, on a different issue, KOSA and COPPA, tomorrow, the Senate will get the chance to take a major step forward on ensuring our kids' safety. We will hold a cloture vote on a measure that contains two resoundingly bipartisan bills: the Kids Online Safety Act, or KOSA, and the Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act, or COPPA.

Both of these bills have been around since last Congress. Both have gone through the Senate Commerce Committee without opposition. But there have been many roadblocks to both KOSA and COPPA, and the parents who have been pushing and pushing and pushing for kids' online safety are fed up with the delay.

But I believe this time will be different. This time I am very hopeful that we can pass these bills through the Chamber.

I have worked closely with Members on both sides to get these bills ready for the floor. I made sure Members had plenty of time to offer their input, work through disagreements, and arrive at a consensus. Now, the moment to act has arrived. We are going to get our chance to take the next big step tomorrow.

I have had many difficult meetings with constituents as a Member of this

body, but few, few have been as heart-wrenching as the meetings I have had with the parents of kids who took their own lives because of what happened to them on social media.

I met with one parent from New York yesterday whose child suffered this terrible fate. She has lost her child forever.

And I have met many others back home and across the country who are in a similar situation. Some of the parents told me about how their kids were relentlessly bullied online. Others told me about how their kids were targeted by predators or duped into buying deadly drugs. Virtually all the parents shared their stories about the intense mental anguish their kids suffered.

When I talked to the parents who lost their children, when I saw the pictures of their kids that they were holding up yesterday—I have seen those pictures before. I think of my kids when they were little. I think of my grandkids today. What if one of them goes online and loses their life? God forbid. God forbid.

The loss shatters your heart, and I think to myself that if we could get these bills done, it would do so much good for millions of families across the country. Tomorrow is the day we must act.

So I want to thank so many of the Senators who labored tirelessly on these bills. I especially want to thank Senators BLUMENTHAL and BLACKBURN for their work on KOSA, as well as Senators MARKEY and CASSIDY for their work on COPPA. I also wish to thank Chair CANTWELL for her excellent leadership on the Commerce Committee. I look forward to voting on advancing KOSA/COPPA here on the floor later this week.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, now, next topic, tonight President Biden will address the Nation on a most solemn matter, his decision—his generous, wonderful decision—to pass the torch at the end of his term and his vision for the future of America.

President Biden's decision to stand down from a second term in office will go down as one of the greatest acts of patriotism of any President in our long, storied U.S. history. To pass the torch is one of the hardest decisions possible for someone whose life has been entirely about leadership, but he did it because he believed it was the right thing to do for the country he loved so much.

Nevertheless, tonight I expect President Biden to remind the American people that one thing hasn't changed: Right now, our democracy stands at a crossroads, and we—all of us—have a lot of work left to do.

Democrats want to keep America moving forward with greater hope and opportunity for everybody. Republicans, on the other hand, are hell-bent on taking our country backward with chaos, with dysfunction.

If anyone needed a clearer contrast between the Democrats' and the Re-

publicans' vision for America, just take a look at the latest Trump plan proposed by the very conservative, the arch conservative Heritage Foundation. The more the American people learn the details of Project 2025, the more trouble Donald Trump is going to have. Let me say that again: The more the American people learn the details about Project 2025, the more trouble Donald Trump is going to have. The Trump plan calls for the most conservative agenda in American history, chocked full of radical, rightwing MAGA proposals that are way out of line with the mainstream.

While Democrats are focused on protecting reproductive rights and a woman's right to choose, the Trump plan lays the groundwork for a national abortion ban. While Democrats are focused on providing student debt relief to millions of borrowers, the Trump plans calls for defunding the Department of Education. While Democrats are focused on creating jobs and making our Tax Code fairer for working families, the Trump plan calls for more tax cuts for the very wealthy, the corporate elites, the mega corporations. While Democrats are focused on tackling climate change and lowering energy costs, the Trump plan would gut our clean energy investments, empower the Nation's biggest oil and gas producers, and throw thousands and thousands who are now in good-paying jobs out of work.

The list goes on and on and on, but the bottom line is this: America cannot afford 4 years of the Trump plan. It would be dangerous for our democracy, disastrous for our economy, horrible for the average American family, and downright destructive for the progress we have made in the last 4 years.

HONORING DETECTIVE JOHN GIBSON AND OFFICER JACOB CHESTNUT

Mr. President, 26 years ago today, Detective John Gibson and Officer Jacob Chestnut of the Capitol Police gave their lives in the line of duty while defending the Capitol from an attack by a lone gunman.

On what was a very dark day in the history of this building, Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut demonstrated extraordinary courage in the face of extraordinary danger. If not for their selfless actions that day, many innocent people would have been injured or would have lost their lives.

Days like today remind us of the immense responsibilities of the Capitol Police. It is no easy task to be the guardians of the Capitol complex, but Capitol Police do it every single day with unwavering dedication and courage.

So we will never forget the sacrifice that Detective Gibson and Officer Chestnut made 26 years ago. May their memories continue to be a blessing to their families, to all of us here who remember that awful day, and to their brave brothers and sisters in the Capitol Police.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

The majority whip.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

TRUMP RALLY SHOOTING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, some events in our lives make such an impression that we can recall exactly where we were and what we were doing when we reflect on learning about them. On November 22, 1963, I was a sophomore at Georgetown University here in Washington, DC, when the news broke that President John F. Kennedy had been shot in Dallas, TX. I was in the library, and the news spread through that quiet room like wildfire. We all stopped what we were doing and went outside and stood in the street and listened to the car radio's report of the news that was just tragic news, of course, that President Kennedy had given his life.

It has been more than 60 years since the assassination of President Kennedy and 43 years since President Reagan was shot. A week and a half ago, Americans were shocked to witness on live television an assassination attempt against former President Donald Trump as well as the murder of Corey Comperatore at a Pennsylvania political rally.

We should all take a moment to reflect on Mr. Comperatore's family loss. His wife reported that when shots were ringing out, he shielded his wife and children with his body. It is an amazing scene to think that at that moment—that emergency moment—he thought of others to protect them. They have been in my thoughts since the tragic events of that Saturday afternoon.

We have a responsibility in Congress to learn how the Secret Service failed to protect former President Trump on July 13. We need to do this on a bipartisan basis; keep politics out of it.

The Judiciary Committee, which I chair, has jurisdiction over the Secret Service. Tomorrow morning, the Judiciary Committee, along with the Homeland Security and Government Affairs Committees, will receive a classified briefing on the shooting. I hope that we learn more since the hearings that occurred in the House of Representatives.

Next Tuesday morning, the Judiciary Committee and the Homeland Security Committee will hold a joint, bipartisan hearing on the assassination attempt, where we hope to learn more from the FBI and the Secret Service.

We need to ask probing and important questions and do it in a respon-

sible way that avoids the kind of incendiary language that has become all too common in our country. It is irresponsible for a Member of Congress to accuse the opposing political party of being “flat out evil and . . . [trying] to murder President Trump,” but a Member of Congress actually said that. Another Member said, “Joe Biden sent the orders.” Can you imagine? Those kinds of statements are so irresponsible, mean-spirited. They don't belong as part of the national debate.

As a country, we have become desensitized to toxic and violent rhetoric that some politicians have embraced as standard fare. We should all be disturbed by the April poll from Marist which found that “one in 5 U.S. adults believe Americans have to resort to violence to get their country back on track.”

I have said this repeatedly, and it bears repeating: Political violence is never acceptable. It is never the answer. Political parties should not elevate leaders who say these things that are so irresponsible.

Candidates should encourage Americans to exercise their constitutional right to speak and vote, not open a rally with an official declaring: If we lose this election, it is going to take a civil war to save this country.

As the most powerful democracy in the world, the eyes of our allies and rivals are always on us. Our political discourse should reflect our solemn responsibility to encourage free and fair elections not just abroad but at home because, in the land of the free, everyone should feel safe expressing their political views and participating in this country's most sacred and fought-for legacy, a free and fair democracy.

ISRAEL

Mr. President, later today, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will address a joint session of Congress. I believe this invitation to speak was ill-timed and one which the Prime Minister should have had the good sense to decline. But if there is one thing we know about Prime Minister Netanyahu is that he never misses an opportunity to further his political agenda.

Let me be clear: There are nations and proxy groups that seek to destroy Israel, and that is not something we can or ever should take for granted. We have seen this with the horrific slaughter by Hamas on October 7, the subsequent Iranian missile barrage, the ongoing attacks by Hezbollah, and the continued holding of innocent Israeli hostages, including Hersh Goldberg-Polin with ties to my State of Illinois. That is why I have long supported helping Israel in its self-defense.

But let me also make clear that support for Israel's right to exist is not a blank check for extremist policies of Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Even before the October attack, Netanyahu was pursuing a deeply troubling agenda compelled by his self-interested desire to hold together his far-right coalition and avoid legal problems.

He enabled illegal settlement expansion, entertained outrageous proposals to annex the West Bank, advance policies that would have undermined Israel's judicial independence, and ignored any long-term vision for peace with the Palestinians.

Pressure from Israel's friends, including President Biden, to rethink those policies were often brushed aside or manipulated to create domestic political support in Israel.

Tragically, it has been clear for years that neither the current Israeli nor the current Palestinian leadership have a vision of political will to find a lasting peace for two people—with tragic consequences.

Shortly after the October 7 attack by Hamas, many of us warned our Israeli friends to learn from our own mistakes we made in the fog of rage and pain following September 11, 2001. But I fear these lessons have been lost upon Netanyahu, and the cost for Israel and Palestinians alike has been heartbreaking.

Netanyahu has failed to create a postconflict plan, has ignored increased settler violence in the West Bank and extremists blocking humanitarian aid from entering Gaza.

When I think about the right of Israel to exist, it is pretty clear to me, start to finish, that is the basic foundational position to take: the right to defend themselves, of course. October 7 was proof positive that that is necessary.

But you take a look at the course of the war in Gaza ever since: 39,000 innocent Palestinians have died; 90,000 have been injured. The scenes that come back to us from what is happening in Gaza are heartbreaking. To think that these children are dying of famine and starvation because they have stopped the shipments of humanitarian aid into Gaza in a regular, orderly way, that is unacceptable.

In the end, I fear the devastating civilian toll in Gaza will not only be judged a moral and humanitarian calamity but a likely strategic failure by the Israelis as well.

I have long supported a two-state solution for Israel and Palestinians. In fact, out of the terrible Yom Kippur war came an unimaginable, yet lasting, peace between Egypt and Israel.

So with the right leaders on both sides, it can be done. And the United States has a responsibility for a renewed push on all sides toward this goal, one in which Israel and Palestinian children can once and for all live together in peace and dignity.

A pending cease-fire that would see hostages released, humanitarian aid increased, and eventually lead to a desperately needed outcome seems finally within reach.

Last night, at the invitation of BEN CARDIN, our colleague from Maryland, I met with some of the hostage families here in the Capitol. I cannot imagine what it must be like, many of them wondering if the person whom they