

million to \$22 million for a couple, and then it is permanently repealed by 2023. The corporate rate cut and pass-through cut also stays permanent—a boon to wealthy shareholders. Middle-class tax deductions and credits expire. Deductions for corporations and the wealthiest are permanent or even get better.

As Mark Mazer, the director of the Independent Tax Policy Center, said, “You could create a plan that just cuts taxes for middle-class people. That’s not what this is.” Yet that is how Republicans are selling it.

A few days ago on Hugh Hewitt’s show, my friend the majority leader said that “at the end of the day, nobody in the middle class is going to get a tax increase” under the Republican bill. Again, that was MITCH MCCONNELL: “Nobody in the middle class is going to get a tax increase.” Well, if Leader MCCONNELL was referring to the House bill, that is just a bold-faced lie, and he ought to retract it, but to give the Senator the benefit of the doubt, maybe he is referring to the Senate tax bill still under consideration. Let’s see.

In the Republican bill, will nobody in the middle class get a tax increase? We will wait and see. If past is prologue, I doubt it because the House said no middle-class person would get an increase, then their bill walloped the middle class. One-third get an increase immediately, and then half get an increase over the next 10 years.

I would remind my Senate Republican colleagues that their House Republicans sold their bill as a middle-class bill—a middle-class tax cut—and then put together a plan that raises taxes on millions of middle-class families, one-third of all families making between \$65,000 and \$150,000.

If the Senate bill follows the same path, promising universal, middle-class tax cuts but delivers smoke and mirrors and hidden tax increases, it will get clobbered in the court of public opinion, as it would deserve.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will pro-

ceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of John H. Gibson II, of Texas, to be Deputy Chief Management Officer of the Department of Defense.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 60 minutes of debate, equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, we are grieving yet again today another horrific mass shooting in a church in Texas—over 25 dead, others still clinging to life. We were barely past our stage of grief as more than 50 people were shot dead and 500 were injured at a country music concert in Las Vegas. Of course, every single night in this country, parents and brothers and sisters go to bed having lost their loved ones, and 90 people die every day from guns in this country.

I just think it is worth stating that this happens nowhere else other than in the United States. This is not inevitable. This is not something that we should accept. We are not impotent or helpless to try to change the scope of tragedy that is crippling for families that have to go through this.

I want everyone to take a quick look at this pretty simple chart. The United States has more guns and more gun deaths than any other developed country. It is not close, we are not even in the neighborhood of any of our other G-20 competitor nations. While the President told us the other day that this is a mental illness problem, one cannot explain this outlier status through a story of mental illness because none of these other countries have any lower rate of mental illness. There are just as many people who are mentally ill in these countries as there are in our country.

We cannot explain it by the attention we pay to mental illness. We spend more money on treating mental illness than these countries do. This isn’t a mental illness problem. We have to do better in treating people who have psychological disorders in this country, but the reason that we are an outlier nation when it comes to the number of gun deaths and the epic scale of our mass tragedies is explained by something else.

Here is a quick story. This graphic shows the States that have background check requirements on all gun sales in the private sector, and here are the States that have no background check laws beyond those that are required in Federal law. It is a fundamentally different story when it comes to gun-related homicides. In the States that have background check laws, the average rate of homicide is substantially lower—substantially lower—than in States that haven’t background check laws. That is because in this country, with the loosest, most lax gun laws in the industrialized world, private citi-

zens are able to get their hands on weapons that are designed not for hunting and not for shooting for sport but to kill. These tactical assault-style weapons are being used over and over in these mass tragedies, and more people end up in harm’s way.

Smarter gun laws—just making sure that the right people have guns, not the wrong people—lead to less gun deaths. It is time for us to admit that this is a uniquely American problem and that it deserves our attention rather than our silence, which has been our response every single session that I have been a Member of Congress.

This poster shows but a few of the faces that have been lost to gun violence in this country. My small town of Sandy Hook is a broken community. It is a beautiful, wonderful community, but it is a broken community. The ripples of grief that come with losing that number of children—beautiful children—all at one time never really gets repaired. That small community in Texas, Sutherland Springs, will suffer that same fate. It will be a community that will not ever truly repair itself, having lost so many beautiful people at one moment. You can’t rewind the clock.

It is increasingly impossible for me to continue to go back to Newtown, CT, and tell the people of that community that even after mass murder after mass murder in this country, at a scale that occurs in no other Nation, our response as a body is to do nothing. It is a level of callousness that is frankly unexplainable to the victims of this violence, and this macabre club of families that have had to deal with the consequences of gun violence is getting bigger and bigger and bigger.

Why? Because the number of people who die by guns is not going down. It is not leveling off. It is exploding. Every year, more people—not less people—are killed by guns in this country, and it seems to be the only problem in which there is zero interest in this body to solve. When a terrorist plows into civilians with a truck in New York City, Republicans in this body are talking about policy change within hours, but after somebody walks into a school or a church or a shopping mall, we are told that there has to be a restraining order on policy debate for days. It is ridiculous, and it is offensive to the families who have gone through this.

So, let’s just for a moment set aside the issues that I will admit are unlikely to come up for a vote in this body between now and the end of this session. I think it is unbelievable that universal background checks, supported by 90 percent of Americans, can’t get a vote here. I don’t think there is another issue like that in the American public, where 90 percent of Americans agree on something and Congress can’t even conceive of getting it done.

The only place where background checks is controversial is in the Congress. Every single gun owner I talk to