

recognizing the unique healthcare needs and opportunities that exist in rural communities and work together to solve the issues these communities face.

TRIBUTE TO CHAD PREGRACKE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the outstanding work of a great Illinoisan, Chad Pregracke, who has just been named a 2013 CNN Hero.

A native of East Moline, IL, Chad grew up knowing how important the Mississippi River was to his community. He spent a lot of time on the river with his parents, KeeKee and Gary, and his older brother Brent. Chad saw how badly the river was being polluted and knew something had to be done. When no one else stepped up, he decided he would.

In 1997, he received a small grant and spent that summer cleaning up part of the river on his own, sorting through the trash on his parents' front lawn.

In 1998, when he was just 23 years old, Chad founded his own non-profit—Living Lands & Waters. The venture has now grown to a full staff and fleet of barges. Living Lands & Waters relies on teams of volunteers throughout the Nation, with a heavy focus on the Mississippi, Illinois and Ohio River regions.

Living Lands & Waters organizes about 70 cleanups a year in 50 different communities. Chad estimates that his group has worked with about 70,000 volunteers to remove more than 7 million pounds of trash from the Nation's waterways. Among the trash they have pulled from river are more than 67,000 tires, 218 washing machines and four pianos.

Not all of their finds are the size of pianos. Chad boasts an extensive collection of messages in bottles he has found over the years. To date, Chad has retrieved 64 of these bottles, often hundreds of miles from their place of origin. They include everything from love letters and lottery tickets to treasure maps and simple notes of good wishes.

Chad's hard work has earned him significant recognition and praise, most recently being honored by CNN as one of its 2013 Heroes. I am pleased to add my thanks to Chad Pregracke for working to improve our communities by saving our rivers.

COMMON SENSE GUN SALES

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, as the holiday season draws close, millions of Americans are shopping online for clothes, toys, and other holiday gifts. But alarmingly, at the same time, convicted felons, domestic abusers, terrorists, and other dangerous people are able to go online and just as easily shop for something else: guns.

Studies have shown that thousands of firearms are bought and sold online every year. Many of these sales exploit loopholes in the background check laws designed to keep our communities

safe. Under current law, an individual buying a gun at a brick-and-mortar, Federally licensed firearm dealer must pass a simple and quick background check to make sure that, among other things, they haven't been convicted of a felony, or aren't a domestic abuser, or haven't been adjudicated to be dangerously mentally ill. Department of Justice statistics have shown that Brady background checks have blocked more than two million instances in which a dangerous individual attempted to obtain a deadly weapon. But a significant loophole in this law is now well known: felons and other prohibited persons can simply go to a "private seller," as opposed to a licensed dealer, and buy a gun without a background check.

It has been estimated that as of September 2013, about 67,000 firearms were listed for sale online from private sellers. Many of the people buying guns from these sellers have no intention of committing any sort of crime and would easily pass a background check. But as a disturbing new report recently released by Mayors Against Illegal Guns makes clear, all too often, the Internet serves as a black market where dangerous individuals can get their hands on weapons. According to this report, 1 in 30 would-be firearm purchasers on www.armslist.com has a criminal record that legally prohibits them from purchasing or owning a gun.

This means, according to the report, that more than 25,000 guns of almost any kind may be transferred to prohibited persons through www.armslist.com in any given year. At any time, a convicted felon can log on and purchase a military-style weapon from a "private seller." For example, one "private party" listing on the website touts a military-style semi-automatic rifle as the "World War III special," and boasts that the weapon can "provide rapid defensive fire when needed." Such a weapon has no sporting purpose. It is designed to kill as many people as possible, as quickly as possible. Should it really be available for anyone to purchase, at any time, without a background check?

This leads to dangerous and sometimes tragic outcomes. For example, the report cites a man from North Carolina who, earlier this year, posted an ad on the Web site seeking to purchase a military-style assault rifle specifically from a private seller. The investigation found that this prospective buyer had previously been convicted of several felonies, including robbery with a dangerous weapon, and would have failed a background check. In another case, Zina Daniel of Wisconsin obtained a restraining order against her husband which legally prohibited him from purchasing a firearm. Days later, the husband bought a semiautomatic handgun from a dealer through armslist.com, and went to find Ms. Daniel at her workplace. There, he used the weapon to murder her and two others, injure four more, and kill himself.

Had these individuals been confronted with a simple background check at a brick-and-mortar gun shop, they may have been turned away. Why should a purchase from the online marketplace be any different? Study after study, conducted by organizations across the political spectrum, have shown that around 90 percent of the American public supports the enactment of background checks on all gun sales. The vast majority of our constituents agree that wherever someone is buying a gun—at the shop around the corner, from the Internet, from a gun show, or even from the back of a van in a dark alley—they should be able to prove that they can pass a simple and quick background check.

We must not wait until the next unstable individual buys a deadly weapon online and turns it on our communities. We should act to protect our families, our neighbors, and our loved ones. I urge my colleagues to take up and pass background check legislation to shut down the online black market for illegal firearm purchases. It's just common sense.

TRIBUTE TO MAGGIE MCINTOSH

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to honor Maggie McIntosh on the occasion of her retirement as director of Federal Relations at Johns Hopkins University.

Maggie has a long career in public service. She has served in the Maryland House of Delegates since 1992, when she was first elected to represent the 42nd District. Since 2002, Maggie has represented the people of northern Baltimore City as the Delegate for the 43rd District of Maryland.

She is also an active member of the Maryland Democratic Party. She previously served for 8 years as a member of the Democratic Central Committee from Baltimore City.

Maggie is a woman of many firsts. She was the first female majority leader in the Maryland House of Delegates. She was also the first woman to serve as chair of the Environmental Matters Committee.

Maggie is also a fighter. One of her many passions is education. She was a Baltimore City public school teacher, and an adjunct professor at Catonsville Community College and the University of Baltimore.

Maggie is also passionate about environmental issues, Maryland economic development, equal rights, and the effort to elect more women in Maryland. She has an extraordinary record as a legislature, and she is only now getting started.

Additionally, Maggie is a trusted friend. I have known her for many years. Maggie previously served as my State director and campaign manager—I call her "Boss Maggie."

Today, I wish to recognize her for her years of service to Johns Hopkins University. Maggie joined Johns Hopkins in 1992, and is currently the director of