

Yesterday, Senator WYDEN and I were asked to be on program after program, and we declined, because it was not a day for pontificating about policy or political posturing. It was a day for grief and mourning. I reach out to my State. I cannot be there physically, but my heart is with you and I am in agony with you. It becomes all of us here and in any place in government not to pick a single issue and say that is why, but to look at the strings that run from Springfield to Jonesboro or in any other community in this State and to find out what is happening with the youth of America whereby they solve their problems by resorting to this kind of violence.

We must have the courage to face all of the possibilities. It isn't just the school. It isn't just the gun. It isn't just the family. It isn't any of these things in isolation, but it is all of them together.

I, for one, reach across to my colleague from Oregon, Senator WYDEN, and every other member of the Oregon delegation in this Congress, and to our Governor, and to school officials and to parents in Oregon and across this country and say, let's figure it out and let's try to prevent it from occurring again. This does not belong in America. The answers start with us.

The answers start in our hearts and in our homes, in our legislatures, in this Capitol building, but it starts with us as individuals to find out how to say no to this in the future and to prevent it. We are doing many things to punish, and those are appropriate things. It is time to do more to prevent.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon is recognized.

Mr. WYDEN. I thank the Chair.

As Senator SMITH has said, the people of Oregon are grieving this morning. Our hearts are out to them. This is a time when all of us from Springfield, OR, to Springfield, MA, have to take a few moments out from our daily routine and reflect on what has happened in our home State. This is supposed to be a joyous time of year for kids in high school. They think about summer vacations and plans, time with family. Once again, however, our country has been rocked by unspeakable violence. I think all of us know that young people get upset and they do foolish things. But that is not what this is about.

In times past, when young people got angry, they might throw a rock, they might throw a fist, but there was not this pattern of deadly gun violence. And so now it is critically important as we grieve for the people of our home State—my staff has been trying to help, giving blood, assisting others in the community, but it is especially important now to get beyond the kind of finger pointing and the sort of blame game that inevitably takes place here and look to how these tragedies can be prevented in the future.

I share Senator SMITH's judgment that this is about what is in our heart.

It is about taking every possible step in the schools, in the family, through the education and health programs and through law enforcement programs, to protect our citizens and to reach out to those young people in trouble. That way we have a chance to restore safety in our communities and peace of mind for parents who, right now across this country, because of Springfield and the previous tragedies, are going to get up in the morning saying to themselves: What is going to happen at my child's school today? We cannot have that. No Member of the Senate can abide by that. And that, to me, is our central challenge today.

Oregonians have come together in the last 24 hours to do what we always do best, and that is to help friends and neighbors in a time of great need. We have seen an extraordinary outpouring of concern in Springfield towards families. It is not possible to find any real comfort at a time like this, but if you can feel hopeful—we have got to get up every morning working to make this a better world and a safer world—we can take some comfort in knowing that communities like Springfield do work. They are getting up this morning and saying that they are going to try to reach out to everybody in that community, to try to do everything possible to heal in Springfield and our home State but, even more importantly, to do everything they can to make sure that tragedies like this do not happen again in Oregon or anywhere else.

That is what we need to work for in this Chamber. Government policies can help, and with the government being a better partner, and families and schools and communities rallying, as Springfield has, we can make a difference and we can stop this carnage in our schools.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate have a minute of silence in the Chamber in deference to the remarks of the two Senators from Oregon, and then the Senate would proceed with the hour of morning business beginning at that point.

(There being no objection, the Senate observed a moment of silence.)

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business for not to exceed 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

ISTEA

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote on the con-

ference report on H.R. 2400, the ISTEAA reauthorization legislation. I regret that I am unable to be here to vote on this important piece of legislation, but I must depart momentarily to speak to the 25th Anniversary Reunion of Vietnam-Era Prisoners of War in Dallas, Texas.

If I were able to record my vote, however, I would vote against this conference agreement. This legislation is likely the most pork-laden legislation ever to be considered by Congress in the 20th Century. This conference report should be defeated, despite the inclusion of many important and commendable provisions.

I cannot support this conference report despite the fact that it does include significant motor carrier, highway and boating safety initiatives developed by the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The Commerce Committee conferees, Senator HOLLINGS, Senator STEVENS, and I, worked diligently and responsibly to ensure that effective truck safety inspection and enforcement activities are continued, that safety initiatives on motor vehicle occupant protection are created, and that recreational boating activities are advanced.

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation portion of the conference report also requires the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (NHTSA) to change existing passenger car air bag standards so that the risks air bags pose to infants, children, and other individuals are minimized. I also want to take this opportunity to express my personal thanks to Senator KEMPTHORNE. Without his involvement, I doubt our efforts to improve passenger car air bags would have succeeded as they did.

Yet despite these notable achievements, I regret I cannot support the ISTEAA reauthorization conference report. I object for several key reasons: the budgetary offsets, donor state inequity, and pork barrel spending.

On April 2nd, I reluctantly voted for an amendment sponsored by Senators DOMENICI, LOTT, and CRAIG on the Balanced Budget Act which proposed to transfer approximately \$10.5 billion over five years from the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans' tobacco-related diseases to pay for the transportation reauthorization legislation. In part, I did this because I believe that the tobacco companies, rather than the taxpayers, should bear the burden for veterans' tobacco-related diseases caused partially by smoking and using other tobacco products while they were in military service.

Military service did not force servicemembers to smoke, but I do acknowledge that for morale reasons, the services made cigarettes available for free or at inexpensive prices. The services also give servicemembers condoms and birth control pills at no cost to military personnel, but that does not mean that they want our men and women in uniform to be promiscuous.