

It is my understanding that the matter is being addressed in the State Department authorization bill, which recently passed the House. I hope that we can continue to allow the authorizers to address this issue and would hope that the gentleman, in that light, could withdraw his amendment at this time.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. I yield to the gentleman from New York.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the comments of the chairman. And I recognize the considerable gains made in the State Department authorization bill.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

The CHAIRMAN. The amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) is withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will rise informally.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HANSEN) assumed the chair.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Committee will resume its sitting.

DEPARTMENTS OF COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE, THE JUDICIARY, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2000

The Committee resumed its sitting.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO).

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I want to address to the chairman, as a father of two young daughters, on June 7 of this year, Mr. Chairman, the House overwhelmingly passed my bill, H.R. 1915, known as Jennifer's Law.

The bill was inspired by the disappearance in 1993 of a young Long Island woman named Jennifer Wilmer, who is still missing.

The bill would provide \$2 million for grants to States to collect and input information on unidentified victims in a national database to assist in the location of missing persons, providing law enforcement officials with the tools to identify missing persons reported as unidentified and so as to close many unsolved cases.

I am wondering if I could ask the distinguished chairman of the committee if he would provide assistance in ensuring that we can fund this important program.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Chairman, reclaiming my time, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) on his leadership on this issue.

I understand that the bill has a very good chance of being signed into law this year. My bill provides \$60 million for grants authorized by the Crime

Identification Technology Act of 1998 for grants to upgrade information and ID technologies.

I believe that the authorizing legislation would include information systems like Jennifer's Law when enacted that would be covered by this grant program.

I would be happy to continue to work with the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) on this issue.

Mr. LAZIO. Mr. Chairman, if the gentleman would continue to yield, I just want to thank the chairman for his pledge to collaborate. Based on his legislative skills and his reputation, I think we can take that to the bank.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. DINGELL

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Amendment offered by Mr. DINGELL:

At the end of the bill, insert after the last section (preceding the short title) the following new title:

TITLE VIII—ADDITIONAL GENERAL PROVISIONS

SEC. 801. (a)(1) None of the funds provided under this Act for grants authorized by section 102(e) of the Crime Identification Technology Act of 1998 in the item relating to "DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE—Community Oriented Policing Services" may be used to provide funds to a State that has not certified on a quarterly basis to the Attorney General that 95 percent or more of the records of the State evidencing a State judicial or executive determination by reason of which a person is described in paragraph (2) are sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation to support implementation of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System established under section 103 of the Brady Handgun Violence Protection Act.

(2) A person is described in this paragraph if the person is described in paragraph (1), (2), (3), (4), (8), or (9) of subsection (g) or subsection (n) of section 922 of title 18, United States Code.

(b) The Attorney General may prescribe guidelines and issue regulations necessary to carry out this section.

(c) This section shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

Mr. DINGELL (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The CHAIRMAN. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. DINGELL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, the amendment is simple. It will ensure that the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, NICS, will catch more criminals and it will ensure that the system works properly as the Congress intended.

The Instant Check System took 5 years to build and cost roughly a quarter of a billion dollars of the taxpayers' money. However, despite the time and money expended, the system is not working.

The FBI has stated that 1,700 prohibited purchasers have received firearms because the Federal system does not have all the records it needs.

□ 1930

The New York Times reports that Colorado has stopped using the Federal system because it is incomplete. States

are not carrying out their responsibilities under this. The amendment would fix these problems. Quite simply, it would require States to certify quarterly that 95 percent of all available records are in the national criminal database. By demanding accountability from the States, the Congress will ensure that FBI background checks will be complete, accurate and thorough. If that can be accomplished, fewer criminals will slip through the cracks and the national system of instant checks will work.

I would like to think of my amendment as putting "instant" back into instant check. There will be more records, better records and citizens will not face unnecessary delays. This is how the Congress intended it to work.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. OBEY).

Mr. OBEY. I would simply say that I very much agree with the intent of the gentleman's amendment and I hope that it can be accomplished.

Mr. DINGELL. I thank my good friend for his comments.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to yield to my distinguished friend from New York.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Chairman, I rise to stand with the gentleman from Michigan and to express my support for improving the National Instant Check System.

Just this week the State of Colorado announced its intention to return to a State-based instant check system because of a deadly mistake that occurred under the Federal instant check system. In June, Simon Gonzalez, who should have been prevented from buying a firearm, was able to buy a gun. After buying the gun, he used it to kill his three sleeping children. It is clear that we need a better instant check system.

Do not get me wrong. The National Instant Check System has been an important tool in keeping guns out of the hands of felons. Since November last year, when the system was started, 50,000 prohibited persons have been stopped from purchasing firearms. But we can do better.

I look forward to working with the gentleman from Michigan to ensure that our instant check system is improved. In particular, we will be watching to ensure that States and the FBI increase their cooperation and bring the National Instant Check System up to speed.

Mr. DINGELL. I thank the gentleman for her comments.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to my good friend from Kentucky, the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee, for any comments he wants to make. I think desperately we need to make this system work and I would ask his comments.

Mr. ROGERS. Mr. Chairman, I would hope that the gentleman would be withdrawing the amendment.

Mr. DINGELL. I do intend to withdraw the amendment, but I would like to hear the thoughts of the gentleman first.

Mr. ROGERS. I commend the gentleman for taking this active interest in the matter. I will continue to work with the gentleman to ensure that the system works as Congress intended.