

I thank my colleagues who voted to right this injustice and voted for both of them. I thank those who worked hard to bring this on to the floor for a vote.

Also, just a footnote, the Senate did the right thing in its second vote in rejecting the cockamammy idea of having a motion to suspend indefinitely a judicial nominee following a cloture vote. That may sound like inside baseball, but that would have been a terrible precedent. I applaud the distinguished Democratic leader for speaking out so strongly against that motion, and I compliment the chairman of our Senate Judiciary Committee, Senator HATCH, for sticking with these nominees, both of whom passed our committee.

We have done the right thing. We have righted a wrong of 4 years. I think now the Senate should go on, set aside partisanship, and let us look at those nominees who are still pending.

I yield the floor.

#### LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session. The Senator from West Virginia.

#### ENDING THE DELAY ON JUVENILE JUSTICE LEGISLATION

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, is it any wonder why the approval ratings of the Congress go up every time we go into recess? The American people are watching us, and they are wondering if we are really paying attention to the issues important to them. I fear that we are not paying enough attention, certainly.

Next month, the nation will observe the 1-year anniversary of the tragic shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, in which fifteen people, including the two student gunmen, were killed. But this tragedy is not unique.

In May 1992, a 20-year-old killed four people and wounded ten others in an armed siege at his former high school in California.

In January 1993, a 17-year-old walked into his teacher's seventh-period English class in Kentucky, and shot her in the head. He then shot the janitor in the abdomen.

In February 1996, a 14-year-old student took an assault rifle to his school in Washington state and opened fire on his algebra class, killing two classmates and a teacher.

One year later, in February 1997, a 16-year-old student opened fire with a shotgun at a school in Alaska, killing a classmate and the school principal and wounding two other students.

In October 1997, a 16-year-old student, after shooting his mother, went to school with a gun and shot nine students, killing two of them.

In December 1997, a student opened fire on a student prayer circle at a

Kentucky school, killing three students and wounding five others.

In March 1998, a pair of boys took rifles to school and turned them on classmates and teachers when they exited the building in response to a false fire alarm at their Arkansas school. Four girls and a teacher were killed, and 11 people were wounded.

In April 1998, at a Pennsylvania school, a 14-year-old-boy fatally shot a teacher and wounded two students at an eighth-grade dance.

The following month, in May 1998, a high school senior shot and killed another student in the school parking lot in Tennessee, and then turned the gun on himself.

Two days later, a freshman student in Oregon opened fire with a semi-automatic rifle in a high school cafeteria, killing two students and wounding 22 others. The teen's parents were later found shot to death in their home. This freshman student did not heed the admonition of the Scriptures which says: Honor thy father and thy mother. He proceeded to kill his father and his mother.

Then, a month after last year's massacre at Columbine High School, in May 1999, a 15-year-old gunman—I suppose you could call a 15-year-old a gunman—opened fire on fellow students in Georgia, injuring six students, including one critically.

Most recently, last week in Flint, Michigan, a six-year-old boy took a gun to school and killed a six-year-old girl in front of their shocked classmates. Six-year-olds killing six-year-olds—what have we come to? And yet, the Congress fails to act. Are we blind? Are we numb to these killings? Even in the city in which we work, the tragedies are mounting. In the District of Columbia, since the school year began in September, 18 juveniles have been killed. Of those, police say that half of them started as arguments at school and ended in death in nearby neighborhood streets.

Isn't this enough? Can't this Congress hear the cry of the American students, and their parents, to step up to the plate and at least debate ways to help break this cycle of violence? I know that Congress cannot solve this problem on its own, just as an individual school board or PTA cannot resolve this crisis acting as a single institution. But we, the elected leaders of this nation who are very quick to point to problems in other nations, are not even talking about ways to end this horrific record of children killing children.

Day after day, we criticize one nation for human rights violations or another nation for failing to meet the needs of its people. But who are we to look across the waters and criticize others if we remain silent, if we remain numb, if we remain mute, dumb about our own problems?

I am told that the current gridlock on this issue is because of partisanship. I hear that the reason the conference committee on the juvenile justice bill has only met once—last August—is that Members are at opposite ends of the spectrum on the gun-related provisions in the legislation.

This legislation does not take any dramatic steps toward weapons. It simply would put in place some commonsense provisions to balance public safety and private gun owners' rights. Requiring trigger locks would not jeopardize anyone's second amendment rights, but it might prevent children from using the guns at school—where the parents are at fault for letting those weapons lie around where they are within the reach, within the sight, of children. And improving background checks is not a monumental change either. These checks would only serve to prevent those people who should not have access to weapons from getting them. I hope responsible parents and gun owners will be able to support these commonsense provisions.

So I do not understand why this has to be a partisan issue in the U.S. Capitol Building or in the adjacent Senate and House Office Buildings when it is not a partisan issue in the rest of the country.

I note that earlier the Republican Governor of Colorado signed into law a new background check initiative that is even more rigorous than the one overseen by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Governor Owens said this effort is a balance between "the public's need to try to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals with the private right to purchase a firearm." Let me read what the Governor said again: "\* \* \* the public's need to try to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals with the private right to purchase a firearm." It is a balance between the two. He was talking about a balance between the two.

If there can be bipartisan legislation in Colorado, why can't there be bipartisan legislation here in Congress? Even in this Chamber, Senators were able to put partisanship aside when we passed the juvenile justice bill last May. The legislation was approved overwhelmingly, by a vote of 73-25. Yet the conference committee still cannot reach an agreement.

Is that the problem? The conference committee between the two Houses cannot reach an agreement. The time for delay is over. Our Nation is yearning for leadership. I express my hope, as one Senator, to the conferees to move ahead on the juvenile justice bill. Craft a commonsense bill that would help to break this cycle of youth violence. Show the Nation that the Congress can see what is happening outside the Capitol Building and that we are capable of working in partnership with all Americans to bring some modicum of calm to our classrooms.