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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God, we bow in reverence before Your glorious presence, praying that Heaven's unity may fill our lives.

Lord, empower our lawmakers to make bipartisan progress, enabling our Nation to meet the challenges of our times. Bring to fulfillment the ancient prophet's dream: "How good and pleasant it is for people to dwell together in unity." Make our Senators vividly aware that beyond the appraisals of constituents, there falls upon their decisions and actions the searching light of Your judgment. Save them from weak and expedient choices as You use them to heal and bind, to build and bless.

And, Lord, we thank You for the contributions of the first phase of the summer 2023 page class.

We pray in Your sovereign Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 22, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE BUREAU OF ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, FIREARMS, AND EXPLOSIVES RELATING TO "FACTORIZING CRITERIA FOR FIREARMS WITH ATTACHED 'STABILIZING BRACES' "

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.J. Res. 44, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 44) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives relating to

"Factoring Criteria for Firearms with Attached 'Stabilizing Braces' ".

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Democratic leader is recognized.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SCHUMER. Very soon, Mr. President, AI will reshape life on Earth in very dramatic ways. It will transform how we fight disease, tackle hunger, manage our lives, enrich our minds, and ensure peace. But we cannot ignore AI's dangers: workforce disruptions in a very serious way, misinformation and new weapons, threats against our elections, and there is the danger that we may prove incapable of managing this technology at all. Congress cannot behave like ostriches in the sand when it comes to AI.

Yesterday, I laid out my SAFE Innovation framework for AI. I call it that because innovation must be our North Star. AI could be our most spectacular innovation yet, could lead to generations of prosperity, so Congress must promote its growth here in the United States. But if people don't think innovation can be done safely, without danger, that will stifle AI's development and even prevent us from moving forward.

So my SAFE Innovation framework balances both prioritizing security, accountability, protecting our foundations, and explainability as safeguards, guardrails we need to make AI work safely for us.

Yesterday, I also announced that later this year, I will invite the top AI experts to come to Congress and convene a series of first-ever AI Insight Forums for a new and unique approach to developing AI legislation. These Insight Forums are the first of their kind. They have to be the first of their kind because AI moves so quickly, will change our world so decisively. It is so much deeper in its complexity than almost anything else we have dealt with and lacks the legislative history in

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Congress that other issues like the military or education or healthcare have.

Our jobs as legislators will be to listen to the experts and learn as much as we can so we can translate these ideas into legislative action. We must work quickly but not precipitously, because this issue is so complex. We will have no artificial deadlines. We will come up with proposals in a matter not of days or weeks and not of years, but months.

These forums can't and won't replace the activity already happening in Congress on AI. Our committees must continue serving as the key drivers for legislation we produce in Congress, but the AI forums will give us lots more information and knowledge from which we can draw legislation.

I thank all Senators from both sides who are already working on this issue. We are keeping it bipartisan, as it must be.

We must exercise humility as we proceed. "Humility" is a key word here because this is so overwhelming. Success is not guaranteed. AI is unlike anything we have dealt with before, and it may be exceedingly difficult for legislation to tackle every single issue. But if we can find some solutions and create some consensus, we must press ahead. As Theodore Roosevelt said, "We are in the arena." And there is no substitute for government being involved because without government, there will be no guardrails. Some companies may put them in, but they even won't put them in if other companies don't and gain an advantage. So government must be involved here. It is the only force powerful enough to impose guidelines on what could otherwise be an unfettered AI.

WELCOMING PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

Now, Mr. President, on the Modi visit, later this afternoon, I will join congressional leaders in welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India to the U.S. Capitol, where he will speak before a joint meeting of Congress.

I will tell Prime Minister Modi the same thing I told him earlier this spring when I led the largest Senate codel ever to India: Our two nations will need each other if we are to beat back the forces of autocracy.

When I visited India, I got to see the vibrancy and future potential of that society. It is astounding. And India will grow in power and strength over the next century.

If we want to hold firm against the Chinese Government and the Chinese Communist Party, then the world's two largest democracies must work in unison to ensure peace. It means expanding trade and expanding opportunities for workers to come to the United States. It means safeguarding our common defense, which I know will be one of the big announcements during the visit.

But I also told Prime Minister Modi during our meeting that we cannot lose sight of the values that define us as democracies in the first place, like free-

dom of expression, minority rights, and civil liberties. I told this to him in person because without that, no democracy—no democracy—can long thrive.

So I look forward to meeting for the second time this year with the Prime Minister later this afternoon to stress the importance of democratic values and the urgency of our Nation working together.

TAX CONVENTION WITH CHILE

Mr. President, on the Chile tax treaty, for decades, Chile has been one of America's strongest partners in Latin America—economically, diplomatically, militarily, and scientifically.

Today, the Senate will take a monumental step to strengthen United States-Chile relations by passing the Chile tax treaty. This treaty has been in the works for over a decade. It has strong bipartisan support, and now is the time to finally get it across the finish line.

The United States-Chile treaty is consistent with other tax treaties we have with more than 60 countries, which boosts American competitiveness on the global stage.

Chile is the home to the world's largest lithium reserves—the precious metal used in emerging technologies like iPhones, EV batteries, and renewable energy storage.

So as the world races to advance clean energy technologies, Chile will be a critical ally for anyone looking to lead the way. But without a tax treaty with Chile, American companies could face double taxation and other barriers to investment and trade, leaving them at a significant disadvantage against foreign competitors.

If the United States is serious about remaining ahead of countries like China, it is imperative we pass this treaty today and put American business back on a level playing field with the rest of the world when it comes to Chile. So this is a very important treaty for our future and for our leadership in technology and in clean energy. I hope it will get as close to unanimous support as anything can get in this body.

I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, especially Senators MENENDEZ and RISCH for their work on this issue, and I look forward to the Senate finally getting this treaty passed later this afternoon.

H.J. RES. 44

Finally, Mr. President, on the pistol brace CRA, later this morning, Senate Republicans will force a vote on a bill seemingly designed to make America's gun violence epidemic even worse. Here, at a time with all this gun violence, Republicans are putting a bill on the floor that makes it easier—easier—to conceal an assault-style pistol, something that has been used in mass shooting after mass shooting. Shame on them.

At issue is a commonsense rule released by the ATF regulating the use of pistol braces, widely available accessories that modify AK-style pistols so

that they function identically to short-barreled rifles. If you have ever seen a gunman fire what looks like a machine gun with just one hand, that is what pistol braces allow you to do. And because they don't have a long barrel, it makes it much easier to conceal them; so people for bad purpose, particularly those who are involved and want to do mass shootings, love these weapons. And we are making it easier for them to get them.

Some of the moves that our colleagues on the other side of the aisle make are just appalling.

America's legacy of gun violence has been made significantly worse because of pistol braces. Even a surface look at recent mass shootings reveal that gunmen were often aided by a pistol brace.

In the shooting in Dayton in 2019—9 killed, 17 injured—outside a bar, the gunman used a pistol brace.

Consider the shooting in Boulder in 2021—10 killed, including a police officer. Again, the gunman used a pistol brace.

And we cannot forget that tragedy in Nashville—three teachers murdered, three 9-year-olds slaughtered. The photo from that day haunts me and should haunt us. I think of it all the time: students ushered by police in a single file through the parking lot, parents frantically looking for their children, a little girl—that is the picture I think of—a little girl looking out the window of the schoolbus in tears, scared for her life.

Today's Republican push to ease access to deadly pistol braces is an insult to countless families who have lost loved ones because of these enhanced weapons. This proposal is a shameful—shameful—step backward in America's fight against gun violence, and it is just utterly confounding and perplexing that our Republican colleagues are pushing this kind of legislation.

Americans are tired of hard-right politicians who intentionally turn a blind eye to all the suffering in our communities while they actively work to take us backward in the fight against gun violence. I will strongly oppose this CRA and urge my colleagues to likewise vote no.

NOMINATION OF GENERAL CHARLES Q. BROWN, JR.

Mr. President, finally, later this morning, I will be meeting with Gen. CQ Brown, President Biden's nominee for the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

General Brown is exceptionally qualified to serve as the Nation's highest ranking military officer and will be an important adviser to the President on military decisions and operations.

General Brown's nomination would normally pass with consent, without cloture needed. I want to hear this morning from General Brown about the damaging impact that Senator TUBERVILLE's holds on senior military promotions is having on our national security and military readiness.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

H.J. RES. 44

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I want to follow the remarks of the majority leader. Last Saturday night, there was a Juneteenth celebration in Willowbrook, IL. There was music and people gathered in a parking lot of a strip mall, and they were having a generally good time. And then gunfire erupted. At the end of just a few minutes, 1 person was dead and 22 had been wounded—Saturday night.

That wasn't the only gun violence in the region over the holiday weekend. We estimate that at least 14 were killed and another 61 injured from gunfire. It is a common occurrence, sadly, across America. We have felt it in Illinois. Some estimate that we have had over 50 mass shootings so far this month, and we are only at June 22.

What is going on in America? It is a serious question.

But what has happened every weekend in communities across this country is a reminder that Americans cannot gather to celebrate a holiday, a graduation, or even a funeral without the ever-present threat of gun violence.

It goes without saying, but I am going to repeat it: Gunfire is the No. 1 killer of America's children. Gunfire is the No. 1 killer of America's children.

Many of my constituents beg me to do something as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. They say: Can't you at least regulate the use of some of these guns so that they don't get in the hands of people who will misuse them?

I tell them that I want to do that and I share their sentiments but I don't have the votes to do it. You need 60 votes on the floor of this 100-Member Senate to get anything of that nature passed, and it is hard to do.

One in five Americans say they have lost a loved one to gun violence—one in five. That is unthinkable in other countries around the world. Yet it has become the American way, sadly.

Yet, today, we are facing an incredible effort by the Senate Republicans a little later this morning. They are trying to take a gun safety provision off the books. They want to weaken a law that has been on the books for 90 years—90 years.

They want to overturn a regulation by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives that prevents people from turning pistols into short-barreled rifles. This regulation is on devices known as stabilizing braces. They convert pistols into a weapon that can be fired from the shoulder, but they still only have a barrel under 16 inches long so they can be easily hidden under a jacket.

For almost 90 years, short-barreled rifles have been controlled under the National Firearms Act, along with machineguns and sawed-off shotguns. Why? Because they combine the accuracy of a rifle with the concealability of a handgun. It is a deadly combination.

Pistols with stabilizing braces have a reputation in this modern America. The mass shooter who killed 9 people and injured 17 in Dayton, OH, in 2019 used one of these weapons. One was used by a mass shooter in Boulder, CO, in 2021, who killed 10 people, including a policeman, and by another mass shooter who killed 5 and injured 19 in 2022 in Colorado Springs.

The Covenant School shooting in Nashville, TN, this past March—that horrible scene that we remember, teachers and children being killed at their school—that shooter had one of these weapons as well.

So a Republican Senator is going to come to the floor today and say that we should weaken a safety measure that has been on the books for almost 90 years, to make it easier for people to wield short-barreled rifles that have been used in mass killings in America.

What are we thinking?

The Fourth of July is just around the corner. I remember the last Fourth of July. My wife and I were vacationing in Michigan when we heard the news that there had been a mass shooting in Highland Park, IL, at the Fourth of July parade. A gunman got on top of one of the downtown buildings where the crowd had gathered for this parade, and he used an assault weapon and fired 83 rounds in 60 seconds, firing randomly into a crowd, killing 7 innocent people who just came out for the Fourth of July parade and wounding almost 55 others.

Think of that for a moment: in 60 seconds, that kind of damage with those kinds of weapons.

And here we have, leaving for the Fourth of July break this year, an effort by the Senate Republicans to authorize the use of a piece of equipment that has been used over and over again in America in mass shootings, killing innocent people, including schoolchildren in Nashville, TN.

What are they thinking? At a time when gun violence is the No. 1 killer of children, at a time when we read about it day in, day out, they want to make it easier to have a weapon that serves as a short-barreled rifle, that makes so many people vulnerable and kills them in such a rapid fashion. This makes no sense whatsoever, but it defines the Republican Party's attitude toward gun control.

We have had one exception to what I just said, and that was last year. After the Uvalde incident, we finally did something. I think it was positive, and it was bipartisan. I salute the Republicans who joined in on that, but I hope today they come to their senses and don't weaken this 90-year-old law and make it easier for people to use these weapons in a violent way, in a deadly way.

The ATF rule gives law-abiding gun owners plenty of options to comply with the law: removing the stabilizing brace which is at issue here, attaching a longer barrel to the gun, or registering the weapon like other short-

barreled rifles because that is what it is. So there are plenty of ways that you can comply with the rule, but our colleagues want to throw it out and make it easier to buy these weapons, equipment, that can be used to make a more deadly weapon.

The rule is common sense, and the last thing we should do is wipe it off the books. I urge my colleagues to vote no on the resolution.

PRIDE MONTH

Mr. President, on a separate issue, this weekend, cities around the globe, including Chicago, will be hosting their annual Pride parades. It will be a chance to join together in celebrating the LGBTQ community and to honor the history of the Pride movement.

Sadly, today, even during Pride Month, extremist politicians throughout America are trying to rewrite that proud history. Since the start of the 2022 school year, Republican lawmakers in more than 30 States have introduced bills banning or limiting access to books in our Nation's libraries and classrooms, and many of these books focus, at least in part, on LGBTQ identity and history.

This is not a coincidence because these book bans are not only an affront to the First Amendment; they are a shameful and deliberate effort to erase the LGBTQ community from the American story. Well, try as these politicians might, the truth is that you can't erase the history or the progress when it comes to human rights. You cannot erase the courage and sacrifice of Pride pioneers like Marsha P. Johnson and Harvey Milk, and we cannot erase our LGBTQ colleagues who have broken barriers and who are proving to young people like them that they are a vital part of the Nation's history.

I am going to ask that the remainder of my statement be placed in the RECORD because I have to go to the Appropriations Committee, but I want to salute the people who participated in yesterday's hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee. It was a hearing that, really, I was proud of at the end. I didn't know going in how it would work.

There was a 16-year-old transgender girl from Alabama with her father who appeared, and she did an extraordinarily good job testifying and answering questions. There was a doctor from Texas who has been involved in gender-affirming care for more than 10 years. She talked about the difficulties in dealing with children who are searching for answers in their lives, looking for a place in this world, and hoping that they can find someone whom they can talk to—parents and medical professionals.

It struck me that there are decisions being made every single day across America by parents and families, life-and-death decisions and decisions that are critical. We need to say to these families: You make the best decision for your child.

But when it comes to gender affirming care, many States have stepped in

and said to the doctors involved and the parents involved: Stop the conversation. You are not going to discuss it with children who are troubled and need some help.

That is wrong. Medicine and science should prevail, not prejudice, when it comes to transgender people. The hearing yesterday was a good one, and I think it was an indication that Pride Month is taken seriously by the U.S. Congress and particularly the Senate Judiciary Committee.

The history of Pride is the history of America—hard-won progress, that may come in fits and starts, but over time, brings us closer to fulfilling the promise of equal justice under law. And if we truly want to honor Pride's history—then we need to do more than celebrate the month of June; we need to draw from the Pride movement's legacy and spirit of resistance.

Yesterday, as I mentioned, the Judiciary Committee, which I chair, held a hearing on the urgent need to defend the rights of LGBTQ+ Americans. You see, the very same politicians who are at this moment trying to ban books in schools and libraries are also introducing laws targeting our LGBTQ+ youth, along with the medical professionals who care for them and the parents who love them.

Since the start of 2023, more than 525 of these bills have been introduced in 41 States, many specifically targeting trans youth. Some bills seek to ban gender-affirming care, while others are designed to dictate what sports kids can play or what bathrooms they can use. But all of them are part of the same, concerted effort: using the powers of government to target children and their families.

Put yourself in the shoes of these families for just a moment. Imagine being the parent of a trans child and meeting with a doctor who is helping guide you through potentially life-and-death decisions. These are the most personal moments imaginable. They are hard enough as is. And the last thing you need is a politician forcing themselves into the doctor's office and telling you how to care for your child, a child who is already struggling—and who is only asking for the freedom to live as who they are in their hearts.

The Committee heard from one of those young Americans: Harleigh Walker. She is a 16-year-old transgender girl from Alabama, which has enacted laws threatening her ability to access the care she needs to be happy and healthy. Ms. Walker told the committee, "I want all of you to look at me, here and now, and hear my words. I am a VERY happy 16-year-old. I have wonderful friends who accept me . . . for who I am. I'm active in my school's debate team and other extracurricular[s] . . .

"I'm just trying to be a teenager in America. Same as any other teen, but I keep having to jump through hoops that other people my age don't have to. . . . I'm here in front of this Com-

mittee instead of enjoying summer vacation, just to try and ensure that my right to exist isn't taken away."

Ms. Walker identified an urgent need for new policies that support transgender children and protect them from bullying and harassment.

Parents and families of transgender children are facing fundamental questions about their children's health, identity, and future. They are asking for Congress to step up and protect their children from discrimination in schools, businesses, and hospitals. And this Senate has a chance to do so by passing the Equality Act, which was reintroduced this week by Senators MERKLEY, BALDWIN, and BOOKER and which I am cosponsoring.

Let us show these families—and every LGBTQ+ American—that they are not alone. Let us show them our support and solidarity—not just during Pride month, but every day of the year. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise today just a few days ahead of the anniversary of one of the most devastating Supreme Court voting rights decisions in our Nation's history.

This coming Sunday marks the 10-year anniversary since the Supreme Court's *Shelby v. Holder* decision, when—surprise, surprise—a conservative majority of the Supreme Court voted to dramatically erode Americans' access to the ballot and undo 50 years of voting rights protections.

Now, with the benefit of hindsight and my 6 years serving as California's chief elections officer, I can say that the decision in *Shelby* was not just an anomaly in our Nation's history. Since *Shelby*, we have seen State after State exploit this decision to enact dozens of laws designed to make it harder for some people to vote.

Despite the proponents' claims, the effect of these laws is to make it harder and, disproportionately, for voters of color, voters with disabilities, college students, and senior citizens to register to vote, to stay registered to vote, or to actually cast their ballot.

But, unfortunately, we have seen this before. While the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified in 1870, guaranteeing all citizens the right to vote regardless of race, that did not stop States from limiting access to the ballot. Poll tests, literacy tests, grandfather clauses, coupled with the brutal violence of the Jim Crow South, made it nearly impossible for Black citizens and other minorities, at the time, to exercise their constitutional rights. Yes, I know it is not pleasant to be reminded of this, but I think it is important to keep restating these facts for the record before they end up getting censored out of some history books in schools in different parts of this country. The times we live in, I tell you.

These violations were so egregious and so pervasive that it would take

Congress nearly a century to address them. Congress only took action after the marches of civil rights leaders and the chorus of protests grew so strong that they could no longer be ignored.

The country witnessed the civil rights movement and leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King and John Lewis call out the fundamental hypocrisy of a nation that promised all men and women to be equal but whose professed principles stopped at the entrance to the polling place.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a monument to freedom, but it certainly was never intended to be temporary, let alone a final chapter in the struggle for equality. The Voting Rights Act was actually a reminder—a reminder that America's democracy is imperfect and that it is each generation's job to bring us closer to being a more perfect union.

So in June of 2013, when the Supreme Court struck down section 5 of the Voting Rights Act in that *Shelby v. Holder* decision—the provision which required States with a history of racially motivated voter suppression to prove that any new laws or regulations would not adversely impact minority voters before they could be implemented—that decision undid 50 years of voting rights protections. In an instant, the Supreme Court scrapped section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, which was a critical tool that successfully protected us against the most egregious forms of voter suppression.

As a result of the *Shelby* decision, today too many eligible citizens—eligible citizens—have fallen victim to a new set of barriers put in place by Republican-led State legislatures. Modern-day voter suppression efforts might be a little bit more subtle than what we saw in the mid-20th century, but make no mistake, they are no less effective in suppressing the vote. Purging voter rolls, limiting vote-by-mail opportunities, limiting early-voting opportunities—these are all strategies designed to make it unduly harder for people to have their voice heard in our democracy.

While we may celebrate the recent Supreme Court decision in *Allen v. Milligan*, which was vitally important in upholding section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and affirming decades of the Supreme Court's jurisprudence on the Voting Rights Act, we must remember that the act as a whole is failing to function as it was intended, as it was originally adopted.

Make no mistake, the right to vote—the precious right to vote—continues to be attacked. Mississippi has passed one of the strictest voter ID laws in the country. Georgia cut 10 percent of its polling places ahead of the 2020 elections—mostly around the Atlanta metropolitan area—despite the fact that more than 2 million new voters had registered. More voters deserve more opportunities to vote, not less. In fact, since 2020 alone, 33 States have passed at least 104 new restrictive voting laws.

MAGA Republicans continue to spread false claims of massive voter fraud to cynically justify their voter suppression agenda.

It is these types of threats to our democracy that actually fueled my work as California secretary of state prior to my joining the Senate. As the chief elections officer for a State of nearly 40 million people—the most populous State in the nation and the most diverse State in the nation—I actually worked to implement automatic voter registration, same-day voter registration, to upgrade California's voting systems to meet higher security standards, and to expand mail-in voting and in-person early-voting opportunities. We intentionally and aggressively worked to make our democracy both more secure and more inclusive, not less. That is why today there are almost 22 million Californians on the voting rolls. That is right—there are more voters in the State of California than the population of the State of Florida. The voter rolls are now the most accurate and up to date they have ever been. That is good for election integrity, and we have seen record turnout as a result in four of the last six elections. That is the way democracy is supposed to work.

Now California has taken a stand because our right to vote is worth fighting for and because when it comes to defending and strengthening our democracy, California proudly leads. Now it is time for Congress to follow this example.

In the fight for civil and voting rights, a quote by Dr. Martin Luther King is often invoked, and I will quote it:

The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

Too often in our Nation's history, it has been Congress that has obstructed our path to justice. This body has not always upheld the legacy of the Americans who marched for the right to vote, who risked their safety for the right to vote, who gave their lives so that we might all have a say in our democracy.

Ten years after Shelby, it is clear that this decision has undermined the fabric of our democracy. So it is time that we pass the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, which would restore a preclearance requirement that helped protect the voting rights of all Americans.

I believe that what I learned in high school government class was right. Our country is stronger when more eligible Americans participate. That is why we must also pass and implement the Freedom to Vote Act to set a national baseline of voter protections and access to the ballot.

Our vote is sacred. It is how citizens exercise their voice in the political process. It is how we hold elected leaders accountable. And it is how we, together, shape our country's future.

It is our sworn duty, colleagues. It is our sworn duty to protect the right to vote. So I urge all of us to join me in

restoring these key components of the Voting Rights Act. Let's pass once again landmark legislation to protect our sacred right to vote, and let us live up to the legacy of the civil rights movement.

I yield the floor.
The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The Senator from Connecticut.

H. J. RES. 44

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, in just a very short time, we will be voting in this body on whether to take a step backward in our efforts to stop gun violence.

Let's be very clear: The vote in just about half an hour will be to overturn a regulation that was final at the beginning of this year and went into effect at the end of May—just weeks ago. Yet our Republican colleagues are all too ready to take that step backward on a regulation that would help prevent the kinds of tragedies that we have seen again and again and again in this great country. In a short time, this regulation will be before us in a way that, I hope, we will defeat soundly.

Just last week, we held a summit in Hartford, CT, bringing together all of the major groups involved in trying to prevent gun violence and addressed by the President of the United States, who has promulgated this regulation that requires the registration of pistol braces. It is, perhaps, seemingly, a small matter to the vast majority of Americans, but the fact is that, in the past 4 years alone, pistol-stabilizing braces have been used in a number of mass tragedies.

Just to give you an example, 10 people were killed and 3 injured at a grocery store in Boulder, CO; 9 people were killed and 27 injured outside a bar in Dayton, OH; 5 people were killed and 25 injured at a club in Colorado Springs, CO; 6 people were killed at a church school in Nashville, TN.

In each of these instances, people were killed by someone using a pistol brace. They are so dangerous because they can convert pistols into short-barreled rifles, and they do it by providing stability. A brace attaches a pistol to a shooter's arm, stabilizing the gun and allowing it to be fired from the shoulder. The shooter thereby acquires the power and accuracy of a rifle with an easily concealed pistol.

So, today, we are here to decide whether that ATF rule, supported by the President—to his credit—and designed to keep Americans safe from these makeshift rifles, will stand.

What was so apparent in Hartford when the President spoke to us there was the energy and spirit reflecting America's support for these kinds of commonsense gun violence prevention measures. All of those groups that attended, representing the American people, were, in fact, energized by a growing consensus in America: that the majority of Americans support these kinds of commonsense measures.

More and more, the gun violence prevention movement is led—not just sup-

ported but led—by young people who see our future as stopping gun violence on our streets that continues to take more than 100 lives every day. These young people—some of them were actually in Sandy Hook and were 6 years old at the time that their fellow elementary school students were taken from us—are now graduating from high school. They are voting. They are supporting candidates. They are running for office. This new generation is going to say “enough is enough” just as they did in Hartford at this summit and just as the President said, in effect, when he addressed them.

So the President is taking action under his present authority, even without new legislation, to try to confront and contain and stop gun violence.

We need to be committed to new legislation. I have urged background checks to be applied universally, ghost gun bans, assault weapon bans, large-capacity magazine bans, and perhaps, very feasibly and achievably in this Congress, a requirement for safe storage.

Much more is necessary as a matter of legislation, but the President is committed to taking action under his present executive authority to require commonsense measures, and this registration requirement is one of them.

Let's be very clear: It doesn't ban pistol-bracing; it simply requires that gun owners register them. The rule amends ATF's regulation to require and clarify, when someone uses a pistol-stabilizing brace to convert a pistol into a short-barreled rifle, that that person needs to register the gun as a short-barreled rifle. If somebody is going to convert a pistol into a short-barreled rifle, it needs to be explicitly registered.

Today, we have a choice. Either we allow shooters to turn pistols into powerful, accurate, easily hidden rifles, with total impunity, or we have the courage to protect our communities. That is a choice that we have right here on the floor of the U.S. Senate by every single one of us—whether to save lives or continue to enable those pistols to be more lethal, more deadly, and more intolerable.

I have been working on this issue for a long time. When I first became Attorney General of the State of Connecticut in the early 1990s, I championed a ban on assault weapons. I defended it in our State courts against many of the arguments made here. At that point, the number of advocates was a handful on our side. This movement has grown, and it has been fueled by the tragedies that we confront—the ones that I mentioned—where short-barreled rifles had been used with a pistol brace and lives had been lost because of this contraption that makes guns more lethal, more deadly.

We don't need pistol braces for legitimate uses of guns; and if they have legitimate uses, they can simply be registered.

The movement that has built over these years since the early 1990s and,

most directly, since Sandy Hook, has been fueled by these tragedies that we can help prevent going forward. That is our obligation today. The summit that came together just last week in Hartford, where the President committed himself unequivocally and dramatically to these kinds of commonsense measures, can be advanced if we permit this kind of executive action to be taken.

Now is no time for a step backward. Now is no time to say to the President: You can't take this kind of commonsense action under existing authority.

Now is the time to move forward with stronger legislation—all of those measures that I mentioned and more—that will make America safer and that will help prevent the kinds of tragedies that these pistol braces simply aggravate and fuel.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, first, I ask unanimous consent that, prior to the scheduled vote, I be permitted to speak for 10 minutes, Senator MARSHALL for 5 minutes, Senator KENNEDY for 10 minutes, and Senator SCHUMER for 2 minutes.

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

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, America is crying out for this Congress to do something about the epidemic of mass shootings. We average more than a mass shooting a day right now. Kids are living in fear when they walk into school. People don't know where the next shooter is coming from. No place seems safe.

So what is the Senate Republicans' answer to this paralyzing fear and anxiety that Americans have about mass shootings?

Their answer today is to put a resolution before the floor of the Senate that would make legal a new class of semiautomatic rifles that has been banned for 100 years because they are too dangerous.

So the answer to the mass shooting crisis in this country is of more assault rifles, more dangerous weapons, and taking a class of weapons that has been illegal for a century and putting them on the open market.

That is outrageous, and it is completely removed from the conversation that families and kids are having all across this country. Instead of taking dangerous assault weapons off the streets, this resolution would put more of them into the commercial marketplace.

I want to talk for a few minutes today about how dangerous this resolution is and to ask my Republican colleagues to vote with us—to vote with us—against this resolution so that we can protect our families and our kids from criminal acts and mass shootings.

For almost a century, the law has treated different types, certain types, of firearms differently than others; namely, those that Congress has seen

as more dangerous and more closely associated with violent crime. Short-barreled rifles are in that category. They are more transportable and concealable than long rifles. They have a longer range, greater accuracy, and more firepower than pistols. It is kind of the perfect recipe for criminals. That is, in part, why they are more highly regulated than your standard handgun or your standard hunting rifle or even an AR- or AK-style assault rifle.

To own a short-barreled rifle in this country, you have to pay \$200 for a tax stamp. You have to undergo a background check. You have to register that firearm with the ATF. You can have one, but you have to go through that process. That system—the courts have agreed—is consistent with the Second Amendment. It allows for responsible, law-abiding citizens to acquire these dangerous weapons while keeping them out of the hands of criminals, people who want to commit crimes with them.

Now, what has changed?

Well, in recent decades, gun manufacturers have responded to the widespread popularity of AR-15 rifles by selling a variant that they call either a large-format pistol, or a heavy pistol. It is a shorter version of an assault rifle. It has a shorter barrel, and it lacks a shoulder stock. These guns, theoretically, can be fired one-handed, but very few people want to do that. They are too large and heavy to control effectively, so they haven't been very popular in the marketplace. So the industry figured out a way to make them more popular.

In 2012, the first stabilizing brace was created to help a disabled veteran shoot an AR platform pistol one-handed. You kind of see a crude version of it here. It was sort of a rubber sling that slipped over the buffer tube at the rear of the weapon and then cinched down on the shooter's forearm with Velcro straps. This original design solved a very specific problem for a disabled shooter, but the gun industry saw an opening, and it wasn't about to let that opportunity slip by.

"The large format pistol really took off in 2014," says one article in the NRA's own magazine, *Shooting Illustrated*. What began as this rubber orthotic device turned into something that looked very different. It looked exactly like a shoulder stock.

Manufacturers started designing and marketing stabilizing braces designed for disabled individuals that would enable firing from the shoulder—firing short-barreled rifles, essentially, from the shoulder—and resources popped up all over the internet showing gun enthusiasts how to use these pistol braces designed for disabled shooters to turn their large-format pistols—not very useful—into short-barreled, shoulder-fired weapons.

Outdoor Life said:

The AR pistol of yesteryear is not the same platform that shooters are enjoying today for one reason: the stabilizing brace.

To be clear, it has always been illegal—for 100 years—to modify a large-format pistol by adding a stock or a brace for the purpose of firing it from the shoulder without going through that process I mentioned: getting the tax stamp, going through the background check. Whether knowingly or unknowingly, gun owners who modified their firearms in this way were creating short-barreled rifles. That is not allowed under the law, but manufacturers capitalized on widespread ignorance of the law to expand their stabilizing brace designed for disabled shooters and selling it as something intended to be fired from the shoulder by non-disabled individuals. Their advertising sometimes says that they weren't intending it to be fired that way, but over and over, you see marketing suggesting something very different.

So here is what happened. The ATF stepped in to correct this. The ATF stepped in to eliminate this ambiguity and just make it clear that, as you have not been able for 100 years to turn a short-barreled rifle into something you can fire from your—you can't take a pistol and use one of these braces to fire from your shoulder, that that needs to be the rule and the regulation going forward. So the ATF steps in with a pretty simple rule that basically says: If a brace-equipped pistol looks like a rifle, fires like a rifle, if the people who made it are trying to sell it as a rifle, then it is a rifle.

There is no ban on these braces or on weapons equipped with them, even short-barreled rifles. You just have to abide by the law to acquire one, which means a tax stamp, a background check, and registration. All we are doing, all the ATF is doing, is essentially reaffirming what has been the law for 100 years. If you want a short-barreled rifle or you want to convert a pistol into a short-barreled rifle, you just have to go through that process. Get the tax stamp, go through the background check, and register the gun.

At the same time, there is nothing in this rule to prevent a disabled veteran who wants to equip a pistol with a true stabilizing brace that is not designed to fire the weapon from the shoulder from doing exactly that or to prevent a manufacturer from selling a stabilizing brace designed to satisfy those specific needs of the market. But this isn't what the gun industry has been selling. The gun industry hasn't been selling true stabilizing braces to disable veterans; they have been selling an ability to convert a pistol into a short-barreled rifle.

The opponents of this rule will tell you that it is an unconstitutional gun grab. They are not likely to tell you that it is just law enforcement doing their job and enforcing a law Congress made almost a century ago. The courts have upheld Congress's authority to regulate some firearms more stringently than others because they are especially dangerous or unusual, which is

why there is no unrestricted right to own a machine gun or a sawed-off shotgun or a short-barreled rifle no matter how it becomes a short-barreled rifle.

When Congress passed the National Firearms Act, it chose to regulate these dangerous firearms by taxing them and requiring registration. Courts have agreed: Possession of an unregistered short-barreled rifle poses a danger to the community.

Events have borne this out. Over the last 5 years, unregistered arm-brace-equipped guns have been used in high-profile mass shootings in Dayton, in Boulder, and in Colorado Springs. Mass shooters like these unregistered arm-brace-equipped guns.

This is a good rule. It doesn't make any new law; it merely helps to enforce a law that has been on the books for almost a century. The ATF is just doing their job.

To pass this resolution would put onto the conventional commercial marketplace a new class of dangerous, concealable assault weapons that for 100 years we have had consensus in this country need to be regulated in a more comprehensive way.

The ATF is doing their job, and I would urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MARSHALL. Mr. President, I rise in support of Senator KENNEDY's resolution of disapproval of the ATF's stabilizing brace rule. This rule is a dangerous attack on every American's Second Amendment rights.

I want to start by telling you why this is important. Where I live in Kansas, typically we will have one sheriff or a deputy on call at a time, and he is covering an area of 60 by 40 miles, so often the nearest law enforcement officer is 45 minutes to an hour away.

Like many States, we are seeing an uptick in the rise of crime, with fentanyl flooding across our border. Twenty tons of fentanyl has been seized. We can't imagine how much came across this open border. But along with the fentanyl and the open border, we are seeing crime on the rise. More and more families feel afraid that they are not secure. Even my own wife 2 weeks ago asked me to take her out to our family gun range and give her some lessons on how to handle a weapon as well.

By the way, women's favorite weapon for self-protection is a short-barreled rifle. It is what they feel comfortable with. It is not loud. It is easy to control.

Why are we trying to punish Americans who just want to defend themselves and practice their Second Amendment rights?

In complete disregard for Americans' constitutional rights, President Joe Biden enacted an unlawful rule banning stabilizing braces—known commonly as pistol braces—allowing the ATF the full authority under the law

to prosecute millions of Americans for firearms they purchased perfectly legally. Through Biden's rule, millions of responsible gun owners suddenly have become felons.

As law-abiding Kansans get the book thrown at them under this Second Amendment power grab, the President's own son commits an actual gun violation felony, and he walks away with a sweetheart deal. I ask you, what type of message does that send to law-abiding American gun owners across the country? This is wrong. Americans realize this is a double standard.

Sadly, this egregious policy uniquely impacts our Nation's disabled veterans who use a pistol brace to handle their firearms. For some of these individuals who risked their lives for our freedoms, a pistol brace is the only option for safe and effective firearm use. But under this ruling, the constitutional right to bear arms is null and void if you use a stabilizing brace to operate a firearm.

That is why the President bypassed Congress and carried out his gun-grabbing agenda through the regulatory state, demanding his ATF use a misleading interpretation of the National Firearms Act to enforce this heavy-handed policy.

Let me be clear. The National Firearms Act does not—does not—give the ATF the authority to ban pistol braces. Congress has not, nor should it ever, give the ATF this power.

This rule represents the largest gun grab in American history, potentially impacting as many as 40 million responsible gun owners. We refuse to accept the supersized AFT's unconstitutional power grab, and I am proud to stand here with Senator KENNEDY and defend Kansans' and Louisianans' Second Amendment rights.

I will continue to stand firm here with all of my colleagues and oppose this executive overreach by the ATF.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to use a prop during my remarks.

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

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I want to spend a few minutes talking about Senator MARSHALL's and my legislation to overturn President Biden's squid-brained idea with respect to pistol braces.

The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Mr. President, as you well know, gives private citizens the right to possess a firearm, including a pistol, and to use it lawfully. That is not a right of government; that is a right that each of us has as Americans.

Justice Scalia said it pretty well in *DC v. Heller*:

The American people have considered the handgun to be the quintessential self-defense weapon.

So many people who are opposed to the Second Amendment—they say they

are not opposed to the Second Amendment. They say they just want to regulate guns. They don't. They want to abolish guns. And many of them wouldn't know a gun from a J.Crew catalogue. This is a handgun. This is what we are talking about.

Our Second Amendment right is not unlimited. We know that. It is subject to reasonable—reasonable—restriction by government, consistent with the Constitution and the country's "historical tradition of firearm regulation." Those aren't my words; those are the Supreme Court's words. I am quoting *New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. Bruen* by the U.S. Supreme Court. For example, in many States, you can't own a bazooka. That is a reasonable restriction. Your right to own a gun can also be restricted if you suffer from mental illness. That is what we have concluded as a society as a reasonable restriction.

The issue today is very simple. It is whether President Biden's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms' new rule, in effect, banning or, at a minimum, severely restricting pistol braces is a reasonable restriction under the Constitution. That is what we are discussing today.

Trigger warning: This is a pistol brace. I know it is scary. This is a pistol brace. It fits on your forearm like this. Here it is right here. To the pistol brace is added another piece that grips the handgun. That is what we are talking about here.

A pistol brace is also known—this scary piece of equipment here is also known as a stabilizing brace or an arm brace. It is a simple device. It is mounted to the rear of the pistol. It is designed to anchor the pistol to the shooter's arm, right here—it goes on the forearm—so the shooter can shoot the pistol with one hand.

Now, why is that important? Because some Americans don't have two hands or the use of two hands or two arms. Pistol braces were invented to help handicapped people, particularly handicapped veterans, who don't have the use of both of their arms.

You don't have to be a handicapped person to use a pistol brace. Some studies have shown that there are as many as 40 million pistol braces in the United States that President Biden wants to outlaw—not 4 million, 40 million—and most of them—I would say virtually all of them—are owned by law-abiding citizens.

Now, this pistol brace, other than stabilizing the pistol, it doesn't change the pistol in any way. The pistol brace doesn't change the caliber of the pistol. It doesn't make it more powerful. The pistol brace doesn't change the number of rounds that the pistol can hold. The pistol brace doesn't make the pistol an automatic pistol. Automatic weapons are forbidden in the United States. And the pistol brace doesn't make the pistol fire any faster. The pistol brace also does not help the shooter load the pistol more quickly.

Except for stabilizing the pistol, it doesn't change the pistol in any way. It just makes it easier to hold, which is important particularly if you are handicapped.

As one of my colleagues alluded to, pistol braces were invented in 2012. They have been legal since. As I said, millions of Americans own them. Millions of Americans use them, especially handicapped Americans.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms has never had a problem with pistol braces—none, zero, zilch, nada—until President Biden became President. Now, President Biden and his ATF have promulgated a rule. It says attaching a pistol brace to a pistol somehow magically stops the pistol from being a pistol and turns it into a short-barreled rifle.

The ATF has defended its proposed new rule, as has President Biden, by pointing to two mass shootings that were committed by individuals who used pistols with pistol braces.

Now, why does it matter? Why is the ATF trying to say a pistol is no longer a pistol if you use a pistol brace; it is a short-barreled rifle? I will tell you why. You don't have to be a Latin scholar to figure it out because short-barreled rifles, once again, which the ATF says pistol braces turn pistols into, are heavily restricted by the National Firearms Act of 1934 and the Gun Control Act of 1968. That is why they want to turn a pistol into a short-barreled rifle by using a pistol brace.

Under these two Federal statutes, if the ATF can succeed, the ATF can require the owner of the pistol with the pistol brace to register it within 120 days with the ATF. They want to start a gun registry for law-abiding Americans. Hello. They want to start a gun registry. If the ATF pulls this off, this is what they can do.

This is what you have to do if you own a pistol brace and you use it with your handgun, handicapped or otherwise. You have got to register it within 120 days with the ATF. You have got to destroy the pistol brace, or you have got to dismantle the pistol brace, or you have got to surrender your pistol to the ATF, or you have to destroy your pistol.

And violations: If you don't do what the ATF says, violations of these two Federal statutes are punishable by 5 to 10 years in prison and fines up to \$250,000.

Stupidity should hurt more. Unless you self-identify as an idiot, you can see what is going on here. The American people may be poorer under President Biden, but they are not stupid.

The ATF is trying to keep Americans from owning pistols and/or they are trying to keep Americans from owning pistol braces and/or they are trying to use this rule to start an extensive national gun registry. And the ATF rule is just a backdoor way to subject pistols to more smothering regulations.

I swear to God and all the angels, Americans get so much government,

they choke on it. They choke on it. Neither the National Firearms Act of 1934 nor the Gun Control Act of 1968 mention pistol braces, nor does the statute's legislative history.

Under recent unambiguous decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court in *West Virginia v. EPA*, in *Alabama Association of Realtors v. Department of Health and Human Services*, and in *King v. Burwell*—all Supreme Court precedent—a regulatory Agency like the ATF does not have the power under our Constitution to decide major questions like banning pistol braces unless Congress says it is OK, through the text of the statute that the Agency is relying on. The statute itself clearly and unambiguously has to give the ATF the authority to ban pistol braces, and it does not.

The ATF rule is unconstitutional. It is also unconstitutional under the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen*, which was handed down a couple of years ago, because banning pistol braces is not part of our country's "historical tradition of firearm regulation."

The ATF rule also violates, in my judgment, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. And finally, the ATF rule and President Biden's rule are just—the rule is just plain bottom-of-the-barrel moronic.

Attaching a pistol brace to a pistol, which doesn't change the pistol in any fundamental way except stabilizing it, does not stop the pistol from being a pistol. It doesn't. And it sure doesn't turn it into a short-barreled rifle. Pistols are pistols. Rifles are rifles. Duh. All the pistol brace does is allow an American, especially a handicapped American, to safely grip a pistol and control it in a safe manner. That is all it does. Like I said, stupid should hurt more.

This ATF rule is why so many Americans wonder how so many governmental officials in Washington, DC, made it through the birth canal.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. SMITH. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. 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. SCHUMER. Mr. President, America's tragic epidemic of gun violence has been made worse by easy access to pistol braces. But today, amazingly enough, with all of these mass shootings, Republicans want to loosen safety rules regarding these accessories and take us backward in the fight against gun violence. It is hard to believe that that is what is happening.

Pistol braces make it easier to conceal and transport weapons that function as highly dangerous short-barreled rifles and, in many instances, have been accessories of choice in recent mass shootings. Some of these mass shooters choose these braces to cause mayhem, and we are loosening the rules on them.

It is hard to believe our Republican friends are doing this. How on Earth can Republicans look at our Nation's gun violence and think the right answer is to make these accessories easier to own? How can Republicans look away from tragedies in Dayton, in Boulder, and in Nashville, and in so many other places where pistol braces were involved, and conclude that we should reverse commonsense gun safety rules?

When you use a pistol brace, if you are up to bad purpose, it makes it easier to conceal a weapon with AR-15-like power.

Today's Republican push to reverse safeguards against deadly pistol braces is an insult to families torn apart by these accessories. It is in my mind almost every day, when the shootings occurred in Tennessee and the shooter used a pistol brace, and three 9-year-olds were killed, as well as three teachers, and you saw the picture of the little girl crying on the bus leaving the school because she was so frightened. I think of that picture every day.

This proposal would mark a horrible—horrible—step backward in America's fight against gun violence. I urge my colleagues—I hope on both sides of the aisle—to vote no.

VOTE ON H.J. RES. 44

I ask for the yeas and nays.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the joint resolution is considered read a third time.

The joint resolution was ordered for a third reading and was read the third time.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The joint resolution having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the joint resolution pass?

The yeas and nays have been requested.

Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 50, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 171 Leg.]

YEAS—49

Barrasso	Cramer	Hyde-Smith
Blackburn	Crapo	Johnson
Boozman	Cruz	Kennedy
Braun	Daines	Lankford
Britt	Ernst	Lee
Budd	Fischer	Lummis
Capito	Graham	Marshall
Cassidy	Grassley	McConnell
Collins	Hagerty	Moran
Cornyn	Hawley	Mullin
Cotton	Hoeben	Murkowski

Paul	Schmitt	Tuberville
Ricketts	Scott (FL)	Vance
Risch	Scott (SC)	Wicker
Romney	Sullivan	Young
Rounds	Thune	
Rubio	Tillis	

NAYS—50

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Bennet	Hirono	Sanders
Blumenthal	Kaine	Schatz
Booker	Kelly	Schumer
Brown	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Sinema
Cardin	Lujan	Smith
Carper	Manchin	Stabenow
Casey	Markey	Tester
Cortez Masto	Menendez	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Feinstein	Murray	Warren
Fetterman	Ossoff	Welch
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Hassan	Peters	Wyden
Heinrich	Reed	

NOT VOTING—1

Coons

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 44) was rejected.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

TAX CONVENTION WITH CHILE

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of treaty document No. 112-8, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Treaty Document No. 112-8, Tax Convention with Chile.

Pending:

Schumer Amendment No. 136, to add an effective date.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2011

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to bring forward, once again, my bill—the United States-Russian Federation Seafood Reciprocity Act.

This is a really important bill for our fishermen throughout America. This is a really important bill as it relates to sanctions against Russia. It is a really important bill as it relates to not letting Russia and China evade sanctions that the President of the United States has put on them—the Russians, in particular.

It should be a bipartisan bill with regard to unanimous consent. I tried to move it last year. It had an objection. We worked through the objection and amended the bill to address the objection, in working with the Biden administration, to try to fix this from an administrative standpoint, but we were not getting anywhere.

Once I explain what is happening, I think every person watching—every American watching—and every Alaskan, certainly, is going to go: What the heck? Why on Earth are we not passing Senator SULLIVAN's bill?

What is the background?

Well, here it is.

You know, I often brag about the great State of Alaska as being the superpower of seafood as over 60 percent of all of the seafood harvested in America comes from Alaska's waters. We have the most sustainable fisheries and the best managed fisheries literally in the world. They feed Americans. They feed the whole world.

So this bill is about that, certainly. But it is about all fishermen, including in Massachusetts. I guess my colleague from Massachusetts is going to come and object, which is a real disappointment. But this bill is also very much about geopolitics and going after the Russians, which is all what we think, collectively, we should be doing after their brutal invasion of Ukraine.

So what is the background?

Let me start with some explanation.

In 2014, when Russia invaded and annexed the Crimean Peninsula, the United States imposed sanctions on Russia in a whole host of different areas. The Russians retaliated with their own sanctions, and one of those sanctions was that Russia banned the import of all American seafood into Russia. It is a big market. It is certainly a big market for my fishermen. But what was crazy about that is that the Russians had banned the importation of America's seafood into Russia in 2014. So what is that—8 years ago? 9 years ago? Yet we have kept our market open to Russian seafood.

If you want to talk about an unlevel playing field, Russian seafood pours into the United States pretty much duty free, and American seafood—Alaskan seafood—going into Russia is banned. So that is just wrong. That is just wrong. Russian seafood imports into the United States have increased by close to 200 percent—200 percent.

Russian seafood companies are largely owned by Russian oligarchs, who are supporting this war—Putin's war of aggression in Ukraine—and, of course, they have been stealing market share from American fishermen, undermining the markets for our U.S. fishermen that we have worked hard on in our own country.

Does anyone in America think this makes sense? It doesn't. It doesn't.

Much of this cash, the Russian imports—we are talking hundreds of millions, up 200 percent—go back to the Russian oligarchs, the Russian Government to help drive their war machine.

So since I came to the Senate 8 years ago, I have been trying with every administration to stop this unlevel playing field. Again, Russia imports hundreds of millions of dollars of seafood into our market almost duty-free, going after American fishermen, and we can't export one fish to Russia. Who thinks that is fair? So I tried with President Obama—he wouldn't help; President Trump—he wouldn't help; and President Biden. Well, it took a war—literally, it took a war—to get some administration to try and fix this.

President Biden—to his credit and at my urging—when he issued his Execu-

tive order targeting the Russians with sanctions, part of that order included a prohibition of Russian seafood coming into America. Great. That is what we needed. That is only fair. It goes after the Russian war-machine oligarchs. That was welcome news, intended to isolate the Russian economy. However—however—the Biden Executive order—which, again, we appreciated very much. It is about time. It took only 8 years for our own government to say: Wow. Look at this unlevel playing field between Russia and America with regard to our fishermen and our seafood. But the Biden Executive order has a loophole. It has got a massive loophole that, of course, the Russians are taking advantage of.

The vast majority of Russian seafood is harvested and frozen in simple product forms and then—guess what—it is shipped to which country? That other great dictatorship in the world—I am joking when I say "great"; it is a brutal dictatorship—China. So Russian fishermen now send all their fish to China to get it reprocessed—laundered, essentially. They fill it with phosphates. And guess where they ship it to. The United States. Hundreds of millions of dollars of Russian seafood now gets sent to China—another dictatorship—and they send it back to the United States almost duty-free. That is a giant loophole. It is happening every day. It is an outrage.

By the way, it is really bad seafood. It turns Americans off from eating seafood. They fill it with phosphates, plump it up, nasty, and they send it back to the United States.

So now Russia and China are colluding to avoid the Biden Executive order. It is hurting American fishermen, once again, and it is strengthening Russia: the oligarchs, the government, the Putin war machine.

I have been working patiently—patiently—for a year with this administration. The Deputy Secretary of the Treasury is supposed to call me back today.

You better call me, Mr. Secretary.

The Secretary of Homeland Security, let's close this loophole. Let's close this loophole. It is only benefiting Russia and China, for goodness' sake, and it is hurting our fishermen. So I am not sure why this isn't happening.

Again, I have been talking to the administration. The Secretary of Homeland Security said: Senator, we will take care of this. You are right. This is a loophole we can't abide by. CBP will enforce this. The Deputy Secretary of the Treasury: Senator, we will work with OFAC to close this loophole. That has been a year, and we are still waiting. And the Russian war machine benefits from this. The Chinese, of course, benefit from this. And American fishermen are getting screwed. Why isn't our government helping?

Come on, Mr. Secretary. Come on, Mr. Deputy Secretary, call me today. Let's fix this.

But we are not waiting. We are not waiting.