

July 14, 1999

OUR CONSTITUENTS DEMAND
SENSIBLE GUN SAFETY LAWS

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 1999

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, the people of Illinois and Indiana, and in particular the residents of my district, are beginning the healing process after having suffered the violence of hate over the 4th of July weekend. I am thankful and grateful for the outstanding effort by local, state, and federal law enforcement officials in bringing the rampage to an end. I am also proud of my community for never losing faith and for having the courage to stand tall in the face of hate.

The killing and shooting spree took the lives of two men and forever changed the lives of many others. What happened as we celebrated our Independence Day should be a wake up call to Congress to step up, fulfill its duty, and pass legislation that protects the lives of our citizens. The mad man who committed these heinous crimes bought his guns illegally from an unauthorized gun dealer. He was able to do so because the dealer just recently purchased more than sixty weapons in a short period of time. He did so for the sole purpose of selling them for profit.

We have a responsibility to protect the lives of our constituents. Congress must pass and the President must sign bills to limit the purchase of handguns to one per month and to require the registration of every handgun sold in the United States. Our constituents demand it and our children deserve it.

Following the killing spree, Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago wrote in the Chicago Tribune about the need for Congress to immediately pass gun safety measures. The people of our state appreciate Mayor Daley's unwavering leadership on this issue. He has taken his cause to state and federal legislators and made it clear that without passing sensible gun safety legislation, we all face the consequences of gun violence.

I wholeheartedly agree. His remarks follow.

CRACKING DOWN ON VIOLENCE AND
HATE

(By Mayor Richard Daley)

CHICAGO.—Last weekend Illinois and Indiana became the latest focus of violence across the country resulting from intolerance and hate.

Like all Chicagoans I am outraged by these hate-based shootings and the damage that has been done to people who were victims for no reason other than their race or religion.

There is no place in Chicago for hate, hate-related violence or anyone who promotes either. We will never let hate or the violence that flows from it divide us. When acts of bigotry and racism occur, we will stand together against them as one community and one city.

I want to commend the people of Rogers Park, Skokie, Northbrook, and communities in Downstate Illinois and Indiana for coming together and growing stronger as a result of these tragedies. These shootings are a tragic reminder that each of us has an important responsibility to protect the right of every person—irrespective of his race, religion, ethnic background or sexual orientation—to live life to the fullest, free from violence.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

There is another issue raised by Benjamin Smith's actions the fundamental causes and ramifications of violence in our communities.

Right now, the Chicago police and the Englewood community are faced with a series of murders of young women. In the wake of those killings, many residents of that community don't feel safe in their own neighborhood. That is unacceptable in Chicago, and that is why the police department has deployed a special task force of investigators to solve those murders.

There are other steps we can take. Residents across the city have demonstrated that community policing can lead to safer streets.

We must also work harder to end the easy availability of guns.

Consider how Smith obtained the handguns he used. He first tried to obtain three weapons from a licensed gun dealer in Peoria Heights but failed a background check and was turned away. That shows that this part of the gun-control system is working—up to a point.

This case demonstrates the need for even stronger background-check laws. If we had a system that ensured that local authorities were alerted whenever someone who may not legally own a gun attempts to purchase one, Smith might have been stopped before he went on his rampage. Instead Smith was able to purchase his guns from a dealer who was not licensed and who had a history of indiscriminately putting guns on the street. This is the point at which the system failed. It failed for a reason I have been discussing for a long time. There is money to be made in selling guns illegally.

Currently an individual can legally purchase guns in large quantities at one time and then sell each one of them illegally for a profit. Last November I proposed state and federal legislation to make it illegal to purchase more than one gun per month. This would make it far less profitable for someone to go into the illegal-arms sales business but would not inhibit the rights of legitimate gun owners in any way. Who could possibly need to purchase more than one gun per month for hunting purposes or to protect his or her family?

We have not yet succeeded in passing this legislation and other gun-control initiatives. On behalf of the victims of the recent shootings and all the victims of gun violence in our city, we will continue our efforts until more effective gun-control measures are law. I will continue to argue that there is no reason why the state of Illinois should not license gun dealers as it does beekeepers, manicurists and taxidermists.

We can make it harder for the Smiths of this world to succeed in acting on their hate. By taking the profitability out of illegal gun sales, we can make it more likely that, once licensed gun dealers turn down their purchase requests, individuals like Smith will have nowhere else to turn to buy weapons.

HAZEL DELL FARM

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to commemorate the historic Hazel Dell farm. It was the location for this years veterans' celebration in Jerseyville. The

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owners of the farm say it was a natural place for the celebration because the original owner of the farm, Col. William Fulkerson, fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War. His grandson died battling the Germans in World War II, and his grandson died in Vietnam.

Last year, the 1866 Fulkerson Mansion was placed on the National Register of Historic places and a brief dedication was held during which the new National Register plaque was unveiled. I am very pleased to see our community coming together to remember our veterans and take pride in our local heritage.

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE CHARLES
WATKINS, JR.

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 14, 1999

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to a friend, a colleague and a tremendous public interest human being, Judge Charles Watkins, Jr., who recently passed away. Judge was much too young to die, and yet he did probably because like many other men and especially African American men, did not adequately look after his health. Judge was getting ready to retire from his position as a distinguished professor at Malcolm X College in Chicago. Judge was born in Vandalia, La. in a family of ten children. He like most of his peers was taught the value of hard work. Therefore, after high school, Judge entered the military, did his time, came out and went to college to study medical laboratory technology. He got married, and he and his wife HermaJean, had three children, Debbie, Judge C. Watkins III (Chuckie), and Carlos. Judge continued his education and eventually earned a Doctorate's Degree.

Judge had a strong work ethic and worked two and sometimes three jobs for practically all of his adult life. He worked in the blood bank at the University of Illinois, was Director of the Laboratory at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Neighborhood Health Center and developed the medical laboratory technology program at Malcolm X College where he taught for thirty years. Judge was a hardnosed union activist, helped to organize the Cook County College Teachers Union and served as its vice president for 21 years.

Notwithstanding all of his professional accomplishments, Judge was most known for his involvement in public activity and his willingness to reach out and help others.

He was a participating member of the United Baptist Church and served as chairman of the 7th Congressional District Political Action Committee and was a vice president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers. Judge was tough, tenacious and a skilled labor negotiator who could stand like a rock and not be moved. Although he had reached a high level of professional and social prominence, he lived among and worked with people in low-income communities which at one time was characterized by the Chicago Tribune as home for the permanent underclass.

He enjoyed the simple things of life, church with his family, backyard barbeques, trips back