

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is correct.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on the juvenile justice bill, the reason why I have encouraged the leadership to move as quickly as they are able to—and I say, in regard to what the distinguished Senator from Mississippi said earlier, I also know if he were to make the same request I made, he could face an objection. What I am urging is that we find a way to move forward because to have the full impact in the United States of our juvenile justice bill, which passed by a 3-to-1 margin in the Senate, we have to get it on the President's desk in its final form before the August recess so there is some chance of moving before school goes back in this fall. All of us, whether we are parents, grandparents, teachers, or policymakers, have been puzzling over the causes of children turning violent in our country.

Certainly all of us in our lifetimes have seen random acts of violence somewhere in the country. I don't think any of us have seen the severity or the number, almost a regularity, of violence we are seeing today. The root causes are likely multifaceted, and we know that. But the Hatch-Leahy juvenile justice bill is a firm and significant step in the right direction. Passage of this bill shows when the Senate rolls up its sleeves and gets to work, we can make significant progress. But that progress amounts to naught if the House and Senate do not conference and proceed to final passage on a good bill.

Once conferees are appointed, there will be another point in the legislative process where we will have to roll up our sleeves to work out differences between the House- and Senate-passed legislation.

Every parent in this country is concerned this summer about school violence over the last 2 years. They are worried about the situation they are going to confront this fall. Each of us wants to do something to stop that violence. There is no single cause and there is no single legislative solution that will cure the ill of youth violence in our schools or on our streets. But we have an opportunity before us to at least start to do something, to do our part. Now, it is unfortunate we are not moving full speed ahead to seize this opportunity to act on balanced, effective juvenile justice legislation.

We should not repeat the delays that happened in the last Congress on the juvenile justice legislation. In the 105th Congress, the Senate Judiciary Committee reported juvenile justice legislation in July 1997, but then it was left to languish for over a year until the very end of that Congress. In fact, serious efforts to make improvements to this bill did not even occur until the last weeks of that Congress, when it was too late and we ran out of time.

The experience of the last Congress causes me to be wary of this delay in action on this legislation this year. I want to be assured that after the hard work so many Senators put into crafting a juvenile justice bill, that we go to a House-Senate conference that is fair, full, and productive. We have worked too hard in the Senate for a strong, bipartisan juvenile justice bill to simply shrug our shoulders when the House returns a juvenile justice bill rather than proceeding to a conference. I will be vigilant in working to maintain this bipartisanship and to press for action on this important legislation.

To this end, I circulated yesterday to the distinguished chairman of the Judiciary Committee the unanimous consent request that I made. It lays out a simple road map for us to proceed to a juvenile justice conference before the August recess and before the new school year begins. I understand the unanimous consent request cannot be accepted tonight, but if we could accept this, or a form of it, this is what it would do:

We would take up the House juvenile justice bill, H.R. 1501; we would substitute the Hatch-Leahy bill, S. 254, amended to eliminate the provision banning the import of high-capacity ammunition clips; pass the bill as amended; request a conference with the House; instruct the conferees to include in the conference report the eliminated provision on high-capacity ammunition clips—put it back in, because parliamentarily it would be allowed—and we would authorize the Chair to appoint conferees.

The fact that the House returned the Senate juvenile justice bill to us is not an insurmountable obstacle to get to conference on this important issue. This unanimous consent—or a form of it—would lay out a simple procedure for us to get to conference promptly, and the majority has the power to say: We agree, let's go to conference.

We know only too well that when it is something that has the commercial interests of Y2K liability protection, we can go over what seem to be insurmountable obstacles and enact legislation into law. There is no commercial interest. There is certainly far more. It is the safety of our children. It is allowing our children to have a youth. It is allowing our children to go to school, as we did, in safety. It is allowing our children to learn, to be young people, and not to be forced to grow up in violence.

It is a gift we could give to the children of America. It is something we could do before they go back to school. It is something we should do.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. LEAHY. Yes.

Mrs. BOXER. It is a very brief question.

I have just gone over with my colleague and some of our staff the fact that the House sent this bill over 3 weeks ago. We did our work. They did their work. And when our friend, the majority leader, says we are dragging our feet, we certainly didn't drag our feet on the juvenile justice bill.

I ask my friend if he agrees that we have not dragged our feet on that bill and that we have acted as we should. God knows, we want to make sure we do something to make things better.

As I see it, on June 23, 1999, this bill was placed on the calendar. No one is dragging their feet on this bill. Both Houses have done their work, and it is time to move forward to avoid another tragedy.

I ask my friend if he agrees with that.

Mr. LEAHY. The Senator from California is correct. We have moved very quickly on it. I hope we do not run into the situation that happened last year. We spent a lot of time on the juvenile justice bill, and then it languished and languished after coming out of committee. It sat so long that by the time we got to it, the time of the session ran out. In fact, the end of the Congress ran out.

Here we are not right at the end of a Congress, but we are facing a school year, and we should begin.

I promised the distinguished senior Senator from New Hampshire that I would wrap up. I believe I have wrapped up.

Mr. GREGG. I thank the Senator from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). The Senator from New Hampshire.

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

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask the Chair to lay before the Senate Calendar No. 153, the fiscal year 2000 Commerce, Justice, and State appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative assistant read as follows:

A bill (S. 1217) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I bring before the Senate today, on behalf of myself, the Senator from South Carolina, and members of the Appropriations Committee, the bill to fund the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the judiciary, and related agencies, which I want to spend some time discussing.

But before I do that, let me begin by thanking, for the extraordinary