

I just spoke to a woman yesterday from Plaistow, NH—Kathy. Kathy's son Thomas was a hero in his local community. He was compassionate and caring to his peers and even helped a fellow student who was living alone in the woods rededicate himself to studying and eventually graduate. He literally went out in the woods to find a homeless student and brought him into his home.

Around 7 years ago, this bright young man became addicted to painkillers. This is a story we hear all too often. He had an injury, he became addicted to painkillers, and his family was shocked at how many pills he was legally prescribed for his back pain. It wasn't long before he turned to something else—heroin.

In fact, the national data shows that four out of five people who turn to heroin actually started with misusing or overusing prescription drugs.

Thomas's life, unfortunately, took a turn for the worse, and he spent time in jail before eventually passing away from an overdose.

When I spoke with Kathy, she told me that more needs to be done to help others struggling with a substance use disorder. She wants to see more resources for early education. She wants to fight back against the stigma associated with addiction.

In having this debate on the Senate floor, that is something we need to turn around—the stigma. This is a public health crisis. This is a disease, and we need to get help for those struggling with addiction.

But Kathy is not alone. A woman in Goffstown wrote to me after losing her brother to a heroin overdose:

From here forward, we will never have another holiday where our family is complete. At Thanksgiving, when our close, loving family gathers, there will be an empty seat where he once sat. An unfilled stocking at Christmas will remind us of the void we feel each day. Come his 25th birthday this year, we will visit his grave site where he is buried instead of hugging him in our arms and wishing him another wonderful year.

A father in Brentwood, NH, lost his son to an overdose and told me:

I cannot describe the pain, feeling of helplessness and grave despair [my wife] and I went through upon finding our son dead. This has been a tragedy we in the end were not able to fix, and a war we were not able to win. Our son is now part of the statistics.

A woman in Wakefield wrote that her niece's dreams were crushed when she became addicted to heroin. She wrote:

Her death has left the family heartbroken, and we have chosen to tell everyone the truth in hopes that her death will not have been in vain.

A mother in Manchester said:

I wake up every morning with the fear of finding my son dead. I am crying out for help.

A mother from Greenville, NH, who spends her days helping people living with substance abuse disorders only to come home and see her own son struggling with using heroin, told me:

As I tried to comfort those who have been affected by this tragedy, I think that my son will be next.

In Laconia, a man helps those struggling to get treatment, but he feels helpless when he is faced with a 5-month waiting period to get into a facility. He wrote:

In 5 months, these individuals will be dead.

A parent from Salem contacted me and told me her son is struggling with heroin addiction, and she needed help finding a treatment program for him since she couldn't afford to pay for treatment herself, like the mother of these three children who had to revive her son from an overdose before the paramedics could arrive, or like the Griffin family, Pam and Doug and Shannon Griffin from Newton, NH, whom I have gotten to know well. The Griffin family lost their beautiful 20-year-old daughter Courtney to a fentanyl and heroin overdose. Courtney's father, Doug Griffin, and his wife, Pam, have made it their life's mission to raise awareness about this terrible epidemic to help save lives and help others going through the same difficulty and tragedy.

Doug and so many other dedicated people in New Hampshire are working tirelessly to turn the tide against this epidemic. Earlier this year, I met with families from New Hampshire who actually traveled to Washington to urge Congress to take up and pass CARA. If we don't act, what kind of message are we sending to these families who need our help and need us to act? That is why we need CARA and we need to ensure this framework is passed.

CARA authorizes resources for treatment, prevention, recovery, and first responders—critical facets of a comprehensive approach. And CARA is an authorizing vehicle. Some have made this argument around here: Why should we pass an authorization vehicle if the funding is not attached? Under that reasoning, we wouldn't have passed the Violence Against Women Act, we wouldn't have passed the Head Start Program, we wouldn't have passed a program for vaccines for children, we wouldn't have passed the Second Chance Act, and there are so many more. The reality is that in the appropriations bill there have been increases in funding for CARA, and we are going to fight for even more increases in funding. In fact, at the end of the day, the Senate appropriations bills include a 46-percent increase in spending on opioid addiction programs since last year. So we can do more, but if we don't pass CARA, then we will do a great disservice to the American people.

President Obama's Director of the Office of National Drug Policy, Michael Botticelli, told me at a hearing in New Hampshire last year: "Certainly the CARA Act, I think, highlights many of the issues and fills really critical gaps not only in terms of funding but in terms of policy around this issue."

Mr. President, I hope this is not a partisan issue. Unfortunately, we know, whether you are a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent—it

doesn't matter what your political background is—we have so many families in New Hampshire and across this country who are struggling with addiction, and it is time for us to rise above the politics and pass this important legislation.

I again thank Senator PORTMAN. I thank Senator KLOBUCHAR and Senator WHITEHOUSE for the passion and leadership they have shown on this legislation.

There is an urgent and pressing need for this legislation, and I call on my colleagues to come together and make sure we duplicate what happened in the House of Representatives, where there was an overwhelming vote to pass this legislation, so we can get it to the President's desk and make sure this legislation is funded.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, before the Senator from New Hampshire leaves the floor, I just want to say again what I said previously. We wouldn't be where we are today on the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act without the Senator from New Hampshire, who made an extraordinary contribution to this early on and played an important leadership role. So on behalf of all Members of the Senate, Republicans and Democrats, I want to thank the Senator from New Hampshire for all she did to bring this forward.

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate the House message accompanying S. 2012.

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the House insist upon its amendment to the bill (S. 2012) entitled "An Act to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes," and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

COMPOUND MOTION

Mr. McCONNELL. I move that the Senate disagree to the amendment of the House, agree to the request by the House for a conference, and the Presiding Officer appoint the following conferees: Senators MURKOWSKI, BARRASSO, RISCH, CORNYN, CANTWELL, WYDEN, and SANDERS.

CLOTURE MOTION

I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby

move to bring to a close debate on the motion to disagree to the House amendment, agree to the request from the House for a conference, and the Presiding Officer appoint the following conferees: Senators Murkowski, Barrasso, Risch, Cornyn, Cantwell, Wyden, and Sanders with respect to S. 2012, an original bill to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes.

John McCain, John Cornyn, Marco Rubio, Deb Fischer, Rob Portman, Roger F. Wicker, Richard Burr, Joni Ernst, David Vitter, James M. Inhofe, Dean Heller, Pat Roberts, Lamar Alexander, Ron Johnson, Tom Cotton, Thom Tillis, Mitch McConnell.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that this cloture vote occur at 3:30 p.m. today, with the time from 2:15 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. controlled by Senator BOXER or her designee; further, that the time from 2:30 p.m. until 3 p.m. be controlled by the majority, and the time from 3 p.m. until 3:30 p.m. be equally divided between the two managers.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

RECENT TRAGEDIES IN MINNESOTA AND THE COUNTRY

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today to remember those who have been affected by the tragic events in my State and across the country over the last week. I am here today to remember the loss, to share in the grief, and to stand with our community as we seek justice and healing and solutions together.

Last week was a tough week in Minnesota. There have been and there will be a lot of bleak moments, when all anyone can do is to hug their family and their friends and ask why. How can this happen? How can we make sense of the senseless? How can we go on as people and as a community that is hurting so badly?

But amidst all the horror, I also saw hope this weekend. Sunday, I spoke at Pilgrim Baptist Church in St. Paul, as well as Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church in Minneapolis. When I looked around that room, I saw the horror, the frustration, the anger, but I also saw the hope. Being there with the grieving members of our community gave me that hope because I knew that they supported one another, that their hearts must mend, that the neighborhoods must heal. I literally heard them talk about how the love they had within the walls of that church must go beyond to the greater community.

We have lost so many this week. What can you say to a mother whose precious baby boy—a 2-year-old—is killed in a drive-by shooting while sitting in his father's car in north Minneapolis? And what do you say to that same mother whose precious other child—the little boy's baby sister—was also injured by that gunfire?

What can you say to elementary school children who have suddenly lost that friendly face in the lunchroom who always gave them a smile, a kind word, a healthy snack? There are no words that can take away the pain of losing a beloved son, partner, and friend. Philando Castile was beloved—a “gentle soul,” in his mother's words. He loved the kids at his school, and they loved “Mr. Phil” right back. He knew all the kids' names. There were more than 500 of them. He learned who had allergies and who might need a little extra help. And, yes, with a little playful nagging, he got them to eat their vegetables. In short, he cared about them, and he let them know it. Everyone knew it. My State's outpouring of grief, especially from his school, and the love and support in the wake of his loss means something.

The loss of that little 2-year-old is also a powerful reminder that being a friend is never a wasted effort—that even the smallest kindness shown to the smallest person makes this world better.

Then there were the five officers lost in Dallas. Officer Brent Thompson had just gotten married a few weeks ago. His bride was a fellow transit officer. Officer Michael Smith served in the Dallas Police Department for 26 years and volunteered as a mentor to at-risk kids. Officer Patrick Zamarripa served three tours of duty in Iraq in the U.S. Navy. The only thing he loved more than the Texas Rangers and the Dallas Cowboys was his 2-year-old daughter, Lincoln.

How about the 21 police officers in St. Paul who were injured Saturday night? There were so many peaceful protests—and there continue to be peaceful protests—involving Black Lives Matter and other groups in our State over Philando Castile's death. That is part of our democracy. That is how we make change. But what happened on Saturday night on Highway 94 was far from a peaceful process. We cannot achieve justice through injustice.

So where do we go from here? We know that nothing we can say will take away the hurt, but here is what we can do to narrow the gap between us:

First, we must pursue justice. When I served for 8 years as Hennepin County attorney, which is the chief prosecutor of our county, the largest county in our State, I always believed that my job—and the principle we would use when we looked at a case—was to convict the guilty and protect the innocent. That is what justice calls us to do. That is why I have joined with other members of the Federal delegation—Senator FRANKEN, Congresswoman MCCOLLUM, and Congressman ELLISON—in calling for a Federal investigation into Philando Castile's death. We need to understand what happened and how we can prevent this from happening again. Philando, his family, and all those children who loved him deserve nothing less.

Second, we must fight for a criminal justice system that works for everyone. We all know people who have been caught up in a criminal justice system that can be harsh and unfair. It can do the right thing and it can protect victims, but it can also destroy individual people and it can pull families apart. That is why we must pass criminal justice reform. I have long supported important policy changes. My State was one of the first that videotaped interrogations, and that ended up being a good thing, not only for the defendants but actually for our police officers and those seeking convictions. I have supported reforms to the eyewitness process. I have supported body cameras, diversity in hiring, law enforcement resources and training—very important as we go ahead and look at what we should be focused on in the next year—and meaningful, meaningful work between law enforcement and our citizens.

What else do we need? In my mind, we need commonsense gun reform. I was proud to join my colleagues on the Senate floor demanding changes to make our communities safer. One of those changes, in addition to the terror watch list bill, was to make sure we find some kind of consensus on improving background checks. The Senate's failure to pass bipartisan background check legislation has been a big disappointment. Here we had two A-rated NRA Senators that came together. Senator TOOMEY as well as Senator MANCHIN came up with a bill that would have closed some loopholes that would have made it safer. We know that States that have those background checks in place have reduced rates of suicides by guns, and they also have reduced rates of domestic homicides. I still remember those Sandy Hook parents in my office advocating for that change in the bill. They knew that wouldn't have saved their babies, but they also knew it was one of the things that could best save lives going forward and could best bring consensus in this Chamber.

From my time as county attorney, I remember those little children lost to violence:

Byron Phillips was a little boy killed on his north Minneapolis front porch. We had to put up billboards in the community saying: If you know who killed me, come forward. Eventually, it worked, and we put the guy in jail.

Tyesha Edwards was killed by a bullet while doing her homework at her kitchen table. Her mom said: Get your homework done, and you can go out with us to the mall. That is how she died. Again, we put the guys that did it in jail, but that is not compensation for what happened to that family.

Americans from across the Nation and across the political spectrum support commonsense proposals. They support commonsense background checks closing the loophole at gun shows by wide margins. In honor of those we have lost in Charleston and Orlando,

San Bernardino, Newtown, Aurora, north Minneapolis, and cities across the Nation, I will continue to stand with my colleagues until we take action on these commonsense measures.

I am reminded of President Obama's beautiful words at a service remembering more Americans lost to gun violence—this time in Charleston, SC. He said this:

For too long, we've been blind to the unique mayhem that gun violence inflicts upon this nation. Sporadically, our eyes are open: When eight of our brothers and sisters are cut down in a church basement, 12 in a movie theater, 26 in an elementary school. But I hope we also see the 30 precious lives cut short by gun violence in this country every single day; the countless more whose lives are forever changed—the survivors crippled, the children traumatized and fearful every day as they walk to school, the husband who will never feel his wife's warm touch, the entire communities whose grief overflows every time they have to watch what happened to them happen to some other place.

My friends, we must stem the tide. But we also know that justice in our laws—which means the criminal justice reform that I noted earlier, which means commonsense gun reforms, which means making sure that these cases are investigated and the law is followed no matter what the victims' race or ethnic background or how much money they have—must happen to bring justice to these families. But the other part of this, as I look at our neighborhoods that are affected by this every single day, is economic justice. In the famous words of Dr. Martin Luther King:

We know that it isn't enough to integrate lunch counters. What does it profit a man to be able to eat at an integrated lunch counter if he doesn't earn enough money to buy a hamburger and a cup of coffee?

When we see lingering disparities—and “lingering” is kind of a nerdy word for what we are talking about here. When we see these disparities of economics, when we see health disparities, when we see far too many families working so hard but still struggling to get ahead, and stubborn achievement gaps in our schools, we know there is so much more work to do. The solutions here are a deep commitment to an economic future for the people that live in our cities, to make sure they have access to the jobs that are starting to open up all over this country, that they are trained—that we look at what is happening in their schools and make sure that the training they get matches jobs that are open. We have jobs all over our State now in technology, in science, in manufacturing and welding, and this is giving those kids hope—not just in community colleges and regular colleges, not just in high school, but in middle school—that they are going to be able to get one of these jobs. That is economic hope. It is about training our kids, keeping them in school, opening the doors of our businesses, big and small, to people of neighborhoods like the one that I was in yesterday in St. Paul.

Finally, we must all work to protect the innocents among us. That is what I started talking about—how we must convict the guilty and protect the innocent, especially our children. Two-year-olds should not be shot and killed on the streets of north Minneapolis. Four-year-olds should not watch a man die in the car seat right in front of them. Nobody should have to explain to a classroom of children why their beloved friend “Mr. Phil” doesn't feed them lunch anymore. We are better than this.

I recently visited a mosque in Minneapolis and heard the story of a Muslim family who had gone out to eat at a restaurant—two parents, two kids. The parents, by the way, had been through 9/11 and understood what had happened then but have been able to live in our community, where we have the largest Somali population in our country, without a lot of discrimination, without a lot of hateful words even after 9/11. But not this time. They were in the restaurant with their little kids, and a guy walked by and said: You four go home. You go home to where you came from.

The little girl looked up at her mom and said: Mom, I don't want to go home. You said we could eat dinner out tonight. I don't want to go home and eat dinner.

Those are the innocent words of a child. As sweet and funny as it is, think about this: She knows no other home. She didn't even know what that guy was talking about because she knows no other home, because Minnesota is her home, because the United States of America is her home.

America is better than angry words directed at strangers in a restaurant. America is better than babies being shot on the street in broad daylight. America is better than Philando Castile losing his life. And America is better than throwing concrete chunks at police officers in St. Paul and five Dallas cops being taken from their beat forever.

So I am here today to stand with the people who are not satisfied with how things are—the people who are ready to work to make things better, the people who are the helpers and the peace-makers. Together, we can make this world a better place, and more just.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, the Senate will soon vote on the conference report for the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. The importance of this bill cannot be overstated. People are dying, families are suffering, communities are being torn apart. We can help, but we must do so now.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation, which passed in the House last week with only five votes in opposition. The bill is intended to address the growing national crisis with regard to opioid abuse and addiction.

The staggering statistics surrounding this issue are well known and are worth repeating. Every day, approximately 7,000 people show up in an emergency room for problems associated with opioid abuse. Every 30 minutes, on average, someone in our country dies from conditions that are opioid related.

My home State of Utah has been particularly hard hit. In 2014, 289 Utahans died due to opioid abuse. That is more than half of all drug overdose related deaths in the State. The CARA conference report represents a thoughtful set of policies that tackle the problems experienced by the real people—with families, children, and friends—who are represented by these statistics.

A letter signed by over 200 advocacy organizations supporting the conference report states that the report addresses the “six pillars” of a comprehensive response to drug addiction crises. These pillars are prevention, treatment, recovery support, criminal justice reform, overdose reversal, and law enforcement.

I am proud of the role I played in not only supporting the CARA effort but in helping to shape the conference report. As the chairman of the Finance Committee, it was important to me that the report include key improvements for Medicare in the fight against opioid abuse. I am glad to say we were successful in that regard. The legislation allows Medicare Part D prescription drug plans to identify only one physician to prescribe and one pharmacy to fill all of an at-risk patient's opioid prescriptions.

Senator TOOMEY, who has worked closely with Senator BROWN, has been an important leader on this policy. Both of them have been excellent. He should be commended for his work that, in the end, will improve patient care, reduce abuse, and give at-risk beneficiaries more opportunities to get the help they need.

Additionally, the conference report contains significant provisions related to medication-assisted treatment, or MAT, which has long been a priority for me. I have a long history of working to improve access to drugs like buprenorphine as a prescription treatment for opioid-use disorders, including heroin and prescription drug addiction.

I was the author, together with Senators LEVIN and BIDEN of the DATA 2000 law that first made it possible for patients to be prescribed buprenorphine. I would also like to note that colleagues like Senators MARKEY and PAUL have also been very able champions in our recent efforts to expand access to this effective drug treatment, including the introduction of legislation and our push to get the administration to use its regulatory authority to address this need.

Our efforts helped to encourage the drafting of an HHS rule that was finalized on July 6, the same day as the CARA conference meeting. This rule

raises an individual doctor's patient cap for buprenorphine from 100 patients to 275 patients. Thanks to these combined administrative and legislative efforts, patients will have greater access to the medication-assisted treatment they need in their recovery from substance abuse disorders.

I am pleased, as well, to see provisions included in this legislation that encourage the National Institutes of Health to intensify fundamental, translational, and clinical research on the understanding of pain. The hope is that this kind of research will lead to alternatives to opioids for effective pain treatment. These few lines within the legislation will have a significant influence on our understanding of how opioid abuse and chronic pain impact our families and communities.

Another set of highlights in the conference report are the provisions designed to protect infants born to mothers suffering from opioid addiction. Reuters reported that, roughly every 19 minutes, a child is born with an opioid dependency in the United States. That statistic is astounding.

My home State is not spared from this heartbreaking problem. A recent Utah Health Status Update indicated that, between 2009 and 2012, more than 100 babies each year tested positive for illicit drugs at birth. Once enacted, CARA will strengthen the existing plan of safe care for infants born and identified as affected by substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms, as well as fetal alcohol spectrum disorder. Hopefully, this will be an effective step to address what is a tragic problem for too many American children.

As you can see, these are issues that have been in need of sensible solutions for some time. As such, I wish to emphasize that the process that has brought us here to the precipice of passing CARA is nearly as impressive as the conference report itself.

Senator PORTMAN, from Ohio, long-time advocate on these issues, has worked tirelessly alongside Senator WHITEHOUSE, from Rhode Island, for roughly 3 years to shepherd this effort through the Senate. Those two gentlemen deserve a lot of credit and support, and I am glad that politics around this situation have been reduced so they can get this bill through.

Senator AYOTTE, who also deserves a tremendous amount of support and respect here, has also been a champion for those afflicted by these problems. Also, Senator AYOTTE deserves a lot of praise for all of her hard work. She understands this problem probably more than a lot of others, as her work in law enforcement helped her to do so. Senators PORTMAN, WHITEHOUSE, and AYOTTE heard from the individuals and families who are afflicted in dealing with these issues, and they did an outstanding job to craft policies to address these needs. All three of them deserve a great deal of respect and support.

Under Chairman GRASSLEY's leadership, CARA was reported out of the

Senate Judiciary Committee. He did a great job in committee. I was on the committee. The original bill then came to the Senate floor, where Senators were able to offer amendments. The Senate passed the amended version by a vote of 94 to 1.

A similar process played out in the House, with the House passing its opioid package by a vote of 400 to 5. I was pleased to serve on the conference committee that produced what should be the final draft of this report legislation. There were many similarities between the House and Senate bills, and we were able to resolve our few differences in a way that produced an improved CARA bill.

I want to commend Representative FRED UPTON, the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee—he is a great friend of mine—who was instrumental to the House effort and who also very ably chaired the conference committee. FRED UPTON is one of the great people in this body, as are the others that I mentioned.

As I alluded to earlier, the House passed the conference report this past Friday by a vote of 407 to 5. In other words, over the past several months, there have been three major votes in the two congressional Chambers, and the support has been overwhelming. Counting every vote collectively, the bill has received around 900 yeas in Congress and less than a dozen nays. Do you know how many of those votes in opposition have been cast by a Democrat? One. A single House Democrat voted against passage of the original House opioid package. Every voting Democrat in the Senate voted in favor of our version of the bill. I commend them for that.

Last week, every House Democrat who was present voted in favor of the conference report. I commend them for that. I note these facts not to unduly inject partisanship into this discussion but because we have heard rumblings that a number of Senate Democrats may want to hold up the process in order to extract more concessions. Some have actually suggested that, despite regular order and the overwhelmingly bipartisan support this legislation has enjoyed thus far, Senate passage of the CARA conference report is in doubt. I find this hard to believe, and I hope it is not true.

A few weeks ago, the White House urged Democrats in Congress to "slow-down" the effort to finalize an opioid package. Thankfully, this was met appropriately with outrage. All of us, Republicans and Democrats, now have a tremendous opportunity to give vital assistance to many Americans in need and to do so with, hopefully, an almost unanimous voice. These days, we don't often get to do that around here. We should not let partisan politics get in the way of this pressing issue.

Like I said, more than 200 advocacy and stakeholder groups that have been involved throughout this process have urged passage of this conference report.

Individuals suffering from these afflictions, as well as their families and friends, are crying out for help. The House of Representatives heeded their call. The Senate must do the same.

I want to commend the majority leader for moving swiftly to bring this important legislation up for a vote. I think it is absolutely essential that we act before Congress breaks for the recess.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the CARA conference report. Let's send it to the President's desk this week and deliver results for those Americans who are depending on us.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

TRAGEDY IN DALLAS AND GUN POLICY

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am coming to the floor once again to express my condolences to the families of those who were lost in Dallas—the families of Brent Thompson, Michael Krol, Patrick Zamarripa, Lorne Ahrens, and Michael Smith. In Connecticut, we know the ripples of loss that really never end in a community like Dallas and a community like Orlando. There is going to be a long period of healing. Our thoughts and our prayers and any help we can provide from those of us who represent Connecticut and Sandy Hook, specifically, extend to those in Dallas.

In the wake of another tragedy, I wanted to come down to the floor for a short period of time—I know my colleagues are waiting to speak—to talk about some of the very irresponsible rhetoric that gets tossed around when it comes to this debate over the future of gun policy in this country. I want to take 5 or 10 minutes to talk about what is the biggest lie used by the gun lobby in this debate, and it is this: The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun, is a good guy with a gun.

This isn't true. It has never been true. It will never be true. It is, quite simply, an invention designed by the gun industry to sell more guns, to convince Americans that laws and rules cannot protect them, and that the only thing that can keep them safe from being shot is to buy expensive weapons and expensive ammunition that pad the profits of the big gun companies.

It is time we call this lie what it is. It is a marketing gimmick for gun companies, plain and simple: The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun, is a good guy with a gun.

Let me be clear. I don't quarrel with anyone who decides to buy a weapon for self-defense. That is your decision. That is your call. Last week I met in my office with women from Connecticut who came to my office to tell me about their belief that owning a weapon is instrumental to their ability to protect themselves. One woman told me a story of repelling an attacker with a gun that was in her purse, and her sincere belief is she would not be alive today if it weren't for the weapon that was on her person.

I support the Second Amendment, and I accept that the Supreme Court has made it clear that this amendment protects the ability of anyone to buy a weapon for self-defense, subject to certain commonsense limitations. But if you are buying a weapon because you think that owning one makes you less likely to be killed by a gun, then you are wrong. If you are standing in the way of policies that crack down on illegal or dangerous weapons on our street because you believe in some kind of gun control Darwinism—a world in which the good guys with guns eventually shoot all the bad guys with guns—then you have it backwards because that is not how it works.

You know how I know this? Because study after study tells us that owning a gun makes you more likely to be killed by that gun than to use it to kill someone who threatens you. Studies show that in countries and States with more guns, there are generally not less gun deaths but more gun deaths, like the study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that showed a gun in your house doesn't make you less likely to be killed. It isn't even risk neutral. Having a gun in your home actually increases your chance of getting killed by a gun by anywhere from 40 percent to 170 percent.

How about the study in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* that showed that people living in a house with a gun are 90 percent more likely to die from a homicide than a person who lives in a house without a gun.

What about the study from the Violence Policy Center that showed that instances of guns being used in self-defense are so rare that on average there are 44 criminal homicides with guns for every time a gun is used for protection in a justifiable homicide.

How about one more study. The Harvard Injury Control Research Center study showed that in States and communities with greater gun availability, gun homicide rates were higher, not lower, than in communities and States with lower gun availability. It is your decision whether or not to buy a gun. There are certainly instances where it may make sense, and I don't begrudge the individual who makes that decision, but the data tells us only one story. The actual real, live experience of living in a nation awash in guns shows that contrary to the gun lobby sloganeering, the opposite of their claim is actually true. The more good guys there are who have guns, the more good guys die from guns. We have no clear or more horrifying example of this truth than last weekend in Dallas, TX.

Texas is an open carry State, meaning that anyone who can legally buy a semiautomatic weapon can walk around the streets of Dallas or any other community with that weapon attached to them. Reports suggest that there were perhaps 30 people openly carrying AR-15-style weapons at Saturday's protest. Some were also wearing

camouflage, bulletproof vests, and gas masks. There were also dozens and dozens of police officers on hand, all of them expertly trained and heavily armed. Between the 30 heavily armed civilians and dozens of police officers, there were more good guys with guns in the vicinity of this one very bad guy with a gun than at nearly any other crime scene in recent memory, and it led to chaos.

Here is what Dallas Police Chief Brown said in the wake of the shooting:

We're trying as best we can as a law enforcement community to make it work so that citizens can express their Second Amendment rights, but it's increasingly challenging when people have AR-15s slung over their shoulder and they're in a crowd. We don't know who the good guy is versus the bad guy when everyone starts shooting.

All of those guns in the hands of good-hearted civilians and trained police officers—and what killed the sniper, Micah Johnson? It wasn't a gun. It was an explosive device attached to the end of a robot on wheels. Eleven brave police officers fired their weapons at Micah Johnson. Dozens of armed civilians theoretically had the opportunity to defend themselves and their fellow protesters, but one deranged man, armed with an antique rifle and 30-round magazines strategically positioned above his targets, was unharmed by all of those good guys with guns, just as Jared Lee Loughner was unharmed by a civilian with a gun in the parking lot of the supermarket where he shot Congresswoman Gabby Giffords in the head, and just as the armed security guard in Pulse nightclub couldn't do anything about Omar Matteen as he executed 49 young men and women. It is just like what happened to Nancy Lanza, who thought the guns in her home would protect her and her son from harm, only for them to be used by her son to murder her in her sleep and then massacre 20 first graders and 6 of their educators.

If you want to buy a gun for self-defense, that is your call, but before making that purchase, understand that the gun lobby is lying to you. If a bad guy has a gun and wants to kill, there is very little that can be done to stop him once the tragedy is in motion. The best policy is to stop madmen and killers from getting these dangerous weapons in the first place.

Dallas Police Chief Brown said to us:

Do your job. We are doing ours. We're putting our lives on the line. The other aspects of government need to step up and help us.

When Connecticut implemented a law requiring a permit to be issued before a gun is issued, gun homicides dropped by 40 percent. In States that require background checks for private handgun sales—listen to this—48 percent fewer law enforcement officers are shot to death by handguns, and in States with universal background checks, women are 46 percent less likely to be shot by their intimate partner than in States without universal checks.

This isn't conjecture. Good laws save lives. Concentrate on passing laws that keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of criminals and killers, and you will save lives. Load up your streets, schools, and shopping malls with weapons and just hope that the good guys will eventually outshoot the bad guys, and people will be killed.

People across this country have figured it out, and that is why they support expanded background checks by an astounding ratio of 90 percent to 10 percent. There is no public policy in this country that is supported by 90 percent of Americans. They know that smart firearms laws save lives, and so they support universal background checks by a ratio of 9 to 1. It is also why there are fewer and fewer American families buying guns. It makes sense for some people, and I am not denying that. A new CBS News poll shows that gun ownership is at a near 40-year low with only 36 percent of Americans reporting that they own a gun. That is down 17 points from its highest rate in 1994 and down a whopping 10 points from just 4 years ago, but be forewarned, this development will simply propel the gun lobby to be even bolder in spreading its lies about the effects of gun ownership.

Just two weekends ago the head of the NRA went on national TV and told Americans that the only way to protect themselves from terrorism is to have a personal defense plan. That means, if you didn't parse his words, to go out and buy a gun from a gun company and help the industry stem this tide of declining gun ownership all in the name of collective self-defense. Well, it is a lie. Good guys with guns generally don't stop bad guys with guns. They didn't in Dallas. Good laws that keep illegal and dangerous weapons off of our streets, that make sure that only law-abiding, peaceful citizens are obtaining weapons—those laws stop bad guys. When you strip away all of the rhetoric driven by the gun industry profit motivations, that is the truth.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks.

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

FAA REAUTHORIZATION BILL

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, over the past 4 months, the Islamic State has carried out two deadly terrorist attacks at airports. Taken together, these two attacks—one at Brussels Airport and one at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport—resulted in more than 500 injuries and more than 70 deaths.

Since September 11, airport security efforts have emphasized securing aircraft against hijackings, but the Brussels and Istanbul bombings highlight other airport security vulnerabilities. As these attacks demonstrate, it is not just planes that are vulnerable. Both the Brussels and Istanbul attacks sought to exploit the largely unprotected areas outside the principal security checkpoints where the attackers could detonate bombs outside of screening. The large crowds of people who congregate in nonsecured areas of an airport—like security checkpoints, check-in counters, and baggage claim—make appealing targets for terrorists who like nothing better than maximum loss of life with minimum effort.

This week, the Senate will take up the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization bill, which will directly address the vulnerabilities exposed by these attacks. It will ensure that attacks like those that happened in Brussels and Istanbul don't happen at American airports.

While this bill has gained new urgency in the wake of the bombings in Istanbul and Brussels, the reforms in this bill are not a hasty response to these attacks. Instead, they are the product of months of Commerce Committee oversight of our Nation's transportation safety agencies and extensive Commerce Committee analysis of airport security vulnerabilities.

I am proud that the bill we are considering today is the most significant airport security reform bill that Congress has considered in a decade. As I have already mentioned, one problem that the Brussels and Istanbul attacks highlighted in great detail is the tempting terrorist target offered by large crowds of people in unsecured areas of airports. The FAA bill addresses that problem in a number of ways. For starters, this bill includes provisions to get more Americans enrolled in the TSA's PreCheck program. Expanding enrollment in PreCheck will reduce wait times at security, which will help reduce the size of crowds waiting in unsecured areas.

The bill also directs the TSA to more effectively deploy its personnel during high-volume travel times to speed up wait time at checkpoints. It also requires the TSA to develop and test new security systems that expedite the movement of passengers through security. Another important measure we can take to prevent attacks like those in Brussels and Istanbul is increasing the security presence in unsecured areas of airports.

The FAA bill adds more prevention and response security teams, which often include K-9 units, and expands training for local airport security personnel so the airports are better able to deter or respond to bombers or active shooter threats. Increasing security at our Nation's airports and expediting security checks will go a long way toward preventing terrorist attacks, but threats at U.S. airports are

not only threats facing U.S. airline passengers. Americans travel internationally on a regular basis, and on their return flights they depend on the quality of airport security in other countries. Part of protecting the traveling public is making sure that Americans traveling to other countries are safe when they return to the United States.

To increase security for Americans traveling abroad, the FAA bill that we will pass this week authorizes the TSA to donate unneeded screening equipment to foreign airports with direct flights to the United States. It will strengthen cooperation between U.S. security officials and security officials in other countries and authorize the TSA to support training for foreign airport security personnel. It requires the TSA to conduct assessments of security that have received less attention at foreign airports and foreign cargo security programs.

Another aspect of airport security that has received less attention but is equally important is the need to make sure that individuals who work behind the scenes at airports don't pose a threat. In October of 2015, terrorists killed 224 people when they brought down Russian Metrojet flight 9268 shortly after it departed Sharm el-Sheikh airport in Egypt. Many experts believe that the terrorists responsible had help from an airport worker. Ensuring that airport workers are trustworthy is essential to keeping passengers safe. However, at times the security badges that permit individuals to work behind the scenes at airports have been issued to individuals who have no business holding them. Right now in the United States individuals with convictions for crimes, including embezzlement, sabotage, racketeering, immigration violations, and assault with a deadly weapon can all obtain security badges granting them access to restricted sections of an airport.

While most criminals are not terrorists, there are too many criminals who, for the right price, would happily expand their criminal activities even if it involved assisting terrorists. In fact, in March of this year, an airline ramp agent was arrested in a Florida airport with \$282,400 in cash that he allegedly intended to hand off to an unknown individual. News reports indicated that he was aware the money was connected to illegal activity but knew little else. In other words, he could easily have been transporting money to terrorists without being any the wiser.

The FAA bill that we will pass this week tightens vetting of anyone with access to secure areas of an airport and expands the list of criminal convictions that could disqualify someone from holding a security badge. This bill also provides for an increase in random searches of behind-the-scenes airport workers who are not always subject to security screening the way passengers are.

I am very proud of everything this FAA bill achieves in terms of security.

This is the most comprehensive airport security package in a decade, and it will help us make real progress toward keeping airline passengers safer, and that is not all.

In addition to its robust security package, this bill puts in place a number of other important measures, among them new consumer protections. For example, this legislation will require airlines to refund package fees for lost or unreasonably delayed baggage so passengers will not have to spend a ton of time tracking down a refund when the airline doesn't deliver. It will also make sure airlines have policies that will help families traveling with children sit together on flights. It also takes steps to improve air travel for individuals with disabilities, and it ensures that Americans in rural areas will continue to have access to reliable air service.

The bill also takes measures to support the general aviation community. It streamlines the requirements for the third-class medical certificate for non-commercial pilots so private pilots don't face unnecessary bureaucracy when obtaining their medical qualification, and to reduce the risk of accidents for low-altitude fliers like agricultural applications, the bill requires highly visible markings on small towers that could impose a hazard to pilots.

On the aviation safety front, this bill updates current law to reflect the rapid advances in technology we have seen over the last few years—most notably drones. This bill includes provisions to deploy technology that will work to keep drones out of the path of airliners, which is particularly important given reports of near-miss collisions by airline pilots. It will also deter drone operators from interfering with emergency response efforts like wildfire suppression, and, in addition to fostering drone safety, this bill authorizes expanded research opportunities and operations that will further the integration of drones into our Nation's airspace.

Since we took control of the Senate in January of 2015, Republicans have focused on passing legislation to address the challenges facing the American people in our country. I am proud that with this bill, we have found a way to make our increasingly dangerous world a little safer for Americans. I am grateful to my colleagues who contributed to this bill, particularly my Democratic counterpart in the conference committee, Senator NELSON.

Senator AYOTTE also led numerous subcommittee hearings in the Aviation Subcommittee to get the bill on a path to success, and both of us appreciate the contributions of Senator CANTWELL, our Aviation Subcommittee ranking member.

This bill is an example of what can happen when Democrats and Republicans work together to get things done for the American people. I look forward

to sending our legislation to the President for his signature later this week.

UNITED STATES APPRECIATION FOR OLYMPIANS
AND PARALYMPIANS BILL

Mr. President, I also wish to speak for just a moment, if I can today, about a bill that hopefully will pass the Senate later today as well.

In just a few weeks, our Olympic athletes will head to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, for the 2016 Olympic games. The following month, America's Paralympic athletes will compete in the Rio Paralympic games. These athletes represent what is best about our country. They embody the timeless values of hard work, dedication, and sportsmanship.

Our Olympic and Paralympic athletes—and their families—have made innumerable sacrifices over the many years of training it takes to become a world-class competitor. Training is not cheap, and the vast majority of our amateur athletes put it all on the line without the help of sponsors or endorsement deals to subsidize their expenses.

Many of these athletes have spent virtually their entire lives training for this moment, and I have absolutely no doubt these brave young men and women will represent our Nation with great honor and distinction.

America's Olympic and Paralympic medal winners, in particular, will be greeted with much enthusiasm and great appreciation upon their return. Local communities across America will find ways to honor their returning hometown heroes. Unfortunately, one of the ways the Federal Government will welcome home our Olympic and Paralympic champions is by greeting them with a new tax bill. That is right. The Internal Revenue Service considers these medals to be income and will tax the value of any gold, silver, or bronze medal awarded in competition as well as any incentive award our athletes receive from the U.S. Olympic Committee.

I believe this tax penalty on our Olympic heroes is wrong, and that is why earlier this year I introduced S. 2650, the United States Appreciation for Olympians and Paralympians Act.

This legislation—introduced with Senators SCHUMER, GARDNER, GILLIBRAND, and ISAKSON—would ensure that America rewards the sacrifice and hard work of Team USA by exempting from Federal tax the medals and cash prizes they win at the Olympics and Paralympics.

I am pleased my legislation will pass the Senate later today, sending a strong signal to our athletes as they depart to the 2016 games that their Nation stands behind them. I urge the House of Representatives to take up and pass this legislation before the House adjourns for the August recess.

America's Olympic and Paralympic athletes deserve not only our admiration and respect but also a tax system that acknowledges the many years of training and sacrifice they have en-

ured. Because training for the Olympics is not considered a business enterprise, our athletes cannot deduct the substantial costs they incur over the years as they prepare to represent America on the world stage.

Most countries not only compensate their athletes but also subsidize their training expenses with taxpayer dollars. Our athletes make considerable financial sacrifices to train for the Olympics and Paralympics and as amateurs receive no compensation for their training. The very least we can do is ensure they don't receive a tax penalty when they successfully represent our Nation in the highest level of athletic competition.

Simply put, when it comes to our victorious Olympic and Paralympic athletes, we should celebrate their achievements rather than tax their success.

CONGRATULATING PAIGE MCPHERSON

Mr. President, I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations and best wishes to one of Team USA's shining stars; that is, South Dakota's own Paige McPherson.

Paige grew up in Sturgis, SD, graduating from Black Hills Classical Christian Academy in 2009. She will be competing in Taekwondo at the Rio games and will be striving for her second medal in a row, after claiming a bronze medal at the London Olympic Games in 2012.

I know Paige will represent America—and South Dakota—with great distinction next month, as will all of our Olympic and Paralympic competitors.

I wish to thank the original cosponsors of my legislation, whom I mentioned earlier, as well as Finance Committee Chairman HATCH and Senators SULLIVAN and MORAN for their support. I look forward to seeing our legislation enacted into law this year, and I wish all of our Olympians and Paralympians the very best of luck in Rio.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:53 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION
ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:30 p.m. will be controlled by the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, or her designee; the time from 2:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. will be controlled by the majority; and the time from 3 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. will be controlled by the two managers.

The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to speak for 15 minutes.

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

TRAGEDY OF VIOLENCE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I stand here as one of the two Senators from the largest State in the Union to recognize that there is a hole in the heart of America today as we cope with the tragedy of violence on all sides. I am working on comprehensive remarks because I am doing it more, in a way, for myself, and those are not prepared right now, but right now I want to send my deepest condolences to those who are suffering, who have lost loved ones, be those loved ones police officers or community members, and for that matter, so many Americans, so many American families who suffer losses because of violence every day. It is critical that we address this issue. I compliment the voices on all sides—the voices of compassion, reason, and love—and I hope I can add my voice to their voices.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, what several of us are doing on another topic is calling attention to the web of denial that is being peddled in our Nation by special interests and their think tanks and organizations that are working to undermine peer-reviewed climate science. Their goal is to create uncertainty and to delay action on the biggest environmental and public health threat we face today.

Climate change is real, human activities are the primary cause, and the warming planet poses a significant threat to our people and to our environment. That is not my opinion. I am the first one to say I am not a scientist. I rely on scientists, and 97 percent of them have said that climate change is real and human activity is the primary cause.

The level of scientific certainty on manmade climate change is about the same as the consensus among top scientists that cigarettes are deadly, but some of you may remember that up until the late 1990s, the tobacco industry scoffed at the best available science proving that tobacco is addictive and causes cancer. No one in today's world would argue with the fact that tobacco is addictive and causes cancer. In the 1990s, there was a campaign of denial, just as there is for climate change now. Year after year, the tobacco industry attacked the science that showed the link between cigarettes and the threat to human health, as well as the Surgeon General's warning that nicotine was as addictive as heroin and cocaine. Let me share a few of the statements made by or on behalf of the tobacco industry.

In 1970, the Tobacco Institute advertised that the scientific finding that proved a connection between cigarette smoking and lung cancer was wrong. They said: "The Tobacco Institute does not—and the public should not—accept these claims at face value."

In 1971, Joseph Cullman, the chairman of Philip Morris, said: "We do not