

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 146, I was unavoidably detained by official business in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained due to delays in air traffic control. I missed rollcall votes 145 and 146. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1906, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2000

Mr. LINDER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-159) on the resolution (H. Res. 185) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1906) making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1259, SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICARE SAFE DEPOSIT BOX ACT OF 1999

Mr. LINDER, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 106-160) on the resolution (H. Res. 186) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1259) to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to protect Social Security surpluses through strengthened budgetary enforcement mechanisms, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1083

Ms. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. CRANE) be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1083. He was inadvertently added last week.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Washington?

There was no objection.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.J. RES. 33

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be withdrawn as a cosponsor of House Joint Resolution 33.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 24, 1999.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker,
U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received for the White House on May 24, 1999 at 4:30 p.m. and said to contain a message for the President whereby he submits certifications in accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Amended Mines Protocol of the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHL.

CERTIFICATIONS REGARDING AMENDED MINES PROTOCOL OF CONVENTION ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on International Relations:

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Amended Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, together with its Technical Annex, adopted by the Senate of the United States on May 20, 1999, I hereby certify that:

In connection with Condition (1)(B), Pursuit Deterrent Munition, the Pursuit Deterrent Munition shall continue to remain available for use by the United States Armed Forces at least until January 1, 2003, unless an effective alternative to the munition becomes available.

In connection with Condition (6), Land Mine Alternatives, in pursuing alternatives to United States anti-personnel mines or mixed anti-tank systems, I will not limit the types of alternatives to be considered on the basis of any criteria other than those specified in the sentence that follows. In pursuit of alternatives to United States anti-personnel mines, or mixed anti-tank systems, the United States shall seek to identify, adapt, modify, or otherwise develop only those technologies that (i) are intended to pro-

vide military effectiveness equivalent to that provided by the relevant anti-personnel mine, or mixed anti-tank system; and (ii) would be affordable.

In connection with Condition (7), Certification with Regard to International Tribunals, with respect to the Amended Mines Protocol, the Convention on Conventional Weapons, or any future protocol or amendment thereto, the United States shall not recognize the jurisdiction of any international tribunal over the United States or any of its citizens.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
THE WHITE HOUSE, May 24, 1999.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

URGENCY REQUIRED IN DEALING WITH GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, the purpose of my remarks is to try and gain support within the Republican leadership to move and to move in an urgent fashion with respect to the gun safety provisions that have passed the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, this country has been shocked over the past 2 years as we have witnessed the shootings in Springfield, Oregon; Fayetteville, Tennessee; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; Jonesboro, Kansas; West Paducah, Kentucky; Pearl, Mississippi; and in Littleton, Colorado, as we have seen children take up arms against their schoolmates, against their friends, in school.

And while we will be discussing these matters at great length for a long period of time in the Congress as the Nation and the Congress come to grips with what we might do to try and prevent these actions in the future, one thing seems to be very clear among the people in this country, and I would hope among the people in the Congress and certainly among the Republican leadership, and that is that keeping guns out of the hands of kids will help to ensure that the feelings of anger and hostility do not lead to fatal shooting sprees.

We clearly need to listen to children and parents and make sure that school counseling and mental health resources are sufficient, and we must understand that the causes of youth violence are complicated and that the solutions must be broad-based, and we must strive to understand what brings children to this point where they would

take up this violent action with guns against their schoolmates.

It is urgent to the American public that the Congress be able to respond to the problems of children having guns, having easy access to guns, and the irresponsibility of some parents who make those guns available or negligently leave those guns lying around the house, in many instances loaded and unlocked, with easy access by these children.

Last week the Senate passed several pieces of legislation designed to improve the margins of gun safety, if you will, requiring background checks for all gun sales, including gun shows. We have a companion bill here by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BLAGOJEVICH) requiring new handguns to be sold with safety locks. We have companion legislation here by the gentlewoman from Indiana (Ms. CARSON) outlawing high density ammunition clips, so they will not be made available.

I think that these are measures that the American public can understand, that the American public supports, that the American public, whatever their positions are with respect to gun control, understand that these are gun safety issues about the safety of our children.

Our children are, in many instances, some of our most vulnerable citizens, who go to school with all the expectations that we all went to school with when we were growing up, only to find out that it can become a shooting gallery because of the easy access of a troubled teen or a troubled youngster to these kinds of guns. Yet what we see is an effort to somehow not address this legislation on a timely fashion, not to take that legislation from the Senate and to pass it, not to have a freestanding piece of legislation which we can pass and send to the Senate that is identical to that which they passed so that they might be able to put it on the President's desk before we leave for Memorial Day.

No, what we see is, we are going to get one hearing this week, and then action perhaps in the committee sometime in June. Knowing the July schedule, knowing the August schedule. It is very likely, it is very likely, that America's schoolchildren will start the next school year without the Congress of the United States having addressed this issue.

I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN).

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the very distinguished gentleman from California for yielding to me.

I would say to the gentleman, 13 young people die from firearms every single day. That amounts to nearly 5,000 a year. It is the second leading cause of death among young people.

There is a reason why there are more deaths from firearms of young people

in the United States than in all 25 other industrialized nations combined. Something is wrong here. What is wrong is the fact that there are over 225 million guns available in the United States that invariably are getting into the hands of our young people.

There are many things we could and should be doing.

□ 1845

For one thing, we have concealed weapons laws. In the Commonwealth of Virginia it is lawful to take a concealed weapon into a children's recreation center. In the Commonwealth of Virginia and many other States, one can take guns and park one's vehicle in a high school parking lot with a gun in or on one's vehicle. That does not make sense.

It does not make sense to be able to buy more than one handgun a month. What people oftentimes do is buy a whole case of guns in one State. They travel up the East Coast and then set up shop on a street corner in an urban area and sell those guns.

These are not responsible situations when we see the kind of death and destruction that is occurring from firearms every day. It is time for the House to take action to complement the action of the Senate, to put forward a good, responsible juvenile justice bill that will in fact make our schools and streets safer for our children.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) very much for his contribution. His remarks point out the urgency and the danger that these guns present to young people in this Nation. He has pointed out that 13 children under the age of 18 are killed each day because of guns.

Guns cause one in every four deaths of teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19. Firearms are the fourth leading cause of accidental death among children 5 to 14. Clearly the easy availability and proximity of guns, handled in an irresponsible fashion, to young children is lethal to those children.

We have an opportunity with the very common sense proposals that were presented in the Senate to address this matter and to address it now, with the same sense of urgency that parents are asking themselves about, whether or not they should send their children for the remainder of the school year, whether or not they should pull their children out of school before school closes, whether or not they should try to find another school that they might think will be more safe than the one they are in.

But what we have learned over the last 18 months, we do not know what school that would be. We do not know where a troubled child has easy access to a gun and then acts out anger, frustration or problems that that child has by shooting their schoolmates.

That is why we are asking the Republican leadership to schedule this debate, to schedule this vote this week before we go home for Memorial Day, Memorial Day, a rather significant day in the history of this country. But tragically now many will be celebrating Memorial Day at the loss of their children because of these tragic shootings. I think that is why we cannot play this by the ordinary rules of legislative procedure and process and jurisdiction and all of those arguments that are designed to keep these common sense approaches from coming to the floor of the House to be voted on.

Why are they doing that? Because the people who oppose trigger locks on guns that are accessible to children, the people that are opposed to getting rid of the loophole for gun shows where one can buy guns and gun shows without a background check, that one would not be allowed to if one went into a gun shop, people who oppose limiting the high density ammunition clips, they want time to regroup, to re-scramble, to put pressure on the Congress, to give campaign contributions, to lobby the Congress so that they can overwhelm the judgment and the determination of the American people.

The Republican leadership ought not to become a tool for those interests, because it is those interests that are keeping guns in the presence of young children in an irresponsible fashion.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding to me, and I strongly associate with his comments.

I have only been in Congress 3 years; but in the course of the time that I have been in Congress there have been eight multiple shootings on school yards.

I look at my colleague, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE), she and I were present earlier before tragic shootings in our State, seeking the attention of the Republican leadership and of this Congress to at least allow a vote on simple, common sense, direct approaches that would minimize the impact of gun violence with our children.

We pleaded, for instance, to have the opportunity to at least vote on the most benign of child access protection legislation in the last Congress. We were denied the opportunity in the last juvenile justice bill to have any vote at all on any legislation, any amendment, even modestly taking the tack of trying to increase the safety of guns in the home.

It was frustrating for me that we could have 15 States, starting with the State that was the home of the Chair of that subcommittee that had child access protection, the State of Florida, 15 States have followed, and yet we have not been able to have the most innocuous of votes in this Chamber.

I am pleased that finally we are starting to see some movement, that we have seen some action on the Senate side, and perhaps the Republican leadership will find it in their heart to allow a vote on the floor of this Chamber. There are a number of proposals that have absolutely nothing to do with the rights of the hunting population around this country. In fact, they are supported by the overwhelming majority of gun owners.

Why? Why do we still sell guns in this country that do not tell one whether or not there is a bullet in the chamber? There are dozens of people who are killed every year because of the so-called unloaded gun. Why is it that we do not spend a few cents, up to 75 cents or a dollar, to have a mechanism so that when the clip is removed from an automatic pistol, that it sweeps the chamber and unloads it? Why is it that there are more consumer protection devices for toy guns than real guns?

Mr. Speaker, I think the time has come for the people on this floor to seize control of this issue ourselves. If it takes a discharge petition in order to be able to vote on these simple, common sense steps that will save children's lives, that are in fact supported not just by the majority of Americans, but by the majority of the gun-owning Americans, I think that the time has come.

I deeply appreciate the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) yielding me some time. I appreciate this discussion that is taking place here this evening. I hope the American public will add their voice so that they are in fact heard and this Congress takes its head out of the sand, takes simple, common sense steps that will in fact save the lives of children in America.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for his remarks, and he does point out the incredible inconsistency that we would put child-proof caps on aspirin, child-proof locks on gates and child-proof locks on car doors, and all of these efforts to save our most precious resources, the children of this Nation, but we would not think about doing it with respect to a lethal weapon like a gun that is unfortunately all too often left lying around the house.

Fifty-five percent of the handgun owners keep their guns loaded in their homes, and 34 percent of them keep them loaded and unlocked, loaded and unlocked in their homes, and in many instances with very young children present; and tragically sometimes, as we know, children with a lot of difficult problems who end up then acting out in a fashion that is lethal to their friends and to their classmates.

So I think that is why, as we see America starting to respond to the

tragedies in Oregon and Colorado and Georgia and elsewhere, they start to say, why should people not have to be responsible in all the homes with locking the gun with the trigger lock, and the people who sell these guns be responsible for providing trigger locks with the sale of these guns so that their children can be safe, so that they can know that it is the denial of the easy and spontaneous access.

That does not mean that somebody someday will not hammer the lock off of the gun or, as we saw tragically witnessed here recently, break off the locks on the cabinet, but it is the standard of care that we owe our children.

I thank the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for raising those points.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, Columbine High School is just a few blocks from my congressional district. Columbine High School had its graduation this last weekend, honoring those kids who graduated with their class and honoring those who could not be there.

No one would be so shallow as to suggest that the only solution to these terrible shootings we have had in high schools around the country is gun control. But a troubled youth who does not have a gun is a troubled youth. A troubled youth with a gun is a killer.

I have been inundated with calls. Many of my colleagues have been inundated with calls from around the country, from suburban parents, moms and dads, from urban and rural parents, moms and dads, asking the simple question: Why cannot we do something, a little something, to keep guns out of the hands of kids?

No one believes that children in an unsupervised way, especially in or around a school, should have a gun. There are several proposals that we can pass on behalf of the American public and on behalf of American children, simple proposals which will give safety for guns and kids.

The first proposal is one which will make gun shows comply with the same laws that gun shops comply with. Gun shop owners, to sell a gun to somebody, have got to conduct a background check. They have got to have some identification to know that the person buying the gun is 18 years old or older. They have to have some kind of registration and way to trace that they sold the gun.

Gun shows can have numerous dealers which are not registered and which can sell guns to anybody for any amount of money, no questions asked. One year ago this last June, a staff member from my Denver office walked into a gun show in the Denver area, the Tanner Gun Show. The Tanner Gun Show is held 10 times a year. He bought

a gun, no questions asked, cash on the barrel head, \$450. It was a semi-automatic weapon. The two boys at Columbine High School bought their guns at the Tanner Gun Show, the very same gun show we had been at just a few months before.

Another thing we can do before we leave this week is we can pass legislation banning once and for all multiple-round ammunition cartridges. Why on earth does one need a cartridge of 15 or 25 or 30 bullets to hunt? One does not need those. Those cartridges are designed to kill human beings; and kill human beings they did, at Columbine High School. They kill police officers around the country every year. We thought we banned them in 1995. But because of a loophole in the law, these cartridges are still legally available, and that loophole needs to be closed.

Last, but certainly not least, Congress can pass legislation this week which will establish child safety locks on guns. This would prevent kids who should not have guns from getting them and using them. This is a common sense proposal. Parents across the country want to know why Congress has not enacted this law already.

As I said, Columbine High School's graduation was last Friday. Many more schools will still be in session through next week. Congress should send a message to the parents across America that we care; that part of the solution, although not all of the solution, is that Congress will take steps to enact child gun safety laws, not next month, not next fall, not sometime in the future, but now, before school is out, to begin to ensure the safety of every child across America.

That is why I appreciate the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) taking on this important task tonight. That is why I intend to work this week to let our Speaker and everyone in this Congress know Congress must discuss child gun safety legislation and pass common sense, narrowly drawn rules before we leave for the Memorial Day recess. The only and best way we can memorialize these kids this week in Congress is to pass legislation before Memorial Day.

□ 1900

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman very much for her remarks and thank her for the kind of vehicle she is going to provide the Congress to express its opinion to get this done now.

As she points out, these are provisions, the safety locks on guns, the getting rid of the loophole provided by gun shows as opposed to gun shops, and multiple rounds, high-density ammunition clippings, these are very common-sense remedies and closure of loopholes that the American people understand and that they support.

The Senators in the United States Senate have passed these provisions.

They should be sent over here. We should pass a freestanding bill and make sure that we can have this become law before our children get back to school. I think it is important that we address it with that kind of urgency.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding. I particularly thank him for allowing me to join him and my colleagues on an issue of such moment, if you will, and to be able to say to the American people and to my colleague, common sense tells us that guns do kill.

They do kill. Ask any law enforcement officer, any person who is responsible for keeping law and order. Ask teachers. Ask parents. And, of course, ask injured children and ask the loved ones of those children who are killed.

I have heard the response by those who are advocates of the idea that the Second Amendment should prevail above all, that guns do not kill, people do. But people use guns to kill. And I think the American people are way out in front on this issue right now, because if we read the Second Amendment, it has to do with the keeping of a militia for a founding country of 13 colonies trying to survive.

And do my colleagues know what? We have a militia, the National Guard. And no one is trying to take guns away from the National Guard. We also know that the people of America have guns in their homes, and no one is trying to take guns away from the American people.

But in 1995, over 440 children died just of unintentional shootings alone. In my home City of Houston, Texas, a few years ago, almost 10 years ago, I did something unheard of. I rose up off of City Council and said, we are going to pass an ordinance that holds adults responsible for allowing guns to get in the hands of children.

If my colleagues know Texas, and I do not think my fellow Texans will allow me to praise them as well as to cite that it was an unheard of thing to do for a City Council member to do in the City of Houston. And there was a lot of opposition. The National Rifle Association sent people in to testify against it. But the mothers came forward and said, we want this.

Out of that ordinance came a State law that is now in place in the State of Texas that holds parents responsible, holds parents responsible, for letting guns get in the hands of children. And what we have seen is a 50-percent decrease in unintentional shootings since that was what it was to be directed toward.

To the family in Conyers, Georgia, if those guns had been more secure, as we are attempting to say to parents, not only in a nice display case with a glass

front that could be broken, but away from the eyesight of children, it is our responsibility to try and keep them safe, but it is our responsibility to keep law enforcement officers safe as well.

Firearms are the fourth leading cause of accidental death among children 5 to 14 and the third leading cause of death among 15 to 24 years old. If this were a medical problem, we would call it an epidemic. In 1994, 70 percent of the murder victims between the ages of 15 and 17 were killed by a handgun and 2 in 25 high school students, almost 8 percent, reported having carried a gun in the last 30 days.

As a member of the House Committee on the Judiciary, we have had an opportunity to move this legislation forward. In fact, we could have done just what the Senate did to amend the juvenile bill that the Senate just passed with common-sense response to these gun issues.

We could, for example, stamp out the loophole in gun shows. Enormously important. We could provide for the safety locks that would protect our children and to realize that they protect others, as well.

My colleagues could not imagine the gun shows that travel around the Nation. And many times there are store owners that participate in these gun shows. But let me assure my colleagues, there are a lot of individuals who come and say, I have no license. I have no permit. I have nothing. I am just here. And the reason I have nothing is because these are in my personal possession.

This is a loophole. And so, we get the individual driving up to the gun show with 25 AK-47s and they say, this is part of my personal ownership. And they sell 10 or 15 to an individual who gives no reason. I have talked to law enforcement officers who went and bought a gun from someone, an automatic rifle, and said, "I am going to use this to kill a cop in New York." And the person who was unlicensed said, "All right. Here is a silencer to go with it. But make sure when you do it, do not call my name."

There are too many guns in America. And most Americans want to be safe in their homes. They want law enforcement officers to be safe, as well. And so, I am joining with my colleagues to ensure the closing the loophole in the gun shows. I would like to see a Brady waiting period for those gun shows to protect individuals. I want to see raising the handgun purchase age from 18 to 21. I think child safety locks are an imperative.

And frankly, I wish we could pass the same legislation in the comprehensive gun legislation offered by my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) to deal with the idea of holding adults responsible.

When I spoke to some parents and teachers and explained to them that,

no, I am not trying to disadvantage parents, I chair the Congressional Children's Caucus, I do not want to point the blame and put parents, who are already distraught, in a situation where they are criminally liable, but I think such a piece of legislation is common sense, and I think if they understand it fully, they would be running towards supporting it.

Because what it says is, know what your children are doing. Do not leave guns on coffee tables and in places conspicuously, where the child can get it. And if their child is in a garage or reading the Internet and building bombs, they need to know what is going on. Because we have to protect their children and our children. And how much more can we get from not listening to our children.

Let me close by simply saying to my colleagues, and I thank again the gentleman from California for yielding, that we know that there are other aspects of this, the video and entertainment industry. I am working on legislation to deal with mental health services, an omnibus mental health services for our children that deals with schools but also deals with other needs that our children have, so that if they are on medication they are not off of it one day and on it the next day.

I think America should be ashamed that we have a children's memorial that acknowledges the number of children that have been killed by guns. And allow me to share with my colleagues.

Chris Hollowell, age 5, was unintentionally shot and killed by his 10-year-old brother.

Sean Harvey, 16, was killed by a man who mistakenly thought the boy was stealing the neighbor's car.

Brian Crowell, 12, was unintentionally shot by a 14-year-old.

Amanda Garza died from a gunshot wound to the head after shooting herself with a .357.

Amanda Rogers, dead, 6 years old, was playing with a Nintendo with her cousin and was unintentionally shot by them.

Karissa Miller, 2, was unintentionally shot and killed by a 7-year-old boy.

Christopher Murphy, 11 years old, the son of two police officers, unintentionally shot and killed by his 11-year-old friend.

Christopher David Holt, 4, unintentionally shot and killed himself with a .357 Magnum.

Amanda Drukenbrod, 13, shot and killed at home when a teenage boy was showing off his gun.

I can go on and on, pages and pages of young children who died at the hand of a gun. Not a knife, not a stick, but a gun.

I think it is time now to say that we will not go home for this Memorial Day recess unless we stand up and be counted in the United States Congress and

put a bill on the President's desk that he can sign.

I say to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT), join us in getting this legislation on the floor of the House because our children are dying and we cannot stand by any longer.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her remarks and urge that the Speaker make this in order this week before we leave town for the Memorial Day break.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY).

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, my colleague from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), he and I are on the same Committee on Education and the Workforce; and in the last past year and a half, we have talked about violence in our schools, we have talked about what can be done.

A week ago Tuesday, we had six young people come in to talk to us, talk to us about how gun violence has affected their lives. And it was very hard because here we had so many young people that faced death, lost their friends.

There are many of us that are victims. A lot of us are adults. We try and say we can handle that kind of pain. But even as adults, it is always hard. But to hear the young people talk about what happened in their schools, it was a real heartbreaker. And yet, here in Congress we continually hear silence.

I came to Congress to try and reduce gun violence in this country. That was a promise I made to my son. It is a promise I have made to my new grandson. It is something I plan on doing. And we have had our Littletons, we have had our shootings in Georgia, so many shootings. But I want people to look at this because this is where people do not realize what is happening. We have a Littleton every single day.

Every single day, we lose 13 young people, whether it is an accidental death, whether it is a suicide, or whether it is a homicide, we lose 13 young children a day.

We have an opportunity here in Congress to try and do something. We have an obligation to the people of America to do something. We have been talking about comprehensive reform on reducing gun violence and helping our young people. And yet in the Senate the other night, when they asked for more money for school counselors and psychologists, it was voted down. That can be part of a comprehensive package.

No one is saying that it is not just guns. There are a lot of factors that go into gun violence. The young fellow in Georgia, when he shot six of his classmates, he was really on the verge of suicide. He still does not understand why he did what he did.

We can help a lot of these kids. What I am hearing constantly is, this is too

big for all of us to handle. We cannot do anything about it. But do my colleagues know what? That is what we hear when they want defeat before they even start.

We have to change the debate. When I am home in my district, I have NRA members that come up to me all the time, "Carolyn, we support what you are doing." But then we have so many Members that are afraid of the NRA leadership. They are afraid of what they can do to them as congresspersons.

Certainly, they are not going to come after me about guns in my district because the people in my district support me on what I am trying to do. But we have Members here, and they have every right to be afraid of the NRA because the NRA will come in and say things about the Member that have absolutely nothing to do with guns, or make up lies. And they do make up lies.

What I am asking the American people, the mothers, the fathers of this land, call their congresspersons, give them the support that they need. Because if we only hear from one side, I guarantee my colleagues, in a couple of months, we will be back here when school opens again and there will be another shooting in the school and people will say, why can we not do something?

A year ago, when we had a committee hearing, a psychologist said it was not a matter of if there would be another school shooting, it was a matter of when there would be another school shooting.

□ 1915

But a lot of these young people that were shot, killed, injured, they did not make the newspapers across the country. They might have made it in their hometown newspaper, but they did not make it on the front pages, because they are all individuals.

My colleague before me talked about a health care crisis. We have four young people left in Colorado that have spinal cord injuries. Do you know what it is going to cost the American people on health care? The estimates, the low estimates of health care to our young people on a yearly basis for those that survive their injuries is \$14 billion. \$14 billion. Can you imagine what we could do with that? Can you imagine what we could do with that money here in Congress? Education, health care, all the things that we want to do.

I am asking every mom, every dad, let us hear from you. We have to hear your voices. Grassroots, that is what we need. That is what changes and certainly motivates this Congress, because if they do not, there are a number of us that will continue to fight to reduce gun violence in this country, but it would be nice if we had a few more voices to be heard so we could

give our colleagues the strength to do the right thing. They have got to hear from you. If you want to make a difference, then your voice does count. Do not sit there saying, "Oh, so and so will call. I don't have to." You have to let the Congresspeople here know what you want. Then we will win.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank the gentlewoman very much for her remarks and think she makes a very important point. It is highly unlikely that we will have this kind of common sense gun legislation to help protect our children, to help protect our communities from the easily accessible and irresponsible ownership of guns, if the American people do not call their Members of Congress and insist upon it.

Over the last couple of weeks as I have been out in the public in my district and talking to groups and just being on the streets of my district, people have come to me and asked time and again: Why can you not do this and do it now?

When they saw the Senate not do it, they were infuriated, and the Senate doubled back and took a new vote and then came in line with what the American people wanted. Then the Senate doubled back a second time and came in line with what the American people wanted.

But apparently the Republican leadership in this House and the NRA are going to delay this legislation, fully understanding that delay is the enemy of legislation, that you get it jammed up at the end of the session against a recess, against the appropriations bills, and this starts to fall through the cracks, and it is nobody's fault and it is everybody's fault.

We need the American people to call the Republican leadership, to call their Members of Congress and tell them that these three or four measures, very common sensical measures, should be passed and should be passed immediately. They could, if in fact the leadership wanted to do it, be passed before we leave for Memorial Day.

They are having a hearing on the day we leave town, because then they are hoping for a week where there will not be any discussion of this measure and there will not be a sense of urgency about the American people to have Congress address this when we come back, and pretty soon we will find ourselves addressing it in September or October. It is the oldest legislative strategy in this town, just delay and delay.

Already we see Members that are supporters of the NRA going around the floor with checklists from the NRA trying to line up their support, who they have given their contributions to, will they stand tough on this. That is why they want the time. They want the time to kill this bill, not to give it great general consideration but to kill

these ideas that have passed overwhelmingly in the Senate of the United States.

I would hope that people would heed your call for them to call Members of Congress and ask them to pass these child gun safety measures that have been passed by the Senate.

I yield to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and I particularly thank him for his leadership on this special order, because there is a hunger and a thirst in the American public for this legislation and for education about this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this chart came home to the American people finally in Littleton and in Georgia. Close to 60,000 deaths during the tragic Vietnam War for 11 years. That is compared to 11 years at home, close to 400,000 deaths, increasingly the deaths of children. The reason that so many of us on both sides of the aisle cannot go home for Memorial Day without a bill is that we cannot face our constituents without a bill, not after the massacre in Littleton and the attempted massacre in Georgia.

I want to focus for just a few minutes on gun shows, because frankly I was ignorant until recently of the fact that anybody can buy a gun at a gun show free of any Federal requirement. I am sure most of the public does not know that there is no Federal requirement that says that a person with a mental defect has to be checked before buying at a gun show, with a felony conviction has to be checked before buying at a gun show, or even that a child has to be checked before buying at a gun show. Remember that some of the guns used in Littleton were bought at a gun show.

The gentleman from Virginia (Mr. MORAN) was on the floor earlier. He is from the district adjoining mine. My district has an absolute ban on guns of any and every kind. As I speak, my district is flooded with guns of every kind. Many of those guns come from gun shows in Virginia, because anybody can buy a gun at gun shows in Virginia. Maryland also provides guns through gunrunning into the District of Columbia.

That is why we need Federal law and Federal regulation. State by State is almost useless, given how porous are the boundaries in our country. We can go from one place to the other. You do not have to go through any kind of check to go from one place to the other, and it is a free country and we would not want you to have to go through a check. But we do want to contain these guns so that we can begin to deal with these contrasts.

The gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN), the ranking member of the Committee on Government Reform, and I sat on a special hearing before

the Georgia incident where we heard astounding testimony from the GAO on how easy it is to buy .50 caliber sniper rifles from legitimate dealers, leave aside gun shows. Now, a .50 caliber sniper rifle is a rifle that can penetrate armor if you stand out on the back steps of the Capitol and aim it toward the Lincoln Memorial.

The GAO went undercover and asked for .50 caliber weapons of the kind, to use their words, that would pierce a limousine or bring down a helicopter. My friends, this is the Nation's capital. The people who ride in limousines and helicopters are Members of Congress, the President, the Vice President, and members of the Cabinet.

What this says, of course, is that even here, someone who wanted to take out anybody from the highest official to an ordinary citizen anywhere in the city or the region could buy a gun from a legitimate dealer, even telling them virtually that that is what they wanted to do. Imagine what a person with a mental defect could do by going to a gun show.

We must remember that this very building was the site of the assassination of two brave Capitol policemen. That gun was shot by a schizophrenic man. At a gun show, he might easily have purchased such a weapon.

The long and short of it, my friends, is that what we have in this country is massive gunrunning across the borders, between one State and another, sometimes shipped in large numbers. The result is that in the large cities such as the one I represent, the District of Columbia, the murders take place one by one. Now in the suburbs the murders take place in groups, by massacre. Choose your style. The difference is the same. They are all our children.

I focus on gun shows this evening because of the ages of the youngsters in the last two incidents. A 15-year-old in Georgia, a 17 and an 18-year-old in Littleton. These are precisely the ages of children that could go into a gun show today in many States and purchase a weapon.

Sometimes we are told that what was passed in the Senate the other day will not make much difference, it is at the margins, why pass it? The simple answer to that is if it will not make much difference, then pass it. If in fact those who cherish guns think that these bills will not hurt them very much, then pass the bills. There will be some slight inconvenience to the legitimate public, but who would say that that inconvenience would not be worth it if the lives of only a few children were saved?

And may I remind the House that most of the deaths we will never hear about because they are accidental deaths. We hear about the massacres, we hear about the drive-by shootings. But when these guns are kept in homes, they are most often used accidentally by family members or friends

within the homes. The 15-year-old youngster broke into a locked chest to get the gun that he used in suburban Georgia last week.

The silent deaths, the accidental deaths will be reduced, and certainly the deaths that have outraged the country will be reduced if we pass the modest legislation that came forward finally from the Senate last week. That is the very least this House can do if we want to make sure that this gap never appears again in our country.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. I thank very much the gentlewoman for her remarks. I want to thank my colleagues who joined me in this special order to try and urge the Republican leadership to pass this week the common sense gun safety provisions that have passed the Senate of the United States.

We do so with the full understanding that the problems and the tragedies in Littleton or in Georgia or in Oregon or in Kentucky and other such States where young people have taken up guns and assaulted and killed their classmates and their friends, that that problem will not be addressed solely with the questions of gun safety legislation. But clearly in each of these cases or most of these cases, what we find is the easy access of young children, in some cases disturbed young children with the irresponsible possession of guns in the home.

We believe that trigger locks will help increase the margin of safety in our communities. We believe that not letting young people go into gun shows or people go into gun shows on behalf of young people and with no questions asked be able to buy a gun, a gun they could not buy if they went into a gun shop. They could not do that. They would have to undergo that check. We urge the leadership to pass these common sense gun safety measures.

I yield to the gentleman from Guam.

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California for yielding. I want to extend my congratulations for this excellent special order on the issue of the proliferation of guns. Even in a place as remote as Guam, which lies some 9,000 miles away from here, a couple of weeks ago a couple of young ladies in middle school were detained in school for having handguns, bringing handguns to school. Guam, the place that I come from, is a place where lots of people own weapons.

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Fortunately, most people on Guam who feel that they need to own weapons are in total agreement with their registration and with their regulation, so I am happy to report that. But it appears to me that certainly the country's supply of weapons, the availability of weapons, the easy access of weapons is really the crux of what we are getting at.

It is rather clear that the guns in and of themselves may not be causing these violent episodes that our Nation has been subjected to, but certainly the fact that the weapons are so easily available has made sometimes what would be seen as minor violent acts turn into major, major tragedies, and I cannot help but wonder where is the wisdom that is supposed to be part of the legislative body that we belong to in trying not to address this issue when it is rather obvious that this cries out for action.

As a career educator, and actually early on in my career I was what would be seen as a disciplinarian in a very large high school, and I served in that capacity for several years, one of the things that certainly would help us in trying to deal with all the issues that are attendant to the growth of children and the work of children inside educational institutions is to not allow them the opportunity to have things that would be harmful to them. And we think of all the things that we deny them that would be harmful to them, think of all the efforts, extraordinary efforts, that we go through to deny them things that we know are not in their own best interests, things which may lead to tragic circumstances; and yet we seem to hesitate, we seem to falter when it comes to the issue of guns.

So I certainly appreciate and I want to congratulate the work of the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER) and all the other speakers during this special order.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Guam.

Finally, I just like to say, Mr. Speaker, that I had an opportunity to meet with a group of students at Pinole Valley High School in my district and had subsequent conversations with five of those students, Brian Davenport, Marcus Maxwell, Jamian Johnson, Kari Washington and Brett Parsons about Littleton, and those students and the students in the larger group had spent a great deal of time watching the news, listening to the news on the Internet, over the networks and elsewhere, acquiring information about what took place at Littleton.

They clearly understood that this was about them, it was about their peers, it was about their generation, children of their same age, and they were terribly troubled about it, and they understood that this is not a problem that can be answered with one solution, that it is, in fact, very complex.

I was also quite pleasantly surprised, the extent to which the students understood they clearly had a very strong role to play in the solution to these outbreaks of rage and the violence and the killing that have taken place in these schools, that they understood that maybe they should be nicer to

some of their fellow students, that there were students who they knew were somewhat loners or did not feel a part of the student body, that they should extend themselves, they should go over and talk to them, that maybe they should stop making fun of students or characterizing students because of the way they dressed, whether they had the latest clothes or they did not have the latest clothes, or the latest sneakers, or the wrong color clothes or what have you; that they had to think about not doing that, that students should not be characterized and categorized whether or not they participate in a religious organization after school or the debate club or they were on the track team or the football team.

All of these cliques that are natural, very, very natural during the adolescent years in schools, they understood that that was unfair to those students.

They had formed, they had many celebrations of their differences at Pinole High School over the years. The day I was there, they decided to celebrate their unity, to celebrate their sameness, to celebrate the fact that they were part of one student body drawn from many different communities.

It was a very exciting thing to see happen in response to Littleton.

So while we are focused on guns this evening and while we are focused on the need of the Republican leadership to expedite the consideration of these common sense gun safety measures, we also appreciate the complexity and the magnitude of this problem.

And let us not forget, let us not forget as we keep talking about children and schools and violence and killings, that 25 million teenagers are enrolled in 20,000 schools nationwide. Eight of those youths in six schools perpetrated the school killings of the last 8 months. Twenty-five million children came and went to school every day without being subjected to this danger or perpetrating this danger. We are talking about a handful of young children.

Some people have suggested, and I think the minority whip said it this week in Salt Lake City: The problem is not guns; the problem is, we are raising children to kill children.

No, we are not raising children to kill children. Twenty-five million teenagers went to school yesterday, the day before, and the day before Littleton and the day before all of these tragedies, and afterwards, and did not engage in the killing of their classmates or their friends. But a very small handful, because of the easy access and proximity and the irresponsible ownership of these guns and possession of these guns in their homes and the easy ability to purchase them through a loophole in the law at gun shows; that handful of students was able to per-

petrate an incredible amount of violence and incredible amount of killing on their school friends and on their communities.

So this is not to suggest that these are children of a generation of a culture of violence and killing because it is not true. Those kinds of generalizations will cause us to miss the problem, will cause us to miss the complexity of it.

But what we do know in this particular case was these young people had relatively easy access to these guns, and what we do know is that we have that part, as my colleagues know, that part of the solution coming together in the passage of these measures that have passed the Senate.

So I think we ought to keep and we ought to understand our children, and we should not, we should not paint them with the very broad brush of a relatively and, well, less than two handfuls of children that have perpetrated this kind of violence over the last 18 months. If this was the culture of violence in this young generation, as Michael Males, who is at the School for Social Ecology at the University of California, Irvine, points out, if this was a culture of violence, if we had raised children to kill children, then these killings would not be thousands of miles apart and months apart. This is what all children would be doing.

But they are not doing it. Like all of the children before them, they are going to school to get an education, to socialize and become part of their community, to grow up and to mature and decide what they are going to do with the rest of their lives. And their parents did not raise them to kill children.

But some parents unfortunately have been very irresponsible about leaving loaded guns and leaving firearms around, easily accessible to their children, apparently have not had the kind of communication or have not imposed upon their children the kind of discipline I grew up with about a gun.

I hunted, my father hunted, my children hunt. We have very, very strict rules about when one can touch a gun and when they cannot touch a gun and what to do with a gun in the home and what to do with the gun in the field.

Now some parents apparently have not been able to convey that or not willing to convey that or do not understand the kind of risk. We have got to deal with the questions of that kind of parental irresponsibility and with placing some responsibility and liability on those who fail to be the proper custodians of their children and of these firearms.

Mr. WU. Mr. Speaker, the tragedy at Columbine was heartbreaking for all Americans, but it was particularly difficult for the people in my home state of Oregon, where we endured a similar tragedy just one year ago at Thurston High School in Springfield.

At Thurston High, two young students were killed, and America reacted with sadness and sympathy.

At Columbine High, as we all know, thirteen students were killed by the two gunmen. America reacted with profound grief and a renewed sense of urgency.

Ladies and Gentlemen, thirteen children die every day in America—the result of handgun violence. Columbine happens every single day.

It is not nearly as dramatic, there are no CNN cameras, the nation does not stop and hold its breath, and watch . . .

But, every day in America, 13 children die unnecessary deaths from guns.

This is a children's health epidemic—and it is high time this Congress start paying attention to it, and take some steps in the right direction.

Now is the right time to begin the search for answers. Clearly, this is not an easy task. There are many approaches we can take to reduce youth violence:

We can make it easier for parents to spend time with their children.

We can reduce class size so teachers can identify troubled children, and get them the help they need.

We can better teach our young people the value of human life.

We can devote more resources to school counselors and mental health providers.

And we can simply open up the channels of communication between adults and teenagers . . .

What I've learned from listening to Oregon students in their schools, is that perhaps the most important thing we can do to make schools safer, is to create an atmosphere where it is more acceptable for students to talk to adults when they see danger signs.

These are all important steps . . .

Each will be helpful, but none alone or all together will be effective enough to curb this health epidemic without a commitment from this Congress to make guns less accessible to young people.

Conflicts and emotions that get the better of people can sometimes be sorted out with words, sometimes they get sorted out with fists, or with knives . . .

But the only tool of anger that can mow down thirteen students in a school library—is a gun.

Simply passing laws will not address the root causes of this tragedy, but there are steps we can take to keep guns out of the hands of violent juveniles.

That is why I urge my colleagues to support reasonable gun safety measures being introduced by Democrats:

First, let's close the "gun show loophole," which allows criminals to trade weapons anonymously. By instituting background checks for those seeking to anonymously purchase firearms at gun shows, we can make guns less accessible to criminals, and to violent youths.

Second, let's raise the minimum age for handgun purchases from 18 to 21.

Third, let's make sure that guns are childproofed at least as well as a bottle of aspirin—by requiring gunmakers to equip all guns with child safety locks.

And finally, let's show the American people that we're serious about stopping the illegal

transfer of guns. I hope my colleagues will join Mr. WEXLER of Florida, myself, 95 other Democrats, and one Republican, Ms. MORELLA, in supporting HR 315—a bill which limits the number of handgun purchases to one per month.

Once again, I don't think that any law will ever be a complete solution. None of us do.

But we're not expected to always find the complete solution. We are here to do what we can to make this country better, safer, healthier, and more prosperous.

These sensible measures are steps in the right direction, steps down a right and sensible path.

I hope our colleagues on the other side of the aisle will take these steps with us. Sooner rather than later.

Because this is an epidemic that waits for none of us. Every day we wait—thirteen more children die—another Columbine—every single day.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, these three measures that have passed the Senate are the beginning step in that area, so I want to thank my colleagues who joined me in this special order. I plead with the American public to call their Member of Congress, to call the Republican leadership, ask them to schedule these gun safety measures as soon as possible, to do it this week. We have a relatively clear calendar. It can all be passed and wrapped up before we go home for the Memorial Day break.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order today.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

CLINTON ADMINISTRATION CREATING PERCEPTION THAT ALL IS WELL IN THE WORLD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, we can only spin national security issues and concerns so long, and eventually the truth catches up to us. The truth is about to hit the fan this week in Washington on the national security concerns of this country.

For 7 years, Mr. Speaker, we have heard the rhetoric coming from the White House that the world is safe, there are no problems, our security is intact, and therefore, we can dramatically cut the size of our defense forces and we can, in fact, shift that money over to other purposes.

During the 7 years that that has occurred, Democrats and Republicans alike in this body and the other body have joined together to constantly remind the administration that things were not quite as good as they were being portrayed to the American people.

Unfortunately, we were not as successful as we would have liked. In fact, Mr. Speaker, State of the Union speech after State of the Union speech the President would stand before the American people and would talk about the economy, would talk about jobs, would talk about crimes domestically, but no mention of national security concerns. In fact, Mr. Speaker, this past January, as I sat through the State of the Union speech in this very room, I timed the President's speech. He spoke for 1 hour and 17 minutes. The total amount of time he devoted to national security was 90 seconds, 90 seconds to talk about the problems we have with our relationship with China, 90 seconds to talk about the problems that are resulting from the economic instability in Russia, 90 seconds to talk about the proliferation that has now caused Iran and Iraq and Syria and Libya to begin to develop medium- and eventually long-range missile systems, 90 seconds to talk about the sabre rattling between India and Pakistan, 90 seconds to talk about the problems with North Korea, both our nuclear development program and their testing of long-range missiles which the CIA acknowledges now for the first time ever can actually hit the mainland of the U.S.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, during those 90 seconds, all the President did was point up to the gallery and praise one of our young pilots.

Mr. Speaker, support for our military is not when the commander in chief parades a group of soldiers down the White House lawn for a photo op, it is not when the commander in chief stands on the deck of an aircraft carrier and talks about the pride in our services while morale is reaching an all-time low. We have serious problems, Mr. Speaker, and this week, starting tomorrow, those problems are going to be made available for the American people to see firsthand.

Now, as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, we are aware that this administration has tried to create the perception, and with a great deal of success, that everything is okay in the world, all is safe, Russia is our new friend, China is our new friend and partner, we do not have to worry about the Balkans because we have got our troops deployed.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, what has been occurring over the past 7 years with strong concerns expressed by both Democrats and Republicans alike in this body is that we have committed our troops to too many places in a short period of time to be effective in