

Earlier this year the Jerusalem Post reported that an Israeli journalist tried to prove this point by bringing a plastic gun to a press conference at the Israeli Knesset. He got the gun through security, and he filmed himself pointing the gun at Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Fortunately the gun was unloaded and the journalist had no intent to harm anyone. But we should take steps to protect against the risks of these undetectable guns before a tragedy occurs.

I will support efforts to extend the current law, but I also urge my colleagues to work to close this loophole as quickly as possible.

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I thank Senator SCHUMER and Senator NELSON for their work on the extension of the Undetectable Firearms Act.

Plastic guns printed from 3D printers are one thing: dangerous. They have no place in our society. These 3D-printed guns can be used to dodge security checks the way Tom Brady dodges opposing defenses. Members of the law enforcement community, police men and women, the ATF, TSA, FBI, and Secret Service all support this legislation because it will make our communities safer. I share their concerns and the concerns of so many of my constituents in Massachusetts. I come here today to express my support for this bill because the safety of our children and communities must be our top priority. No parent, student, or traveler should be worried that a plastic 3D gun could be left undetected and find its way into an airplane, a train, or a classroom.

I am pleased we are passing this legislation today, but we must all remember that this is the bare minimum. Passing this legislation keeps plastic guns from becoming legal, but it does not crack down on the torrents of assault weapons filling our streets or ensure that all gun sales must include a background check. Neither does it close the loophole that allows a plastic gun with a single piece of removable metal to evade the ban.

Even after this bill passes, we must continue to fight for commonsense gun safety regulations. In 1994, I worked with my colleagues and now-Vice President BIDEN to enact tougher gun control laws that helped remove dangerous Chinese assault weapons from our streets. At the time, it seemed like an insurmountable task, but we got those weapons of war off our streets. Today we face a challenge that seems similarly insurmountable. So I hope that in the coming days and weeks the Senate and Congress acts in a bipartisan manner to curb the epidemic of gun violence in our country. I will work with any Member of this Chamber, on either side of the aisle, to enact comprehensive gun control legislation that will keep our neighborhoods, our communities, our cities, and our public safe. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that we finally

put tough gun safety laws on the books and get these dangerous weapons off our streets and out of our neighborhoods.

Thank you.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, on December 3, 2013, the House of Representatives passed a 10-year reauthorization of the Undetectable Firearms Act. This law prohibits firearms that are undetectable by widely deployed security screening technologies such as x-ray and metal detectors. These are the standard technologies used by law enforcement officials to protect the public in State and Federal government buildings, courthouses, airports, and a host of other public spaces and events and these are the same technologies that protect the public and elected officials in the Capitol and congressional office buildings, where so many congressional staff and members of the public work and participate in the democratic process in an open and accessible environment. It is not difficult to appreciate why lethal weapons capable of evading such detection cause significant concern for the law enforcement community. This law has been the widely supported policy of Congress since 1988, when the legislation was signed by President Reagan. Ten years ago, Senator HATCH and I came together to reauthorize this law in 2003.

While today's legislation is an important step to reauthorize this law, we have more work to do. Law enforcement experts have urged Congress to make modest changes necessary to close a loophole that allows an individual who makes a firearm using 3D printing technology to easily evade the reach of the current law. I support those changes in order to better protect the public and update the current law in a responsible way.

Unfortunately, these recommendations have been met by Republican objections. As the expiration of this law has crept closer and the issue has gained the greater attention of law enforcement officials and Members of Congress, I worked in the Senate to find bipartisan support for a reauthorization of the law that would include these needed updates. I was disappointed that no Republican senator was willing to engage in a joint effort to responsibly update the law.

Today, a functioning, all-plastic, undetectable gun manufactured in the home using publicly available technology is not theoretical; it is reality. Unfortunately, the legislation we pass today fails to provide law enforcement officials with the best tools possible to keep pace with current and rapidly developing technology. This reauthorization does give Congress time to consider necessary updates to the law that law enforcement experts believe are critical to close the loopholes that have been exposed by emerging technologies.

I hope that as we go forward, Members of Congress on both sides of the

aisle will closely examine the improvements we need to make to this law and will act responsibly in addressing them. Given this law's long history of bipartisan support, we should work together to carefully consider the recommendations that law enforcement experts have made to make this law better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I too thank Senator GRASSLEY for arranging so we could proceed with the current law. I have found Senator GRASSLEY to be someone who will listen, who will deliberate, and who will try to do what he thinks is in the best interests of the people, in this particular case, the security interests of the people. I would ask Senator GRASSLEY to consider, as we meet about this over the course of the next several weeks or months, since we both fly in to Washington, DC—and if you are on flights like this Senator is, there may be a good chance there is an air marshal on that flight because the flight is so sensitive coming in to a city where you are only seconds—if an airplane aborts a landing, you are only within seconds of that airplane being near some of the centers of the U.S. Government, such as the Capitol, such as the White House, such as the Supreme Court. If a person were able to sneak a plastic gun through, then it seems to me that poses a much greater threat to the security interests of this country and its people.

If it is, in fact, legal to have a gun where you can remove that piece of metal and someone has been able to sneak that through the metal detectors at the place of origin of that person's flight, then it seems to me we are asking for trouble. In the great tradition of the Second Amendment of protecting people and letting them have their rights to guns, this is an aberration of that right that we need to duly consider and protect against.

I thank Senator GRASSLEY for coming here and extending the law today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business until 7 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The Senator from Tennessee.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I intend to speak for more than 10 minutes when I get the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Certainly I do not have any objection to that.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for as much time as I may require after Senator REID does what he wants to do on the floor tonight, which would not interfere with the Senator from New Hampshire going ahead at this time.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Thank you, Madam President and Senator ALEXANDER.

PASSING A BUDGET

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I come to the floor this evening to talk about the importance of Congress doing its job and passing a budget. We need a budget that is going to provide certainty for our economy, that will eliminate reckless spending cuts, and that will foster job creation.

We hear this week that Senate Budget Committee Chair PATTY MURRAY and House Budget Committee Chair PAUL RYAN may be close to just such an agreement. I think that is very good news because we need a budget deal so we can put an end to the manufactured crises that have hurt too many families and businesses in New Hampshire and across this country.

I know I speak for so many of us here in the Senate when I say our primary focus really should be on continuing to put in place an environment that creates jobs, that lays a foundation for economic growth. And that is one of the things that getting a budget deal would help do.

We have recently seen some signs of progress in the economy. The jobs report on Friday was positive with over 200,000 private-sector jobs added in November, and we have now had 45 straight months of private-sector job growth. But we all know we are not out of the woods yet. We have a lot more work to do, and we need to build on the momentum that is there to get more people back to work.

When I travel around New Hampshire, my constituents tell me they are very frustrated with the gridlock in Washington, and what they want is for us to come together here in Congress, to agree on a budget, and to take action that supports economic growth.

Granite Staters are absolutely right. With a potential budget agreement, we have an opportunity to eliminate some of the uncertainty in our economy, to eliminate some of those harmful cuts that are part of sequestration—the automatic budget cuts—and to finally set some priorities that will help us create jobs.

Sadly, too much in the past few months has had the Congress moving from one manufactured crisis on the budget to another. It has cost the economy severely. It has hurt job creation.

As economist Mark Zandi recently noted: “As long as lawmakers stay deadlocked over the direction of the federal budget, the economic recovery will not gain momentum.”

So I am very hopeful we can reach a deal that will provide the Appropriations Committee with a roadmap for the rest of 2014 and 2015.

I have heard from a lot of small businesses in New Hampshire that one of the challenges they are currently facing post government shutdown—and certainly for so many small businesses and families, they were hurt by that government shutdown, which cost the economy about \$24 billion, and they are now looking at what the potential impact in the future will be from sequestration. Those spending cuts have halted Federal contracts, in many cases, for small businesses. They have caused uncertainty that is affecting job creation and hiring.

One of the New Hampshire business owners with whom I met recently said: “You hear about how CEOs are hesitant to hire—this is why”—this uncertainty around sequestration, around what we are going to do about a budget for the country.

These indiscriminate cuts from sequestration have not just hurt job creation. They have also affected programs that are critical to families in New Hampshire and across the country.

One of those programs I had a chance to visit last week is the Meals on Wheels Program. I helped deliver meals in Rockingham County. The Presiding Officer knows Rockingham County very well. It is just across the boarder from Massachusetts, which she represents. I had really ambivalent feelings about delivering those meals to seniors because on the one hand people were so appreciative and we got to help people who needed those hot meals, but on the other hand what I heard from those seniors was the effect that sequestration and spending cuts were having on the program. Those spending cuts have slashed \$81,000 from Rockingham Nutrition's Meals on Wheels budget. According to Debra Perou, the agency's executive director, Rockingham Nutrition is delivering 17,000 fewer meals as a result of those cuts. She told me it was a very tough day when they had to try to figure out who was going to get cut from getting those meals on wheels.

The seniors with whom I met in Salem told me they were frustrated that nothing was happening to eliminate those reckless spending cuts.

I met a former engineer from Raytheon, Larry Somes and his wife Lillian. Lillian not only has dementia developing, but she has macular degeneration. It has made it difficult for her to cook. Larry's pension from Raytheon does not go as far as it did 25 years ago when he retired. He said: “Congress isn't doing anything [to help].”

Well, Larry is not alone, sadly. In Salem, 25 percent of Meals on Wheels

recipients are older than 85. For these seniors—who are unable to cook for themselves—Meals on Wheels makes it possible for them to keep their housing and independence.

One of the things the seniors did this fall was to do a campaign where the program asked all of the seniors who received Meals on Wheels if they would write a message about how they felt about the program on a paper plate and send it to their elected officials so we would know what they are thinking. So I brought some of those messages, and they are short so they will not take much time to read. But I think it is important to read some of these messages so all of us have a chance to hear how our seniors are feeling.

This one is not signed, but it says:

Seniors need Meals on Wheels to keep them in their homes and healthy. Put yourself in their position. Do you like to eat? Do you want to be in your home?

Thank you Meals on Wheels. I am crippled and walk with a walker. I can't cook much anymore. I'm a diabetic so I have to eat, eat right. Thanks to everyone who cooks and delivers. God bless you.

Keep Meals on Wheels. The homebound people are in need and look forward to getting a healthy meal and seeing someone every day.

That is the other aspect that is so important about Meals on Wheels. It is not just about delivering that hot meal. It is about making sure someone is checking in on our older Americans who are living alone, who sometimes do not see people because they are housebound. These messages are telling about how important this program is.

As Maria and Bill say:

As this plate is empty, so will my wife's meals be. She has a serious medical problem and needs these meals. Think of this when you sit in your dining room tonight to have your meal. Thank you for your help keeping these meals coming.

Then from Denise, she says:

Please don't take my food away. I need it.

That says it all.

The work Rockingham Christian and Meals On Wheels does is critical for seniors in that part of New Hampshire. They are joined by nine other Meals On Wheels Programs around New Hampshire. They serve thousands of people throughout the State. Last year alone Meals On Wheels delivered more than 1.2 million meals to 11,596 people in New Hampshire. The services are critical not only for improving the lives of seniors but also for reducing health care spending. The yearly cost of Meals On Wheels for a single senior is equivalent to the cost of 9 days in a nursing home or 1 or 2 days in the hospital. This is not a program that is important to seniors because it keeps them healthy and keeps them in their homes; this is a program that is cost-effective because if we are not able to keep seniors in their homes with something to eat, they are going to wind up in nursing homes and they are going to wind up in hospitals.

Programs such as Meals On Wheels are not where we should be cutting. We