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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a bill of the following title in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1638. An act to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the retroactive eligibility dates for financial assistance for higher education for spouses and dependent children of Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers who are killed in the line of duty.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 100-702, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, appoints John B. White, Jr. of South Carolina, to the board of the Federal Judicial Center Foundation, vice Richard M. Rosenbaum of New York.

The message also announced that pursuant to Public Law 104-1, the Chair, on behalf of the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate and the Speaker and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, announces the joint appointment of Susan S. Robfogel, of New York, as Chair of the Board of Directors of the Office of Compliance.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member except the majority leader, the minority leader or the minority whip limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, amidst the sometimes incendiary rhetoric surrounding the efforts to reduce gun violence, there are times when it is easy for people to overlook a basic fact: the victims of gun violence are real people; they are not statistics. They are not debating points.

The grounds of our Nation's Capitol are filled with memorials to the dead. Our visitors and tourists here are visiting them as I speak, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean Memorial, soon we may have a memorial to the soldiers who died in World War II.

Mr. Speaker, if we take all of those memorials to all the soldiers who have been killed since the Civil War, it would be fewer than the number of Americans who have been lost to gun violence in the last third of a century.

It is not enough to simply have another memorial here in our Nation's Capitol; although, something the size of 16 Vietnam memorials would be impressive, because that is what it would take to list all of these victims.

Last Sunday, in Portland, we had thousands of people standing and crowding into our little Pioneer Courthouse Square for our Mother's Day March against gun violence. They were standing on 70,000 bricks that had peoples' names inscribed who contributed to building that public square. It would take 10 acres of bricks with peoples' names to deal with the million victims.

Our job must be to make sure that these victims are not anonymous; that we put a face next to the names, to provide details of the life that would go along with that picture.

It is important to let people know that these victims had parents, rel-

atives and friends. They had jobs. They had hopes. We need to know how it happened and we need to think of what we could do to prevent it. That the United States has the worst record of gun violence of any developed Nation in the world ought to be a concern to every citizen, a sense of shame.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that it is we are less smart than the rest of the world. It is hard to believe that we are somehow worse people. I cannot believe that we care less about our children more than others, and I would hope that we as a people are not somehow more reckless.

I hope that in focusing our attention on the loss, how it occurred, what it means, we will be able to renew our commitment.

Tomorrow, I am going to speak on the floor of this House about one face, a young man named Darrell English. I will talk about the circumstance of his death, and I will be posting that information on my website and dealing with it in public meetings so that others may know the name, the face, the hopes and the dreams.

Every month, as long as I am in Congress, I will continue the discussion on the floor, on the Web, the conversation with the community, as a small gesture that these people not have died in vain.

This hope that we can all do our part to reduce the danger of gun violence. I hope the House of Representatives will act on that, finally, acting on a juvenile crime bill that has been locked in conference committee that has not met for 295 days because of unwillingness to pass the simple common sense steps that have already been approved by the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that citizens back home will take steps to promote their own initiatives and legislation that politicians can use to make their communities safer in the political process, at the ballot box, in the legislature. I hope that every citizen will do

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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