

fentanyl and carfentanil from being shipped through our borders and addresses any gaps in our mail security.

Earlier this year, I announced that the DEA had established a tactical diversion squad in Clarksburg, WV. It probably doesn't sound like much but it will be a big help to enhancing our law enforcement efforts to stay one step ahead of this influx of drugs.

Programs like the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program, known as HIDTA, are critical in helping to coordinate initiatives that reduce drug use and abuse in communities. We must embrace and intensify prevention strategies in our schools, community centers, and our afterschool programs.

Our youth cannot think that this epidemic is acceptable or that it is the new normal. We must ensure that when someone decides they want treatment for their drug use, they have access to this treatment. There are no lists of people to admit into incarceration. There is no waiting list here. Yet there is a waiting list for our drug treatment and prevention centers.

September is National Alcohol Addiction and Recovery Month, and today Senator MURPHY of Connecticut and I are offering a resolution which honors the significant achievements of those citizens who are now in recovery. The resolution also recognizes the nationwide need for increased access to treatment.

This is an area where there is so much more work to do. We must have the detox beds available and the workforce trained and ready to assist those seeking treatment. We also want to make sure we have a range of treatment options available. This is definitely not a one-size-fits-all problem. Each addict found their way to addiction in a different way, and each must figure their own path out, whether through inpatient rehab, peer-to-peer rehab, medication-assisted therapy, a 12-step program, or, most likely, a combination of these and other options.

It is also essential that we remember that recovery does not end when an addict finishes treatment. Services need to be available to assist with their transition back into society.

We must look at the collateral effects substance abuse has on our communities, whether it is through increased violent crime, child neglect and abuse, or disease, especially hepatitis and HIV, given the rise in heroin use.

Are there immediate solutions for all of these problems? No, we have found there aren't. But, like the city of Huntington, we must continue to come to terms with the extent of the problem in order to know what solutions do make sense, and, like Huntington, progress is going to be incremental and it will take time. We can begin to tackle some of the problems through commonsense changes and policies.

One example is Jesse's Law, a bill named after a West Virginian. She was

a daughter, a sister, and an addict in recovery. Following surgery from a running injury, despite her best efforts and those of her family, Jesse was discharged from the hospital—she had told the hospital she had addiction issues—she was discharged from the hospital with a prescription for 50 oxycodone pills and fatally overdosed later that evening. By amending the privacy regulations for persons with substance abuse disorders, we can ensure that those individuals receive the safe, effective, and coordinated care they need to prevent other tragedies like Jesse's and her family's from occurring.

I recognize that these problems are also going to take additional funding. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, along with the Presiding Officer, I will work to ensure that these resources are going to programs that best meet a State's needs, whether it is HIDTA, the DOD's counterdrug program, or substance abuse grants. In the fiscal year 2017 Labor-HHS appropriations bill, there is a \$126 million increase for programs fighting opioid abuse. In bills passed by the committee, funding to address heroin opioid abuse is more than double last year's levels. However, I also know this problem cannot be solved by simply throwing money at it.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to develop additional policies to tackle these problems. We must consider all options. The outcomes are sad. I mean, I personally know families who have been affected by this. I think everybody does. If you are in a townhall meeting and you ask for a show of hands from those who have a story or know somebody from their church or their children's friends, almost every hand in the meeting will go up.

We need to work with State and local officials to learn what is working and what is not.

I will also keep fighting for an additional issue, a side issue that is just as important, which is veterans who rely on the VA programs to help with their opioid addiction, or that newborn who is born dependent on opioids, or the addict who is willing to seek treatment, and any other person because practically every person in this country is touched by this disease.

I will keep fighting for cities like Huntington that even in their darkest hours continue to move forward and fight every day toward a brighter drug-free future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. 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. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I will start today with some numbers. Unfortunately, some of these numbers are all too familiar to Americans concerned about the horror of gun violence. There are 3 numbers: 49, 280, and 99.

Forty-nine, unfortunately, we know maybe more than the other two numbers. That is the number of people killed in Orlando just a couple of months ago in the worst act of gun violence we know of. So many Americans watched that horror and would have guessed that the Senate would have acted with a sense of purpose and urgency and even outrage to begin to take steps to reduce gun violence. Unfortunately, that didn't happen a couple of months ago. There were 49 killed in Orlando. We can recite the other communities in the country over the last not just number of years but even the last several years, and 49 is the Orlando number.

I am not sure we hear enough about the other two numbers, which are the weekly death toll or the weekly toll of violence in cities and communities across the country. Two hundred and eighty is the number just in the last week who were shot across the country and 99 is the number killed. That is just 1 week.

For purposes of my remarks, to set aside numbers for a moment and consider the human trauma, the human tragedy, the toll of that, it is almost incomprehensible, all of the families who have been destroyed by gun violence. For many of us, it is a news event that we watch on television and read about. We are horrified. We pray for the victims. We wish for action to be taken to at least begin—just begin to reduce gun violence, but then we move on. Most of us move on if we are not directly affected, but those families don't move on. Their lives are either destroyed forever or adversely impacted in some way forever, mothers and fathers and brothers and sisters and husbands and wives and friends. It is impossible to in any way describe the adverse impact this problem is having.

There are some who would say there is not much we can do about it other than enforce the law, and that is their point of view. I don't happen to agree with that. I think we need to take the same approach to this issue as we have taken to any issue the American people have faced over many generations. Most of the time we come together with concerted action and begin to tackle a problem. It might take a year, it might take 5 years, it might take 25 years, but, as Americans, in most cases we come together and begin to address the problem. Only in Washington does that not happen anywhere near often enough.

There are a couple of commonsense steps we can take right now—meaning

next week or the week after or in the very near term—commonsense steps that have wide support across the country in both parties. One would be to finally say: Why not vote in accordance with not just a national consensus but actually a consensus here in the Senate on background checks? Why would we allow these gaping holes in our system to remain wide open so that almost anyone can get a gun? No matter how dangerous, no matter how much a threat they are to society, they can get a gun because of these gaping holes in our background check system. No one disputes that there are these holes. No one disputes that they lead to unnecessary death and violence. But we haven't been able to get enough Members in the Senate to come together to support background checks. We should try to do that again. I don't know why we don't have more votes. Let's keep voting until we get enough momentum.

Second, this idea of terrorists whom we made a judgment about—that we either know they are terrorists or we suspect they are terrorists based upon all kinds of evidence—and we say: That category of people will not be able to get on an airplane. Guess what. When we did that after 9/11, that was our policy or part of our larger policy against terrorism. We came together and said that those people can't get on airplanes. Guess what. We haven't had planes fly into buildings in the country since 9/11 because we came together, we made a decision, we acted on it, and we stopped at least that part of the practices terrorists engage in. But when it comes to this issue of reducing—even beginning to reduce gun violence, we haven't had the same consensus.

So we have a circumstance now where suspected terrorists are deemed too dangerous to fly in a plane but not to own a weapon of war. So, virtually, under the policy that is in place now, because the Senate hasn't acted, because we haven't had an act of Congress, there are folks who are either suspected terrorists or terrorists who can't get on an airplane but can buy any gun they want or obtain any gun they want and there is no legal prohibition. That makes no sense to anyone who is serious about this issue of preventing violence and reducing gun violence.

How about individuals who are convicted of violent hate crimes that involve the use of force being allowed to get a gun? Why would we wait until that individual commits a felony with a use of force that in many cases involves the use of force with a firearm? Why would we wait for that violent person to go down that pathway, someone who is convicted of a hate crime that involves domestic abuse or some other act of violence or the use of force?

So I think a number of these strategies are commonsense steps we can take that would have zero impact on the right to bear arms. We are not

talking about law-abiding citizens; we are talking about people who pose a demonstrated threat to people in our community and beyond. But so far that hasn't happened. I hope we will schedule some votes. How can that be harmful, to keep voting on such an important issue until we move forward? So that is something we can work on before we leave here.

There is no rule that says we have to leave at the end of next week. We could work the week after that and the week after that and begin to make progress on a whole range of issues, including gun violence. Of course, I hope that will include finally getting to a conclusion on Zika funding to address this threat to pregnant women and their children. We should finally get that done, and maybe we can get that done with the spending bill next week. That would be great progress. But unless we act, we leave on the table this horror of gun violence where there has been virtually no progress for years—not just months but for years.

PENSIONS FOR MINE WORKERS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish to speak about an issue that is—to say it is unfinished business is an understatement. The fact that we are standing here in the fall of 2016 and the Congress of the United States hasn't fulfilled its promise to coal miners is really an insult not only to coal miners who spent a lot of years in the mines in a lot of States, mine and other States, but it is also an insult to the country because their government—our government—made a promise to them more than a generation ago.

Some people may remember the book “The Red Badge of Courage.” That was written by Stephen Crane, a great novelist who didn't even make it to the age of 30. He died in his late twenties.

Stephen Crane is known for being a great novelist and known for writing “The Red Badge of Courage,” but one of the most compelling accounts he ever wrote or anyone has ever written about the dangers and horrors of a particular line of work was Stephen Crane's essay, just before the turn of the last century, about a coal mine in my hometown of Scranton. The name of the article published in Collier's magazine was “In the Depths of the Coal Mine.” I will not of course read all of it and recite major portions of it, but suffice it to say that Stephen Crane, a great novelist, went into a coal mine and reported what he saw there, not as a work of fiction but as a work of the harsh realities in nonfiction of what the miners were facing.

In one part of the essay, he described the mine he was in when he descended all the way down. Of course, you only have to go down a very short distance before it is pitch black. You can't even see your hand in front of your face. He described the mine as a place of “an inscrutable darkness, a soundless place of tangible loneliness. . . .”

Then he went on from there describing what he saw, describing young children working in the mines, children the ages of 10, 11, 12, and into their teens, working in the mines; describing the process of how the coal got out of the mines, mules pulling these carts full of coal. He described what my fraternal grandfather saw when he was there as a young boy at the age of 11, who entered a mine not too far away from this particular mine, just as Stephen Crane was writing.

Stephen Crane concluded the essay by talking not only about all of the horrors of the mine but how miners could die in that mine. He described it at one point in summation as the 100 perils or the 100 dangers that those coal miners faced.

Why do I raise that today? I realize coal mining in the present day or even 10 or 15 or 20 years ago, maybe even 30 years ago, was not nearly as dangerous as it was in the 1890s or the early part of the 1900s, but it is still very dangerous work today and has been for all these years. We have seen too many places where miners have been trapped and rescued or trapped and never rescued, killed, in places like Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Kentucky, and other places over more than a generation—in fact, many generations. Those miners worked there for, in many cases, more than 10 years or 20 years. Some of them also served our country in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, or beyond.

They were promised by their government that they would have a pension. A number of us, in a bipartisan fashion, came together to support the Miners Protection Act, which would make sure that at a minimum the now 12,951 miners in Pennsylvania would get that pension they were promised and a smaller number—but a big number, in the thousands, in Pennsylvania—would also get the health care they have a right to expect. This was a promise by the Federal Government. It wasn't a “we will try to” or “we hope to do it” or “we will make every effort to do it,” it was a hard-and-fast, irrefutable promise, and it is time the Federal Government has delivered on that promise to those miners and their families.

They went into the darkness and the danger of a coal mine in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and beyond. Some of them were younger than that. Some of them still do it and still engage in that work. They should have a right to expect that just as they kept their promise to their families that they would go to work every day and work hard and bring home a paycheck, just as they made a promise to their employer that they would go into that mine every day and do impossibly difficult work year after year and sometimes decade after decade—and they fulfilled that promise to their employer and to their families. Some of them made a promise to their country that not only would they work hard, but they would serve their country in war and combat.