

mediation now clearly can aim to resolve disputes such as wetland determinations, grazing issues, and USDA farm program matters, in addition to the traditional credit role of mediation. CAMP represents the individuals and entities across the nation who administer the state agricultural mediation programs, and I thank that organization for their leadership on this issue.

I want to specifically offer my thanks and gratitude to Linda Hodgin, Director of Mediation and Ag Counseling, with the South Dakota Department of Agriculture. Linda's knowledge, input, and ability to work with CAMP enabled Congress to enact the mediation reauthorization this year. Under her direction in the last two years, around 500 family farmers and ranchers in South Dakota have benefitted from the services of mediation and counseling. The mediators and counselors who work with Linda in South Dakota are to be commended for their time and commitment to family farm agriculture.

We live in a day and age where nearly every farmer and rancher must secure financing from some source in order to take care of production costs associated with agricultural production. This mediation program allows agricultural producers to settle their credit and farm program disputes in a fair way without digging themselves into legal debt. I wish to thank my colleagues who supported this important initiative.

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read the names of some of those who have lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is in session.

In the name of those who died, we will continue this fight. Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today.

October 26, 1999:

Manuel Guilarte, 78, Miami-Dade County, FL;
 Damien McFarland, 25, Gary, IN;
 Willie B. Nelson, 47, Atlanta, GA;
 Sarah Petty, 49, Atlanta, GA;
 Brett Pleasants, 39, Denver, CO;
 Brenda Ray, 31, Atlanta, GA;
 Tony B. Richards, 32, Memphis, TN;
 Fernando Rodriguez, 25, Detroit, MI;
 Comer Sistrunk, Jr., 61, Cincinnati, OH;
 Ronald Turchi, 61, Philadelphia, PA;
 Tony Unk, Houston, TX;

Michael Washington, 16, Baltimore, MD; and

Deric West, 18, Oakland, CA.

One of the victims of gun violence I mentioned, 31-year-old Brenda Ray of Atlanta, was shot and killed one year ago today while walking home from her sister's house with her two children. A stranger approached Brenda, robbed her, then shot her in the chest while her six-year-old son and five-year-old daughter stood by watching.

We cannot sit back and allow such senseless gun violence to continue. The deaths of these people are a reminder to all of us that we need to enact sensible gun legislation now.

PASSAGE OF S. 3164

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased that the "Protecting Seniors from Fraud Act" passed the Senate. I was an original cosponsor of this bill, S. 3164, which Senator BAYH introduced on October 5, 2000, with Senators GRAMS and CLELAND. I have been concerned for some time that even as the general crime rate has been declining steadily over the past eight years, the rate of crime against the elderly has remained unchanged. That is why I introduced the Seniors Safety Act, S. 751, with Senators DASCHLE, KENNEDY, and TORRICELLI over a year ago.

The Protecting Seniors from Fraud Act includes one of the titles from the Seniors Safety Act. This title does two things. First, it instructs the Attorney General to conduct a study relating to crimes against seniors, so that we can develop a coherent strategy to prevent and properly punish such crimes. Second, it mandates the inclusion of seniors in the National Crime Victimization Study. Both of these are important steps, and they should be made law.

The Protecting Seniors from Fraud Act also includes important proposals for addressing the problem of crimes against the elderly, especially fraud crimes. In addition to the provisions described above, this bill authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make grants to establish local programs to prevent fraud against seniors and educate them about the risk of fraud, as well as to provide information about telemarketing and sweepstakes fraud to seniors, both directly and through State Attorneys General. These are two common-sense provisions that will help seniors protect themselves against crime.

I hope that we can also take the time to consider the rest of the Seniors Safety Act, and enact even more comprehensive protections for our seniors. The Seniors Safety Act offers a comprehensive approach that would increase law enforcement's ability to battle telemarketing, pension, and health care fraud, as well as to police

nursing homes with a record of mistreating their residents. The Justice Department has said that the Seniors Safety Act would "be of assistance in a number of ways." I have urged the Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee to hold hearings on the Seniors Safety Act as long ago as October 1999, and again this past February, but my requests have not been granted. Now, as the session is coming to a close, we are out of time for hearings on this important and comprehensive proposal and significant parts of the Seniors Safety Act remain pending in the Senate Judiciary Committee as part of the unfinished business of this Congress.

Let me briefly summarize the parts of the Seniors Safety Act that the majority in the Congress declined to consider. First, the Seniors Safety Act provides additional protections to nursing home residents. Nursing homes provide an important service for our seniors—indeed, more than 40 percent of Americans turning 65 this year will need nursing home care at some point in their lives. Many nursing homes do a wonderful job with a very difficult task—this legislation simply looks to protect seniors and their families by isolating the bad providers in operation. It does this by giving federal law enforcement the authority to investigate and prosecute operators of those nursing homes that engage in a pattern of health and safety violations. This authority is all the more important given the study prepared by the Department of Health and Human Services and reported this summer in the New York Times showing that 54 percent of American nursing homes fail to meet the Department's "proposed minimum standard" for patient care. The study also showed that 92 percent of nursing homes have less staff than necessary to provide optimal care.

Second, the Seniors Safety Act helps protect seniors from telemarketing fraud, which costs billions of dollars every year. This legislation would give the Attorney General the authority to block or terminate telephone service where that service is being used to defraud seniors. If someone takes your money at gunpoint, the law says we can take away their gun. If someone uses their phone to take away your money, the law should allow us to protect other victims by taking their phone away. In addition, this proposal would establish a Better Business Bureau-style clearinghouse that would keep track of complaints made about telemarketing companies. With a simple phone call, seniors could find out whether the company trying to sell to them over the phone or over the Internet has been the subject of complaints or been convicted of fraud. Senator BAYH has recently introduced another bill, S. 3025, the Combating Fraud Against Seniors Act, which includes