

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

GUN SAFETY

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I hope we rise to the moment before us and get something done, over the course of the next week or two, to try to make this country safer. I am glad to be joining the President in a few hours to hear more about his thoughts on how we can put the safety of our kids ahead of any political considerations and try to figure out how to make sure that Parkland is the last.

As I have told some of the kids from Parkland who have come into my office, the ripples of grief will never, ever end. Newtown, CT, is a place that has been fundamentally changed. When you lose that many young lives in a short period of time, there is no true recovery. Unfortunately, Parkland will find that as Charleston did, as Orlando did, and as so many did before them.

We need to remember that while the country tends to pay attention to the epidemic of gun violence when there is a mass shooting, this is an epidemic that doesn't take a day off. Yesterday, it is likely that 80 to 90 people died from gunshot wounds. The majority of those were suicides. That is an epidemic in and of itself. A chunk of those were accidental shootings, another chunk of those were gun homicides; but the rate of gun deaths in this country just has no parallel anywhere else in the world. There is not another First World nation that has the rate of gun violence we do. In fact, it is not even close. The rate of gun violence in our country is 20 times higher than the average in the OECD.

We have to remember that when we try to craft a public policy response, it just cannot be about school shootings. One is much more likely to die from an accidental gunshot than in a school shooting. We have to be comprehensive in our approach, which is why the Fix NICS Act just isn't good enough.

I am proud Senator CORNYN and I and many others in this body came together to put forward a piece of legislation that will improve the background check system. It will make sure people who shouldn't buy guns aren't able to buy guns, but it is a modest change. In fact, it is really just about making sure people who are in law enforcement and inside the NICS system comply with existing law. It doesn't actually add any new background checks, it doesn't solve the gun show loophole, and it doesn't solve the internet loophole. So my hope is, we can bring this bill before the Senate, but then we can have a debate on other measures that might enjoy bipartisan support that will do 10 times more than fix NICS to keep this country safe.

Let's talk about expanding background checks to make sure everybody who is buying a gun in a commercial sale has to prove they are not a crimi-

nal and prove they are not seriously mentally ill. Let's talk about the experience that Connecticut and Indiana has had in allowing courts to use protective orders to take away guns from people who are showing evidence of doing harm to the people around them. Let's have a conversation about whether we think it is right for people to be able to walk into schools with a gun equipped with a 30-round or 100-round magazine.

I don't know if any of those measures will get 60 votes, but I think we owe it to the American people to not limit debate, to not shut down debate in the U.S. Senate Chamber.

I know it is probably a scary thing for some Republicans that votes are changing. Many of my Republican colleagues have acknowledged they might be thinking about supporting things today that they might not have supported before. Because minds are changing, it behooves us to make sure we have a full debate on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

I am supportive of the bill that Senator CORNYN and I have worked on. I hope it can become the foundation of a much more comprehensive set of measures that we take a look at in the coming days. I think we have to pay attention to where the American public is on this issue. I understand polls shouldn't dictate all of the decisions we make here. We pay attention to public opinion, we respond to it more often than not, but it doesn't guide every single decision we make because public opinion changes.

On this issue, it has been a slow and steady build, the number of Americans saying the U.S. Congress bears responsibility for the epidemic of mass slaughter in this country because we have not changed a single gun law, except to make them weaker, since Sandy Hook. Remember, the only thing this Congress has done since Sandy Hook is allow hundreds of thousands of seriously mentally ill people to get weapons. That law was passed last year by the President—nothing to restrict guns.

In fact, 97 percent of Americans want us to pass universal background checks. Apple pie isn't as popular as background checks are in this country today. No other public policy we are considering gets a 97-percent approval rating from the American public than universal background checks. Let's listen to that. Let's listen to them.

I encourage Senator MCCONNELL not to limit debate, not to constrain the Senate. Let's use this week and next week to have a set of measures we can debate and have up-or-down votes on, and let's hope, in the meantime, the President fleshes out what he is for and against.

The President tweeted that he is in support of comprehensive background checks. Maybe later today we will find out if that is really true. Comprehensive background checks tend to mean the closing of the loopholes that exist,

but hopefully the President can help lead us to a conclusion that is something much more than Fix NICS. As my colleague from Florida who has lived through the last several mass shootings in his State remarked, Fix NICS is simply not enough to meet this moment. I hope we build upon it in the coming days.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2464

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2464) to improve border security and to provide conditional provision residence to certain long-term residents who entered the United States as children.

Mr. CORNYN. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

FIX NICS BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, my colleague from Connecticut is here in the room and mentioned the bill we have been working on together, the Fix NICS bill. I want to remind all of us what the motivation was, at least on my part, for introducing this legislation and express my gratitude to the Senator from Connecticut, as well as the Democratic leader Senator SCHUMER, and others who have cosponsored this legislation.

It was just a few short months ago when someone murdered 26 people worshipping in a small church just outside San Antonio in Sutherland Springs. He had purchased these firearms having lied on the background check when they asked him whether he was a convicted felon, whether he was honorably discharged from the military, and whether he had ever committed any domestic violence. He lied.

If he had told the truth, he would have been prohibited from buying those firearms and perhaps—maybe, perhaps—he would have been dissuaded, slowed down, or perhaps would not have committed that terrible atrocity that day when 26 people lost their lives, and 20 more were injured.

We have come to find out that the Air Force, which had convicted him of two of those offenses—domestic violence and the felony—failed to upload the information that was required in the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. If they had, then he would not have gotten away