

I think that is the same plea that many Americans have for this Congress. They understand that gun safety is a politically heated issue. They understand that there are constitutional and legal questions that are difficult to balance.

They want us to have the courage to take up that debate rationally, responsibly and respectfully.

On an average day, 93 Americans are killed with guns—93 people a day, every day. Over 30,000 Americans a year die from guns. Many more live in daily fear that they could be next.

I hope that we can agree to be more like Heather Gooze, to not abandon our fellow Americans to face that danger and fear of gun violence alone. Supporting Senator FEINSTEIN's bill to ban the sale of "bump stocks" would be a good place to start.

#### TRIBUTE TO ANGELA McQUEEN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the remarkable courage of a woman from my home State of Illinois.

Her name is Angela McQueen—"Angie" to her friends and family.

Ms. McQueen teaches math and physical education at Mattoon High School in central Illinois.

In late September, she was in the high school cafeteria when she saw a student pull a semiautomatic handgun from his backpack and start spraying the cafeteria with gunfire.

Ms. McQueen and other teachers at the high school had recently been trained on what to do when faced with the threat of gun violence at school.

It is sad and distressing to think that teachers need such training today, but that is, sadly, the reality. Thank goodness Angie McQueen had that training.

The instant she saw the gun, she lunged and pushed the young man's hand towards the ceiling so he couldn't shoot others.

She said she had only one thought in her head as she acted, as she put it, "You're not going to do this to my kids."

Hundreds of students were in the cafeteria at the time. One student was shot and hospitalized briefly, and another student suffered minor injuries when he was apparently grazed by gunfire.

School and law enforcement officials say that Ms. McQueen's selfless actions likely saved students' lives.

One student who witnessed the incident told a reporter for a local newspaper, "Ms. McQueen is like Chuck Norris, basically. She's a hero."

Angela McQueen is the daughter of two retired teachers. In her biography on the school's website, she was asked to describe why she became a teacher. The first reason she gave: "I wanted to make the world a better place."

She has certainly done that.

Ms. McQueen is modest. She doesn't like being in the spotlight, but she recently allowed the city and families of

Mattoon to thank her publicly at a reception at the school.

Mattoon School superintendent Larry Lilly undoubtedly spoke for many when he said, "We are forever grateful to Angela for her courageous actions that saved the lives of our kids. She was a ray of light in our darkest hour."

"You're not going to do this to my kids." That was what Angela McQueen vowed before she risked her life to disarm a young man with a semiautomatic handgun.

I hope that all Members of Congress will take those words to heart as we debate gun safety and what we can do as a society to protect our children and all Americans from gun violence.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we are a Nation of immigrants. That should be an obvious point, but it bears repeating at a time when our President sees political advantage in trafficking in xenophobic scapegoating. Unless you are Native American, you come from a line of people who come from somewhere else. Indeed, that simple fact is an integral part of the American story.

We are also a nation that believes that anything is possible. Our ancestors and relatives journeyed here because, in America, where you come from does not determine what you can accomplish. In this great country, as long as you work hard and play by the rules, you can achieve your dreams. That itself is the American Dream.

No single group of people embodies these ideals more than our Nation's Dreamers. Dreamers grew up in this country; they were brought here as children. They seek only the opportunity to contribute to our Nation and to be legally recognized as the Americans that they are. Dreamers are our neighbors, our teachers, and our first responders.

Nearly a thousand Dreamers serve in our Armed Forces, risking their lives to defend the only country they have ever known as home. We cannot in good faith claim to care about the American Dream if we neglect to protect the very people who are living it.

Take, for example, Dr. Juan Conde, a DACA recipient and a resident of Vermont. Dr. Conde was born in Mexico and brought to the United States as a child by his mother. In 2007, his mother was tragically taken by cancer. Showing remarkable courage and determination for a young man, this tragedy inspired Dr. Conde to find a way to help cancer patients like his mother; yet he was unable to become an oncologist due to his immigration status. So instead, he decided to obtain a Ph.D. in cancer research from the University of Texas.

Dr. Conde wanted to treat cancer patients, not just study the disease. After receiving DACA status in 2012, he was empowered to pursue his medical degree. He is currently a medical student at University of Vermont's Lanier College of Medicine.

Dr. Conde hopes to spend his life in the United States treating cancer pa-

tients and helping to find a cure for the disease. My hope is that we can make that happen, not just for Dr. Conde but for every other Dreamer. There are almost 800,000 Dreamers like Dr. Conde, all of whom have just as much potential to make our communities and our country truly great. To deny them these opportunities because they were brought here as children is as senseless as it is cruel.

Yet that is the decision the president made. He could have worked with Congress to find a permanent solution for Dreamers while leaving DACA protections in place. Instead, he cast them aside. His administration has made absurd, nonfactual, and offensive arguments in support of that decision ever since. When Attorney General Sessions announced that DACA was being terminated, he argued that the program was an example of the Obama administration's repeated failure to enforce our immigration laws. He argued that such failure caused crime, violence, and even terrorism. During Senate Judiciary Committee hearings, I pressed both the Attorney General and his Department on this point, to name just one Dreamer who was involved in terrorist activity. Of course, they could not, but apparently, fear-mongering is more effective than acknowledging simple truths.

By definition, Dreamers are law-abiding. They seek nothing more than to contribute to our country. If the President refuses to stand with Dreamers, then Congress must. We have done it before in the Senate. Four years ago, 68 Senators, Democrats and Republicans, voted for comprehensive immigration reform legislation that I managed on the Senate floor. That legislation included key protections for Dreamers, including an expedited pathway to citizenship. It is time for the Senate to act again now and for the House to follow suit. The future of Dreamers and the fate of the American Dream itself lies in our hands.

#### PERU

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly about the unfolding political crisis, which is also a crisis for justice, in Peru.

Peru transitioned to democracy in 2000, after two decades of internal armed conflict and authoritarian rule. The country has made important strides in rebuilding its democratic institutions, consolidating the rule of law, and combating impunity, but today, efforts by a majority in the Peruvian Congress to arbitrarily remove judges from the country's highest court, the Constitutional Tribunal, and to oust the attorney general for courageously doing his job, threaten to undermine those gains and reverse Peru's democratic progress.

As a former prosecutor and the senior Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee, I am especially concerned about the attempt by the majority in

Peru's Congress to impeach Attorney General Pablo Sanchez in the midst of his office's investigation into allegations that the Presidential campaign of Keiko Fujimori received illegal contributions in 2011. The effort to remove Attorney General Sanchez strongly suggests a deliberate strategy to obstruct justice and to undermine the autonomy of the attorney general's office. This would represent a grave setback for hard-fought gains to reestablish an independent judiciary and the rule of law in Peru. It would have serious ramifications for U.S.-Peruvian relations.

Credible allegations of corruption must be thoroughly investigated, without prejudice to party or power, and with due process for the accused. I urge members of Peru's Congress to support those who are acting on behalf of the Peruvian people in the pursuit of truth and justice. Key to this is respect for the autonomy of the office of the attorney general and of the Constitutional Tribunal, institutions that are guarantors of human rights and the rule of law.

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#### PRESS FREEDOM

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, we are all too familiar with President Trump's "fake news" mantra, which he has repeatedly used to discredit unfavorable news reports and undermine the credibility of the media in our country.

This mantra and the accompanying threats to freedoms of speech and of the press have now spread far beyond our borders. Autocrats and dictators around the world are enthusiastically using the concept of fake news and the legitimacy granted to it by the President of the United States to further undermine and restrict press freedom and fact-based reporting on corruption, human rights, and other abuses in their own countries.

For example, in response to an Amnesty International report on thousands of military prison deaths in Syria, President Bashar al-Assad remarked, "You can forge anything these days, we are living in a fake news era." Similarly, in response to news reports on persecution of the Rohingya ethnic minority group in Myanmar, an officer in Myanmar's Rakhine state security ministry stated, "There is no such thing as Rohingya. It is fake news."

The list goes on and includes comments from autocratic leaders in the Philippines, Venezuela, Russia, China, and Turkey, among others, who have used the fake news mantra to legitimize harassment, arrests, and prosecutions of journalists.

Last week, the Committee to Protect Journalists, CPJ, released its annual census of imprisoned journalists worldwide, which has hit an historical high of 262. The total does not include the many more journalists who were imprisoned for a period of time during the year before being released prior to the December 1 census. A CPJ statement

published with the report noted that: "Far from isolating repressive countries for their authoritarian behavior, the United States, in particular, has cozied up to strongmen such as Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Chinese President Xi Jinping. At the same time, President Donald Trump's nationalistic rhetoric, fixation on Islamic extremism, and insistence on labeling critical media 'fake news' serves to reinforce the framework of accusations and legal charges that allow such leaders to preside over the jailing of journalists."

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution has inspired people around the world for over 200 years. It was reaffirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and versions of it have been included in the constitutions of many countries; yet while the United States has long been a global leader for freedom of expression, the White House is now actively working to undermine press freedom. President Trump's reckless rhetoric has not only harmed our credibility and our reputation, it has emboldened foreign dictators who fear nothing more than for their misdeeds to be exposed by the media. The consequence is journalists threatened and imprisoned, journalists assassinated with impunity, publishers who are intimidated, and the ultimate casualty is the truth.

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#### PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, 2018 marks the 100-year anniversary of the influenza pandemic that killed an estimated 50 million people, including 670,000 Americans. I suspect most people assume that, given the remarkable advances in modern medicine since 1918, nothing so disastrous could happen again, but in fact, it could, and next time, it could be even worse. The spread of infectious diseases and drug resistance, and the accompanying threats to global security, are on the rise, and the international community is woefully underprepared to fight back.

The several large-scale infectious disease outbreaks of the last two decades, including SARS, H1N1, and Ebola, have revealed the extent to which individual countries and the international community at large need to dramatically improve their preparedness to respond to such potentially catastrophic health crises.

The stark reality is that the threat is increasing. An ever-growing, increasingly mobile global population will provide the breeding ground for the emergence and contagion of existing and new infectious diseases.

The potential threats from infectious disease outbreaks include not only catastrophic loss of life, but severe economic harm and social and political instability. The 2014-15 Ebola outbreak, for example, which began with the death of a 2-year-old boy in a remote Guinean village, ultimately killed

more than 11,000 people across six countries, left thousands of children orphaned, caused an estimated economic loss to those countries of nearly \$3 billion, and resulted in many people losing confidence in their country's public health system.

It is important to note that Ebola, which is spread through direct contact and terrified millions of people including in this country, is hardly the most infectious known disease. Several other disease agents, such as measles and influenza, can be spread through the air and can develop into epidemics or pandemics much more rapidly.

That is one of the reasons why many global health experts fear that an infectious disease outbreak far worse than Ebola will occur sometime in the next 20 years and that the number of outbreaks will become more frequent.

Despite improvements in access to safe water and sanitation, vaccine development, and other public health advances to combat infectious diseases, an enormous amount of work remains.

One of the most important lessons learned from the Ebola outbreak is that time is of the essence. The lack of a rapid, coordinated global response resulted in many preventable deaths. Disease surveillance systems were poor or nonexistent in the severely impacted countries, there was a lack of trained personnel to rapidly deploy, and no effective public communication system was in place to inform and update local communities.

An additional problem was the inability to quickly mobilize resources. Countries and NGOs around the globe lacked a reserve of available funds. The Congress took a step toward addressing this issue in the fiscal year 2017 State and foreign operations appropriations bill, which included a \$70 million emergency reserve fund to address infectious disease outbreaks around the globe. In the fiscal year 2018 Senate version of the State and foreign operations bill, Chairman GRAHAM and I included \$130 million for programs to prevent and respond to such emerging health threats.

However, as I have said before and I will say again, far more needs to be done to build the public health infrastructure to prevent and respond to disease pandemics. As the international community works to be more prepared for infectious disease outbreaks, the U.S. should continue to play a leading role in preparedness planning. Unfortunately, President Trump's fiscal year 2018 budget would cut funding for these very programs, including for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which played an indispensable role in responding to the Ebola and Zika outbreaks, as it has to many other international health crises.

It is time we invest and prepare for pandemics in a similar way as we invest and prepare for war, nuclear disasters, or other large-scale threats to global security. The potential consequences are no less serious. I urge