

THE NATIONAL YOUTH VIOLENCE
COMMISSION**HON. DAN BURTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, the Columbine High School tragedy and its after-shocks still haunt our memories. Statesmen, pundits and ordinary citizens ask questions every day as to why our children are murdering their peers. Clearly, the mere fact that we must ask these questions demonstrates that a real crisis exists and needs to be addressed immediately. While no one has any definitive answers, many opinions have been put forth without reaching any consensus. These opinions are multi-faceted and have included: the de-moralization and de-humanization of our youth due to a "culture of violence" perpetuated by the media, the non-enforcement of existing laws regarding firearms, and the degradation of families and communities due to this "culture of violence."

All of these opinions likely point to sources of the problem of teen violence, but they do not reveal the possibility of one single and simple solution. In order to put a halt to the specter of teen violence, an investigation should be made into its causes and to its probable solutions. Such a Commission should be bi-partisan, and it should be appointed equally by the President of the United States and Leaders in Congress from both the Majority and Minority parties. In the best interests of the Nation, the Commission will come to some form of a consensus concerning the various natures of, and the solutions to, the extreme teen violence that is plaguing our society.

These tragedies are too important to ignore, and too important not to focus all of our resources on discovering their root causes and possible solutions. That is why I, along with Representatives MARKEY and TIERNEY, am introducing legislation to create a national Commission that will be asked to conduct an in-depth analysis of teen violence. The Commission would be made up of a panel of experts that include religious figures, teachers, law enforcement officials, counselors, psychologists, and research groups that deal with family issues. Hopefully, a Commission that contains such experts will be able to appraise the situation accurately and make the necessary recommendations.

Upon completion of its work, the commission will be responsible for submitting to Congress and the President a report detailing possible steps to reduce the level of juvenile violence in America. While this is not a problem that will be solved overnight, and there are some serious ideological differences that need be overcome, I am hopeful that this Commission can help us in preventing similar tragedies from occurring in the future, and at least begin to address the plague of youth violence that is tearing the very fabric of our nation.

THE NATIONAL YOUTH VIOLENCE
COMMISSION**HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, weeks after the tragedy at Columbine High School, we as a national community are still cognizant of the ordeal and attempting to make sense of this horrific incident and the other school massacres that followed it. Many of us are still asking questions and searching for reasons why our children are senselessly murdering each other in classrooms, schoolyards, streetcorners and their homes; why there is so much violence surrounding and savaging the youth of our country.

There have been several factors cited as the possible causes for this emphasis on violence: the disconnection so many youths feel from their parents, peers, schools and communities; the harmful influence of the entertainment media; the easy access children have to guns; lack of support services for alienated and mentally ill teens; and the weakening of our moral and communal safety nets.

While there are many informed opinions and hypotheses, there are very few definitive conclusions and little consensus as to who or what is responsible for this atrocity. This is a problem that can not be solved with definitive answers—there is no one answer. As a country Americans do agree that we must come together as a nation to stop this menace, which is putting all of our communities and way of life at risk.

In order to combat this difficult challenge, we must reach a national consensus on how to respond. We must carefully, deliberately, dispassionately analyze the depths of the problem. Today, Mr. BURTON, Mr. TIERNEY and I are introducing legislation to create a national commission on youth violence that will examine the many possible reasons why so many children are becoming killers and help us find solutions to diminish this imminent threat.

In order to thoroughly study the many dimensions of the problem this panel should be composed of the country's finest experts in the fields of law enforcement, teaching and counseling, parenting and family studies, child and adolescent psychology, Cabinet members, and religious leaders.

After 18 months of work, the commission would be responsible to report its conclusions to the President and Congress and recommend a series of tangible steps to take in order to reduce the level of youth violence and prevent another community from feeling the same pain and grief as the residents of Littleton.

There are several steps that must be taken by Congress and the citizens of our country in order to preserve the safety of our children. We understand that this problem is not one that can be solved overnight, or with any single piece of legislation. Despite this we have legitimate policy and philosophical differences to overcome in order to tackle this problem. There is not a guarantee that with this commission that we will find these answers and solve our problems, but we believe there is hope for doing so and therefore deserves our support.

TRIBUTE TO LARRY PETERSON

HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of one of Colorado's great businessmen, Larry Peterson. In doing so, I would like to honor this individual who, for so many years, has exemplified the notion of public service civic duty.

Larry Peterson is a self made man who has always exhibited strong morals and family values. After graduating high school, he spent a short time attending Colorado State University. Larry chose to leave college to return home and help care for his family in a time of need. He experienced many areas of the work field, before settling into a career. Late in the 1960's Larry Peterson began working at a pharmacy, which he would later own.

Larry Peterson is a successful businessman and has always sought to share his success with others. He finds time to get involved with charities such as Make A Wish Foundation, and the Children Miracle Network. His contributions to charities are too numerous to list, which indicates just how many there are.

Aside from his contributions to charities, Larry Peterson has been very active in Republican party politics. As a precinct captain since 1998, Larry has helped many candidates who have run, or are running, for office, including Colorado Governor Bill Owens, President George Bush and Senator Bob Dole. Larry has also played a key role in the organizational efforts of the GOP throughout Colorado. He was very effective in assisting former GOP Chairman Don Bain with important grassroots events from throughout 1993–1996. He even participated as a member of the Colorado Delegation to the National Convention in 1996.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to say thank you to Larry Peterson for his truly exceptional contributions to numerous charities, and to the state of Colorado alike. People like Larry, who give so selflessly to others, are a rare breed. Fellow citizens have gained immensely by knowing him, and for that we owe Larry Peterson a debt of gratitude.

A TRIBUTE TO BEVERLY A.
SHAUGHNESSY FOR HER 35
YEARS OF SERVICE**HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a remarkable public servant in my district, Beverly A. Shaughnessy, who is retiring after 35 years of service to the Fourth District Cook County Court.

Mrs. Beverly Shaughnessy, the former Beverly Thomas, has been a life-long resident of Berwyn, Illinois. Mrs. Shaughnessy began her career in the Berwyn Health Department. In the early 1950's she moved to Berwyn City Hall as a Court Clerk. When Berwyn and other surrounding communities became a part of the Fourth District, Beverly moved to the District offices in Oak Park. As the Fourth District outgrew its facilities, a new District office was