

Florida, which I have the privilege to represent.

Since 1949, American Legion Post 273 has been serving the community of Madeira Beach and Pinellas County. Post 273 has more than 3,100 members, making it the largest post in the Great State of Florida and the 5th largest post in the World. In its 50 years of service, Post 273 has a record of service that is second to none.

Post 273 has many volunteers who perform thousands of hours of volunteer service at the Veterans Affairs Hospital at Bay Pines. Among these activities are an annual Thanksgiving Day dinner for disabled veterans, and a New Years Day luncheon. The Honor Guard at Post 273 has performed at 108 funerals in the past 12 months, and has participated in several other functions including the biannual reading of Madeira Beach's deceased veterans. The Post also provides financial assistance to the families of needy veterans.

The service of Post 273 goes beyond veterans. Post 273 has sponsored 14 students for Boys State, where enterprising young boys are selected in their junior year of high school to go to Tallahassee and participate in a detailed study of Florida's State Government. In addition, Post 273 also sponsors an annual oratorical contest, where boys and girls compete nationwide for more than \$18,000 in scholarships. Post 273 also sponsors activities and events that inform the community's young people about child safety, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide prevention.

In its service to the community, Post 273 has been active in the Special Olympics, giving mentally challenged youth a chance to succeed, assists the American Red Cross with an annual blood drive, has a strong record of environmental protection, as it sponsors a recycling program, and raised money to provide sea oats for the Madeira Beach beach re-nourishment program.

Finally, I would be remiss if I neglected to mention American Legion Baseball. Each year, the American Legion sponsors approximately 86,000 young men in legion ball. Madeira Beach Post 273 sponsors two teams, providing uniforms, equipment, umpires, and travel funds.

Mr. Speaker, the service that American Legion Post 273 has provided veterans and families in the community of Madeira Beach for the last 50 years is remarkable and I wish all the members much success as they begin their next 50 years of service.

THE FOGGY BOTTOM ASSOCIATION  
CELEBRATES 40 YEARS OF SERVICE  
TO THE COMMUNITY, 1959-1999

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 16, 1999*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute the Foggy Bottom Association as it celebrates forty years of service in one of Washington's oldest neighborhoods. The Foggy Bottom Association is not only one of the oldest, it is one of our most active and valuable associations.

The Foggy Bottom Association's recorded history dates back to 1765 when Jacob Funk, a German immigrant, purchased and subdivided 130 lots between 24th and 19th

Streets, NW and H Street to the river. This area, known as Hamburg, was the site of docks, glass factories, breweries, a gas works, and later stately homes and what were known as "alley dwellings." Shortly after World War II, public and private developers moved in, building large residential complexes, highways, government and private office buildings, and cultural and educational centers. At the same time, run-down housing stock was being purchased and rebuilt by a mix of people who formed the core of what is now the Foggy Bottom Association. This organization was dedicated to protecting and promoting the neighborhood.

Today, Foggy Bottom is an unusual mixture of homes, apartment dwellings, churches, hotels, restaurants, small businesses, large institutions and government agencies. Many old, historic buildings have been restored and are open to the public.

Music, art, good fellowship, and lots of history are all part of the anniversary program which culminates on June 19, 1999—the day the Foggy Bottom Association was incorporated in 1959.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members of this body to join me in celebrating the Foggy Bottom Association and congratulating the membership for their commitment to the preservation and protection of one of our treasured neighborhoods.

CONSEQUENCES OF GUN CONTROL

**HON. RON PAUL**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 16, 1999*

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I recommend that my colleagues read today's Washington Times article entitled "Disarming Good People" before voting on unconstitutional and counter-effective gun legislation. Outlined within, are some of the disastrous consequences of enacting more gun control. While the lawmakers demand even more restrictions on the sale, ownership, and the use of firearms, we currently have the highest level of gun control in our Nation's history. Yet only 50 years ago, there were no violent incidents in schools like the recent tragedy. Instead of rushing to disarm the law-abiding, let us first examine the current 20,000 gun laws already on the books for their effectiveness.

DISARMING GOOD PEOPLE

*Editor's note:* The following is an open letter from 287 economists, law-school professors and other academics to Congress, regarding gun-control legislation before the House of Representatives. Some but not all of the names of the signatories appear here.

After the tragic attacks at public schools over the last two years, there is an understandable desire to "do something." Yet, none of the proposed legislation would have prevented the recent violence. The current debate focuses only on the potential benefits from new gun control laws and ignores the fact that these laws can have some very real adverse effects. Good intentions don't necessarily make good laws. What counts is whether the laws will ultimately save lives, prevent injury, and reduce crime. Passing laws based upon their supposed benefits while ignoring their costs poses a real threat to people's lives and safety.

These—gun control laws will primarily be obeyed by law-abiding citizens and risk mak-

ing it less likely that good people have guns compared to criminals. Deterrence is important and disarming good people relative to criminals will increase the risk of violent crime. If we really care about saving lives we must focus not only on the newsworthy events where bad things happen, but also on the bad things that never happen because people are able to defend themselves.

Few people would voluntarily put up a sign in front of their homes stating, "This home is a gun-free zone." The reason is very simple. Just as we can deter criminals with higher arrest or conviction rates, the fact that would-be victims might be able to defend themselves also deters attacks. Not only do guns allow individuals to defend themselves, they also provide some protection to citizens who choose not to own guns since criminals would not normally know who can defend themselves before they attack.

The laws currently being considered by Congress ignore the importance of deterrence. Police are extremely important at deterring crime, but they simply cannot be everywhere. Individuals also benefit from being able to defend themselves with a gun when they are confronted by a criminal.

Let us illustrate some of the problems with the current debate.

The Clinton administration wants to raise the age at which citizens can possess a handgun to 21, and they point to the fact that 18- and 19-year-olds commit gun crimes at the highest rate. Yet, Department of Justice numbers indicate that 18- and 19-year-olds are also the most likely victims of violent crimes including murder, rape, robbery with serious injury, and aggravated assault. The vast majority of those committing crimes in this age group are members of gangs and are already breaking the law by having a gun. This law will primarily apply to law-abiding 18- to 21-year-olds and make it difficult for them to defend themselves.

Waiting periods can produce a cooling-off period. But they also have real costs. Those threatened with harm may not be able to quickly obtain a gun for protection.

Gun locks may prevent some accidental gun deaths, but they will make it difficult for people to defend themselves from attackers. We believe that the risks of accidental gun deaths, particularly those involving young children, have been greatly exaggerated. In 1996, there were 44 accidental gun deaths for children under age 10. This exaggeration risks threatening people's safety if it incorrectly frightens some people from having a gun in their home even though that is actually the safest course of action.

Trade-offs exist with other proposals such as prison sentences for adults whose guns are misused by someone under 18 and rules limiting the number of guns people can purchase. No evidence has been presented to show that the likely benefits of such proposals will exceed their potential costs.

With the 20,000 gun laws already on the books, we advise Congress, before enacting yet more new laws, to investigate whether many of the existing laws may have contributed to the problems we currently face. The new legislation is ill-advised.

Sincerely,

Terry L. Anderson, Montana State University; Charles W. Baird, California State University Hayward; Randy E. Barnett, Boston University; Bruce L. Benson, Florida State University; Michael Block, University of Arizona; Walter Block, Thomas Borcherding, Claremont Graduate School; Frank H. Buckley, George Mason University; Colin D. Campbell, Dartmouth College; Robert J. Cottrol, George Washington University; Preston K. Covey, Carnegie Mellon University; Mark Crain, George Mason University;