

day, but, frankly, it would take me more time than we have here for debate on the floor to tell 86 stories every single day.

This isn't just about the fact that I come from Newtown, CT; this is about the fact that there is a regular drum-beat of gun violence throughout this country. By doing nothing in the Senate and the House week after week, month after month, year after year, we effectively become complicit in these murders. We silently endorse this epidemic of gun violence when we don't even try to make gun trafficking illegal at a Federal level; when we don't stand with 90 percent of the American public and the vast majority of gun owners—80 to 90 percent—and simply say you shouldn't be able to get a gun if you are a criminal and you have to prove you are not a criminal before you get a gun; when we don't endorse simple gun safety technology to make sure the gun that was used to kill Officer Moore can't be used by someone who isn't its intended user, its owner, the technology developing—we could help; we could assist—that would cut down on stolen firearms that are used to kill and hurt people.

I will keep coming down to the floor whatever chance I get to tell a handful of these tragic stories from Connecticut, to New York, to Chicago, to Los Angeles, giving voices to the victims of gun violence so that someday, somehow, the Senate will recognize that although we can't eliminate these numbers, although we can't bring them down to zero, with smart, common-sense legislation, we can make sure these numbers are much lower than they are today and that there is much less tragedy visited on American families and much less cost to American taxpayers.

I yield back, Mr. President.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 15 minutes.

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

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

HONORING DEPUTY SHERIFF MATTHEW CHISM
AND OFFICER EDDIE JOHNSON

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, all across the country right now people are honoring the men and women who serve in law enforcement as we honor National Police Week. I was the cochair of the Senate Law Enforcement Caucus. Senator COONS and I founded that caucus when we came to the Senate a little over 4 years ago. I am proud to be able to speak on behalf of those who serve and their families.

I just had a meeting with the Federal Law Enforcement Association to talk about the challenge of these jobs and the challenge to families and the importance of understanding the moment you are in. One of the observations I made to them—going back to some legislation I worked on a few years ago to allow police officers to carry their weapons when they went from State to State—is that you may not remember everybody that you arrested, but everybody you arrested remembers you.

The vulnerability of police and their families is sometimes equal to and sometimes exceeds the vulnerability of those of us whom the police, every day, step up to protect. This is a week when we really take a moment to recognize that. We take a moment to recognize those who serve. I want to pay tribute today particularly to two Missouri officers who were killed in the line of duty last year: Deputy Sheriff Matthew Chism of the Cedar County Sheriff's Office and Officer Eddie Johnson of the Alton Police Department.

Deputy Sheriff Chism, of Stockton, MO, was tragically killed in November of last year. He was 25 years old. Deputy Sheriff Chism was shot and killed while conducting a traffic stop. He had served with the Cedar County Sheriff's Office for just under 2 years. Deputy Sheriff Chism is survived by his wife and his young son. Clearly, that family has paid a tremendous price for the willingness of their husband and father to step up and defend us.

Officer Eddie Johnson, Jr., of Alton, MO, was involved in a fatal vehicle crash while responding to a structure fire on October 20 of last year. In addition to being an officer with the Alton Police Department, Officer Johnson also served as the fire chief of the volunteer fire department and as a reserve deputy for the Oregon County Sheriff's Department. He was 45 years old. He is survived by his wife and their three children.

So difficult things happen to those who serve. We saw two of our officers, the St. Louis County police officers at Ferguson, MO, who were shot recently as someone was shooting into a crowd there expressing concern about police activity. But the very people trying to be sure that the crowd was able to express that concern were then the victims of violence that has not yet been really figured out—why the person who fired those shots was shooting at a crowd, whether he was shooting specifically at police in that crowd or just shooting into the crowd or what that person was doing.

The desire of people who serve and put on that uniform every day is to serve and protect. That is their No. 1 goal, I am confident, in virtually every case in taking that job. The No. 1 hope of their family is that those people come home safely at the end of their shift. You know, life is uncertain in many ways, but more uncertain when you actually decide you are going to pursue a service to others that puts

you intentionally in harm's way—people who are not only prepared to serve but willing to serve, prepared to stand in the way of danger to others but willing to stand in the way of danger to others. It is a determination of what to do that other people don't make and don't bear the responsibility the same way. So it is important for us right now to think about those who serve.

I was glad to join Senator CARDIN as a cosponsor, with others, of the National Blue Alert Act—the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act. This bill created a national alert system to apprehend violent criminals who have seriously injured or killed police officers. These two officers were killed while in their squad car. This alert system would be used to quickly get that information to other police agencies and to the public, as they are trying to find someone who would think about doing that sort of thing.

We passed that bill on April 30. The House of Representatives passed it yesterday. It is now on the way to the President's desk. It is a good thing for us to step up and be willing to do. This is a job where you go to work every day not knowing what is likely to happen that day. We saw events in my home State, in Ferguson, MO, last August that brought attention to the danger that police face.

I heard even the President talking about Baltimore just a few days ago. He made the comment that we have difficulty in communities and difficulty in people's lives—people who are not prepared for opportunities and they do not get opportunities. The President said something like this: And then we send the police into those environments, and we act surprised when bad things happen, when unfortunate things happen, when violence occurs, when police are in the middle of a situation that suddenly does not work out the way any of us would want it to.

Police are dealing with major problems. I cosponsored with Senator STABENOW last year the Excellence in Mental Health Act, trying to be sure that we are dealing with people's behavioral health problems like we deal with all other physical health problems. One out of four adult Americans has a behavioral health problem that is diagnosable—according to the NIH, almost always treatable—and then one out of nine has a behavioral health problem that severely impacts how they function as an individual, according to the National Institutes of Health.

We have no greater support of that effort to try to begin to try to treat behavioral health like all other health than the police organizations around the country that stepped forward and have said: This is a problem that we deal with all the time, and there are better ways to deal with it than expecting police officers to deal with someone whose behavioral health problem leads them to violence or into another situation.

By the way, people with behavioral health problems are more often the victims of violence than they are the perpetrators of violence. So often this is part of what we ask police to respond to. We expect police to be psychiatrists and psychologists and first responders and experts at protecting others. Then, we can easily begin to want to question what equipment they used, what uniform they were told they needed to have on for the exercise that they were about to participate in, the public safety moment they were about to be part of.

These are hard jobs. They are difficult jobs that often come into the moment of difficulty in other people's lives—people who for whatever reason do something that they would normally not do, react in a way that they might normally not react or react out of incredible frustration because of the situation they found themselves in. But we expect the police to step forward and immediately be able to respond to that situation in a way that protects others. Does every police officer do the right thing every time? Probably not. Does almost every police officer do their very best to do the right thing ever time? Absolutely, they do. It is the exceptions that get attention, as they should. But for those of us who every day benefit and benefit in this building from the work they do—I remember on 9/11. One of my memories of 9/11 is that I am one of the last people to leave the Capitol Building and the police officer who is there telling me to get out as quickly as I could. As she says that to me, I realize, as I am leaving the door to try to get to a safer place, she—the police officer who says that I need to get out of here right now—is still standing at the place where she told me: You need to get out of here right now. Whoever else might have been left in the building, she was trying to be sure that they got out of the building, too.

That is what we expect the police to do. That is what their families know every day when they go to work, that they may be called on to do extraordinary things. For those who serve, we are grateful. This is an important week to be grateful to police officers whom we see and police who are helping us whom we do not see. So I am pleased to be here to thank them for their service.

TRADE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, on another topic, I would just like to say that I hope we can move forward with the ability to have trade agreements. I was disappointed yesterday that we were not able to move forward and not vote on a trade agreement but to vote on the framework that at some point in the future would allow us to negotiate a trade agreement.

You cannot get the final negotiation on a trade agreement unless the people with whom you are negotiating know that the trade agreement is going to be

voted on—yes or no—by the Congress. It cannot be an agreement that the Congress can go back and look at and say: Well, we do not really like that provision. We do not like this provision. Let's send it back, but let's not do what they said they were willing to do as part of this negotiation.

Trade is good for us. Trade is in almost all cases about tearing down barriers to our products, because we have very few barriers to those that we trade with. So trade is almost always an opportunity to sell more American products in other countries, particularly as it relates to the most likely first agreement we would get if we would get trade promotion authority. That agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, will make a huge difference in the way that part of the world develops, if they develop based on a trade relationship where the rule of law matters, a trade relationship where everyone is treated in a way where you are looking for a way to come back and have more ability to work together in the future, where you are working on trade relationships where not every ounce of profit has to be made on any one deal, because you are always thinking about what happens next.

We have great opportunities there and they do too. That part of the world will be dramatically different 10 years from now and even more different 20 years from now, if our system becomes a system that becomes the basis for how they move into their economic future and create economic opportunity for them and for us—as opposed to the other alternatives, which are much more colonial in nature, much more cynical in nature, much more likely to be one big trading partner, and there is one little trading partner in every deal.

That is not the way this works. That is not the way it should work, but we can't get to that final opportunity for American workers unless we have an agreement where we understand what happens to that agreement once it has been negotiated.

The best thing, the best offer does not come until the people on the other side of the negotiating table know they are doing this under trade promotion authority, an authority that every President since Franklin Roosevelt has had, and every President since Franklin Roosevelt asked for, until this President, who didn't ask for it until his second term and then clearly didn't do anything to push for it until after the congressional elections last year.

But this is a 6-year ability to create more opportunities for American workers and jobs that provide good take-home pay for American workers. I hope the unfortunate decision not to move forward and get this done is a decision the Senate quickly has a chance to rethink, revoke on, and move forward.

With that, I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). Morning business is closed.

ENSURING TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 1314, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 58, H.R. 1314, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

OUR COUNTRY'S WORD ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, it has been nearly 2 years since the Syrian tyrant Bashar al-Assad attacked his own people with sarin gas, crossing President Obama's so-called red line. At the time, President Obama grudgingly called for airstrikes against Assad but hesitated at the moment of decision. When Secretary of State Kerry opened the door to a negotiated solution, Vladimir Putin barged in, allowing Assad the pretext of turning over his chemical weapons to avoid U.S. airstrikes. The amen chorus proclaimed a strategic master stroke.

But it wasn't so. Street-smart observers were onto Assad's game. He only needed to keep a tiny fraction of his chemical stockpile to retain his military utility. Syria thus could open most—but not all—of its facilities at no cost to the regime.

In fact, because most of Syria's chemical agents were old, potentially unreliable yet still dangerous, the regime actually benefitted by getting the West to pay for the removal of the old stockpiles.

And where are we now? Exactly where a few of my colleagues and I warned we would be. News reports just this week indicate that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has discovered new evidence of sarin gas and VX nerve agent—9 months after the organization declared Syria had disposed of all of its chemical weapons. In the meantime, Assad has simply shifted to chlorine gas for chemical attacks against his own people, which is also prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention, even though Syria signed that convention as part of President Obama's deal in 2013.

I am appalled by these reports that the Syrian regime has obtained stocks of chemical weapons, but I cannot say I am surprised. Anyone with eyes to see knew the message President Obama had sent. When he flinched in 2013 in the face of Assad's brazen and brutal