

check. If a person goes to a gun show and buys from a dealer there, he or she would still have to go through a background check under current law. If that person goes to the next table, he or she can buy whatever they want and nobody is checking, and that is what we are going to stop.

Let's say I want to buy a gun through the Internet from Senator TOOMEY in Pennsylvania and I am in West Virginia. I see he has a gun for sale, and I want to buy that gun. As the law is stated today, as far as buying interstate—from West Virginia to Pennsylvania—Mr. TOOMEY would have to send that firearm to a licensed dealer in West Virginia, and I would have to have a background check done before I can take possession of that gun.

We are not creating new law. All we are saying is if a person goes to a gun show, there will be a background check for all guns that are sold at the gun show. If a person buys through the Internet, there will be a background check whether it is instate or out of State. This is not a universal background check. This is basically a criminal and mental background check and that criminal and mental background check has to show that person has been found guilty by a court that he or she is a criminal or criminally insane and not allowed to buy a gun and that is all.

So what everybody is hearing with all this talk is just falsehood. If a person is a law-abiding, proud gun owner, such as myself, and likes shooting and going out in the woods with friends and family, we do not infringe in any way, shape or form on individual transfer.

For those transactions which are not commercial transactions—for example, in West Virginia usually your grandfather or uncle or somebody gets you your first gun. There are some people who never bought a gun but have a collection of guns that was handed down to them by their family. Those people will still be able to have that type of transaction. That is not interfered with. A person can sell a gun to their neighbor without any interference. A person can put a note on the bulletin board in their church and say: I have a gun I would like to sell and sell it to a church member.

So if anyone says we are infringing on somebody's right, we are not. As we worked on the bill, we basically looked at the gun culture in America, who we are, how we become who we are, and that is what we took into consideration.

I, for one, as a gun owner and a person who enjoys hunting and shooting and all the things and camaraderie which that brings, I feel sometimes I am looked upon in an objectionable way because I enjoy that. I am a law-abiding citizen and my second amendment right gives me that right. I want to make sure that right is protected. I also have a responsibility to do the right thing, and that is why we are here.

If we are looking for ways to keep our citizens safe from mass violence, then shouldn't we look at the culture of mass violence? I have gone around to the schools in West Virginia and talked to some of the students.

We can talk to our young pages, the brightest and best of what we have. They have probably become desensitized compared to what the Presiding Officer and I would have seen in our generation. If we saw what they do in a movie—and we didn't have the Internet back then, so we didn't have anything to compare to it.

If we are going to talk about banning somebody's weapon, such as a hand-me-down gun, if you will, don't you think we ought to have people with expertise who can tell what the gun does to make sure it isn't just something that might look fancy but doesn't perform any better than a deer rifle? The Commission on Mass Violence is part of this bill. Basically, we are going to have people who have gun expertise, people who have mental illness expertise.

I have gone to the schools and talked to teachers in kindergarten, first grade, and second grade. They are saying: Wait a minute. We have no help. We have identified kids who are challenged mentally or come from a home that is unstable and not getting proper support, and we have nothing to do to help them. As a society, I believe we have a responsibility, so we are going to have that Commission with guns and mental illness expertise.

How about school safety expertise? We had the horrific situation in Newtown. That gentleman got in that school, not because he had a key or because the door was unlocked, he got in that school because he was able to shoot the glass out of the front door and stick his arm in, hit the safety bar and let himself in.

I have been a Governor for 6 years in the State of West Virginia. We built a lot of schools, and we remodeled a lot of schools. Not once did an architect come to me and say: Governor, if we are going to build these schools, we need all these safety devices so a person cannot get into the school.

They told me about the lockdown for each room so a person would need to have a safety code to get into a room. Not one time was I told we should have bulletproof glass on every first floor window. Not one time was that ever brought up to me. We need people who have school safety expertise.

There is video violence. Talk to the children and youth of today. If you have not gotten on the Internet lately and flipped to video violence, you should do it. It will amaze you. What you see will absolutely scare you. They are exposed to horrific things, which I can never imagine from my childhood. Don't you think we should have the people who are the first defenders of the first amendment come and talk to us about how we can change the culture of violence in our society? That is what we are talking about.

I have heard a lot of my colleagues on different talk shows saying they didn't like this or we should be doing that. My good friend Senator PAT TOOMEY and I are going to go through this bill and explain what it does and what it doesn't do and how we can move the ball forward by keeping society safe, treating law-abiding gun owners with the respect they should have and make sure criminals or the mentally insane who have been found to be so by court cannot buy a gun.

So if someone is a law-abiding gun owner, they are going to like this bill. If someone is a believer in the second amendment right of Americans to bear arms, they are going to like this bill. If someone is a defender of the rights of our military veterans, they are definitely going to like this bill. If someone is looking for ways to keep our citizens safe from mass violence, especially our precious children, they are going to like this bill. For those criminals or persons who have been declared mentally insane by the courts, they are not going to like this bill, and that is exactly what we have tried to do.

I want to go through much of this, but I want to give my friend Senator PAT TOOMEY an opportunity. I appreciate his input so much. We are sister States, West Virginia and Pennsylvania—especially western Pennsylvania. My family and I grew up in Farmington and Fairmont and northern West Virginia, which is an hour and a half below Pennsylvania. We have the same slangs and sayings. We say "you'ns" instead of you all or you. Pat and I understand each other.

I would like Senator TOOMEY to explain the part that is so near and dear to him as well as to me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

TRAGEDY AT THE BOSTON MARATHON

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I wish to begin by actually taking a moment to inform the Members of this body and people who may be listening, if you were not aware, it appears that a tragedy has struck at the Boston Marathon and bombs have gone off and there are injuries that we know of, casualties, the severity of which we do not yet know. We hope and pray there are no fatalities. Apparently, according to the news reports I have seen, it is too soon to know that with certainty.

I know my good friend from West Virginia joins me in having our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims and their families of the very disturbing news we have just learned this afternoon.

GUN SAFETY

Mr. TOOMEY. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate the Senator from West Virginia. The work we have done together has been challenging and constructive. I think we have come to a