

learn and grow regardless of where they come from, their income, their disability—whatever their background. Every child should have that opportunity to grow and, you know, really seek their dreams.

Teachers can make a lasting impression in the lives of their students. In fact, I just had lunch with some of my interns in my office, and one of them said that she will never forget the encouragement from one of her college professors when she expressed some doubts about her success at her school, which happened to be Berkeley. This teacher said: You have a lot of years ahead of you. You know, believe in yourself. You can take risks, but go forward. She had a lot of years ahead of her to determine what she wanted to do with her life. So this intern in my office found this to be very encouraging.

That is what I mean about teachers having a profound impact on the life choices that their students make and how they think about themselves in this world. So I extend my gratitude to every teacher in Hawaii and across the country who continues to provide the kind of teaching experience that enables our students to have faith in themselves, to learn, and to understand that, you know, life has a lot in store for them.

I hope that a lot of these students will become teachers themselves, will become educators, and will be the kinds of teachers who will provide the kind of support that every student needs and deserves.

So “mahalo” to all of our educators across our country for all that you do both in and out of your classrooms and for the commitment that you have to our Nation’s children, our families, and our communities.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I want to come to the floor today to talk about a success story but, potentially, a success story interrupted.

Back in 2022, we all were shocked to watch news playing out during an afternoon that we were here, working in the Senate, of another mass shooting—this one of just unthinkable size and scope—in Uvalde, TX. I was actually sitting in the Presiding Officer’s chair when I saw word of the shooting scroll across my smartphone screen.

Gratefully, in the wake of that shooting, a group of us—Republicans and Democrats—were able to come together and set aside the differences that we had and still have on the issue of gun violence in this country. We decided not to argue about an assault weapons ban, for instance. Instead, we decided to work on finding the least common denominator, as we called it, and tried to find a set of commonsense changes to our gun laws and common-

sense investments in our communities that would, hopefully, together, try to put a downward pressure on what, up until then, had been annual spiking rates of homicides and mass shootings.

It is just true that, in this country, you are 10 times more likely to be shot in your school, in your neighborhood, at a movie theater than you are in any other high-income, developed nation. That is a choice. That is not bad luck. That is not happenstance. That is because, in America, we decide to have a ton of weapons in the hands of very dangerous people. We also don’t spend enough time trying to unwind some of the reasons young people, in particular, get into lives of really risky and potentially violent behavior.

So we came together in 2022, and we passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. It was a big bipartisan vote. It wasn’t close. The final tally was 65 to 33, with nearly two-thirds of the Senate voting in favor of this commonsense gun safety measure. It wasn’t anything close to what I see as being necessary in order to tackle this epidemic in this country, but it was significant. It was five changes in gun laws: supporting State red flag laws; stopping domestic abusers from getting their hands on guns; putting in a short but meaningful waiting period when young people are hastily buying an assault weapon; making it easier for law enforcement to go after drug trafficking rings. It was five meaningful changes, but it was also a big investment, a big investment in the kind of services that can help interrupt violence.

A lot of my Republican friends said: You know, we don’t believe it is the guns. We think it is mental illness.

Well, I don’t agree, but this is how you put together a compromise. So we passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, which included a landmark \$14 billion investment, most of it in mental health, most of it directed toward kids’ school-based mental health, but there were also significant investments in school safety—just hardening schools to make it harder for a shooter to get inside and community anti-gun violence initiatives, which is the work that local community groups are doing in North Carolina and Connecticut and all across the country to just try to wrap services around people who might be at risk of gun violence or to stop that cycle of violence once the first shooting happens.

So we passed this legislation, and we crossed our fingers. We said: Let’s hope that we are right and that these changes in gun laws and these investments we are making in our communities will make a difference.

Well, what happened after we passed that law was absolutely stunning: the biggest 2-year decline in gun violence in the history of recorded statistics in the United States of America. That is extraordinary. That is extraordinary. I am not going to sit here and claim that the entire reason was the Bipartisan

Safer Communities Act, but it was a big part of the reason because we did make it harder for bad people to get their hands on guns. We did deliver the kinds of services that are necessary. You are seeing this downward trajectory, but let me just put the numbers on it.

In 2023, there were 659 mass shootings in America. In 2024, there were 500. That is a 24-percent, 1-year decline in mass shootings. That means that there were 160 mass shootings that didn’t happen and 160 communities that were not terrorized in 2024. And this bill had a lot to do with it. Overall gun deaths went down from 2023 to 2024 from 19,000 to 16,700. That was a 12-percent reduction. We have never in this country’s history seen 1-year declines in gun homicides in the neighborhood of 12 percent. Certain cities saw astronomical declines. In Hartford, we saw a 39-percent drop in homicides from 2023 to 2024. This year—this year, 2025—Hartford is on track to have the lowest recorded instances of gun violence—those are homicides and nonfatal shootings—since 2006. New Haven saw a 39-percent drop in homicides. As I think I said, overall, in Connecticut, we had 167 homicides in 2023. In 2024, we had 63. It is wild.

This happened in Baltimore, and this happened in Chicago. In most of the major cities in this country and in rural areas as well, we saw this dramatic, dramatic decline. So it is just something to celebrate because it is not easy to get that kind of consensus. It is not easy to get that kind of consensus, and we should celebrate the fact that there are literally thousands of people—largely young men—who are alive today because of the bill that we passed.

But this progress is in threat of being interrupted, and the reason is that the Trump administration has reversed course. I want to talk specifically about how they are undoing the progress of this bill, but their attempt to try to reverse the broader progress that we have made on reducing gun violence is pretty comprehensive. Let me just give you a handful of the ways in which the Trump administration is trying to make our communities less safe.

First, they closed the Office of Gun Violence Prevention. This was something the Biden administration set up to try to better implement the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. This wasn’t a terribly political office. It was just trying to coordinate all the work being done across Agencies to reduce violence in our communities. Trump would have taken this office in a different direction, but he didn’t. He just shuttered it. There is no Office of Gun Violence Prevention anymore in the Federal Government.

On March 20, the administration announced that they are going to start a process of restoring firearms rights to individuals who have had them taken away because they had serious criminal records. This is likely illegal.

There is an appropriations bill rider that says the ATF can't do this, but the message was sent: We actually think that dangerous people should be able to get their gun rights back.

That same day, Trump's Department of Justice filed a motion in Federal court, trying to overturn a decision to say that silencers are not protected by the Second Amendment, trying to say that no State legislature could ban or regulate the use of silencers, and silencers are broadly used by killers, by criminals who are trying to hide the fact that they are engaged in criminal, lethal conduct.

On April 7, the DOJ announced that it was repealing a policy from the Biden administration that said simply this: If you are a gun dealer and you are engaged in illegal conduct, we are going to pull your license, and we are not going to give you two or three or four shots. We are going to have a zero tolerance policy for gun dealers who are selling guns on to the black market. That is a policy most Americans would see as common sense, but the DOJ announced that it was going to let off the hook gun dealers who are violating the laws.

Now, throughout the last 100 days, the Trump administration has been sending all sorts of signals that they are deprioritizing the work of the ATF. Most recently, on April 9, they announced that the Army Secretary would now be the acting head of ATF. This was basically telling ATF agents: We don't care about your work. We are not going to have a full-time ATF head. We are putting somebody with a big, other important job in charge of the ATF. You are not going to have any real supervision or direction.

It was just a signal of the deprioritization of the enforcement of our gun laws that caused, the next day, the second highest ranking official at the ATF, who had served admirably for 35 years, to resign in protest.

Then, maybe most unconscionably and most cruelly, just a few days ago, the ATF took down the memorial wall dedicated to victims of gun violence. I mean, there were names up there, tributes to moms and dads, brothers and sisters who had been killed in episodes of gun violence. That was really important to hundreds of families out there who knew that their loved ones' names were part of that wall. Now the wall comes down. For what? Just to send another signal that the administration doesn't care about attacking gun violence.

But I really wanted to come to the floor today to talk about the two most important assaults that the Trump administration has made on our work to try to keep our communities safe. Those are the twin announcements that the administration made that they were going to end two of the key streams of funding for community groups in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

First, the administration announced it was ending \$1 billion in grants under

the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act to invest in school mental health and then that they were ending \$800 million of DOJ grants to try to drive down violence through supporting community efforts to do that work.

This makes no sense. I understand we have a difference. The President and I have a difference on what our gun laws should be. But there is consensus—I thought there was consensus—that we should support investment in mental health. I thought there was a consensus that we all believed that there were good community groups that were doing totally apolitical work, not related at all to gun laws, to try to interrupt cycles of violence.

The reason that these numbers have been going down is not just the changes in gun laws. The reason that our communities are safer all across the country is that we are finally putting real money into school-based mental health, into children's mental health, and into the groups in our communities that are keeping kids alive.

In Oakland, they have seen a stunning 32-percent drop in homicides, and it is a result of groups like Youth Alive!. This is a nonprofit that is working to prevent and disrupt the cycle of gun violence. So you go into a community, you go into a place where a shooting has happened, and you do work with the victim of that incident to make sure that it doesn't become a cycle of violence.

These are often called hospital-based violence intervention programs. When there is a shooting, you have a social worker or a community anti-gun violence worker that goes to the hospital. That is often when the communities are the most angry, the friends of that victim may be planning for revenge, and you do the work to stop that cycle of violence.

It was working in Oakland. Youth Alive! was preventing gun violence. Last year, of the 113 clients they served, only 1 of them was injured a second time. Yet, in the middle of a 3-year \$2 million grant that Youth Alive! was getting, it was suspended, terminated. They are going to have to lay off their staff. That program is being shut down in Oakland. And I will just tell you, I would bet you homicides are going to start going back up in Oakland.

Baltimore has seen a similar massive decline in gun violence, a 43-percent reduction since 2010—what a success story in Baltimore, one of the most violent communities in terms of rates of gun violence in the country, a 43-percent decline.

Center for Hope is a group in Baltimore that provides prevention and healing services for children who have been the witnesses or victims of gun violence. They were getting, again, a \$2 million grant to work with the victims of gun violence to try to heal those communities and, again, stop that cycle of retributive violence that often happens in places like Baltimore.

Donald Trump cut their grant. So in the middle of the grant, they are losing \$1.2 million, and they are going to have to lay off 7 employees.

Center for Hope runs 6 of the city's 10 Safe Streets sites. These operate in the pockets of Baltimore where you see the most shootings. Because of these Center for Hope sites—these Safe Streets sites—between 2023 and 2024, four of the sites run by the Center for Hope saw zero homicides. Now they are having to lay off people. Guess what is going to happen. Those shootings are going to go up again.

We had to work really hard to find this consensus on a very difficult issue. It is illegal, what the President has done. He is not allowed, under the Constitution, to decide unilaterally to cancel spending that has been authorized and appropriated by Congress. So maybe the first and most important thing to say about what the President has done to cancel mental health grants and anti-violence grants is that it is illegal. He can't do it, and it is likely that a court will turn these grants back on.

But it is also such bad policy. It is cruel and inhumane, but it is also illogical. We literally are seeing the fruits of the labor of these groups, and not just in saving a life or two. You are talking about a 30- and 40-percent reduction in violence in these cities. And what will happen is unmistakable. You stop funding these groups that are doing the mental health work in the schools, that are doing the anti-gun violence work, and these rates will start to go back up again.

That is illogical, but it is cruel as well because what the President is doing, for instance, in cutting off the school mental health grants is that he is cutting off existing grants. It is not that he is announcing: I am not giving any new grants.

There are schools all across this country that have set up new mental health clinics because of the grants they got. They were 5-year grants, and 1 or 2 or 3 years into those grants, Donald Trump is shutting those programs down. So there are literally going to be thousands of children—traumatized children, children with serious mental illness, with cycles and histories of abuse in their households—who have created this relationship with an adult—this adult who is helping them address their potential tendency to act out in violent ways due to their mental illness, their trauma. And one day, these kids are going to show up at school, and that adult is going to be gone. That trusted adult that had created that bond, that relationship that is helping that child, that is keeping that school safe—that relationship, that bond is destroyed because in cutting these grants off with no warning, there is no way, in the middle of a school year, for a school mental health clinic to find the money under the mattress.

It is illogical. It is going to drive up gun violence rates. And it is cruel to

our poorest and most at-risk communities and to the kids—and to the kids—the traumatized kids, the kids with serious mental illness, the kids that we should think first about when we wake up in the morning.

I guess the final thing to say is this: We are putting ourselves out of business. We are putting ourselves out of business. What is the point of passing a law by a 65-to-33 vote if the President of the United States can just ignore it? As I said, that is illegal, and the courts will likely tell him: You can't shut off the funding that we appropriated and authorized.

This should matter to Republicans and Democrats. Every single one of my Republican colleagues worked really hard to get this job, worked really hard to become a U.S. Senator. Those of us who worked on these bipartisan pieces of legislation worked really hard to pass them. What is the point of running for the U.S. Senate, what is the point of working to forge this compromise if the President can just ignore it?

By the way, if Donald Trump gets away with it, mark my words, a Democratic President will do the same thing. If this becomes standard practice, if our laws just become advisory, then there is no reason for any of us to show up any longer. Why do you work so hard, why do you care so much about getting to this place if you don't care when the President just ignores the laws that we pass?

It is very hard to find consensus here, especially on an issue as important and as politically sensitive as gun violence. So when we do find that consensus, on behalf of the kids and the families out there who are begging us to work together to save lives, we should protect that consensus.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

GENIUS ACT

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the vote we just had on the motion to proceed on the GENIUS Act.

Despite promises that the GENIUS Act's fundamental flaws would be fixed ahead of any vote, we still don't have the new bill text.

Now, many of my colleagues have made clear that they want to improve this bill and that it is important for Republicans not to jam us. Well, the Republicans decided to jam us anyway. But the Democrats have power to say no, and that is exactly what we just did.

The GENIUS Act would establish a new regulatory framework for stablecoins, a type of cryptocurrency whose value is pegged to the value of another asset, often, the U.S. dollar. This is a \$100 billion market.

A stablecoin is very similar to a bank deposit. Its value, like the value of your deposits in a bank account, is sup-

posed to maintain a stable value. That is why they call it a stablecoin.

But as we have learned throughout history, banking can be a really risky activity. It requires a robust regulatory and supervisory framework that protects consumers, that protects our national security, and that protects the stability of the financial system.

Democrats in the Banking Committee worked hard to improve the GENIUS Act before, during, and after we had a vote in committee on the bill. We want to strengthen the guardrails on this new financial product to make sure that it is safe and reliable.

Democrats—even Democrats who voted for the bill in committee—made it clear: The bill needs to improve significantly to win their support on the floor. But this new bill that was introduced last week and rushed to the floor this week, and that we voted on just today, lacked those guardrails.

So far, Republicans have refused to adopt changes that would apply basic consumer protection rules, like the ones the banks and other financial institutions have to follow so that their customers don't get cheated; have refused to adopt changes that would make it more difficult for cartels, terrorists, sanctions evaders, and human traffickers to use stablecoins to finance illegal activity; have refused to adopt changes that ensure that stablecoins do not destabilize our financial system and require taxpayers to bail out crypto companies when they crash; have refused to adopt changes that would prevent Big Tech billionaires from using this bill to issue their own private currencies; have refused to adopt changes that would stop Donald Trump and his family from corruptly profiting off their new stablecoin, USD1, which is already the fifth largest stablecoin in the world and has already been used to cut them in on shady, multibillion-dollar deals with foreign governments.

So what happened when the Democrats saw the new version of the bill last week? We stood together, we held firm, and we made clear that we were not giving them enough votes to get to 60 and move the bill forward. That brought Republicans back to the negotiation table over the last several days.

The lead negotiators made clear: Republicans need our votes. We will not be rushed. We will not be jammed. We will not vote on something that we haven't even seen. This issue is simply too important.

And that brings us to today. We were asked by the Republicans to take this vote without ever seeing the text of the new bill. There is no way for any Senator to know whether the final bill sufficiently protects consumers, no way to know whether the final bill prevents terrorists in rogue nations and cartels from using stablecoins to move dirty money around, no way to know whether the final bill stops Big Tech billionaires from taking over our money supply, and no way to know whether the

final bill stops President Trump from making billions off his stablecoin and accepting bribes from foreign nations.

These purported fixes were negotiated behind closed doors, in the dead of night, and we don't even know for sure what they are. We need time to evaluate them carefully. This is what it looks like when Republicans try to jam the Democrats.

But the opportunity for bribery and corruption through a Trump stablecoin is not hypothetical. It is not like, well, here is something that might happen. Trump has already shown us right out in public exactly how to run the corruption play.

It was reported last week that an Abu Dhabi investment firm, MGX, is using Trump's USD1's stablecoin to finance a \$2 billion investment in Binance, essentially giving Trump a cut of the deal. The firm is chaired by someone who is referred to in the industry as the "spy sheikh" of the United Arab Emirates and co-owned by G42, a firm with extensive ties to the Chinese Government.

I do not think that some of my colleagues fully comprehend the scale of this corruption. Donald Trump and his family have essentially started their own bank, and money from foreign governments and large corporations is already pouring in. This is not one of Trump's standard failed side hustles, like steaks or vodka or his licensing deals. His stablecoin, USD1, is the fifth largest in the world, and it is only 3 weeks old. He is set to make hundreds of millions of dollars, potentially billions of dollars, on this undertaking.

If you are seeking pardons, if you want tariff exemptions, if you want other special favors, you don't need a briefcase of cash pushed under the table; you can do it conveniently online with Donald Trump's stablecoin. How can any Senator—Democrat, Republican, or Independent—endorse that kind of corruption? How can any Senator—Democrat, Republican, or Independent—facilitate that kind of corruption?

Over the past few months, we as Democrats have too often forgotten we still have some power, and this is our opportunity to use it. We did not vote for this bill today. We stood firm, and we demanded improvements.

I have heard from some of my colleagues that this bill will happen with or without us, and that is simply not true. We proved it today. I urge Democrats to continue to use their power and make sure that we don't sign off on a weak deal, on a bad deal, on a deal that, months from now or years from now, we say: Oh, that turned out to be a bad idea.

We can only vote for the GENIUS Act when we have a bill that protects consumers, that promotes financial stability, that protects our national defense, and that fights back against Donald Trump's aggressive and public corruption. We need to stand strong as Democrats, and if we do, we can get a