

(3) The number of alleged violations for which the Committee staff conducted a preliminary inquiry: 2. (This figure includes one matter from the previous calendar year carried into 2013.)

(4) The number of alleged violations for which the Committee staff conducted a preliminary inquiry that resulted in an adjudicatory review: 0.

(5) The number of alleged violations for which the Committee staff conducted a preliminary inquiry and the Committee dismissed the matter for lack of substantial merit: 1.

(6) The number of alleged violations for which the Committee staff conducted a preliminary inquiry and the Committee issued private or public letters of admonition: 0.

(7) The number of matters resulting in a disciplinary sanction: 0.

(8) Any other information deemed by the Committee to be appropriate to describe its activities in the previous year:

In 2013, the Committee staff conducted 12 new Member ethics training sessions; nine Member and committee office campaign briefings; 13 employee code of conduct training sessions; eight public financial disclosure clinics, seminars, and webinars; 28 ethics seminars and customized briefings for Member DC offices, state offices, and Senate committees; three private sector ethics briefings; and eight international briefings.

In 2013, the Committee staff handled approximately 8,073 telephone inquiries and 1,980 inquiries by email for ethics advice and guidance.

In 2013, the Committee wrote approximately 755 ethics advisory letters and responses including, but not limited to, 608 travel and gifts matters (Senate Rule 35) and 104 conflict of interest matters (Senate Rule 37).

In 2013, the Committee issued 3,246 letters concerning financial disclosure filings by Senators, Senate staff and Senate candidates and reviewed 1,760 reports.

REMEMBRANCE AND RESOLVE

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, every January brings hope that the New Year will be a happy and safe one. But, sadly, 2014 has already been marred by gun violence.

To cite just a few examples, on January 9, a 16-year-old student at Liberty Technology Magnet High School shot a classmate in the thigh with a pistol. On January 14, a 12-year-old in New Mexico walked into his middle school's gym and opened fire with a shotgun, injuring two of his classmates as they waited to go to class. And on the evening of January 15, a man used a semi-automatic handgun to murder two people at an Indiana grocery store. He was about to kill another person just before police officers shot and killed him.

Sadly, our Nation's epidemic of gun violence continues. The National Cen-

ter for Injury Prevention and Control has estimated that around 30,000 people in the United States die from gunshot wounds every year, and more than 60,000 people are injured by guns every year. A study also has shown that the firearm homicide rate in our Nation is 20 times higher than the combined rate of 22 other countries comparable in population.

We live in a country where almost every week a community is wracked by a mass shooting, defined as an incident that claims at least four lives. In 2013, our Nation witnessed at least 25 such shootings. These occur all over our Nation, in places like Oklahoma City, where last August a man who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia stopped taking his medication and shot his mother, sister, niece, and nephew; in Ottawa, KS, where last April a man who had served prison time for attempted second-degree murder shot and killed 4 people; in Washington, DC, where a mentally deranged individual killed 12 and injured 8 at Washington's Navy Yard.

Last December, just one day before the anniversary of the tragic Newtown school shooting which stole the lives of 27 people, 20 of them children, another school shooting occurred in Arapahoe, CO. This time, the perpetrator was an 18-year-old high school senior who entered his high school near Denver armed with 125 rounds of ammunition, a pump-action shotgun, a machete, and three incendiary devices. He critically injured a classmate, who has since tragically passed away, before taking his own life. While this may not qualify as a mass shooting, it is no less troubling. It is a testament to how disturbingly numb to gun violence our society has become that the sentiment "it could have been worse" is some form of relief.

Today, America is a nation where parents are nervous to send their children to schools, shopping malls, and movie theaters because they are genuinely afraid that their kids might not come back. We live in a nation where toddlers find unsecured handguns in their family's homes and accidentally take lives. We live in a society where arguments and disputes turn into tragedies, all with one ill-considered pull of a trigger. Is this the kind of environment we want to live in? Is this what we want to leave for the next generation?

Mr. President, it is my hope that this year, the procession of gun tragedies will begin to end. It is my hope that we will not be submerged this year in the horror of a mass shooting. But this hope will only be realized if Congress takes action to stop the gun violence plaguing our country.

I urge my colleagues not to accept the status quo, where convicted felons, domestic abusers, and the mentally ill can get their hands on a deadly weapon at any time. I urge my colleagues to take steps toward ending this violence by passing commonsense legislation,

supported by 90 percent of the American people, that would enact background checks on all gun sales. I urge my colleagues to work to ensure that our homes, our families, and our neighborhoods become safer.

ASHLAND UNIVERSITY

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I rise today to congratulate Ashland University for addressing the challenging issue of skyrocketing tuition. After serious consideration, Ashland has dramatically reduced its tuition for the 2014-2015 school year by 37 percent. Ashland hopes this important step will improve access to higher education at affordable prices while keeping the university financially competitive.

Ashland University, which is located in Ashland, OH, has a proud history of providing quality education since its founding in 1878. The university offers undergraduate, masters, and doctorate degrees and has been nationally recognized and ranked in the "Top 200 National Universities" by U.S. News & World Report for the last 2 years.

Madam President, I would like to congratulate Ashland University for addressing the affordability and accessibility of higher education.

TRIBUTE TO MYRON BELKIND

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I rise today to recognize Cleveland native Myron Belkind, who was named president of the National Press Club on January 25, 2014. Mr. Belkind grew up in Lyndhurst, OH, where he began his career in journalism writing as a student and then for the Cleveland Plain Dealer and the Cleveland Press.

During Mr. Belkind's 42-year career with the Associated Press, he covered many world leaders and headed up Associated Press bureaus in Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi, London, and Tokyo. He served as president of several foreign press associations and as a journalism instructor at the George Washington University in Washington, DC. He has received the Distinguished Alumni Awards from the Ohio State University School of Communications and Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

As a foreign correspondent in the 1970s, Belkind covered major international news stories and was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for his coverage of the breaking news that Prime Minister Gandhi's government had declared a state of emergency on June 26, 1975, suspending civil liberties, arresting thousands of political opponents, and imposing restrictions on the national and international press.

He is the first National Press Club president with an extensive international background in foreign correspondence. In his new role, he has vowed to continue his work promoting worldwide freedom of the press and will