

To delay this issue is politics. That is what this is about.

We have 13 children in the United States who die every single day because of gun violence. If this is not an emergency, I do not know what is an emergency. This House of Representatives has risen to occasions where there have been crises in this country. We can move on a dime. We can pass legislation in 24 hours or less if we have the will to do it.

The juvenile justice bill has been sitting in committee for the last 3 to 4 weeks. It is a bipartisan piece of legislation. It can be passed in a heartbeat if we have the will to do it. We have to pass gun safety legislation in our country if we are going to meet the pleas and the cries of American families today.

I saw a grandmother yesterday in my district in Connecticut. She lives in Connecticut, her family is in Indiana. And she said to me, "Ms. DELAURO, when you go back, please pass gun safety legislation. My two grandchildren were evacuated from their schools just last week." And I am not the only one who is hearing the plea of the American public. Let us do what is responsible, let us respond to American families.

Last week the other Chamber did the right thing. They passed common-sense gun safety legislation. The House of Representatives this week has that opportunity. Let us take up this legislation and pass fair and sensible measures that we, in fact, know will save lives.

There are some who want to wait until mid-June. I say we have waited too long. We have done nothing despite repeated tragedies in our schools, and we sit idly by while, as I said, 13 children are killed by guns every single day.

Youth violence is a complex problem. It requires several answers. We need parental involvement, safe schools, guidance counselors, mental health services, and less violence in our media. But gun safety laws that protect children are part of a sensible response to a crisis that is killing our kids in the United States.

I call upon the Republican leadership, I call upon the Speaker of the House, to schedule that vote this week. Like the other Chamber, we must ensure that firearms are sold with child safety locks, that we have background checks at gun shows, and that a person is 21 years old before he or she buys a gun.

Let us take these steps. Our families, our children are relying on us, those of us who have been sent here to do the people's business. Let us take the people's House and let us be responsive to the American public this week, when they are in need of knowing that, in fact, we can represent them and their families and their children in this

body. That is what our responsibility is this week.

My God, I hope that we are up to the task in this body.

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HOUSE SHOULD VOTE ON THREE ELEMENTS OF SENATE GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION PRIOR TO MEMORIAL DAY RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I too rise out of a note of optimism and, frankly, a little sadness, having listened to the Speaker's comments on the floor of this House.

I have been in Congress only 3 years, but over the course of those 3 years we have been attempting repeatedly to have the Republican leadership allow us the opportunity to vote on simple, common-sense approaches that will make a difference for the epidemic of gun violence in this country. We, in fact, know that it will make a difference.

There are about six times that I have taken to the well of this Chamber after tragic shootings, not to try to take advantage of them, but thinking that for a moment there might be an opportunity that this would touch the conscience of the people who control what the Members of this body will be able to vote upon.

Nine times since I have been in Congress there have been multiple shooting deaths on school campuses around this country. One of them, tragically, was in my State of Oregon. I do not know how anybody who looks in the eyes of the families who have suffered this tragedy, who have looked in their souls to realize that we have taken steps in this Congress to deal with things like auto safety, yet we will not take the same simple approach to try and make a difference to reduce the carnage from gun violence for young people.

The concept of a livable community, from where I sit, is what the Federal Government is about. It ought to be a partnership with State governments, local governments, with the local communities, school districts, to try to make sure that when children go out the door in the morning that they are safe, that the family is economically secure and they are healthy.

Gun violence has a wrenching impact on all three of those factors. The economic costs are staggering, costing billions of dollars each year for the thousands who are dead and maimed, victimized directly and indirectly. It has a significant impact in terms of public safety and crime, and it certainly makes a difference in terms of people's sense of security.

In the last Congress we pleaded just to act on the child access protection legislation. Give us a chance to vote on it. Fifteen States have enacted it, including the State of Florida, the home State of the Chair of the Subcommittee on Violence, and it has made a difference in terms of making children safer.

I would think that, at a minimum, the Members of this body ought to come forward and demand that we vote at least on the three elements that are in the Senate legislation, pass those things out today, make that progress real; then we can come back after the recess and deal with the Speaker's more deliberative approach on a longer-range term.

We have legislation introduced by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) that a number of people on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, people of conscience, have signed that could be the vehicle that would deal comprehensively with these concerns.

I have legislation that I will be advancing that deals with making sure that the Product Safety Commission spends as much attention with real guns as it does with toy guns; that we would extend the prohibition against criminals having access to weapons under the Brady bill to others who have demonstrated a consistent pattern of violent behavior. This is overwhelmingly supported by the American public.

And last, but not least, that the Federal Government become a leader in personalizing guns to make sure that, for example, they cannot be used, the law enforcement service revolvers cannot be used against that man or woman in uniform. The Federal Government has a chance to make a huge difference in advancing this technology.

I find it a little ironic that the Speaker takes to the well of this Chamber urging caution and arguing against extraneous riders when we just passed an absolute abomination of a spending bill that was supposedly for the defense of our troops in Kosovo and, instead, included everything from reindeer to mining regulations. When it comes to special interests, we are willing to make exceptions, but not when it comes to our children.

I think our children ought to be the special interests. We ought to come forward with comprehensive legislation and we ought to do it now.

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RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12 of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 27 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.