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NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am very concerned about section 563 in the Senate-passed fiscal year 2017 National Defense Authorization Act related to access by institutions of higher education, IHE, to military installations purportedly for advising and support services.

The provision opens the floodgates to military bases and servicemembers for for-profit college recruiters. It guts the President's Principles of Excellence Executive order meant to protect servicemembers from aggressive or abusive recruiting practices on military installations by requiring that an IHE be granted access to a military installation if it has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Defense, DOD, and has been approved to provide services by the installation's educational service officer. Regardless of other factors which may be of concern to DOD—investigations and lawsuits, infractions of the MOU, etc.—if an IHE convinces a base's educational service officer to grant them access, there is nothing DOD can do to stop it.

In addition, the provision provides preferential treatment to IHE's that enroll large proportions of servicemembers. Providing access to installations based on how many servicemembers an IHE enrolls instead of the actual needs of the servicemembers at those installations does nothing to help improve services for enrolled servicemembers. Instead, it further entrenches the big for-profit players whose business models rely heavily on servicemembers. Those institutions will be able to tout their statutorily guaranteed increased access to military installations when recruiting.

Finally, as passed in the Senate, section 563 does not limit advising and support services to an IHE's currently enrolled students. There have been well-documented cases of IHE's using access to military bases gained under the guise of offering advising and other services for recruitment. The Senate-passed language does not limit an IHE's contact with servicemembers, once on base, to students it currently enrolls. This creates the opportunity for IHE's to clandestinely or openly use their access to recruit other servicemembers to their programs.

Because of the potential harm this provision in the Senate-passed bill will cause to servicemembers—giving near unrestricted access to for-profit college recruiters at a time when most major companies are under State or Federal investigations or lawsuits—I joined Senator BROWN, along with Senators WARREN, BLUMENTHAL, MURRAY, FRANKEN, CARPER, MARKEY, MURPHY,

REED, BOXER, HEINRICH, and SANDERS, to introduce an amendment to remove section 563 from the bill. Military and veterans groups including the Air Force Sergeants Association, Association of the United States Navy, Blue Star Families, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Student Veterans of America, Veterans Education Success, and Vietnam Veterans of America submitted a letter in opposition to the provision. The attorneys general of California, Maine, Connecticut, Maryland, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Minnesota, New York, Iowa, and Pennsylvania also wrote of their opposition.

Not only is the provision harmful, but it is unnecessary. IHE's already have the ability to gain access to military installations for certain legitimate educational activities. I will work with others who are opposed to this provision to get it removed in conference.

MASS SHOOTING IN ORLANDO

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Marcelle and I, along with all Vermonters, were devastated by the news of the attack in Orlando, and our hearts go out to the victims and their families. All Americans deserve to feel safe in their communities regardless of their race, age, sex, ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. In the wake of the worst mass shooting in American history, all of us must stand with the people of Orlando who have been so shaken by this hateful act of terrorism and violence. And in particular, as we celebrate Pride Month, we must stand with and support the LGBT community, both in Orlando and throughout the Nation.

We are so thankful for the law enforcement officers and first responders who rushed to the scene in the middle of the night to confront the killer and save lives. We also are grateful for the work of the doctors and nurses who fought and continue to fight to save even more. My wife, Marcelle, is a registered surgical nurse, and we have been deeply moved to see the outpouring of support by people across Florida and the country who are donating blood and doing what they can to support the victims and their families.

In the wake of tragedies like this, whether the victims are members of the LGBT community, African-American church parishioners, first graders in an elementary school, college students, moviegoers, or others in our community, we are called as Americans to come together in solidarity. We come together in grief and in shock. We come together in support of the victims, their families, law enforcement personnel and first responders, and the entire community. And we come together to try and find a way to prevent further acts of senseless violence. We are at our best as a nation when we come together. When we are united in strength and in courageous acts of self-

lessness and kindness, our country can move forward with a greater sense of purpose and hope.

We must not allow ourselves to be divided by the bigoted actions of a murderer or by any fear that the killer sought to foment. He took an assault rifle into a nightclub, one that was known as a special place in Orlando's LGBT community. He fired on a crowd of innocent, unarmed people. This man was no fighter and certainly no soldier. This was either the act of a murderous bigot trying to shroud his hatred by professing allegiance to ISIL or the actions of a cowardly terrorist seeking to paralyze and divide us with fear—or perhaps both. In either case, we cannot let his heinous acts lead us to turn on one another.

Some are already using this horrific attack as an opportunity to further divide us. The Republican Party's presumptive Presidential nominee continues to peddle his corrosive rhetoric of fear by proposing to ban all Muslims from entering the country. This week he went even further by suggested that the entire Muslim American community was somehow complicit in this heinous act. This is irresponsible fear-mongering—plain and simple. It is guilt by association. And it makes us less safe. We should all condemn this bigotry and reject attempts to foment fear and hatred. We are stronger and safer when we reject such attempts to divide us.

The Republican standard bearer has also questioned the motivations and patriotism of the President of the United States. These insinuations are dangerous. They are beyond the pale, and I reject them emphatically and categorically. I call on every Member of this body to do the same. We are a better nation than this.

The American people are rightfully demanding action instead of rhetoric. They are tired of hearing that the tragedy in Orlando and the countless others we have endured are not about our gun laws. We must recognize that we have a security weakness in this country and ISIL is exploiting it. Our enemies know that in the United States you can go online or to a gun show and buy a gun. You don't need to have identification. No background check will be run. You can simply acquire a semi-automatic weapon that can kill dozens of people in a matter of minutes.

We must have universal background checks. That is simply common sense. We have had background checks for decades. I am among millions of responsible gun owners in this country who undergo background checks when we purchase a firearm. And, like millions of responsible gun owners, I understand that this check is necessary to help keep guns out of the hands of criminals and terrorists. It is common sense that we need to close the loopholes that allow people to evade background checks altogether. And we must also make sure that the background checks are effective. That means giving law enforcement the power to stop