

by a group of brave high school students, the friends and classmates of the fallen, whom I will be sitting down with tomorrow. Their passion and eloquence have been a moral course for change.

Thank God for these students. They are urging us now to have a debate in Congress about something very straightforward: What can we do to stop very dangerous guns from getting into the hands of very dangerous people? How can we keep Americans safe at our movie theaters, at night clubs, at concerts and churches, and above all, at our schools?

We need to get something real and significant accomplished. The problem of gun violence in this country is too immediate for another delay, too severe for half measures.

President Trump has been talking about comprehensive background checks. We are glad to hear that. We are glad that folks are finally starting to talk about the real issues of gun safety again. Democrats believe that, at the very least, in the wake of Parkland, we should strive for comprehensive background checks—closing the loopholes that allow anyone, regardless of a violent history or a history of mental illness, to walk into a gun show or go on the internet and purchase a gun. More than 90 percent of Americans and the vast majority of gun owners support comprehensive background checks. What are we waiting for?

There seems to be a discussion about a more limited proposal, the Fix NICS bill, sponsored by Senators CORNYN and MURPHY, which improves the existing background check system in a few ways. I support the bill and I am a co-sponsor, but the Fix NICS bill is not what President Trump has been talking about this afternoon and at other times when he says “comprehensive background checks.” Fix NICS was written to address one specific issue that was brought to light after the horrific shooting in a church in Sutherland Springs, TX. It is a proposal to address that specific problem, but it leaves unaddressed a host of crucial gun safety issues, including, and especially, the loopholes in our background check system. If we only pass Fix NICS, we will be right back here after the next shooting in nearly the same place. If all Congress does in response to the Parkland shooting is to pass Fix NICS, we will not be doing our job. We must do much more than that.

This week, the Democratic caucus will discuss what policies we believe will most effectively curb the uniquely American epidemic of gun violence. We will propose them and work with our Republican colleagues to perfect and, hopefully, enact them. I sincerely believe we can make progress even on an issue as fraught as this one, but it will require our Republican friends to break free from the iron grip of the NRA.

Our Republican friends face a simple choice: Do something real on guns or please the NRA. Doing both is impossible.

The NRA's No. 1 goal is to make sure nothing meaningful on gun safety ever happens. When there are national issues, when there are horrible shootings, they make a feint as if they might try to do something, but then they pull right back because they want nothing to be done.

As an example, after the shooting in Las Vegas, Senators tried to do something here in the Senate about bump stocks, the modification that allowed the perpetrator to automatically fire his arsenal of assault weapons. The NRA and many Republicans said that they would be willing to work on it, but then what? The NRA pushed the weakest possible measure—a simple review of the issue by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, which had already said that they couldn't do anything about the bill. And then what happened? Nothing.

Now the NRA has pushed the House Republicans to attach the Fix NICS bill—the Cornyn-Murphy bill, a very modest improvement focused on one issue that happened in Texas, but it was not relevant to what happened here in Parkland. They tried to attach that to the NRA's No. 1 legislative priority, concealed carry reciprocity, a bill that undermines our existing gun laws, defeating the entire purpose of the legislation.

Even when it comes to the most modest improvements to gun safety laws, the NRA always finds a way to stand in the way of progress. If we are going to get something significant done to keep our schools and our kids safe from gun violence, for the first time in a very long time, President Trump and congressional Republicans will have to buck the NRA.

It is our hope that Republican leaders will work with us in a bipartisan way to pass legislation that makes a real difference—not half measures, not baby steps, and certainly not attaching good legislation to legislation that would make the overall problem even worse.

We hope Republicans will work with us to pass serious changes to our gun laws, whether the NRA supports them or not. That is the only way we will make progress on an issue that has frustrated Congress and the vast majority of the American people for far too long.

#### NET NEUTRALITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on another matter, last week the Republican-led FCC formally published a rule reversing net neutrality—the legal infrastructure that kept the internet free and open to all Americans. The FCC's rule will give the ISP—the internet service providers—the authority to restrict customers' access to their favorite websites by forcing consumers to buy internet packages, such as cable, and pay more for premium access.

In this new universe, big companies that can pay to play could get faster

internet service while startups and everyday Americans are stuck in the slow lane. It will mean the end of the free and open internet as we know it. The way the internet has driven innovation and entrepreneurship and the way it has provided unprecedented opportunities for Americans to learn and connect with one another could all change, with a profit-making organization at the toll booth deciding who pays what.

We have an opportunity to save the internet by undoing the FCC's ruling through the Congressional Review Act. All 49 Democrats have already signed on to the bill, and one Republican, SUSAN COLLINS, has joined us. We now need only one more vote, one more Republican, to reverse the FCC's ruling here in the Senate.

When we force a vote on this bill, for the first time, Republicans in Congress will have the opportunity to right the administration's wrong and show the American people whose side they are on—the average consumer or once again side with big corporate interests. Are they on the side of big internet service providers and corporations, or are they on the side of consumers, entrepreneurs, startups, and small business owners?

Tomorrow there will be a net neutrality day of action here on the Hill that I hope will focus the Senate's attention on the issue. We have 60 legislative days to pass the CRA, and I urge every single one of my Republican colleagues to join us and help save the internet.

I yield the floor.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Elizabeth L. Branch, of Georgia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

#### TRIBUTE TO MARIAN BENTON TASCO

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate Black History Month and to pay tribute to a Pennsylvanian who has dedicated her life to public service.

Today, we honor former Philadelphia councilwoman Marian Benton Tasco, whose 50-year career in public service has improved the lives of countless people in our State. Throughout her career, Marian Tasco consistently fought for the people of her community. From her first days as a typist working in the city of Philadelphia to the end of her seventh term serving on