

enormous anger and hatred. The entire world was shocked just a couple of weeks ago at the assassination of Charlie Kirk by a deranged gunman who inscribed his political agenda on the shell casings as he murdered a husband and a father of two. Just last week, I was in Dallas where another deranged gunman opened fire at an ICE facility, killing two. Again, that deranged gunman inscribed his political agenda on the shell casings. I wish we did not face this partisan anger. I wish we did not face these threats of violence.

A previous Congress passed legislation protecting the personal information of Federal judges because, sadly, too many Federal judges and their families have been targeted for violence. That legislation was bipartisan; it passed into law; and it has had some modicum of success in protecting Federal judges and their families.

In this instance, Senator KLOBUCHAR, a Democrat, and myself have teamed up together to extend the same protections of privacy that Federal judges have to Members of Congress and to their staffs. We are all blessed to represent our States, and yet we know that there are threats of violence that come with this job. Collectively, the 100 of us in this Chamber have faced thousands and thousands of death threats and threats of violence. Our staffs have been victims of violence over and over again, and so this legislation is bipartisan legislation to enhance the safety and security of Members of Congress and their staffs.

Senator WYDEN has now suggested broadening that to all Americans. I admire that sentiment and agree with that sentiment. There are challenges, however, with the language he has drafted. The language he has drafted, as presently written, could, among other things, prevent law enforcement and parents from knowing where convicted sexual predators are living. It could have the effect of gutting Megan's Laws that have been adopted all across this country.

So what I have offered to Senator WYDEN is to work with him in good faith. I chair the Commerce Committee. I have already offered to convene a hearing to examine how we can expand privacy protections more broadly but do so in a way that doesn't disrupt law enforcement; that doesn't disrupt legitimate interests, such as knowing where sexual predators are living and making sure they are not living near young children, near daycares, near schools.

Because the legislation submitted by the Senator from Oregon has not yet worked through those issues, I reiterate my offer to work in a bipartisan manner to find an expansion of the legislation that is under consideration that would work effectively, but in the meantime, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the Senator from Texas has offered to do a

hearing on my proposal, and I do appreciate that.

I simply believe it is unfortunate when the Senate will pass privacy protections for ourselves but not for all Americans and that only shady data brokers, would-be murderers and stalkers, as well as foreign adversaries buying data on U.S. Government officials, are actually going to benefit from blocking this bill.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2851

However, Mr. President, in understanding that my colleague has made his arguments in believing that my legislation goes too far, I also have a narrower piece of legislation tailored specifically to three groups of people who face elevated risks of violence, doxing, and stalking that is similar to Members of Congress and our staffs.

This bill is also modeled on the bipartisan Commerce Committee bill and protects Members of Congress and staff. Additionally, it protects State and local officials, including State judges who were left out of an earlier judicial privacy bill. The threat to State and local officials has not gone away. Earlier this month, a gunman fired a bullet directly into the home of a State senator in Illinois. This legislation also protects survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence who deserve the strongest possible safeguards against being stalked or harmed.

Even if a Member objects to protecting all Americans, surely, the people doing our jobs in State capitals across the country and those who have suffered assault and violence deserve the same protection as the Presiding Officer and I.

Therefore, as in legislative session and notwithstanding rule XXII, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 2851 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; that the bill be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Reserving the right to object, for the same reasons I articulated a minute ago. I am quite sympathetic to the concerns raised by the Senator from Oregon. He is right. There are threats against State and local officials. Those threats are serious, and they deserve to be dealt with seriously.

In my view, violence is never acceptable, and that is whether I agree with you politically or I disagree with you politically. We should debate civilly, with respect, with decency, and violence should never be the answer.

So just as I did with his previous amendment, I extend my offer in the hearing we convene to consider the issue of State and local officials to consider how best to expand the protection. I am interested in expanding the

protection to as wide a universe as is feasible, as is practicable, but that answer is not yet worked out.

State and local officials is a universe that comprises tens of thousands, if not more people than that. We should have hearings and consider the effect before passing legislation that, if the bill got expanded, would engender an objection to this bill and kill the entire bill altogether.

Because I don't want this body to do nothing and to fail to take a reasonable, commonsense step to protect the security of Members of Congress and their staffs and because I very much want to pass Senator KLOBUCHAR's legislation—which I might note, Senator KLOBUCHAR is a Democrat; I am a Republican. This is bipartisan legislation. Because this amendment at that time, I believe, would imperil the Senate doing anything right now, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I want to tell my colleague from Texas I look forward to the hearings on legislation that would ensure that all Americans have these protections because, as you and I have talked about, I think it is critically important there not be a double standard in America. I thank my colleague for the offer of the hearings.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

GRAND BLANC SHOOTING

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, first, along with Senator GARY PETERS, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate observe a moment of silence in this Chamber to honor the four people and many more wounded yesterday in Grand Blanc Township.

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

(Moment of silence.)

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. President, today, I rise on behalf of the community of Grand Blanc, a community in unspeakable pain, grief, and anger. I stand on the floor of the U.S. Senate as Michigan's junior Senator, along with our senior Senator GARY PETERS, to represent and honor what has gone on in our community.

At 10:30 yesterday morning, a man drove a car into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Grand Blanc Township. The gunman set fire to the building and started shooting. At this time, four are deceased, more are injured and at the hospital. In this small community just 15 minutes from my own community, we are shocked to the core.

In addition to mourning the dead, we pray for the injured. We pray for the community that will be living with the effects of this for months and years to come, and we thank the professionals who are taking care of those in shock today.

Everywhere you go in Michigan, whether I was picking up a cup of coffee or picking up my dry cleaning, Michiganders are very raw.

I think the most important thing, first, is to thank our first responders but also use them as an example. The first officer was on the scene 30 seconds after the 9-1-1 call, and it took law enforcement 8 minutes to neutralize the shooter—8 minutes. They did a masterful job addressing an incredibly complex act of violence, and their efforts are what are keeping people afloat.

I want to give special recognition to two officers: one from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, the other a Grand Blanc Township police officer who happened to be in the area close by and risked their lives to protect the innocent. They did not wait. They ran toward the danger without hesitation. They are heroes today.

I visited Grand Blanc Township this morning. We made a point to go with both Democratic- and Republican-elected leaders, local, State, and Federal. What I saw in the community is confusion and deep pain that something like this could happen in this small place. It is a community where fender benders are much more common than any kind of violent crime, and there is a feeling of pain that such a senseless and useless act of violence happened in our community.

I think it is important to learn that lesson from law enforcement. From everyone I talked to, whether it was local law enforcement, our State folks, our Federal folks, they all said: We just all joined in. We didn't think.

They put their heads down, and they started protecting people. That is the example I hope we can all learn as we try to understand this moment in our country's history.

We have a problem in this country. We have an epidemic in this country, and we have to acknowledge that. The only way we get better is by acknowledging we have a problem. We have a problem with mental health, and we have a problem where people think violence is a legitimate option in voicing disagreement in our system. Whether it was the death of Charlie Kirk, State legislators in Minnesota, people worshipping in Grand Blanc, those who attacked the President of the United States, it is normal to look for an ideology and a reason why they would perpetrate these kinds of attacks. But I think more than anything, what I ask Michiganders and ask Americans to do is look not for the specific reason why but understand that what is happening in our country, we are signaling that we are unwell. We are unwell. Whether it is in Nevada or Michigan, people are unwell, and we have to understand that it is our responsibility to address that.

In Michigan, we, unfortunately, have had five mass shootings in the past 4 years. Oxford High School, Michigan State University, the Splash Pad in Rochester Hills, another church in Wayne, MI, and now Grand Blanc Township is added to this sick fraternity of communities that have to endure this kind of violence.

I would dare say that myself, this is the fourth time I have personally dealt

with one of these mass shootings. I can see that it desensitizes you after all these times. You get used to it in a way that I just can't reconcile.

It was important for us to come together—Democrats and Republicans—to put out the message that, please, take a breath. Don't watch everything social media is putting forward. Learn from our law enforcement officials to be serious and judicious, and let us all be leaders in our own lives. Either you are working every day in your community to make things better or you are working to split people apart.

This targeted violence was meant to terrorize us. It is meant to make us scared in our houses of worship, where people were just trying to pray on a Sunday morning. It is meant to terrorize us in our high schools, in our colleges, in our places of political discourse, on our university campuses. But what it does by making us afraid is, it is infringing on our freedom. If people don't feel that they can go to their sanctuaries—the place where they and their children are supposed to be safe—that is infringing on our freedom.

I would say we must acknowledge as Americans that we have an illness, and the symptom is this extreme violence that is being perpetrated on our most innocent civilians.

I hope today, after a long month of violence across the country, that Democrats and Republicans, especially in this body, can rise above the petty political games and come together to get to work on this epidemic. It is our responsibility as leaders. It is our responsibility as the people look to us to lead.

I just encourage every American to rise above the anger and vitriol of this moment and instead focus on our communities and what we need to come together and heal.

With that, I yield to my senior Senator GARY PETERS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I, along with my Senate colleague from Michigan ELISSA SLOTKIN, am heartbroken and appalled to stand here today as we grieve yet another tragedy in our home State of Michigan.

On Sunday, Grand Blanc Township experienced unimaginable violence when a gunman drove his car into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, fired gunshots at the members of the congregation, and then started a massive fire using gasoline that destroyed most of the church building. This was shocking. It was horrific. It was a violent attack on a quiet and peaceful community.

There are now families whose loved ones will never return their call, never hug them back, and never sit by their side as they practice their faith.

I am devastated to share the ages of these individuals that ranged from just 6 years old to 78 years old. I simply can't imagine the agony that their families are now experiencing.

There are also eight other victims who remain in critical condition in the hospital with their families waiting anxiously by their side. My thoughts are with them as we hope and pray for their safe recovery.

This was the kind of horror that you don't want to believe is even possible in our world, let alone in our own community. But, unfortunately, this is not the first time that I have stood at this podium after senseless acts of violence devastated parents, siblings, children, friends, and neighbors in my State. That is why a part of me feels this terrible sadness today for the pain and loss that was inflicted upon Grand Blanc Township and the greater community.

But I also feel just immense outrage because there are no words to describe the pain, the devastation, and confusion you experience at these moments—pain for the senseless loss of life, devastation for the sense of fear that no matter how hard we work to heal, this despicable act has shattered this quiet community—and our utter confusion as to how someone could have the capacity to inflict this kind of evil.

We know that our Nation is plagued by an epidemic of gun violence. More than 100 Americans will die from gun violence each and every day in our country. We also know that there has been a rise in violent threats and deadly attacks targeting churches, synagogues, mosques, and other houses of worship in communities all across our country. We cannot allow these patterns of violence to continue. We cannot simply accept these attacks like it is another normal day. It is not.

And despite what people may tell us, there is far more that unites us than divides us. Now, more than ever, we need to come together and hold each other up. And once we have grieved, we must work together to find solutions that will prevent this kind of tragedy from devastating more communities.

It is certainly past time to enact sensible gun reform and ensure that every American can practice their faith without fear for their lives. It is certainly past time to take the temperature down on our politics, a growing sickness that has undoubtedly contributed to the rise of polarization and hate-fueled violent attacks against our country. The bottom line is that the time to act is now. There is simply no other option.

I want to, once again, share my deepest condolences for the families and loved ones of the victims of this absolutely horrific attack. My heart breaks for the entire community and everyone who has been impacted by this catastrophic event.

I also want to thank the law enforcement and emergency personnel who responded immediately to this harrowing scene. In fact, two law enforcement officers engaged the shooter in less than a minute, and as a result, there is no question that countless lives were

saved. Their profound bravery and heroism can never be forgotten, as well as the courageous community members who acted quickly to shield women, children, and the elderly from gunfire.

Finally, I want to thank the numerous local, State, and Federal Agencies that have stepped in to support the victims and their loved ones and ensure a thorough investigation is carried out.

Michiganders are tough. Michiganders are resilient. But most importantly, they are kind. On Sunday, that kindness showed through as we saw so many people race—race—to help in the aftermath of this appalling attack. As we remember the victims and as we remember their loved ones and the community members who are still grieving, I hope those actions not only provide some form of comfort but also show that heroism and kindness in the face of unspeakable tragedy is truly who we are as Americans.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. President, first of all, I want to express my sadness at the loss of lives in Michigan, and I want to thank my colleagues Senator PETERS and Senator SLOTKIN.

You speak for every single one of us, and our hearts are broken. Regrettably, our hearts are broken too many times with this endless violence. But thank you so much. And you spoke for every single Member of the Senate, Republican and Democrat, and I think you spoke for America.

Thank you, my colleagues.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. President, we are on the verge of a shutdown, and the question is why. And there are a couple of reasons, because, in my view, we should never have a shutdown, and it is an indication of a breakdown in the constitutional process and the failure of the Executive and the legislative branch to do their job.

As with any kind of shutdown, the conversation focuses on who is to blame. I don't particularly want to talk about who is to blame because I know who will suffer. The people who will suffer are the people that the Presiding Officer represents in Nebraska; they are the people I represent in Vermont. But I do think it is important to give some history of how this happened and what is at stake, and I say that hoping that at the end of the day, which will be tomorrow, we do not have a shutdown, we do not turn the lights off on government.

We have had brinkmanship before, but before, we have had situations where, as we approach the midnight hour, the policy differences—that were vast—between Republicans and Democrats were being discussed by Democrats and Republicans, and that discussion was often at the behest and insistence of the Executive, playing a proper role to get us to talk and resolve those differences. This time, it is different. We have an Executive who said that his party should not even speak to Democrats—not even speak to Democrats.

So I will just ask the commonsense question a Vermonter would ask: Peter, if you disagree with somebody and you won't talk to them, how will you resolve the disagreement?

And that is what has happened.

The second thing is—and I want to say this to my Republican colleagues—we have an Executive who pays no respect to the role that the legislative branch of this government plays in the affairs of this country.

We passed a budget with Republican and Democratic support, and we have an Executive who said he didn't care what it is we passed; he was going to do what he wanted, under the aggressive, caustic leadership of Russell Vought, the head of the Office of Management and Budget. And what Republicans and Democrats in this body agreed to spend, the Executive refused to spend, froze the funding; whether it was foreign aid or healthcare, he could decide.

That is a total and complete violation of the constitutional separation of powers. To the extent that this body—Congress—puts its head in the sand and disregards the assault on our authority by the Executive, we have relinquished our authority. More importantly, we have relinquished our duty. We have relinquished our duty to the people we represent to stand up for the constitutional separation of powers and to bear the responsibility that we have to make decisions about taxing and spending.

There is another reason why we can't just kick the can down the road. There is, in this country, an affordability crisis. People can't afford homes, and they definitely cannot afford healthcare. Folks are terrified at the likelihood of a person they love in their family getting sick if they don't have insurance.

What is about to happen if we don't act before this shutdown is that folks who are getting their healthcare through the Affordable Care Act, who are paying a significant portion of their income for that healthcare but can only afford it because of the subsidies—not because they want to have subsidies but because the healthcare system is so expensive—ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act. Those folks in the Presiding Officer's State and mine are going to lose their healthcare, and that is a reason we cannot condone a resolution that does not include protecting people's healthcare across this country, all those folks who are dependent on the Affordable Care Act for them to be able to have security that if their partner or if their child needs healthcare, they will have access to healthcare. That is the urgency of this. That is what makes it different.

We have an Executive who has told the Congress and the Republicans in Congress: Don't talk to the Democrats.

Disgraceful.

More than that, we have a situation where the people all of us represent will lose their healthcare if we don't resolve that now—right now—because

they are starting to hear about the premium increases that will make it completely unaffordable for them to have access to healthcare.

When we get into a political situation, my Republican colleagues ask me: PETER, why would you want to have a shutdown?—which I don't want, by the way. But you know what, it is a fair question.

But there is a fair question I can ask of my Republican colleagues: Why do you want to have a resolution where the people we all represent are going to lose their healthcare? That is a fair question for us to ask you.

My belief is that there is no answer for that question because it is within our power right now—today, tonight—to make certain that folks who are on the Affordable Care Act will continue to have access to healthcare. It is up to us to solve that problem.

Let me just talk specifically about that and what it means to folks. If we don't act, in Florida, a 30-percent increase; Kentucky, a 32-percent increase; Louisiana, a 32-percent increase; Alabama, a 34-percent increase; West Virginia, a 35-percent increase; Texas, 39 percent; Tennessee, 41; South Carolina, 50.

We have wicked-high healthcare premiums in Vermont, and we may have the worst situation. Let me give an example. I know the Presiding Officer, as a former Governor, is totally sensitive to this. I know the Presiding Officer is.

A family where you have two folks working and they are making a little over \$100,000—they can get the ObamaCare healthcare for about \$7,500. Their premium is going to increase by \$2,300. That is not their fault. They have no control over that. They can't shop around. But what they know is they have a child, maybe a child with disabilities, and what they know is they love that child. They know they love their family. They know, as responsible adults, they want to make sure that if those kids or if their partner needs healthcare, they will have it.

If we fail to act, we are saying: You are on your own. It is complicated. It is political.

That is so unacceptable, and that is what we are talking about.

The blame game is: Why are you in favor of a shutdown?

I am not in favor of a shutdown.

I think the more profound question for each of us—Republican, Democrat, Independent—is, Is it within your power to continue healthcare for the Americans whom we represent? And the answer to that, we all know, is yes, it is within our power.

Now, we may have to stand up to an Executive who doesn't particularly care about that. But we do. We do. And if we do, we must act. So that is what is at stake here.

When we step back from the politics and the blame game and the shutdown showdown activities that are becoming ever more prominent here and just ask ourselves, as U.S. Senators, all of us