

Limiting magazine size will force shooters bent on taking a life to reload more often. When this madman with the strange-colored hair walked into that Aurora, CO, movie theater with a semiautomatic weapon and a 100-round drum magazine, the only thing that spared many survivors was the fact that the shooter's gun jammed. Think of the carnage, in addition to what already was so bad, that would have taken place.

In Tucson, AZ—we met here in Washington yesterday with Gabby Giffords, a woman who was shot right in the head by a man who should have not had a gun. But he emptied a 33-round clip in less than 30 seconds, killing 6 and injuring many more, including Gabby Giffords.

In Carson City, NV, a mentally ill man went to an IHOP during breakfast time and killed four people. Three of them were National Guard personnel going to work. He shot 80 rounds in 80 seconds using 30-round clips.

Limiting the size of clips will not hurt hunters and sportsmen, but it will save lives. So I am going to vote in support of the Blumenthal-Lautenberg amendment.

In the case of Carson City, the example I just gave, let's talk a little bit about mental health. That incident at the IHOP restaurant reveals a tragedy, of course, but also the deficiencies in this Nation's mental health treatment system. That is another important part of our discussion about how to prevent gun violence. We simply have not done a good job of providing funding for and access to mental health services. This should be a bipartisan issue. Going back many years, it was bipartisan—Wellstone-Domenici.

While we have done a better job of doing certain things in mental health, we have done a poor job of removing the stigma that keeps Americans from seeking the treatment they need. We must do better. So the bill reported out of the HELP Committee, led by Chairman HARKIN, begins the work of improving access to critical services.

I hope to be able to have shortly—after we finish this list of amendments—the ability to move to Senator STABENOW's measure. She has worked with others on another bipartisan piece of legislation to go even further in doing something about the mental health problems so that we can alleviate, at least on occasion, these terrible tragedies.

As I have said many times, the efforts will not stop every criminal bent on violence, but last year's terrible tragedy in Newtown was a wake-up call that we are not doing enough to keep our citizens safe. It is hard to even comprehend the scope of the tragedy, let alone recover from it, but part of the healing process is this remarkable conversation about how to prevent violence in America. That conversation is taking place in America today because of Boston and because of the thousands of people killed with guns every year.

Part of the healing process is examining what can be done to prevent more tragedies such as the ones in Newton, CT; Aurora, CO; Oak Creek, WI; Carson City, NV; and multiple other places. I believe that if we can save the life of a single American, we owe to it ourselves to try. That is going to take courage by some people.

President Monson, the president of the Mormon Church, said this about courage:

Life's journey is not traveled on a freeway devoid of obstacles, pitfalls and snares. Rather, it is a pathway marked by forks and turnings. Decisions are constantly before us. To make them wisely, courage is needed: the courage to say, "no," the courage to say, "yes."

The courage today to say yes. Decisions do determine destiny. Today our decision will determine the destiny of our country. Today I choose to vote my conscience not only as HARRY REID a Senator but also as a husband, a father, a grandfather, and I hope a friend to lots and lots of people. I choose to vote my conscience because if a tragedy strikes again—sorry to say it will—if innocents are gunned down in a classroom, theater, or restaurant, I would have trouble living with myself as a Senator, a husband, a father, a grandfather, and a friend knowing I did not do everything in my power to prevent that.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO POSTAL AND LAW ENFORCEMENT WORKERS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the last few days have been trying ones for our Nation. Monday's attack in Boston reminded us that terrorism can still strike anywhere at any time. As yesterday's news of an attempt to send ricin to the Capitol reminds us, it is as important as ever to take the steps necessary to protect Americans from those who would do us harm.

This morning I would like to recognize the postal and law enforcement officials for their excellent work in detecting and preventing this threat before it even reached the Capitol. They proved that the proactive measures we put in place do, in fact, work.

We have faith that the men and women charged to protect the American people will find those responsible for the attack in Boston and for the letter here at the Capitol. The truth will eventually come out, and justice will be delivered.

GUN AMENDMENTS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Later today the Senate will begin to consider amendments to legislation that deals with one of our most fundamental constitu-

tional rights as citizens. There are many different perspectives on this issue, and passions are high on all sides. That is why I would urge the majority to allow the full and open amendment process we were told the Senate would have. Today's votes are a very good start. The American people deserve the opportunity to be heard on this matter. We should respect that. So let's approach this debate in the spirit of transparency that the American people expect.

In my view, we should focus on keeping firearms out of the hands of the criminals and those with mental issues that could cause them to be a threat to our society. The government should not punish or harass law-abiding citizens in the exercise of their Second Amendment rights. It is that focus on protecting communities and preserving our constituents' constitutional rights that will be my guide as we begin to vote on amendments on this bill.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

SAFE COMMUNITIES, SAFE SCHOOLS ACT OF 2013

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 649, which the clerk will report by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 649) to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Manchin amendment No. 715, to protect Second Amendment rights, ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and provide a responsible and consistent background check process.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 4 p.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from California.

AMENDMENT NO. 711

(Purpose: To regulate assault weapons, to ensure that the right to keep and bear arms is not unlimited, and for other purposes.)

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I would like to call up and make pending