

the job you do each and every day—and not just to you but to your families as well. Thank you for protecting our communities. Thank you for protecting our children. Thank you for protecting our Nation.

In Wyoming, we are so blessed to have law enforcement officers of bravery, professionalism and capability—incredible individuals. There are 2,340 police officers in Wyoming. They serve across 77 departments in 23 Wyoming counties. For these protectors of peace, keeping our communities safe is more than a job, it is a way of life.

It comes clearly with unique challenges. Wyoming is a State with vast distances. That means officers face long drives, harsh winters, and moments where backup can be miles and miles away. There are also hiring challenges. We see these challenges nationwide. It means longer shifts and heavier burdens and fewer hands to answer the calls for help. Law enforcement officers are tested each and every day, and they deserve our Nation's strongest support.

Today, we honor one such hero: Sergeant Nevada Krinke, who was with the Sheridan Police Department. Sergeant Krinke was a man of strong faith and selflessness. His colleagues said he "always put other people first."

Tragically, last year, he became the first Sheridan officer to lose his life by homicide in the line of duty ever. He is also the first Wyoming officer since 1997 to die in the line of duty. He was only 33 years old.

I attended his funeral last year in Sheridan. The same community that he vowed to protect and to serve showed overwhelming support. More than 1,800 people attended. It was the largest single event in Sheridan, WY, since Queen Elizabeth's visit more than 40 years ago. Strangers stood shoulder to shoulder, often four deep along the streets as the car bearing his body drove by. They waved American flags. They lined the streets as police cars escorted the family to the memorial service at the college.

People came from all around the country to attend even though they had never met and did not know Sergeant Krinke. The local newspaper asked one of them who had come from a long distance why he came. He replied:

I stand for those who have stood for us.

That is the Wyoming spirit. That is the cowboy code. Live each day with courage, take pride in your work, and do what needs to be done.

Sergeant Krinke was a shining example of what it means to serve others. Fittingly, his name will now be etched onto the Roll Call of Heroes at our National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial here in Washington, DC.

To pay tribute to Sergeant Krinke, 39 law enforcement officers and their families from 13 Wyoming communities are here in Washington today. Many are joining us in the Senate Gallery. With them is the Sheridan chief of po-

lice, Travis Koltiska. Chief Koltiska has worked at the Sheridan Police Department for 24 years. His job has allowed him to make his hometown a safer community and raise his five children with his wonderful wife Mandy. They are also here.

When Sergeant Krinke was killed, Chief Koltiska led the department through its darkest hour.

Thank you, Chief, for all of your actions and for your leadership. Your actions helped so many in Sheridan during a difficult time in the community where you grew up, where you were educated, where you raised your family, and where you continue to serve today. You are a high tribute to every man and woman in blue.

It has been more than a year since that tragic day. To Sergeant Krinke's family, to his wife Karla and their daughter Bella, know this: Your husband, your father was a hero, and we will never forget you.

Law enforcement officers face risks each and every day. The National Fraternal Order of Police reports that in the first 5 months of this year, 109 law enforcement officers were shot in the line of duty and 25 were injured in ambush-style attacks.

The solution to safer communities is to support law enforcement, and in the Senate, we are doing exactly that. This year, we passed the Laken Riley Act. It is now the law; the President has signed it. The Laken Riley Act included a provision from Senator JOHN CORNYN of Texas that protects police officers from violent illegal immigrant criminals. It requires Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain any illegal immigrant who attacks a police officer. The Senate also passed the HALT Fentanyl Act. This legislation imposes tougher penalties on illicit fentanyl traffickers. It gives law enforcement the tools they need to get deadly drugs off of the streets.

To address recruiting challenges, I support President Trump's effort to increase officer pay, to improve training, and to seek tougher penalties for crimes against law enforcement.

For 4 long years, Americans heard calls from Democrats to defund the police. America must leave those divisive, anti-police policies in the past. We must focus on solutions to strengthen our communities and our law enforcement.

It is not enough to fully fund the police; they must know that we have their backs. They must have both the tools and the trust to serve, and that is exactly what President Trump and Republicans in Congress are doing.

This Police Week, let's renew our commitment to our law enforcement.

Senate Republicans salute you, our officers, and we will always support you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Democratic whip.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, as has been noted by my friend and colleague

from Wyoming, this is National Police Week, and I just want to join in his chorus in saluting the law enforcement officials from his State who are here in Washington this week, as well as those in law enforcement from across the Nation. Many have traveled to Washington in their annual trip to honor those lost in the line of duty and to share their priorities with Members of Congress.

If we want safe communities, we need to support our law enforcement and we need to work with our Nation's children, and that includes addressing our Nation's gun violence epidemic. We know that gun violence is the No. 1 cause of police officer line-of-duty death. Currently, the No. 1 cause of death for American kids and teenagers in America is gun violence—not automobile accidents, not cancer. We need to treat this crisis like the national emergency that it is.

Commonsense gun safety measures are overwhelmingly popular with the American people, even with gun owners, including banning high-capacity assault weapons meant for the battlefield, as well as universal background checks and requiring safe storage of guns.

But we know that making communities safer also requires addressing the root causes of violence. The police that I work with in Illinois and in the city of Chicago have made it clear to me: They can do their job, but we cannot arrest our way out of this situation. We need to do more.

Next week marks 3 years since the tragic school shooting at Robb Elementary in Uvalde, TX. On what should have been an ordinary schoolday, 19 innocent children and 2 teachers were gunned down in their classrooms by a man armed with an AR-15.

After that horrific day, Congress came together on a bipartisan basis—a rare bipartisan basis—to pass the most significant gun safety reform in generations. We recognized that too many parents were losing children and too many communities had been irreparably scarred. So when Congress passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, we agreed we must do more to prevent gun violence from happening in the first place.

One of the most prominent provisions of that legislation was Congress's decision to invest in using trained neighborhood and community leaders to break the cycle of violence. With \$250 million in funding, we supported community violence interrupters from the South Side of Chicago to Greensboro, NC; to Baton Rouge, LA; to Houston, TX, and many other communities.

Unfortunately, the DOGE committee had a different idea when it came to preventing violence. Last month, the Department of Justice canceled more than \$800 million in violence prevention, public safety, and victim services grants. That includes millions of dollars in community violence intervention funding that was senselessly cut.

What does this mean? Organizations I am aware of, like Metropolitan Family Services in Chicago, lost \$3.7 million overnight. These funds had been providing mental health training and job skills to hundreds of individuals who are most likely to perpetrate or be victims of violence. We went right to the source.

Because of these initiatives, homicides in the city of Chicago have decreased by 50 percent since 2021. But now, just a few days before the start of summer months when gun violence will be at its peak, neighborhood organizations across the country, including Chicago, have had the rug pulled out from under them.

Does Attorney General Bondi really think that eliminating these grants will stop the violence?

Ignoring reality won't stop the bloodshed that will occur without these funds.

Does President Trump really think that cutting this funding makes America safer?

The next time the President or any of his friends goes to FOX News or some other news source and starts scapegoating Democrats for gun violence in Chicago, they should remember that the President and his billionaire cronies eliminated the successful bipartisan grants.

To make matters worse, the Trump administration doubled down on its decision to rescind another billion dollars in school mental health grants, which were also passed into law in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

There is a detention facility in the city of Chicago for teenagers awaiting trial charged with serious crimes, violent crimes. Some of them are being charged with murder. They wait months, sometimes years, for their trial. I visited that facility. And, of course, it is a detention facility, a correctional institution, but it is also a high school. These teenagers from all across the city of Chicago, waiting for trial, go to school in classrooms, eat in cafeterias, and, of course, stay on the premises.

I asked the teachers and counselors at this facility for teenagers who have been involved in violent crime: Who are these kids? You must get to know them in this facility. What is their background?

Well, one counselor I remember said: Senator, virtually every mental health challenge you can think of, we see in these kids. They came to the Earth in the usual way, but something happened in their lives that changed them. But there is one thing that they virtually all have in common: They are all victims of trauma, witnessing murders, having someone they love lost to gunfire. It is the kind of thing that can change a life for the better or for the worse, and, in this case, many of them are being changed for the worse. And so counseling them and working with them to conquer these haunting experiences in their lives is central to putting them on the right track.

Now, we have a decision by this administration to cut back on school mental health grants. That was part of a bipartisan solution to deal with gun violence. After any mass shooting, many are quick to explain away the tragedy as just a mental health issue, not a result of the fact that America has too many deadly weapons. Yet barely 100 days into this administration, they have dropped any pretense about mental health in dealing with gun violence. Apparently, preventing gun violence by providing treatment to children is just too much for them to take. At one time, this was part of the bipartisan solution.

In Illinois, tens of millions of dollars in school mental health services have now been canceled, forcing students to face the future without this counsel. One program had brought graduate psychology students to low-income elementary, middle, and high schools to provide treatment services to students and bolster the mental health workforce.

Another initiative in Lake County, IL, received nearly \$6 million in Federal funds to recruit and train mental health providers to work in the schools. In an outrageous and unsubstantiated justification, the Department of Education claimed that these funds "violated the letter or purpose of Federal civil rights law" or "undermined the well-being of students these programs are intended to help." There is no evidence of that.

Where is the outrage from those who joined in this bipartisan response several years ago and took great pride in it? Democrats and Republicans finally agreed on something.

Mental health counseling of children that are most vulnerable is a way to reduce gun violence. I still believe that to this day, and yet the Trump administration says: No, we are not going to invest in that.

Do you know what is going to happen? There will be more gun violence and terrible, outrageous events like we have seen so often. Innocent kids will die. Innocent people will die. And people will say: We just need more mental health counseling.

Keep in mind that this administration just eliminated the funds for it. What are they thinking? Where is the outrage from my colleagues on the other side of the aisle?

I saw the press releases from our Republican colleagues celebrating the funding that was originally created. Now, silence. That silence is shameful.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I rise today to seek the confirmation of Retired Army CPT Sam Brown to be the Department of Veterans Affairs Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

President Trump nominated Captain Brown for this important position.

Sam Brown demonstrates a history of service, love of country, and commitment to serving other veterans. A West Point graduate, Afghanistan combat veteran, husband, and father of three, Captain Brown understands the sacrifices the men and women of the U.S. military and their families make every day and is well-qualified to undertake the significant responsibility of being the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs.

The National Cemetery Administration's mission is to honor the memory of our Nation's veterans by caring for their final resting places and providing services to their surviving loved ones. Captain Brown, if confirmed, will fill this position with the utmost respect, honoring and remembering those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

More than 4 million Americans are interred in NCA's 156 national cemeteries. Kansas is home to 3 of those cemeteries, where more than 62,000 Kansas veterans and their family members are buried.

Another responsibility of the National Cemetery Administration is safeguarding the veterans' legacies by documenting their stories. In doing so, NCA helps to make certain that no generation of Americans forgets the sacrifices made for our freedoms.

Mr. President, notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination: Executive Calendar No. 85, Sam Brown, to be Under Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Memorial Affairs; that the Senate vote on the nomination, without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, the chairman and I share a bipartisan commitment to putting our veterans first, including providing them with the kind of memorial and cemetery recognition that they have well earned. There is no difference between us on that point.

And I think we also share a belief that Members of the U.S. Senate have a duty—it is a constitutional duty—to hold accountable the executive branch and demand information from the executive branch to perform our obligations of oversight and scrutiny.

I think we also share a respect for Sam Brown's service to our Nation. As a veteran—as a decorated veteran—who has earned appreciation for his service, the kinds of qualifications he brings to this office are impressive. But this nominee was advanced out of committee by a 10-to-9 vote. So it is clear he does not have unanimous support.

He said, when he was asked about whether he would support the Trump administration's plan to fire nearly