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Time for a Change

Only one week ago, the United States suffered its worst mass shooting in history. In a combination hate-crime terrorist act, 49 people were shot and killed, while another 53 were wounded, at a gay bar by a man who declared ISIS allegiance.

But last night, our U.S. senate demonstrated itself as weak, ineffective, and tone-deaf, says Colorado Ceasefire. In near party-line votes, senators defeated proposals to deny firearms to suspected terrorists and to implement universal background checks.

Colorado enacted universal background checks in July 2013. Since that time, firearms transfers have been denied to over 18,500 individuals, 940 of which were private sales, because the purchaser was prohibited from possessing firearms. These denied individuals were felons, domestic violence abusers, adjudicated mentally ill or fugitives from justice. These measures have kept guns out of the hands of people who have shown a propensity for violence or who are seriously mentally ill.

Over 90% of Americans and 85% of Coloradoans approve of universal background checks. Colorado Ceasefire notes that, unfortunately, Colorado's senator Cory Gardner could not find a way to meeting constituent desires and voted no.

Similarly, 85% of Americans want the sale of guns to terrorists banned, and again Gardner is out-of-step.

Senators are elected to serve the interests of their constituents, but sometimes take principled positions that differ from the views their constituents. With his votes, Gardner did neither. Instead, Gardner put allegiance to his party and his gun lobby benefactors (about \$3 million in the 2014 election) first.

“Voting against public safety could hardly be considered taking the higher ground,” said Christine Lundgren of Colorado Ceasefire. “Gardner has voted for felons, domestic violence offenders, and, yes, even suspected terrorists, to easily obtain firearms, thereby presenting a danger to us all.” Lundgren also wondered at the irony that Republican senators were so very concerned about someone wrongfully on the no-fly list being deprived of their right to firearms, but not about their right to travel freely.

Eileen McCarron, also of Colorado Ceasefire, stated “Coloradoans mistakenly elected Cory Gardner to the U.S. Senate based on campaign rhetoric that he was a ‘different kind of Republican.’” What we saw last night is that he is the same-old worn-out NRA-allegiant Republican. Although Colorado voters can’t do anything about Gardner in this year’s election, they can send a signal that they find little value in gun lobby servants such as Gardner.”

Tom Mauser, who lost his son Daniel at Columbine, spoke of the victims of the Orlando shooting and said “Their families today found no solace in the heartlessness of our U.S. Senate. It is a sad day when elected leaders in a democracy cannot see a grievous wrong and fix it.”

Colorado Ceasefire, an all-volunteer statewide organization, has been fighting for freedom from gun violence since 2000. Ceasefire initiated and was instrumental in the enactment of the 2013 Colorado firearms laws, which included universal background checks, a high capacity magazine ban, and domestic violence firearms relinquishment.

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