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REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 05

Yesterday I was on the floor of the State Senate, speaking in support of a resolution honoring the late civil rights hero Harvey Milk - whose life was cut short by a bullet from an angry man's gun. In the course of those remarks I noted how leaders like Milk have the capacity to provide hope for a better tomorrow in a troubled world and I acknowledged how elusive the feeling of hope can be in today's world, particularly given the nastiness of our political discourse and the seemingly never-ending stream of mass shootings.

Around this same time, 19 elementary school children and 2 teachers were murdered by a man in Texas. Like you, I am deeply saddened and sickened by this unspeakable tragedy. Where do we go from here? How do we explain these repeated massacres to our children?

The United States has the highest gun ownership rates and highest gun violence rates of any developed nation in the world. More must be done, particularly at the federal level to enact commonsense gun control reform.

There is also more we can do - each of us - to honor the lives lost. We can be better. We can take a good look at ourselves and remember to be kinder, more civil with each other; make more of an effort to put ourselves in one another's shoes - to see each other as members of the same community.

There is much strife and upheaval in our world and in our country today but each of us has the capacity to make things better. Each of us has the ability to provide hope, whether it be through volunteering, making a sacrifice for a friend, simple acts of kindness, or by bringing more decency and civility to our politics.

May God bless the souls of those little children and adults. We owe them and their families reason for hope and we owe them action. It is within our grasp.