

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be given 5 minutes to address the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GUN SHOW LOOPHOLE

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, 2 months ago, right after the tragedy of Columbine High School, I warned that whenever a tragedy occurs in our schools, if we don't act quickly and resolutely, the tragedy would recede in memory and we would fail to pass laws necessary to make our schools safe, thereby creating new ways for future tragedies to occur.

To the relief of the entire Nation, the Senate passed the juvenile justice bill that, thankfully, although belatedly, closed the gun show loophole.

The House, however, failed in its duty to the American people. The House was unable to shake loose from the NRA. They were unable to pass a juvenile justice bill with any gun control legislation and unable to even close the gun show loophole.

I rise today to remind the Senate of the urgency that led us to act firmly and resolutely after Columbine, and to use the various parliamentary procedures that allow Members to bring the juvenile justice bill and the gun show loophole bill to conference where we can do what is right.

I spent part of this weekend, Sunday and Monday, in New York's capital region, talking with constituents from Albany and the surrounding towns. Some of the areas were fairly rural. Without prompting, people walked up to me and said: Senator, what the heck are they doing in Washington? How come you can't even close something as simple as the gun show loophole?

They were incredulous. These people aren't passionate advocates of gun controls. They were outraged. They could not believe that a lobbying group, even such a powerful lobbying group as the NRA, could stop the Congress from passing a basic gun show measure.

I am proud of what the Senate accomplished last month. We debated juvenile justice for over a week. Passions frequently ran high. We cast five separate votes on various proposals purporting to close the gun show loophole. In the end, we approved the real thing. The juvenile justice bill itself passed by a margin of 73-25, with majorities of both parties voting in favor.

Is it a perfect bill? No. Is it a good bill that will make a real difference? Absolutely.

Now the question is whether we are going to throw up our hands and say the House couldn't stand up to the gun lobby, so let's give up.

We are in a strange lull, a lull in which newspaper stories inform us, and

I quote the Washington Times of June 23:

Some [GOP leaders] said even a Senate-House conference to iron out differences with Democrats over gun-control provisions in a juvenile justice bill is now in doubt.

I am told today that Mr. ARMEY said at the very earliest, conferees would not be appointed until after the July 4 recess.

First and foremost, conferees ought to be appointed. We should not simply stop the process because some people, certainly a minority of the Members of Congress, and certainly a minority in terms of the views of the American people, do not want it to happen. The Senate debated the issue. We should have the ability to go to conference. I call on the House leadership to appoint conferees quickly and with alacrity so we might debate the provisions here, not only the gun show loophole but many of the provisions that people on both sides of the aisle support that would make it easier to punish violent juveniles as adults and that would provide some of the prevention services that young people need. Because juvenile justice and closing the gun show loophole is a priority to many Americans; to a large majority of Americans, in my opinion.

Two weeks ago, for instance, a month after we passed the juvenile justice bill, we passed the Y2K liability bill. Lo and behold, Senate conferees were immediately appointed, and I understand we are now close to an agreement. In fact, I believe an agreement is due this afternoon. I think that is great. But Y2K is a far more complicated bill than juvenile justice. It is treading on fresh new ground.

The millennium, by definition, occurs every thousand years but we finished this one right up. The juvenile justice bill, however, is in stasis. There are things that can be done to get it moving. The most obvious is for the House leadership once again to appoint conferees so we can debate the gun show loophole. The real problem I fear is that those in the Republican House leadership do not want to continue to debate this issue. They know their allies in the NRA and the American people, including most gun owners, are divided because most Americans, including most gun owners, sincerely believe providing a background check at a gun show does not infringe their rights just as we now provide that a background check must be done when you buy a gun at a gun shop. But they do not want to do that.

So there are other things we should consider to get things moving. Perhaps we can add these provisions to a bill that has to be conferred. Perhaps we can add this to other types of proposals which the other body sees a need to have go forward. But I am issuing this challenge, particularly to the House leadership but to all of my colleagues: We should pledge to send a juvenile justice bill, one way or another, to the President's desk, a bill which includes

the Senate gun show provision, by the first day of school, the Tuesday after Labor Day. That is 2 months to pass a bill that we already passed. If we do not, and there is, God forbid, another school shooting, we will sorely regret our inaction.

I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REED. I thank the Chair.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I will speak for a few moments about a topic that has consumed many of us for many days this week and preceding weeks, and that is the Patients' Bill of Rights.

A particular concern to me has been the status of children in the various versions of the Patients' Bill of Rights. I argue very strenuously and very emphatically that the Democratic proposal recognizes the key differences between children and adults when it comes to health care, and there is a significant difference. For a few moments, I will try to sketch out some of these differences.

First of all, if one looks at the adult population in terms of types of illnesses, they are characterized as chronic diseases with relatively simple symptoms, simple manifestations with known consequences. They are quantifiable over a short period of time. Prostate cancer, breast cancer, heart attack are familiar diseases to all of us.

The other aspect of adults is that there is a large volume of adults who have these types of diseases. As a result, there is more than a sufficient supply not only of physicians but of specialists, those who are particularly skilled and particularly knowledgeable about the most efficacious treatments one can use for these types of conditions.

In contrast, children present another type of population to the health professionals. The good news is that most children are healthy. But if a child is sick, that child usually does not have one of these chronic diseases that is well-researched and well-treated and staffed by numerous specialists, but something more complicated. In fact, as the professionals say, these diseases are usually complex and with multiple co-morbidities. For the layperson, that means different problems interrelated causing a much more complicated case for the physician.

There is another aspect of this dichotomy between adult health and children's health. There are so many