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Senate

TRIBUTE TO KEANON LOWE

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, today I want to recognize and honor Parkrose High School coach and security guard Keanon Lowe for his heroism during the school day on May 17, 2019.

When Mr. Lowe spotted an armed student in a classroom in the northeast Portland high school, he bravely tackled the student, wrestled away the gun, and held the student until police arrived. Mr. Lowe may have saved the lives of countless students, teachers, and administrators at Parkrose.

In Mr. Lowe's own words the day after the incident, "When I signed up to be a security guard, football and track and field coach for Parkrose High School, I did so to guide and coach young people whose shoes I had once been in. I had no idea that I would one day have to put my life on the line like I did yesterday for my students."

Mr. Lowe is no stranger to the spotlight. Before becoming the football and track coach at Parkrose, Mr. Lowe was a standout football player in Oregon at Jesuit High School and then the University of Oregon, U of O, "Go Ducks!"

As an U of O alumnus, I witnessed Mr. Lowe's standout play both in Autzen Stadium in Eugene and in the 2015 national championship game against the Ohio State University.

All Ducks fans know Mr. Lowe as a champion on the field, and now all of Oregon and the country, know him as a hero off the field.

Mr. Lowe's heroics saved the day on a Friday morning just before noon. Students, teachers, and administrators at Parkrose, as well as their loved ones, are incredibly grateful that Mr. Lowe prevented what could have been a tragedy in my hometown.

Sadly, far too many schools in my State and across America have not been so fortunate in the past few decades. Gun violence in schools has essentially created a "lockdown generation" of students whose happy memories of high school dances, games, plays, and other activities jostle alongside memories of lockdown drills and, in far too many instances, violent gunmen.

Again, in Mr. Lowe's own words, "I'm blessed to be alive and extremely happy that the students are safe. I'm not sure what's next, I haven't had the time to really think about it. But I am sure I want to be a part of the solution to school gun violence."

I am grateful that Mr. Lowe prevented the worst on May 17, 2019, and welcome his commitment to be a teammate in reducing the chances of gun tragedies in every school in America.