

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 558, 559, 560, and 561.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of John Hennessey-Niland, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Palau; Donald Wright, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Republic of Tanzania; Dorothy Shea, of North Carolina, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Lebanese Republic; and Todd C. Chapman, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federative Republic of Brazil.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hennessey-Niland, Wright, Shea, and Chapman nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

BIPARTISAN BACKGROUND CHECKS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, every day, we are reminded of the dev-

astating toll of gun violence in our Nation. On average, around 100 Americans die each day from gunfire. It is an epidemic of violence. This week marks the anniversaries of three horrific mass shootings.

On February 15, 1 year ago, a gunman shot and killed five coworkers at a warehouse in Aurora, IL, and also shot and wounded five police officers who rushed to the scene. On that day, we lost Russell Beyer, Vicente Juarez, Clay Parks, Josh Pinkard, and Trevor Wehner.

February 14 was the date of the 2008 mass school shooting at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, in which a mentally disturbed gunman killed 5 students and wounded 17 more. On that day, we lost Gayle Dubowski, Catalina Garcia, Julianna Gehant, Ryanne Mace, and Daniel Parmenter.

And February 14 was also the date when 17 students and staff were murdered in 2018 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL.

These anniversaries and statistics are grim, but they do not capture the true impact of this horrific gun violence—so many funerals, so many families and communities devastated.

And every day we lose still more lives to gun violence in communities large and small. Just this past weekend, at least 23 people were shot in the city of Chicago, nine of them fatally.

We pray for the families and loved ones of those we have lost, and we remember the wounded who bear physical and mental scars from their trauma. We also renew our thanks for the first responders who run toward the sound of gunfire and risk their lives to help others.

There are many people throughout America who are doing all they can to try to reduce our Nation's epidemic of gun violence. This includes parents, community leaders, teachers, faith leaders, law enforcement, public officials, the medical community, and more.

I particularly want to commend a coalition of hospitals that has been working with me in Chicago on the HEAL Initiative. This is an effort to coordinate these hospitals' resources, from economic investment to community programming, to help reduce violence and improve quality of life in their surrounding neighborhoods. There are promising efforts taking place in many States and local communities to address gun violence.

But is the U.S. Senate doing all it can to protect our communities from gun violence? No, not even close.

While there is no single reform that could prevent every shooting, we know there are obvious gaps in Federal gun laws that make it easy for felons, abusers, and mentally unstable people to get guns.

Nearly a year ago, on February 27, 2019, the House of Representatives passed a bipartisan bill to close gaps in our background check system that allow an estimated 22 percent of gun

sales to occur without a check. Around 90 percent of Americans support closing the gaps in the background check system. It is a step that would save lives. Yet the Republican Senate majority refuses to call the bill up for a vote. I can't explain why Senate Republicans won't take up bipartisan, House-passed gun safety legislation that Americans overwhelmingly support. It makes no sense.

There have been too many deaths, too many mass shootings, too many grim anniversaries, and too many excuses for inaction. It is time for Senator McCONNELL to call up H.R. 8, the bipartisan background checks bill, and hold a vote.

TRIBUTE TO DR. LARRY GOODMAN

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, the Chicago area is blessed to have some of the top hospitals and academic centers in the country. Rush University Medical Center and College in Chicago, in particular, has advanced into a comprehensive and leading health care institution. Rush continues to deliver high-quality care to its patients, driving the field of innovative medical research and training the next generation of healthcare practitioners. I would like to celebrate the tenure and accomplishments of the hospital's president and CEO and the leader in the program at Rush, my friend, Dr. Larry Goodman.

In 1976, Larry earned his medical degree from the University of Michigan's Medical School. He completed his residency at the Rush University Medical Center, where he served as the chief medical resident before joining the faculty.

At Rush, Larry served as an infectious disease specialist, working to improve the lives of people affected by HIV and AIDS. He also served as the senior vice president of medical affairs and the dean of the Rush Medical College before the hospital appointed him as its president and CEO in 2002.

Under Larry's leadership, Rush has prospered. The hospital doubled its student enrollment in the last 20 years, training future physicians who will provide top-notch healthcare services in communities around the Nation. The hospital also collaborated to increase its employment of local community members. These efforts, in part through West Side United, have helped to reduce the health inequities that exist between the residents of low-income communities and those in affluent communities. In fact, it was Dr. Goodman who first told me about the alarming 16-year gap in life expectancy between people living in the Loop and in West Garfield Park—just two "L" stops, or 6 miles, apart from each other on the Blue.

More than a year ago, I joined several community leaders to announce the Chicago Hospital Engagement, Action, and Leadership, or HEAL, Initiative to help address many of the root

causes of gun violence, such as economic hardship and spare mental health services. Under this initiative, each hospital made 16 commitments to address these issues. Larry was the inspiration for this undertaking and instrumental in getting it off the ground. It is a testament to his lifelong dedication to those in need.

After decades of service dedicated to improving lives and helping others, Larry has retired with an amazing legacy. He has been key to thinking about the transformative role of hospitals in uplifting communities and through his hard work, vision, and commitment to make it possible. I am especially grateful for our partnership over the years, from his leadership on the Cook County Hospital transition to the Chicago HEAL Initiative.

I am proud to call Larry my friend, and I wish him the very best in retirement.

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK MAGOON

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it was more than 50 years ago that a young couple from Springfield, IL brought their baby daughter to then-Children's Memorial Hospital in Chicago. They drove more than 200 miles each way because they knew Children's Hospital provided the best care for their daughter, and they repeated that trip every 3 months for years. I know this story well because it is the story of my family's relationship with Children's Memorial, now known as Lurie Children's. It also is a story thousands of other children and families could tell about the world-class treatment they received at Children's.

I want to take this time to recognize a person who has been the heart and soul of this hospital for decades: my friend, Mr. Patrick Magoon. Pat served as the president and CEO of the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago for more than two decades. He retired recently, and I want to take this opportunity to honor his work.

In 1977, Pat started his career at then-Children's Memorial Hospital as a planning department intern while he pursued his master's degree in urban policy and planning from the University of Illinois. When he joined the staff at the hospital, he held a number of administrative positions—even working as the hospital's laundry manager—before he became president and CEO in 1997.

In the last 20 years under Pat's direction, Lurie Children's has come to be recognized as one of the best children's hospitals in the Nation. In the last 8 years, U.S. News and World Report has named Lurie's a top 10 children's hospital in the country 7 times. It also has received four Magnet Award designations, the highest national recognition given for excellence in nursing care.

When Pat was appointed, the hospital faced financial challenges, losing about \$1 million a month. Thanks to his hard

work, vision, and commitment, the hospital is not only financially stable but has become a beacon of hope for children—both within its own walls and in the Chicago community. During Pat's tenure, it has increased the number of children it serves by more than 50 percent, giving thousands of children access to high-quality healthcare services. Lurie Children's has significantly expanded its innovative research and treatment services, including its Nation-leading efforts on trauma-informed care and violence prevention, to meet the increasing needs of its patients.

Pat Magoon has been the key to positioning Lurie Children's as a national leader in the care of kids. I am especially grateful for our partnership over the years and his leadership in protecting and advocating for the youngest, most vulnerable patients. We could always count on Pat and Children's to be a strong ally in the support of the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid, biomedical research funding, and addressing violence and the social determinants of health.

Pat Magoon's legacy is not just a great children's hospital, which Lurie Children's has become, but the heartfelt appreciation of the children, parents, staff, and volunteers who know he has been an integral part of making their lives better. I salute my friend, Pat Magoon.

(At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

HONEST ADS ACT

• Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, it has been 1190 days since Russia attacked us in 2016, and we have yet to pass comprehensive election security reform. The next major elections are just 266 days away and primaries are already underway. We must take action now to secure our elections from foreign threats. I applaud my Democratic colleagues for coming to the floor today to urge the Senate to take action.

Our intelligence officials have repeatedly warned that elections remain a target for foreign adversaries and that our election systems remain vulnerable. According to a recent joint statement from our military and intelligence agencies, the administration warned that "Russia, China, Iran and other foreign malicious actors will seek to interfere in the voting process or influence voter perceptions." Our adversaries are emboldened, and we must do more to safeguard our elections.

I have been coming to the floor for years now fighting to get comprehensive election security legislation passed because election security is national security. While we have made progress and secured nearly \$1 billion in election security grants for States, we have been blocked from passing meaningful legislation that would en-

sure our election systems are resilient in the face of attacks, legislation that calls for paper ballots and reliable postelection audits—basic requirements that would dramatically improve election security. Despite my bipartisan work with Senator LANKFORD on such legislation, we have been repeatedly blocked from bringing it to the floor.

There are other commonsense bipartisan election security bills that have been blocked from the floor. Late last year, I pushed the Senate to take action on the Honest Ads Act, my bipartisan legislation with Senator GRAHAM that would increase transparency and accountability for political ads sold online. The goal is simple: bring our laws into the 21st century to ensure that voters know who is paying to influence our political system. That is a goal every elected official should be fighting for, but I was again blocked from offering the legislation on the Senate floor.

We have a common set of facts about how our elections were attacked; now we must act with a common purpose to ensure it never happens again. This is about our democracy, not about partisanship. The freedom to choose our leaders and know with full confidence that those leaders were chosen in free and fair elections is something Americans have fought and died for since our country was founded. We need to be a united front in fighting against those who interfere with our political system, and we must do everything in our power to protect our elections.●

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

BIGHORN SHEEP RETURN TO FORT BERTHOLD RESERVATION

• Mr. CRAMER. Madam President, it has been 150 years since bighorn sheep have roamed the Tribal lands of the Fort Berthold Reservation in northwestern North Dakota. At the end of January, the sheep returned.

Their re-introduction to lands they had inhabited for centuries was a long-held goal of many tribal leaders and state wildlife professionals. Their dream was realized when the Mandan Hidatsa and Arikara Nation and the North Dakota Game and Fish Department worked out a cooperative agreement, which they signed last month.

Thirty bighorn sheep from the Rocky Boy Reservation in north central Montana were brought to Fort Berthold and released near Mandaree and Twin Buttes on reservation habitat known to be ideal for the sheep. Their management and maintenance will be shared between the state and tribe.

The rarest big game species in my state, bighorn sheep are found only on steep terrain near the North Dakota Badlands. With these new sheep, their total population in the state is now approximately 360.

Bighorn sheep are historically significant to the Mandan Hidatsa and