

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY,
MARCH 25, 1996

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the house adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Monday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HASTINGS of Washington). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TUESDAY,
MARCH 26, 1996

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Monday, March 25, 1996, it adjourn to meet at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 26 for morning hour debates.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

HOUR OF MEETING ON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 1996

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns on Tuesday, March 26, 1996, it adjourn to meet at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, March 27.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

DISPENSING WITH CALENDAR
WEDNESDAY BUSINESS ON
WEDNESDAY NEXT

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the business in order under the Calendar Wednesday rule be dispensed with on Wednesday next.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

WHO DO YOU TRUST—HAMAS OR
THE USA?

(Mr. LEWIS of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, there is a Member of this Congress, a Republican, who has told one of his colleagues that he "trusts Hamas more than he trusts our own Government." That is an outrageous and morally repugnant statement, Mr. Speaker.

Hamas is a terrorist organization that targets, maims, and kills innocent men, women, and children. Which Member of Congress thinks they can trust that sick and twisted group more than our own Government. Whoever believes this doesn't deserve the right and privilege to serve in this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this anonymous Republican Member has disgraced him or herself and cast a cloud over the entire

Congress. The Members and the American people deserve an explanation and an apology.

Who among you? Who among you believes such a thing? Step forward and explain yourself. The American people are watching and waiting. For shame, Mr. Speaker, for shame.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

GUN CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Mr. Speaker, in this often contentious debate about gun control, I wanted to talk for a bit about why I supported lifting the ban on so-called assault weapons, but I would like to move beyond that, as well, as to what can be done.

I supported lifting the ban because I do not think it has made much of a difference and I do not think it works. I also think that it is really false advertising.

The fact of the matter is that this type of firearm that is sought to be banned is responsible at best, according to the Department of Justice, for something like 3 percent of violent crimes and many suggest in those statistics that it could be as low as 1 percent of violent crimes. Yet this is where 100 percent of the debate has rested for 2 years.

I also oppose the ban on so-called assault weapons because I never have understood why it is that you can take two firearms and one looks a certain way, perhaps it has a bayonet mount on it or it has a flash suppressor or a folding stock, one firearm looks one way, another firearm looks another way but they both fire the same bullet at the same speed, at the same impact and they are both semiautomatic, yet one is banned and one is not. Once again, it seemed to me to be cosmetic.

Third is because if these are indeed the cause of a lot of violent crime, then why is it that since this ban was passed, well over a year ago, why is it that there has only been one—that is right—one prosecution in the entire country under this law?

So for those reasons, I have opposed this existing ban.

I did support the present bill to lift the ban because it did something else, as well. It created mandatory sentencing for crimes committed with firearms. It put people away. If you commit the crime with this kind of gun or any kind of gun, you are going to jail for a certain amount of time. That is what is needed. My experience is that people who intend to commit a crime with a firearm are not paying attention to laws.

We have laws already that it is illegal to carry a concealed weapon without a permit; any minor that is under 18, it is illegal for them to possess a handgun under existing law. Of course felons are not permitted to have firearms and on it goes. If they are going to commit a crime, they are going to get a gun.

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Now, what I really propose, though, is to take the challenge that a newspaper issued to me recently. It is a fair challenge: If you do not believe in gun control, and I do not, then what is it that you would do? The first thing I would do is to make sure strict penalties are implemented so people understand if they commit a crime with a firearm, they are going to jail. At the Federal level this Government has been lax on that. It is time to toughen up. It is time to enforce existing laws that are on the books.

Second, though, is to lower the decibel level on this issue. There are well-meaning people on both sides of this issue. In fact, there is a lot of disagreement. So can we focus where we agree? Can we focus on a coordinated community campaign?

The fact of the matter is there is too much violence, there is too much crime. Yes, there is too much use of guns in this crime. But that is going to be dealt with by dealing with the heart, by dealing with the soul, by dealing with education, by dealing with the attitude. What is it that causes people in our society to become violent? What is it that makes people somehow think the first thing you do is pick up a gun instead of the absolutely last unthinkable thing you do? That is what needs to be dealt with.

This can be a call for all of us in our community, churches, business groups, our schools, our parents, our teachers, to become involved in dispute resolution processes, to look and study what it is that can be done in our community, how can we work together to make sure that young persons growing up do not think violence is the first resort, how is it newspapers, community journalism, resources at their disposal, how is it newspapers can be involved in surveying what can be done across our country and bringing that home so all of us in the community can understand, so newspapers can focus on successful efforts, role models and community organizing and dispute resolution and their teaching and their education? How is it that newspapers can help focus people's attention, the young person's attention, as to what happens in these types of crimes? What is it that can be done within the community?

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Speaker, we are not going to solve the problem of gun control on the floor of this House. What we can do, though, is to seek to bring this country together around fighting violence and make sure those who commit crimes with guns, yes, are put away, more importantly,