

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES—Tuesday, February 29, 2000

The House met at 12:30 p.m.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 1883. An act to provide for the application of measures to foreign persons who transfer to Iran certain goods, services, or technology, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a bill and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 400. An act to provide technical corrections to the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, to improve the delivery of housing assistance to Indian tribes in a manner that recognizes the right of tribal self-governance, and for other purposes.

S. Con. Res. 83. Concurrent resolution commending the people of Iran for their commitment to the democratic process and positive political reform on the occasion of Iran's parliamentary elections.

The message also announced that pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 106-79, the Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, appoints the following Senators to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Commission—

The Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE); and

The Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED).

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 19, 1999, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

CREATING LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, a livable community is one where our families are safe, healthy, and economically secure. The Federal Government has an obligation to be the best

partner it can in helping create and maintain livable communities. A critical element in creating the climate in which a livable community can thrive is reducing the threat of gun violence.

Since Richard Nixon was President of the United States, over a million Americans have lost their lives to gun violence. This is more than all the deaths in all the American wars since the Civil War. For every gun death, there are three to four injuries.

Mr. Speaker, this is clearly a major threat to the health of our communities. One hesitates to put a dollar cost on such tragedy, but the fact is gun deaths are the most expensive trauma-related deaths, costing over a third of a million dollars.

For each child shot by a gun, those injuries total what it would take to send them to college for a year. The total costs are over \$4 billion a year. If we add all of the indirect costs, lost of productivity, it is over \$100 billion by some estimates. It is important to note that no family today is safe from gun violence, whether it is in Jonesboro, Arkansas, whether it is in the high school in Columbine, Colorado, in my State of Oregon, in Springfield.

Mr. Speaker, this morning, as I was walking to this Chamber, I was given a notice that in Mount Morris Township, Michigan, this morning a first grader was shot by another pupil, a first grade child.

It is important for us to not be paralyzed in this Chamber and assume there is nothing we can do to reduce gun violence. There are a number of simple commonsense steps. I hope that the leadership in this Chamber will bring forward simple, commonsense gun violence provisions that passed the Senate and should find their way to the floor of this House.

There are other examples of what we can do. Yesterday's Washington Post had an article about the smart gun technology that the Clinton administration has proposed to invest in, a gun that can only be fired by one authorized person. In Maryland, Governor Glendening is proposing that there only be sold smart guns in 3 years.

Both of these proposals have merit and deserve serious attention by Congress and the Maryland Legislature. But there is another area that requires no massive legislation. And that is simple, for the Federal Government to lead by example to do what we are asking the rest of America to do.

Mr. Speaker, every year, the government purchases thousands of weapons

for the men and women in law enforcement. If we decreed that only smart guns would be purchased from this point forward, we could use the market forces, the vast potential for sales to government to encourage, to incent the private sector to provide that need.

This is critical for men and women in law enforcement. One out of every six law enforcement officials who dies in the line of duty is killed by their own service revolver or by a service revolver of one of their colleagues. It would build a market for smart gun technology. It would send a signal that it is safe enough and important enough for law enforcement, that it is the right thing to do for private citizens.

Every day in the United States, over a million children go home to homes where there are loaded guns that they have access to. There are over a third of a million firearm deaths every year in this country. If we take the simple, common sense approach to have smart gun technology available, we can make a significant step towards reducing that carnage. For the Federal Government, to lead by example, by putting its money where our mouth is, would be an important step.

Mr. Speaker, and last, and by no means least, as I mentioned, I do hope that the leadership in this assembly will enable us to vote on the Senate-passed provisions to take those simple steps towards safe gun storage, reducing the magazine size for automatic weapons to 10 or fewer bullets, and having background checks at gun shows. These are things that can make our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

GRANTING CHINA PERMANENT MOST FAVORED NATION TRADE STATUS

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

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my concern about granting China permanent normal trade relations. According to the recently released 1999 State Department human rights report on China, it says, "human rights deteriorated markedly throughout the year." Every Member ought to read the report before they vote.

The State Department's human rights report describes the People's Republic of China as "an authoritarian

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.