signed by this President and other Presidents, and they are unenforced by this administration. Unenforced, and we do nothing about the media and the violence which they penetrate into our society because they are the friends of those who promote gun control legislation.

□ 1015

Let us be reasonable. Let us do what is right for America, not what is political. Let us pass reasonable gun legislation, when needed, and enforce that which is on the books.

ERODING THE SECOND AMENDMENT

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

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, when the President says put people first, what he means, particularly this week, is put politicians first, put political people first, because this week, as we further erode the second amendment, we are not putting people first, we are not putting children first, we are not putting safety first, and we are certainly not putting the facts first. But we hear over and over again, no, we are just closing a few loopholes. This is common sense, reasonable, sensible. Yet it goes far beyond closing loopholes in gun shows. It calls for registration of people's guns who go to gun shows, permanent registration. It calls for a 6-month background check that is kept by the FBI for 6 months, and many, many other measures that have nothing to do with closing loopholes.

Mr. Speaker, in Columbine High School, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris broke 23 gun control laws. In Heritage High School, the young man broke into his father's gun cabinet to steal a well-protected gun. Yet we have to ask ourselves, maybe there is something beyond gun control that could prevent these things from happening, because gun control is not working. It did not work in these two cases.

What about the violent video, the violent TV? What about the music? What about children being raised without parents? It seems in today's society, where there are no absolutes, no truths, there are also no values.

This week is not about children, it is about politics.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Such rollcall votes, if postponed, will be taken after debate has concluded on all motions to suspend the rules.

SELECTIVE AGRICULTURAL EMBARGOES ACT OF 1999

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 17) to amend the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 to require the President to report to Congress on any selective embargo on agricultural commodities, to provide a termination date for the embargo, to provide greater assurances for contract sanctity, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 17

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Selective Agricultural Embargoes Act of 1999''.

SEC. 2. REPORTING ON SELECTIVE EMBARGOES.

The Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5711 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end of title VI:

''SEC. 604. REPORTING ON SELECTIVE EMBARGOES.

''(a) REPORT.—If the President takes any action, pursuant to statutory authority, to embargo the export under an export sales contract (as defined in subsection (e)) of an agricultural commodity to a country that is not part of an embargo on all exports to the country, not later than 5 days after imposing the embargo, the President shall submit a report to Congress that sets forth in detail the reasons for the embargo and specifies the proposed period during which the embargo will be effective.

''(b) APPROVAL OF EMBARGO.—If a joint resolution approving the embargo becomes law during the 100-day period beginning on the date of receipt of the report provided for in subsection (a), the embargo shall terminate on the earlier of—

''(1) a date determined by the President; or

''(2) the date that is 1 year after the date of enactment of the joint resolution approving the embargo.

''(c) DISAPPROVAL OF EMBARGO.—If a joint resolution disapproving the embargo becomes law during the 100-day period referred to in subsection (b), the embargo shall terminate on the expiration of the 100-day period.

''(d) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, an embargo may take effect and continue in effect during any period in which the United States is in a state of war declared by Congress or national emergency, requiring such action, declared by the President.

''(e) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section—

''(1) the term 'agricultural commodity' includes plant nutrient materials;

''(2) the term 'under an export sales contract' means under an export sales contract entered into before the President has transmitted to Congress notice of the proposed embargo; and

''(3) the term 'embargo' includes any prohibition or curtailment.''.

SEC. 3. ADDITION OF PLANT NUTRIENT MATERIALS TO PROTECTION OF CONTRACT SANCTITY.

Section 602(c) of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 5712(c)) is amended by inserting ''(including plant nutrient materials)'' after ''agricultural commodity'' each place it appears.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EWING) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois, (Mr. EWING).

Mr. EWING. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, American agriculture plays a key role in U.S. trade economy. The contributions of agricultural exports to the U.S. economy are impressive. The United States Department of Agriculture estimates that farm exports will be $49 billion in 1999, providing a positive trade balance of $11 billion.

Just 3 years ago, however, there was another $10 billion higher on our agricultural trade balance. This was almost three times what it is today. It is a fact, and it is a painful one to many of us, that our agricultural economy is the one sector of the great American economy that is suffering very badly. If things do not improve, 10 percent of American farmers could be forced from their farms this year.

New and reliable markets are one of the answers to this very serious problem. The U.S. agricultural economy is more than twice as reliant on exports as the overall economy. This reliance makes agricultural-specific embargoes especially painful for the American farmer and rancher. H.R. 17 provides a vital and necessary foreign check and balance system. This legislation provides for congressional review and approval of both Houses of Congress if the President imposes an agricultural-specific embargo on a foreign country.

H.R. 17 would require the President to submit a report detailing to Congress reasons for the embargo and a proposed termination date. Congress then has 100 days to approve or disapprove the embargo.

If Congress approves the resolution, the embargo will terminate on the date determined by the President or 1 year after enactment, whichever occurs earliest. If a disapproving resolution is enacted, the embargo will terminate at the end of the 100-day period.

This legislation would not impact embargoes currently in place, nor would it impede the President's authority to impose cross-sector embargoes. Additionally, H.R. 17 would not take effect during times of war. This legislation was the official policy of the United States when the Export Administration Amendments Act was adopted in 1985. Unfortunately, that act expired in 1994 when Congress failed to reauthorize it. It is important to note that the failure to reauthorize was not a result of any opposition to the agriculture embargo language contained in that act.

Mr. Speaker, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, the Soviet grain embargo cost the United States about $2.3 billion in lost U.S. exports and U.S. Government compensation to American farmers. The Soviet grain embargo is still fresh in the minds of grain farmers throughout America. In the midst of an already poor overall economy, the imposition of the Soviet grain embargo triggered the worst agricultural economic downturn in America since the Great Depression.