

U.S. Sen. Johnson: School safety legislation blocked by Senate Democrats

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WASHINGTON – On Wednesday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) delivered remarks on the Senate floor about his legislation, the [Luke and Alex School Safety Act](#), and asked for unanimous consent for its passage.

The bill would codify into law a clearinghouse of information for the best school safety practices. The clearinghouse, available at [SchoolSafety.gov](#), informs parents, teachers and school officials of the best practices for improving school security and publishes information on available grant programs and federal resources. It is named after Luke Hoyer and Alex Schachter, two students killed in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School attack on February 14, 2018 in Parkland, Florida. Sen. Johnson introduced the legislation in November 2019 with Senators Rick Scott (R-Fla.) and Marco Rubio (R-Fla.)

Following Sen. Johnson's remarks on Wednesday, Sen. Schumer (D-N.Y.) blocked the passage of the bill.



Click [here](#) for the video

The Senator delivered the following remarks:

“Madam President, today America grieves. There’s nothing partisan about it. Being a parent and grandparent, I cannot imagine the grief felt by the parents of those children. Unless you’ve experienced it, none of us can. What’s the solution? There is no “one” solution. Let’s be honest about that.

“Following Sandy Hook, following Parkland, I met with the parents of those horrific and senseless tragedies I’ve been blessed to get to know three parents quite well – Tom and Gina Hoyer and Max Schachter. Tom and Gina are the parents of Luke Hoyer. Max is the father of Alex Schachter. To the 17 victims of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School slaughter in Parkland, Florida that occurred on February 14, 2018 – in getting to know Tom, Gina and Max, you get some sense of the level of grief.

“I mentioned, there’s nothing partisan about the grief. I listened to President Biden’s remarks last night. I think the point he made that pierced my heart, because President Biden has known tragedy, is when he said that those parents in Texas, they’re asking themselves, will they ever sleep again? We all grieve. We’re all looking for solutions. The good senator from Delaware said, we must take action,

“What I’ve always valued about Tom and Gina and Max is these are three individuals, parents, who do know the pain. They still grieve for the loss of their sons, and yet they have not approached trying to find solutions in any partisan way whatsoever. They’re trying to find areas of agreement. They advised the Federal Commission on School Safety. They came up with a pretty common sense action. It may not solve all the problems, but it’s a good idea. It is such a good idea that as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental

Affairs, we codified it. We passed it unanimously out of our committee in November of 2019.

“It’s called the Luke and Alex School Safety Act. It’s pretty simple. It just creates a clearinghouse of information of the best practices for school safety. It involves numerous departments – Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Justice, and Department of Homeland Security. They all must approve what these best practices are. It ensures that parents, teachers, school officials and other stakeholders have input into what those best practices are. It doesn’t allow the clearinghouse to mandate any school to take any certain action. Maybe most importantly, it publishes the available grant programs and federal resources available for school safety. Again, it passed out of the Committee on Homeland Security Governmental Affairs twice, unanimously – once under my chairmanship, once under the chairmanship of Senator Peters.

“There’s nothing partisan about this bill whatsoever. It’s just a good idea that could save lives. It was such a good idea, that under the previous administration, they set up that clearinghouse. It’s up and it’s operating. So all this bill does at this point is serve as a model for what’s happening. All this bill does now is codify it to make sure this clearinghouse stands the test of time – that it will always be there to provide the best practices on school safety.

“Now, I’m very sensitive to the moment in time we’re in right now We should let the nation and those parents grieve. I don’t want to politicize anything about this moment.

“So I called up Max, Tom and Gina and asked them, what would you like me do? They’ve been trying to get this codified, passed into law, for four years. I can’t explain why it’s not law. Just last month, the Senate passed the Pray Safe Act, which basically took the Luke and Alex School Safety Act, and applied it to churches. That passed by unanimous consent. No objection. I tried to attach this bill to that bill, but

for whatever reason, somebody is objecting. I have no idea why. None.

“Again, it passed our committee unanimously, twice. It’s a good idea. It could save lives. It is an action, when people are calling for action following this tragedy.

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“I just want to again emphasize the fact that I just spoke with Max and Gina and Tom. These are parents of children who lost their lives in school shootings. These are parents who have come up with a solution, a nonpartisan solution. They got it recommended by the Federal Commission on School Safety. They told me that the day after Parkland a parent from Sandy Hook had a piece of legislation that they’d been trying to get passed but couldn’t. They would help. They would have been one hundred percent supportive of that piece of legislation, come to the floor and pass by unanimous consent – irrespective of the timing.

“They asked me to come to the floor today, to ask my colleagues to lay aside partisanship, to do something for these families, provide them some measure of comfort by passing a completely nonpartisan bill that could make a difference, that could save a life. There is no reason not to pass this bill today, in this chamber, at this hour. So, Madam President, as in the legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of calendar number 102 S.111. I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made, and laid upon the table.

...

“As Chairman of Homeland Security, I passed over 300 pieces of legislation out of

committee. Over 130 of those became law. Very few of those, almost none, were partisan in any way, shape or form. The approach I used to have that kind of legislative success is rather than focus on issues that divide us, I concentrated on areas of agreement. Today I brought to the Senate floor a nonpartisan bill, a bill crafted by the parents, the parents who lost their sons in one of these horrific tragedies. It passed our committee twice, unanimously. Those parents asked me to come today to please pass this bill, take some action, provide some comfort to all the parents that are grieving, to a nation that is grieving.

“I came to the floor today, and I will not engage in partisanship, other than to say it is just sad. It is just sad that this body can’t pass this bill when about a month ago, they passed an identical bill that applied to churches. This one applies to schools, and yet it’s inappropriate, according to the Majority Leader, to pass this non-partisan bill by unanimous consent. Madam President, this is a very sad day for the United States Senate. I yield.”