

tragedy in order to justify this unconstitutional attempt to deny American citizens their core constitutional rights without any proof and without any evidence.

I would just add that if our friends across the aisle think this watch list is so perfect and so infallible, they ought to read an editorial that was produced by the New York Times in 2014 where the American Civil Liberties Union and others objected to the watch list as being a secret government list without any evidence or any proof. They cited a 2007 audit of the 71,000 people on the government watch list and noted that half of those 71,000 were erroneously included in the watch list.

So we all understand what is going on here. This isn't about finding solutions to real problems; this is about trying to change the subject and to distract the American people from the fact that the President and this administration have absolutely no strategy to deal with the threat of ISIS and the President tells us merely to stay the course. So I understand what is going on.

I also would say that the other main purpose of our friends across the aisle, other than to defeat our ability to repeal ObamaCare, which we successfully did in the Senate last week, is to create a "gotcha" moment for Senators and candidates who are running in 2016. Already, the Senator from Connecticut has appeared on national news shows, the President of the United States in his weekly speech to the Nation, and the Senate Democratic leader have already misrepresented what was in the Cornyn substitute to the Feinstein amendment last week to suggest that people who voted against the Feinstein amendment really, really wanted to make sure that terrorists got guns. That is an outrageous accusation, and it is as false as it is outrageous.

So I think it is pretty obvious what is going on here. This is an effort to undermine our ability to repeal ObamaCare. It is an effort to distract from the fact that the President of the United States, the Commander in Chief, has no strategy to defeat ISIS. In fact, the Democratic leader said yesterday that really what we need is an ISIS czar. An ISIS czar? I thought that is the job of the Commander in Chief, the President of the United States, to fight and win the Nation's wars and to keep us safe here at home. Give me a break. Then this foolish idea that we ought to simply take the Federal Government's word without any proof or any necessity of producing evidence in a court of law and meeting some basic minimal legal standard before we deny American citizens their core constitutional rights is just outrageous.

So, Mr. President, I think it is pretty obvious what is going on here, and I am happy to have the American people render their judgment. For that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. President.

The Senator is correct that last week Senate Democrats thought that it was more important to talk about terrorism than it was to talk about the repeal of the Affordable Care Act for the 16th time in the U.S. Senate, 55, 60 times in the House of Representatives. We did think it was more important last week to talk about stopping terrorists from getting weapons. I am sorry we didn't find that bipartisan consensus last week.

What we are talking about here today is a different threat than we have ever seen before, and what we want to do is to stop terrorism before it happens.

The Senator from Texas is right that many of the individuals on the terrorist watch list have not committed a crime, but in order to get on the terrorist watch list, you have to have been in communication with those who are trying to create radical jihad here in the United States. By denying those individuals from getting a weapon, you are serving to prevent a terrorist attack from happening.

Why would we wait until after the terrorist attack has occurred in order to stop that individual from buying a gun? It is too late at that point.

This bill includes provisions to get off that list if you are not on it, so it is perfectly observant of our tradition of supporting the rights of law-abiding citizens to buy and purchase a weapon. But to suggest that the only pathway to stopping an individual from buying a weapon is a criminal prosecution when we know there are people right now in the United States who are in contact with radical ideologies and may be contemplating attacks against the United States misunderstands the way in which we are going to prevent future terrorist attacks from happening in this country.

This notion that those of us who want to change the law in order to better protect Americans are capitalizing on a tragedy is ridiculous and it is insulting, frankly. There are a lot of people who say: Well, when it comes to guns, you can't talk about policy changes right after a mass shooting.

On average, there has been a mass shooting every single day in this country. If you had to wait 24 hours or 48 hours to talk about strategies—such as preventing terrorists from buying guns—that would keep this country safe after a mass shooting, then you would never talk about ways to keep this country safe because every day there are mass shootings separate and aside from the 80 people who die each day from the drip, drip, drip of gun violence all across this country.

I don't think any of us mean to suggest, as the Senator from Texas said, that those who oppose this bill, which is supported by three-quarters of American gun owners and 90 percent of Americans, are rooting for terrorists to get guns. That is not what I am saying. What I am saying is that those who oppose this are more concerned with protecting the rights of potential terrorists than they are with protecting this country. That is what we are talking about.

We are worried about the rights of people on the terrorist watch list more than we are about taking steps to protect this country. What we are talking about is a temporary inconvenience. If somebody is on this watch list who shouldn't be—and it is a very small number—then through this legislation they have a means to get off that list. They have to wait a couple of days, maybe a couple of weeks, in order to buy a weapon. A tiny number of people who are inconvenienced is the cost; protecting the country from a potential terrorist attack is the benefit. That is a trade that my constituents would take in a heartbeat.

I am sorry that we aren't able to proceed with debate on this bill, but I think I can speak for my colleagues that we will be back on the floor in the days, the weeks, and the months to come to continue to ask for a vote on simple legislation to make sure that potential terrorists cannot get their hands on dangerous life-ending weapons.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:48 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

STUDENT SUCCESS ACT— CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to support the passage of the bipartisan Every Student Succeeds Act. I commend Chairman ALEXANDER, Ranking Member MURRAY, and their counterparts in the House, Chairman KLINE and Ranking Member SCOTT, for their commitment to finding common ground and a path forward on this critical legislation.

When President Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act into law 50 years ago, he noted that "from our very beginnings as a nation, we have felt a fierce commitment to the ideal of education for everyone. It fixed itself into our democratic creed."

Yet many communities today across the Nation, including my home State of Rhode Island, are still wrestling with how to address large achievement