

and American death rates involving firearms, and specifically the differences between Windsor and Detroit. If there's one thing Congress needs to study this school year, it's how to rewrite the books and end the senseless slaughter of our school children.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the USA Today, Aug. 30, 1999]

CANADA SHOWS GUN RESTRICTIONS WORK

(By Paul G. Labadie)

I was crossing the bridge that spans the one-half mile of the Detroit River, a physical buffer separating Detroit from Windsor, Ontario. The lineup at the Canadian Customs checkpoint was unusually long. Inching forward, I finally arrive at the custom agents' booth.

"Citizenship?" he asks.

"United States," I reply.

"Are there any firearms in the vehicle or on your person?"

"No."

The customs agent shined a flashlight behind the seats as he circled my car.

"You're sure, no long guns, handguns, shotguns?"

"No, none."

"No ammunition, bullets?"

"None," I replied.

After a search of my trunk and a last look over, he waved me through.

I later found out the reason for the guard's concerns. Someone had been caught with a gun in Windsor.

In Canada, that's all it takes. Its strict policies on gun ownership are strongly enforced and get progressively tougher, with even more stringent laws set to go into effect in the year 2001. To argue against the results of their efforts would be foolhardy, as the statistics are too impressive.

In 1997, Detroit had 354 firearm homicides. Windsor, 1,000 yards away, had only 4. Even taking into account the population difference (Windsor's population is about one-fifth of Detroit's) the comparison is still staggering. And as of July, with Detroit opening its first casino, both cities have legalized gambling. It will be elementary for gamblers to calculate on which side of the river the better odds lie of reaching your car in the parking lot unscathed.

To many Americans, the Canadian solution of handgun bans and restrictions is, at the least, unpalatable and, at the most, unconstitutional. Instead of dealing with the situation directly and restricting civilian ownership of handguns, it has become fashionable to pick the group of one's choice and point the j'accuse-atory finger: the NRA, profiteering gun manufacturers, absentee parents, genetically flawed children, paranoid gun owners, lazy teachers, a fast and loose legal system, and a society of victims. A multiple-choice public indictment of blame, in which, since everyone is at fault, no one is accountable.

The recent school shootings in Colorado and Georgia have many laying blame on the media, pointing to television and movies that glorify violence and gunplay, and music that is designed to incite a riot of anger, resentment and sarcasm in youths who are barely off their training wheels.

But if these mediums are to blame, then how do the youths of Windsor have such immunity? They watch the same TV stations,

go to the same movies, listen to the same music as Detroit youths, and yet they have a juvenile crime rate that is a fraction of Detroit's. The lack of availability of handguns certainly must play a role.

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice, in the States between 1983 and 1993, juvenile homicides involving firearms grew 182%. By contrast, only a 15% increase was seen among homicides involving other types of weapons. In the U.S. from 1985 to 1995, 52% of all homicides involved handguns, compared with 14% for Canada.

Canada's willingness to accept gun restrictions might rise from its history. The settlement of Canada's "Wild West" was far different from the settlement of the United States'. In Canada, wherever settlers moved west, law and order was already in place in the form of the Hudson's Bay Company. From that spawned a culture that was more structured, less creative, less violent and more likely to look to established authorities for the settlement of disputes. In the United States, however, as the settlers moved west they found virtually no law existed, causing them to take matters into their own hands. Thus a culture was spawned that was more independent, more creative, more violent and more likely to settle disputes themselves. And when an abundance of numerous and easily available firearms are factored in, the results can be bloody.

According to statistics, Canada in 1997 had 193 homicides by firearms. The United States had 12,380. It is hard to change a culture, but clearly the easy access to firearms has to be addressed before we can expect any significant drop in our homicide rate.

I used to be a member of the National Rifle Association. I had the logo on my car, was skilled in the parry and thrust of debates, and was saturated with persuasive data from this organization, which covets statistics more than major league baseball. I am not a member anymore, not because of any complete, radical shift in beliefs, but more from a weariness, a battle fatigue of being caught in the No Man's Land among the immutable NRA, the anti-gun lobby and the evening news, lately filled with terrified schoolchildren, emergency-response crews and black-clad SWAT teams. Perhaps the time has come to lose our "Wild West" roots and, at the least, look to put the same restrictions on our guns that we put on our automobiles and the family dog: licensing and registration.

On my way back to Detroit, I stopped at the American Customs booth. I faced a U.S. customs agent.

"Citizenship?" he asks.

"United States," I reply.

He waves his hand to pass me on.

And I could not help but wonder whether the next students getting diplomas would be the "Class of 2000" or the "Class of .357."

FISCAL YEAR 2000 VA HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I was informed of the concern of two North Dakotans who have distinguished themselves on behalf of veterans and their families regarding FY' 2000 funding for VA medical care-incoming National Commander of the Disabled Veterans of America Michael Dobmeier of Grand Forks, North Dakota and Lorraine Frier, National President of the Ladies Auxiliary to

the Veterans of Foreign Wars of West Fargo. Let me take this opportunity to warmly congratulate Mike and Lorraine on their recent election to these important national offices, and to thank them for their many years of distinguished service to our country.

Yesterday, the Senate VA-HUD Subcommittee reported an appropriations measure for the Department of Veterans Affairs that will provide \$18.4 billion for medical care for veterans. This figure is \$1.1 billion above the Administration's budget request of \$17.3 billion earlier this year, however, more than \$600 below House appropriations recommendation of \$1.7 billion for veterans medical care. The House action would increase VA medical care funding to \$19 billion.

While the House action does not meet the recommendations from the Independent Budget, Fiscal Year 2000 of \$20.2 billion, the funding level does come closer to ensuring that the VA may not have to curtail medical services, close community-based clinics or layoff critical health care workers. Earlier this week, the Veterans of Foreign Wars warned that unless the Senate approves funding close to the House level of \$19 billion, "scores of community-based clinics will have to be closed, veterans will wait longer for care and some 8,500 health care workers laid off".

Mr. President, the crisis in funding for veterans medical care is shameful, particularly in light of the strong economic news that we have received almost daily over the past few months. How can a nation that has experienced such strong economic growth during the past few years, witnessed stock market growth beyond all expectations and discussed how to spend the Federal surplus, deny veterans the very best health care. How can we justify making veterans wait for months for specialized health care, closing outpatient clinics or reducing VA staffing levels. In my state of North Dakota, we have been working for several years to secure funding for \$10 million in critical patient privacy and environmental improvements at the Fargo VA Medical Center—a medical center more than 70 years old.

Earlier this year when the Senate, during consideration of the budget resolution, failed to increase funding for VA medical care as recommended in the Independent Budget, Senator DORGAN and I introduced legislation, S. 1022, to authorize an emergency appropriation of \$1.7 billion, above the Administration request, for veterans health care. In view of VA-HUD Subcommittee action in the Senate this week, we must work together to find additional funding for VA health care to bring that level closer to the recommended level in the Independent

Budget. We must do better for our veterans; we can do no less for the sacrifices they and their families have made on our behalf.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST
TIME—H.R. 17

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I understand that H.R. 17 is at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 17) to amend the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978 to require the President to report to Congress on any selective embargo on agricultural commodities, to provide a termination date for the embargo, to provide great assurances for contract sanctity, and for other purposes.

Mr. LOTT. I now ask for its second reading, and object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY—TREATY DOCUMENT 106-10

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, as in executive session, I ask unanimous consent that the injunction of secrecy be removed from the following treaty transmitted to the Senate on September 16, 1999, by the President of the United States:

1997 Amendment to Montreal Protocol (Treaty Document 106-10).

I further ask that the treaty be considered as having been read the first time; that it be referred, with accompanying papers, to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed; and the President's message be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The message of the President is as follows:

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (the "Montreal Protocol"), adopted at Montreal on September 15-17, 1997, by the Ninth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol. The report of the Department of State is also enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The principal features of the 1997 Amendment, which was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), are the addition of methyl bromide to the substances that are subject to trade control with non-Parties; and the addition of a licensing requirement for import and export of controlled substances. The 1997 Amendment will constitute a major step forward in protecting public health and the environ-

ment from potential adverse effects of stratospheric ozone depletion.

By its terms, the 1997 Amendment was to have entered into force on January 1, 1999, provided that at least 20 states had deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, or approval. However, because this condition was not met until August 12, 1999, the 1997 Amendment will enter into force on November 10, 1999.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the 1997 Amendment to the Montreal Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, September 16, 1999.

NATIONAL HOME EDUCATION
WEEK

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from consideration of S. Res. 183, and the Senate proceed to consideration of this bill, which is a resolution designating the week beginning September 19, 1999, and ending September 25, 1999, as National Home Education Week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 183) designating the week beginning on September 19, 1999, and ending on September 25, 1999, as "National Home Education Week."

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to this resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 183) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 183

Whereas the United States is committed to excellence in education;

Whereas the United States recognizes the importance of family participation and parental choices in pursuit of that excellence;

Whereas the United States recognizes the fundamental right of parents to direct the education and upbringing of their children;

Whereas parents want their children to receive a first-class education;

Whereas training in the home strengthens the family and guides children in setting the highest standards for their lives which are essential elements to the continuity of morality in our culture;

Whereas home schooling families contribute significantly to the cultural diversity important to a healthy society;

Whereas the United States has a significant number of parents who teach their own children at home;

Whereas home education was proven successful in the lives of George Washington, Patrick Henry, John Quincy Adams, John Marshall, Robert E. Lee, Booker T. Washington, Thomas Edison, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Mark Twain, John Singleton Copley, William Carey, Phyllis Wheatley, and Andrew Carnegie;

Whereas home school students exhibit self-confidence and good citizenship and are fully prepared academically to meet the challenges of today's society;

Whereas dozens of contemporary studies continue to confirm that children who are educated at home score exceptionally well on nationally normed achievement tests;

Whereas a March 1999 study by the Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation at the University of Maryland found that home school students taking the Iowa Test of Basic Skills or the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency scored in the 70th to 80th percentiles among all the students nationwide who took those exams, and 25 percent of home schooled students were studying at a level one or more grades above normal for their age;

Whereas studies demonstrate that home schoolers excel in college with the average grade point average of home schoolers exceeding the college average; and

Whereas United States home educators and home instructed students should be recognized and celebrated for their efforts to improve the quality of education: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the week beginning on September 19, 1999, and ending on September 25, 1999, is designated as National Home Education Week. The President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation recognizing the contributions that home schooling families have made to the Nation.

NATIONAL HISTORICALLY BLACK
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
WEEK

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 178, which was reported by the Judiciary Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 178) designating the week beginning September 19, 1999, as "National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week."

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

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the report.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 178) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows: