

prohibiting the importation of certain goods from Liberia.

GEORGE W. BUSH,
THE WHITE HOUSE, July 18, 2006.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

GUN AMENDMENTS TO SCIENCE, COMMERCE, JUSTICE, STATE APPROPRIATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY. Mr. Speaker, this body's war on common sense continues.

Before the Independence Day recess, the House approved two amendments to the Science, Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill that promote irresponsible gun ownership and discourage police departments from working together to solve gun crimes. Last year the House passed legislation that would make sure that gun locks are included with all handgun sales. Last month the House stripped away that provision.

Gun safety locks can save lives. I agree with the proponents of these measures that most gun owners are responsible and store their guns safely and securely. I am not worried about these gun owners. Many responsible gun owners already voluntarily equip their guns with safety locks. Gun locks are needed to prevent accidents with the minority of gun owners who are not responsible. And while the pro-gun lobby does not like to talk about it, yes, there are irresponsible gun owners out there.

Last month in New Jersey an 11-year-old found his grandfather's gun and killed his 12-year-old best friend. A gun lock that you can purchase online for less than \$7 would have prevented this tragedy. According to the CDC, 151 children died of accidental shotgun wounds in 2003. Mandatory gun locks would have saved some of those children's lives.

Gun locks prevent stolen guns from being used in crimes. Opponents of mandatory gun locks cite that the cost of gun locks prevent gun ownership. That is truly nonsense. This is like saying the added cost of air bags and seat belts prevent people from buying cars. And, again, trigger locks are relatively inexpensive. Seven dollars could save a child's life. Mr. Speaker, is a \$7 gunlock really infringing on second amendment rights? Of course not.

I wish I could say that the amendment stripping away the gunlock provision was the only nonsensical amendment to the Department of Justice appropriations bill, but it was not. Once

again, this bill would have made felons out of law enforcement officials who share ATF gun tracing information with police departments in other jurisdictions.

The ATF's gun-tracing program helps local police solve gun crimes by analyzing the unique marks made on bullets and cartridge cases when guns are fired. The images of these markings can be compared with other images in more than 200 Federal, State, and local law enforcement laboratories. But this appropriation bill would have made it a crime, a crime, for a police department to share information from the database with another department.

Say a police department in my district on Long Island obtains ballistic information from the ATF and a similar shooting occurs in New York City. The Long Island department could not share that information. In fact, an officer who did share this information would be arrested. This is absolutely insane.

Instead of cracking down on criminals using guns, this provision would treat police officers like criminals. To paraphrase my friend, Mayor Bloomberg of New York, it is a god-awful bill.

Again, some Members of this body put their allegiance to the NRA above common sense. The tracing program provides law enforcement agencies with valuable information about gun trafficking that can prevent crimes from happening. Tracing helps the public identify gun dealers and traffickers who are supplying illegal guns in our communities. But this provision would prevent the use of trace data as evidence in any State or Federal court or any nonATF administrative procedure. This provision cuts local law enforcement out of the loop. Without this tracing data, local law enforcement officers will not be able to pursue gun suppliers that have been implicated in crimes without the ATF's getting involved first. And we all know the ATF does not have the resources to get involved in every civil issue regarding gun crimes.

We let our police departments go after taverns that serve underage drinkers, but Congress will not allow them to crack down on the 1 percent, 1 percent, of dealers in this country who sell guns involved in 57 percent of the crimes.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for common sense. I hope the other body and the eventual conferees who will determine the final version of this appropriation bill will exercise more common sense than the House did last month.

Mr. Speaker, I have been here 10 years. I have never put any legislation forward that would take away the right of someone to own a gun. I am here for gun safety issues. I am here to save lives. I am here to keep down medical costs. I am here to protect our communities. We can do better. And we can with commonsense laws.

JUSTICE FOR ASHTON GLOVER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, "humorous," "outgoing," "warm-hearted," "devout."

These are a few words to describe 16-year-old Ashton Glover, words that came instantly to those who knew her best and loved her.

Ashton had the world at her fingers. She was entering Clements High School for her final year and then wanted to attend Texas A&M University to become a veterinarian. She was born in Lufkin, Texas, and she was proud of her country roots, and she held on to them. She now lived in the small town of Sugar Land, Texas, outside of Houston.

She was a self-described tomboy. Ashton proudly held an officer position with the Future Farmers of America, and she preferred the outdoors and being among nature.

Ashton was a devout Christian. When not with the First Colony Church of Christ Youth Group, she was always willing to help those less fortunate or those in need. She was always there to provide advice to friends or give a simple hug to those in pain. She thought her mission on Earth was to help people.

A room instantly illuminated with Ashton's presence. Those who knew her stated they were the lucky ones. They were able to share in everything that Ashton was.

Those who knew her, however, did not know that two other students, with hearts full of malice and souls fatally bent on mischief, were plotting to steal the life of Ashton.

On July 7 Ashton met up with two 18-year-old students to go "mudding." As you know, Mr. Speaker, that is something we do in the South, driving trucks through muddy fields. It was the type of activity that appealed to this fun-loving girl.

Little did Ashton know that these two scoundrels had no plans to go "mudding" with her. Their sinister intentions were not revealed until it was too late for her to escape. They took Ashton to a dark, deserted construction site, away from the security of Sugar Land, Texas. Away from those who loved her. Away from the safety of her home. And they executed her gangland style.

No reason. No argument. No justification. Just what one murderer called "a morbid curiosity" to see what would happen, to see what she looked like when we shot her in the back of the head.

These two teenage terrors, feeling no remorse or human compassion, left Ashton to die there in the heap of garbage while they went over to IHOP for breakfast.

Mr. Speaker, there is something evil and cold about people who kill someone and then go and have a hearty breakfast.

After they were through eating their pancakes, they came back and buried her in a shallow grave. They went home and slept off the night's atrocity, while her family had nightmares of where Ashton was.

When Ashton's body was located by police, the outlaws decided to run in the darkness of the night. They fled north to Canada, but they did not run fast enough or hard enough. They were caught at the U.S.-Canadian border after police typed their names into the national criminal database.

This tragic and unspeakable crime hits close to my heart. As a father of four and grandfather of five, no father wants to lose a child in the fullness of youth. As a former prosecutor and judge, I believe in justice. And there must be justice, Mr. Speaker.

Justice for a young girl who had a full and rewarding life ahead of her, who was murdered just so a couple of cowardly cunning criminals could see what it looked like to kill somebody, when a young girl took her last gasping breath. There must be justice for her family and her friends who must now endure life without her.

These two killers must also get some justice, Mr. Speaker. Justice is getting what one deserves. These teens will no doubt cry and whine for mercy, but justice must rule the day. Justice for these two demons who brutally executed a young Ashton and extinguished a bright light in this world.

Some individuals will now argue that these two 18-year-olds should be treated with compassion because of their age. Mr. Speaker, these two killers were macho enough to violently end the life of a young girl just to see the results. They should be macho enough to accept the punishment in the penitentiary, where they belong.

Victims should not be discriminated against based upon the age of the offender. As King Solomon was once quoted as saying, "Justice will only be achieved when those who are not injured by crime feel as indignant as those who are."

And, Mr. Speaker, that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

MILITARY READINESS

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to address the House for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the gentleman from Missouri is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, I want to contrast two statements for you to set the stage on what we are dealing

with regarding the United States Army.

"Help is on the way." That is what President Bush said to our military during the 2000 campaign when they were in pretty good shape.

And "No." That is what General Schoomaker, the chief of staff of the Army, answered when I asked him if he was comfortable with the readiness levels of the nondeployed Army units here in the United States.

Let me put it in very clear terms. Our Army is in a crisis. Our forces are fighting valiantly in Iraq and Afghanistan. But the strain of that continued effort has put our preparedness to deter or to fight somewhere else, if we must, at strategic risk. The crises in North Korea, Iran, the Middle East, show how quickly things can change and how they can go wrong. We must be prepared. And right now the Army is not.

President Bush, during the 2000 campaign, strongly criticized the Clinton administration because two divisions were below their appropriate readiness ratings. He said, "If called upon by the Commander in Chief today, two entire divisions of the Army would have to report 'not ready for duty, sir.'"

Today nearly every combat brigade located within the United States would report that they are not ready for duty. They are at the lowest levels of readiness.

Most nondeployed units in the active Army are reporting that they are not able to complete the expected wartime missions. The exact numbers, of course, are classified. Army readiness for units not in Iraq has steadily declined and has fallen to levels that will limit our ability to project ground forces.

Every nondeployed National Guard combat brigade in the Army is reported at the lowest level of readiness. Forty percent of the Army's ground equipment is deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The army has depleted its prepositioned overseas war stocks of equipment. The Army is so strapped for equipment, they are planning on downloading prepositioned ships loaded with combat equipment to help fill shortages.

Mr. Speaker, the Army has lost over 1,000 wheeled vehicles, over 100 armored vehicles, and 100 helicopters since the start of the war in Iraq.

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Guard units in the U.S. are suffering severe equipment shortages which will affect their ability to respond to emergencies in their home States, such as Katrina.

Equipment readiness is suffering as the priority for repair, parts and equipment is only toward the combat theater. The Army is now having a crisis funding its installations at home because of poor planning and the lack of support from the administration. The recent supplemental funding resolution increased the installation budgets by \$722 million, but the Army is still short

\$530 million to meet minimum support levels through the remainder of the fiscal year.

Each installation is being forced to find ways to cut their operating budgets. These cuts are affecting vital training and family support, which further degrades the Army's readiness posture.

Over \$290 billion has been spent in Iraq, with no end in sight. The Army requested more money in the recent supplemental, but the President's Office of Management and Budget cut \$4.9 billion from the Army's request for the 2006 war supplemental before sending it over here to Congress.

During the 2000 election, the current administration told our military, help is on the way. That is clearly not the case. The administration has failed to request the funds needed for the defense of this Nation. We must give the Army what it needs. The Army will need sustained funds, \$17.5 billion this year alone, to start getting well. We cannot shortchange them. We must provide a new direction for the Army, with sustained equipment and manpower, so that we can project power to protect America, wherever and whenever necessary. That is exactly what we must be prepared to do.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE SCOURGE OF UNDERAGE DRINKING

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I request to address the House for 5 minutes.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND). Without objection, the gentleman from Nebraska is recognized for 5 minutes.

There was no objection.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, underage drinking flies under the radar screen most of the time, and I guess the reason for that is that alcohol is legal and is widely accepted. The average age 12- to 17-year-olds begin drinking is 12.7 years of age.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimated the number of underage deaths due to excessive alcohol use is roughly 4,554 a year. In other words, in one year we lose more young people to underage drinking than we have lost in Iraq in 3 years. The death rate is six times higher for underage drinking.

Another death rate that is six times higher is alcohol kills six times more young people than all other drugs combined: heroin, cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana. Six times more die from underage drinking.

Teens who start drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to