

Despite my recent letters with questions about fraud and security concerns, not to mention political influence, Mr. Mayorkas is either completely unwilling or unable to respond to the allegations.

I sat down with Chairman CARPER on August 1, and he agreed that I deserved answers to my questions from the nominee. Now he has pressed forward without getting answers. I am truly surprised that this majority is not interested in getting to the bottom of these allegations—in other words, something that is under investigation—the same way that Senator BIDEN and Senator Obama demanded that we do during a previous Presidency.

If this body is unwilling to await the end of an investigation or if we aren't willing to conduct our own inquiry, one day this whole nomination will come back to bite us. As I said when B. Todd Jones was confirmed, eventually a situation will embarrass the Senate and damage the reputation of the Federal Government.

If this majority is determined to ignore ongoing investigations and at the same time ram through nominees, the American people should hold the Senate accountable for not doing its constitutional job—in fact, refusing to do its constitutional job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I come to the floor for a few minutes, as I have most weeks, to mark a new number. That number is 11,584—the number of gun deaths America has experienced over the last year, since December 14 of last year. That date is burned in the memories of those of us in Connecticut and across the Nation because that was the date 26 people—20 little 6- and 7-year-olds and 6 teachers and educators who were there to protect them—died in Sandy Hook. We recognized the 1-year mark of that shooting this weekend. Almost 12,000 people have died at the hands of guns since then.

I have tried to come to the floor of the Senate in the months since to remind folks that these victims have stories and to give voice to these victims. I will share a few more today.

We were all gripped just a few days ago by news of another school shooting. Not too far from Columbine, Arapahoe saw another very troubled young man walk in with a shotgun and essentially open fire, apparently because of a grievance he had with his debate coach. Caught in the crossfire was a 17-year-old girl, Claire Davis.

Claire was described as outgoing, athletic, and an excellent student. According to reports, she loved horses and recently placed second in an equestrian

competition. Another student said Claire is “one of the nicest people I’ve met at Arapahoe” High School. Claire, 17 years old, survived, but she is still in a coma today just because she was in the wrong place at her high school—a place where everyone expects to be able to go to school in safety. She isn’t on this number yet because she survived, but her life is changed forever because of yet another school shooting.

School shootings now seem to pop up on the news on a weekly basis. But it is not just these school shootings where mass violence takes place. Now you can pick up most local papers every month and see evidence of a new mass shooting.

In Manchester, CT, on December 7 of this year, 41-year-old John Lynn shot Brittany Mills, 28, Kamesha Mills, 23, and Artara Benson, 46, before killing himself in a quadruple murder. He had a history of domestic violence. Police haven’t completely sorted out exactly what happened, but all four of them are dead, marking the eighth homicide stemming from intimate partner violence in Connecticut since January 1, 2013.

Just days before, in Alma, AR, Tim Adams, believed to be in his early fifties, before killing himself killed his 4-month-old grandson, 4-year-old granddaughter, and Michael Williams, the 31-year-old boyfriend of his daughter, in the midst of what seemed to be a pretty simple argument about his daughter’s court date that exploded into an episode of mass violence that took the lives of a 4-month-old, a 4-year-old, a 31-year-old, and then, as many of these episodes do, the life of the shooter himself.

These episodes of mass shootings are not just happening in schools, movie theaters, or places of worship; they are happening in backyards in Alma, AR, and they are happening in apartment complexes in Manchester, CT. And this body, in the 360-some-odd days since December 14, has done absolutely nothing about it. The survivors of these incidents of violence are the stories we don’t talk about.

I have come down here to tell the story today of Claire Davis, Brittany Mills, Kamesha Mills, Artara Benson, Tim Adams, Chayson Williams, Kierra Adams, and Michael Williams. They all died by gunshots. They left behind children, parents, and neighbors who are scarred for life.

Psychologists will tell you that when a shooting occurs, there are at least 10 people who experience life-altering trauma. What we know is that episodes of trauma don’t just affect you up here; they affect your entire body. We have new developing evidence which shows that children who experience multiple episodes of trauma in their lives—and they don’t have to be as grave or serious as a shooting—are physiologically affected for the rest of their lives. Peo-

ple who witness trauma and experience trauma die earlier than people who don’t, never mind have episodes related to post-traumatic stress that stay with them for the rest of their lives. So the spillover, the ripple effects of these 11,000 deaths, frankly, represents a number that can’t even fit on a chart like this.

There is no simple solution. Sometimes it seems as if the only thing we come down here and talk about is stricter gun laws. And I don’t believe there is any reason why we don’t require background checks for guns before they are purchased or we don’t just simply say that these dangerous assault weapons should stay out of the hands of people who aren’t in law enforcement or the military. But that is not the beginning and end of the conversation.

This young man, Karl Pierson, who walked into Arapahoe High School started shooting the place up because he was upset about his place on the debate team. He apparently had a history of disciplinary incidents at that school, but he clearly had some serious issues of mental illness not identified and treated. Of course, the same thing can be said of Jared Lee Loughner and Adam Lanza and this long list of mass shooters across this country. We absolutely have to put more resources into our mental health system.

I appreciate my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who have said: We are not willing to go with you when it comes to background checks or assault weapons, but we will work with you on mental health funding.

In order to do that, we actually have to put the money behind the system. We have closed down 4,000 in-patient mental health beds in this country over the last 5 years. Why? Because the Federal Government is pulling funding from the very programs that actually support increased mental health resources which can identify these individuals before they perpetrate incidents of mass violence. So there is an illusion of bipartisan support around the issue of mental health even while we have these outstanding disagreements on gun laws. Yet there really isn’t agreement because when you are fighting over the budget, when Republicans are calling for massive cuts to programs such as Medicaid or the mental health block grant, then they are undermining the very programs that actually identify and help people such as Karl Pierson or Adam Lanza.

Enough is enough. I will be down here after the holiday, and that number will be over 12,000—12,000 individuals, many of them little girls and boys like those represented on this chart: Daniel Barden and Jesse Lewis and Dylan Hockley.

Back in Newtown, out of respect for the families who are tired from 365 days of grieving, there was no big public remembrance on Saturday. There

was a small private ceremony which I had the honor of attending at St. Rose Church, where so many of the children were parishioners.

As tired as that community is, they also were bewildered, in Newtown, because they went up to the State capitol in Connecticut and got laws passed that will prevent these kinds of episodes of mass violence in the future, but they came down to Washington and, while they got a lot of meetings, they got absolutely no progress—zilch, zip, nada.

As we head into 2014, I hope the memory of these little boys and girls will not fade as we get beyond the 1-year mark of Sandy Hook. My hope is people will start paying attention to this number, creeping up to 12,500 deaths, and will recognize that while this number simply represents the number of people who have died, there are all sorts of people out there such as Claire Davis, who survived, but survived gun incidents that will cripple them for the rest of their lives, and there are, frankly, hundreds of thousands of more people who surround these incidents of violence who have their lives changed forever because of the trauma they experienced.

All of these victims, whether they were killed in the incident or were part of the collateral damage, have voices, voices that should command this place sometime soon to action.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask consent to speak as in morning business for up to 20 minutes.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

THANKING TODD BIANCO

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, this is my 53rd time for consecutive weeks we are in session that I have come to the floor to speak about climate change and to urge my colleagues that it is time to wake up. These speeches are not easy. A great deal of effort goes into assisting me with research and crafting of them. I am particularly grateful for the hard work of Dr. Todd Bianco in helping me to prepare them. He is the fellow sitting on the other side of the sign, looking embarrassed that I have just called him out.

Todd joined my office in September of 2012 as a Geological Society of America-U.S. Geological Survey congressional science fellow. He has contributed considerable scientific understanding and analytical rigor to our work. His ability to interpret the latest climate research has helped me to convey complex scientific concepts both accurately and in a way that is accessible and meaningful to policy-

makers and the public. You may be used to seeing him with me here on the floor for each week's speech, but he has also been effective in researching legislation and preparing for hearings in the Environment and Public Works Committee.

I say this because this week marks the end of Todd's fellowship and he will soon return home to Rhode Island with his wife Allison. Allison Bianco, by the way, is a very talented artist whose work reflects our deep human connection to the natural world. In addition to lending us Todd, Allison has also lent us some of her artwork which is hung on display in my front office. So in addition to thanking Todd for his efforts, I also want to thank Allison. Todd, like me, is an over-married human being.

I wish them both the best of luck back home, and I thank Todd for his work in the U.S. Senate to advance responsible public policy, grounded firmly in the best science.

It is time at last for Congress at least to heed that best science and act responsibly. It is time to wake up. Denying and delaying is irresponsible. In the judgment of history, it will ultimately, I believe, be shameful. Carbon pollution from the burning of fossil fuels is altering the climate. The consensus around this fact within the scientific community is overwhelming, and public awareness of this crisis is growing stronger.

Interestingly, it is growing stronger across party lines. Republicans might want to listen to this. A survey conducted for the League of Conservation Voters found that more than half of young Republican voters, 53 percent of Republicans under the age of 35—53 percent would describe a politician who denies climate change is happening as “ignorant,” “out-of-touch,” or “crazy.” Madam President, 53 percent of Republicans under 35 view that kind of climate denying as “ignorant,” “out-of-touch,” or “crazy.”

Even though a majority of young Republicans understands that denying climate change is out of touch with reality, Republicans in Congress refuse to get serious. Why? Another national survey, this one by the Pew Research Center, found that 61 percent of non-tea-party Republicans actually agree there is solid evidence the Earth is warming, with a plurality saying it is mostly because of humans. But the tea partiers are different. Seventy percent of tea partiers, contrarily, say there is “no solid evidence” the Earth is warming and 41 percent of tea partiers assert that warming is “just not happening.” Not that we don't have enough information yet, but it is “just not happening.”

Regardless of what you think is the cause, there are legion independent measurements that the Earth is warming. This is not a theory. We measure

that the temperature of the atmosphere and oceans is rising. We measure that snow, ice caps, and glaciers are melting. We measure that seas are rising. We measure that the very seasons are shifting.

It is one thing to be the party that is against science. The tea partiers would make it the party against measurement. Just as the tea partiers led the Republicans off the government shutdown cliff, just as the tea partiers tried to defeat the budget deal most Republicans supported, so the tea party wants to lead the Republican Party off the climate cliff.

Outside these walls it is different. Responsible Republican voices more and more acknowledge the threat of climate change and call for responsible solutions. Many want to correct the market failure that aids and abets the polluters' irresponsible practices.

My colleagues, Representative HENRY WAXMAN, Representative EARL BLUMENAUER, Senator BRIAN SCHATZ, and I have put forward just such a market-based proposal, a revenue-neutral fee on carbon emissions, the revenues of which would be returned back to the American people. Here, within Congress, where the polluters' money flows so abundantly, no Republican colleague has come forward to join us. But outside of Congress here are some of the responsible voices in the Republican Party: Former South Carolina Representative Bob Inglis has long urged his party to get serious on climate change. In an article in the Duke Environmental Law & Policy Forum this year, Mr. Inglis invoked the tenets of conservative economics. He wrote:

If you're a conservative, it is time to step forward and engage in the climate and energy debate because we have the answer—free enterprise. . . . Conservatives understand that we must set the correct incentives and this should include internalizing pollution and other environmental costs in our market system. We tax income but we don't tax emissions. It makes sense to conservatives to take the tax off something you want more of, income, and shift the tax to something you want less of, emissions.

That was Bob Inglis and that is exactly how you use his words “internalize pollution and other environmental costs in our market system.” You do it with a carbon fee.

Sherwood Boehlert and Wayne Gilchrest, former Republican Representatives from New York and Virginia, in a joint February 2012 op ed with Representative WAXMAN and Senator MARKEY, made the fiscal case for a carbon fee. Here is what they said:

The debate over how to reduce our nation's debt has been presented as a dilemma between cutting spending on programs Americans cherish or raising taxes on American job creators. But there is a better way: We could slash our debt by making power plants and oil refineries pay for the carbon emissions that endanger our health and environment. This policy would strengthen our economy, lessen our dependence on foreign