further tax cuts until interest expenses went down.

Those who felt and predicted tax cuts are going to spur greater economic growth and, therefore, bring in more revenue and pay down that debt and, therefore, lower the interest rates would get the full tax cut proposed in the original bill.

While the trigger is probably not the perfect trigger, it accomplished the goal of moving the process forward both on reducing the debt and reducing taxes. The concept of using a trigger to allow both sides of the issue to really put your money where the other person’s mouth is is a concept of win-win. It may be crucial to the final passage of this bill that will be acceptable to the White House as well as this House as we review what comes out of conference.

I will continue to work this week on perfecting the trigger mechanism since this House, the Senate, and the President must agree on the final outcome before it becomes law.

Debt reduction is important to strengthen the economy and taking the pressure off our kids and grandkids, and tax reduction in a system that has the highest tax rates in history is in need very desperately of the kind of tax cuts that leaves money in the pockets of the people that earn it.

EXTENSION OF NTR FOR CHINA

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

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House on the issue of our policy towards the People's Republic of China.

I believe the United States' policy toward China should be guided by three primary and pragmatic goals.

First, we must safeguard American security against a potential adversary. Second, we should pursue economic trade relations that promote American economic interests. And finally, we should encourage policies that will allow individual liberty and the rule of law and, thus, respect for human rights to flourish in China.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Congress voted to renew normal trade relations, or NTR, with China for another year. This renewal of NTR will advance all three of the above-mentioned China policy goals.

On the national security front, NTR and the expanded trade opportunity that it brings in non-militarily sensitive goods and services will reduce the likelihood of military conflict between the United States and China.

Countries with extensive trade relations are simply less likely to go to war with each other than countries without those ties. This is no surprise. With extensive trade comes extensive interests in maintaining peaceful relations and thus more trade.

But make no mistake, NTR does not and should not simply trade in militarily sensitive technologies. Any technology with a direct military application should not be exported to China nor to any other country that is not a close ally of the United States.

The Clinton administration's appalling lapses in safeguarding military technology must be rectified immediately. But denying American and Chinese citizens the opportunity to exchange non-military goods and services will not accomplish that.

Instead, the U.S. should reinstate penalties on companies whose negligent sales compromise our security and rebuild a system of controls on the spread of potentially dangerous technologies.

Renewing NTR with China will benefit our economy by providing American consumers access to low-cost goods and by expanding U.S. export opportunities. Revoking NTR would have subjected China's imports to dramatically higher tariffs, and that is another word for taxes. These taxes would not be paid by China but by American consumers. Revoking NTR would have subjected American consumers to up to $29 billion in new taxes.

A second economic benefit from extending NTR will be accelerated growth in high-paying, export-related jobs across America and particularly in my home State of Pennsylvania. Exports in industries such as chemical products, industrial machines, and computer components, where wages average 20 percent higher than the national average, are already fueling much of Pennsylvania's impressive economic growth.

Renewing NTR is a prerequisite to China's accession to the WTO, which, in turn, will dramatically accelerate further growth and opportunity in U.S. and Pennsylvania exports to China.

But finally, Mr. Speaker, freedom works. By renewing NTR with China, we are helping to provide the opportunity for the Chinese people to liberate themselves from the dictatorship under which they currently live.

China's communist leadership has embarked on what is, for them, a very dangerous course. Unlike most other communist dictatorships this century, from Stalin to Mao to North Korea's Kim Il Jong, Deng Xiaoping chose to open China to foreign investment, limited free enterprise, and engagement with the West. His bet was that he could enjoy the economic benefits of capitalism without losing the communist party's monopoly on political control.

Well, in the long run, Mr. Speaker, if we continue to engage China, Deng's successors will lose that bet and the people of China will be the winners. And they will be the winners of freedom because freedom is ultimately indivisible.

Those who enjoy economic freedom will eventually demand political freedom. People who read American newspapers will eventually demand their own free press. The people who travel to the United States on business will see incomparable superiority of freedom and will eventually demand that liberty for their own country.

Freedom once tasted is irresistible. Eventually the Chinese people will demand a free, open, and just Democratic society, just as their fellow countrymen enjoy on Taiwan. Only that kind of society will properly respect the Chinese people's human rights.

These changes to Chinese society will not happen overnight, but having extended NTR will increase the pace at which they develop and, best of all, will be helping ourselves in the process.

REVIEW OF FORUM ON GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for half the time until midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Chicago I hosted the first of 16 women's forums on gun violence that will be conducted by Democratic women Members of Congress. The goal of these forums is to develop strategies and build grassroots movements to pass sensible gun safety legislation this year.

I will tell my colleagues more about this event, Mr. Speaker, during the hour and how much all of us, men and women alike, hope these forums will contribute to making our country safer for our children and our grandchildren.

When discussing gun safety legislation, it is easy for us here in Washington to get lost in all the many intricacies of this subject. We can argue fine points of the law, the real meaning of the second amendment to the Constitution, the difference between a 3-day waiting period and a 72-hour waiting period. We can talk about the features of different weapons and ammunition clips and demonstrate our knowledge of the hardware. But for most Americans, it comes down to this:

Is my child safe on her way to school? Can I stroll in my neighborhood on a beautiful summer evening? Is it safe for me to walk home from the synagogue after services or from church? No one is secure enough in our country anymore to answer "yes." After the tragedy at Columbine High School and the shootings and killing in my district during the Fourth of July weekend, Americans are asking, what
does it take? What does it take before something is done in the United States Congress? How many children have to die? How many ordinary citizens must prepare for another funeral?

We want to talk to you tonight as mothers and as grandmothers. This is about my granddaughter Isabelle and about the horror of gun violence and the simple steps that we can take to reduce it. We know that legislation will not eliminate it, but just ask the devastated families of victims if stopping the killing of even one child is not worth it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON).

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. Speaker, the Juvenile Justice bill passed long ago, and the House still has not appointed conferees. This legislation and its accompanying gun safety provisions are vitally important to all American families.

Each day in America, 14 kids age 19 and under are killed by guns. In 1996, almost 6,000 children were killed with a firearm. In 1997, 84 percent of murder victims age 13 to 19 were killed with a firearm. Fifty-nine percent of students in grades 6 through 12 know where to get a gun if they want one, and two-thirds of these students say they can acquire a firearm within 24 hours.

Kids and guns do not mix. Yet the Republican leadership refused to consider common-sense gun safety measures that would only serve to protect our kids. It is far too easy for kids to get and use guns. Trigger locks, or locked safety boxes, would keep this from happening.

We have continually passed up the opportunity to act on this vitally important issue. I urge the Republican leadership to move to appoint conferees before we lose another child.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I think that the gentlewoman has expressed the kind of impatience that many Americans are feeling right now. They want to know when we are going to do something. That is particularly right now of the residents in my district, who are just beginning the healing process after having suffered the violence of hate over the Fourth of July weekend.

I want to put a face to one of the victims of gun violence. Ricky Byrdsong was a former basketball coach at Northwestern University. He was a father, a community leader, and an inspiration to his family and all those who knew him, a deeply religious man. Ricky Byrdsong was committed to a cause, and his cause was to help underprivileged youth reach their full potential and follow their dreams. His work took him to neighborhoods where violence is all too common a feature of everyday life. He lived with his wife and three children in Skokie, Illinois, a quiet community of ordinary homes and bungalows, quiet streets, good schools, and he once commented to a friend on how happy he was to live in a safe neighborhood. He did not have to worry about violence in his heart. He did not have to worry about the violence that is so common in other neighborhoods. He was happy to live in the peaceful community of Skokie, Illinois.

But that all changed on Friday, July 2nd, when Benjamin Smith murdered Ricky Byrdson when he was outside playing with his children. He was killed because of the color of his skin. And Mr. Byrdsong was not the first target that night of Benjamin Smith’s rage. Six men were shot in Rogers Park. They were walking home from synagogue, they were orthodox Jewish men who were praying that evening. It was a warm summer evening as they walked home and felt not one bullet found its way into six people that night. It is only a miracle really that none of those people was killed. The mother of one of those victims said, “This was not just hate. This is what happens when hate is given a gun.”

Dr. Michael Messing was another victim that night. He and his son were the first people who were shot at that evening. He and his son were walking home and he described this at the forum that I held yesterday how Benjamin Smith actually stopped his car, got out and pointed his gun at Dr. Messing and he knew that right away he had to flee, that this was clearly a dangerous situation, he was shot at, his son was shot at, and again miraculously the bullets missed him. But he stood there to watch his neighbor down the street get shot and suddenly from victim, he turned into physician and ran down the street to care for them.

He faxed me a statement today that said: “As a recent victim of Benjamin Smith’s anti-Semitic and racist shooting spree, I implore you, our leaders in Congress, to pass the necessary legislation on gun control which would inhibit easy access to weapons for criminals. In doing so, you will create a safer, healthier and more optimistic future for our country. If you fail to do so, my living nightmare might one day become yours as well.”

You can imagine what a nightmare that is to be with your son and friends walking home and being shot at on the streets of your community.

Littleton, Colorado; Rogers Park in Skokie, Illinois; Bloomington, Indiana; Springfield, Oregon; Fayetteville, Tennessee; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; Jonesboro, Arkansas; West Paducah, Kentucky; and Pearl, Mississippi. Is your hometown next, Mr. Speaker? No one knows for sure.

At the forum yesterday, a number of incredible people testified. They are the silent majority of our country. That is why I know that the gun lobby says guns are some- thing to do. He talked about the fact that we have to get a driver’s license and renew that driver’s license, and why is it not that every single gun owner does not need to register for that gun? We would not think of saying people should drive a car without a driver’s license. And he said, “What is more sacred in our culture than the family car?” It is also true that in some ways, our mobility, our freedom, our independence, and yet we understand that automobiles and drivers are heavily regulated. And yet not guns.

The gun lobby says guns are some- how a sacred object, that its use should escape all that kind of regulation.

At the forum yesterday, I held up a TEC–9 in one hand and a baby rattle in
the other hand. Baby rattles are gov-
erned by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. We have laws about it. We have regulations about that big thing exempt from regulation by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Why is that? It is one of the only products, I think it is the only consumer product that is exempt from that kind of regulation. So Mark Carlin was saying, let us at least treat guns with the same respect, if you will, as we do our automobiles.

We had Dr. Kathryn Cofer Christophel who is a respected pediatri-
can at Children’s Memorial Hospital and also an expert on gun safety ap-
proaching it as a health issue, refram-
ing this debate as a public health cri-
sis.

She talks about how every year over $1 billion is spent on medical costs as-
associated with the treatment of individu-
als who have been shot. Of these dollar figures do not take into account the lost earnings to their fami-
lies while they are recuperating. She pointed to a chart that we had there yesterday that showed that in 1996 there were 15 handgun murders in Japan, 15 in the whole nation in the whole year. Thirty handgun murders in Great Britain, Mr. Speaker; 106 in Can-
da; 213 in Germany; and 9,390 in the United States.

She said, if we looked at that chart and we were talking about a disease, a virus or a bacteria, and we saw how many people were afflicted in the United States, is there any question in our minds that we would say, what are these other nations doing? They seem to be handling this epidemic better and dramatically reduced it. What are they doing that we are not doing to confront this health crisis. And the answer is really very simple. They have far tougher gun laws. Oh, we may want to bring in all other kinds of cultural issues and maybe they affect some few cases. By and large, the explanation for the difference is we have more guns.

Mr. Speaker, we heard from a re-
markable young man, Albert Smith, who just graduated from Evanston 
 Township High School and his family also was touched by a gun-related trag-
edy in which a member of his family was killed. Albert really does not like to go into details about the tragedy that struck his family, but what he likes to talk about is how it spurred him into action on antiviolence issues, including gun control.

What Albert did was organize a con-
ference on violence and gun control at Evanston Township High School in May which included the U.S. senators from Massachusetts who came to talk about strategies that they had developed to reduce gun violence, particu-
larly among youth, where they had a long period, I think over 2 years, where not a single child in the City of Boston was lost to gun violence, a coordinated effort of prevention and control.

Albert had just one simple challenge for all of us who were gathered yester-
day and that is, what are you going to do about it? What are you going to do about it? What are we going to do about it?

I have received, as I am sure many, many Members of Congress have, let-	ers from my constituents, letters that tell sad stories and cry out for help, and tell about fear, tell about the fear that struck his family, but what he
wants to do is keep guns out of the hands of criminals, let me just quote from her. She said, “That is all I am trying to do.”

Mark Carlin was saying, let us at least treat guns with the same respect, if you will, as we do our automobiles.

Mr. Speaker, Benjamin Smith, who terrorized my community and then tried to kill himself, went to buy a weapon and was turned down because he had an order of protection against him, and fortunately that turned up in his back-
ground check. What he did was go to an illegal gun dealer, someone who had le-
gally purchased an arsenal of weapons. If we had had legislation that said that only one gun a month could be pur-
braced, this illegal gun dealer would not have been able to have this arsenal that Ben Smith was able then to buy two guns from this man.

We need to do sensible things. The gun show loophole is another place Ben Smith could have gone to a gun show to purchase those guns, and if he would have found an unlicensed dealer, he would have been able to purchase as many guns as he wanted to. He would have been able to purchase those guns and murder two people in a way that was not intended when we first passed the Brady law. How many lives would be saved if we would close that simple gun show loophole?

When the gentleman from New York (Mrs. McCarthy) stood on the floor of this House and said, “All we want to do is keep guns out of the hands of criminals,” let me just quote from her. She said, “That is all I am trying to do.” Mr. Speaker, that is a

America is asking us to do some-
thing. Let me just refer my colleagues to an editorial, Mr. Speaker, that appeared June 20 in the Chicago Tribune. It says, “The statute of limitations on responsibility in the United States
As a mother of five and grandmother of thirteen, I empathize with the families who lost children at Littleton, Colorado and with the thousands of other families across this nation who have seen violent crime rob them of their loved ones. These are losses that can never be forgotten and that leave a lasting void no one can fill.

Unfortunately, the American people were the big losers in the debate on the House floor over gun safety last month. Hours of floor debate over three days and nights produced nothing that can comfort those who have already lost a family member to gun violence and provided no real meaningful measures to ensure the future safety of our children.

The fight for sensible gun control is not over. Those of us who believe in closing gun loopholes will continue our efforts. Three months ago, I spoke to many members of the National Rifle Association. I asked us to do. Those three things are:

1. Complete background checks on people buying guns at gun shows and flea markets—just to prevent guns from getting into the wrong hands—often the hands of felons or minors.
2. Gun safety locks to accompany all new firearms.
3. A three business-day waiting period for a gun purchase, more than 400,000 illegal gun sales, two-thirds of which involved either convicted felons or people with a current felony indictment, were blocked. This is clear evidence that this law works and that we are on the right path.

However, we still have far to go. Studies show that one in four gun murders are committed by people aged 18 to 20. Furthermore, about two-thirds of all homicides involve the use of a gun. Also consider that domestic violence often turns into homicide in many instances where guns are available, and that law enforcement officials support gun safety because it saves police officers' lives.

These facts demand our immediate attention. It is no wonder that a recent Pew Research survey found that the majority of Americans believe gun control is more important than the right to bear arms. Similarly, a Gallup Poll shows that 79% of Americans support mandatory registration of all firearms.

I wholeheartedly support a rational gun safety policy to close loopholes that have allowed too many individuals to skirt laws designed to prevent guns from getting into the wrong hands—often the hands of felons or minors.

We should strengthen the Brady law and fight for new gun safety measures that include: a three-business-day waiting period to complete background checks on people buying guns at gun shows and flea markets—just like sales at retail outlets; banning the import of large-capacity ammunition clips; raising the national age of handgun ownership from 18 to 21; and gun safety locks to accompany all new firearm sales; and preventing serious juvenile felons from ever owning guns.

We can achieve all of this if the members of the House have the will and the American people make it clear to their representatives that they demand action on gun safety. Let us stop the delay. Let us pass meaningful gun safety legislation.