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W.Va. senator vows to reintroduce gun legislation

Pat Perriello | Apr. 30, 2013 NCR Today

Joe Manchin, the courageous Democratic senator from West Virginia, has not given up on his efforts to pass legislation expanding background checks on gun purchases. In an interview with Fox News' Chris Wallace [1], he said he absolutely intends to bring the legislation up again.

This is encouraging news. The legislation Sen. Manchin is pushing is not even close to being all that needs to be done to address gun violence in our country. Yet the failure to pass even this modest proposal is a shameful blot on the legacy of the U.S. Senate. Senators need another opportunity to say something positive about the issue of gun violence. Victims of gun violence deserve this attention. The fact is that this legislation, despite its limitations, will at least make a difference. It will actually serve as a positive step in assisting law enforcement in the effort to reduce gun violence.

The Catholic bishops have voiced their support for this legislation. They need to continue to speak loudly and clearly about the necessity for its passage. Hopefully enough pressure can be generated to change enough minds in Congress to get this legislation enacted. The public overwhelmingly supports background checks. Several senators have already seen their poll numbers drop because of their refusal to support them.

Even without pressure, senators should be able to look at this legislation and recognize it is also the right thing to do. It is in fact the least they can do to demonstrate they actually care about the children of Newtown, Conn. It is the least they can do if they truly believe these precious lives are important. Hopefully they will care enough to take this small step to prevent criminals and others who should not have guns from acquiring them.

Keep in mind that Joe Manchin is a West Virginia senator who has loudly supported and continues to support gun rights and the Second Amendment. His own reflections on the current escalation of gun violence convinced him that steps needed to be taken to reduce this violence. It is time for other senators to also act on this common-sense notion.

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[1] http://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2013/04/28/dem_sen_manchin_absolutely_going_to_try_gun_control_again.htm