

COSPONSORSHIP OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE RENTAL FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, yesterday, I introduced two bills, S. 1130, the Motor Vehicle Rental Fairness Act and S. 1125, the Telecommunications Merger Review Act of 1999. Later in the day, I asked that Senator CONNIE MACK be added as an original cosponsor to the Motor Vehicle Rental Fairness Act. Despite the fact that my request specifically stated "the Motor Vehicle Rental Fairness Act", the Bill Clerk's office inadvertently added Senator MACK as a cosponsor to the Telecommunications Merger Review Act. It is my understanding that this error has been corrected. I want the record to reflect that Senator MACK was an original Cosponsor of the Motor Vehicle Rental Fairness Act.

"SHALL ISSUE" LAWS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss concealed weapons laws. Currently, in Michigan, if a person wants to obtain a permit for a concealed weapon, he or she must apply at the local county gun board. Each one of these gun boards is made up of three members: the local sheriff, county prosecutor and a designee of the state police. The gun boards base their decisions on a person's demonstrated need for a gun, and that person's criminal record, if any, and on local conditions. Local decisionmaking makes sense.

Local law enforcement officials know the local environment, local citizens, and can best assess the local impact of increasing the numbers of weapons carried in public. Last night, the Michigan State Senate passed a bill that, if signed into law, would take discretion away from local gun boards and put more weapons on our streets and in public places. In my view, eliminating the authority of local gun boards would be detrimental to public safety in Michigan and take us in the opposite direction than we are heading in Congress. More important than my opinions are the views of the law enforcement community in Michigan. Every major law enforcement agency in the state of Michigan including the State Police, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, Michigan Prosecuting Attorneys Association, Michigan Municipal League as well as many other organizations such as the Michigan Municipal League have made statements opposing this bill.

One of the bills that is now before a conference committee of the Michigan Legislature is referred to as a "shall issue" bill. The NRA has been lobbying Michigan legislators to support a "shall issue" policy. The legislation is called "shall issue" because it mandates that if a person passes an FBI Federal background check, the gun board "shall issue" him a permit to carry a concealed weapon, without re-

quiring a show of need or the condition of other local circumstances.

This legislation goes in the wrong direction. It would increase the danger of gun violence in our communities. I have seen no evidence, that people who have a legitimate need to carry a gun for protection are being denied the ability to do so. The numbers demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of requests for concealed weapons permits are approved. It's important for public safety that local gun boards continue to make such judgments.

Here in Congress, we are working hard to reduce the easy availability of lethal weapons to people who should not have them. I do not want to see my State go in the other direction by passing a law that encourages the spread of concealed weapons in public places.

Michigan has not been the only state targeted for these NRA-backed concealed weapons bills. Yet, despite the best efforts of the NRA, the "shall issue" policy has been rejected by a bipartisan group of legislators in more than 10 States. That's because of the power of people in those States who united to demand action. Voters in the State of Missouri recently defeated a "shall issue" proposal much like the one in the Michigan Legislature. Missourians voted to keep in place prudent regulations for carrying concealed weapons—regulations that were first enacted in reaction to the days of Jesse James and the outlaw gangs.

I believe the majority of Michigan's citizens feel the same way.

MEMORIAL DAY COMMEMORATION REMARKS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, in anticipation of Memorial Day this coming Monday, I wish to honor the memories of the 1.1 million Americans who gave their lives in defense of America and American ideals. Americans have fought and died in various wars spanning over two centuries. Her fallen soldiers have left indelible marks on the annals of history in conflicts notable for the good attained over the evil vanquished: independence over monarchical tyranny; freedom over slavery; and democracy over fascism and communism. Indeed, in this century alone, American servicemembers can be hailed for turning the tide of history's two world wars. As we head towards the dawn of a new millennium, I ask my colleagues to join with me to give homage to America's patriots, in deed as well as word.

I believe the best way to commemorate the spirit of those who gave their lives is to honor, respect, and care for the 26 million American veterans living today. As Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have striven to accomplish this goal through a number of legislative measures and processes. After a successful battle

over the budget resolution, I and 52 of my Senate colleagues signed on to a letter urging the Appropriation's Committee to match the budget resolution's recommendation of an additional \$1.66 billion for veterans' health care. This funding is vital to ensure that our nation's veterans get the highest quality of health care available. I have also pushed for enactment of legislation which would increase veterans' education benefits; allow for a Medicare Subvention demonstration project; require additional national cemeteries to be built in areas with high veteran populations; and ensure that construction of the World War II Memorial begins next year.

The Athenian leader Pericles had these words to say about those who lost their lives in the Peloponnesian War over 24 centuries ago: "Not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions, but there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men." This Memorial Day, I challenge my colleagues to make a commitment to engrave the memory of 1.1 million Americans not only in our hearts, but in the legislation we enact for veterans and servicemembers during the remainder of the 106th Congress.

ELECTION OF EHUD BARAK AS PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate Ehud Barak, on his victory in the recent Prime Ministerial election in Israel. Mr. Barak is a man of courage and a proven leader. He is eminently capable of leading our closest ally in the Middle East at this important juncture in its history. His resounding victory reaffirmed the Israeli people's strong desire for peace.

Not only was the election a victory for Mr. Barak, it was also a victory for Israeli democracy. Nearly four out of five Israeli citizens over the age of 18 cast ballots on May 17, 1999. That figure is even more astounding when you consider that Israelis—even those living overseas—are not permitted to cast absentee ballots. More than ten thousand Israelis purchased airline tickets and traveled great distances in order to exercise their right to vote. This dedication to the most basic pillar of democracy is enviable, for if people fail to exercise their right to vote they quickly lose their voice.

This election also marked an important milestone. For the first time in Israel's history, an Arab campaigned for Prime Minister. Although Azmi Bishara withdrew from the race shortly before the election in order to boost the chances of Mr. Barak, he should be commended for his courage in running. While members of Israel's Arab minority have long been represented in the Knesset—Israel's parliament—Mr. Bishara's campaign demonstrated that