

**SENATE—Tuesday, April 11, 2000**

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

**PRAYER**

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

God our Father, we pause in the midst of the changes and challenges of life to receive a fresh experience of Your goodness. You are always consistent, never changing, constantly fulfilling Your plans and purposes, and totally reliable. There is no shadow of turning with You; as You have been, You will be forever. All Your attributes are summed up in Your goodness. It is the password for Your presence, the metonym for Your majesty and the synonym for Your strength. Your goodness is generosity that You define. It is Your outrushing, unqualified love poured out in graciousness and compassion. You are good when circumstances seem bad. When we ask for Your help, Your goodness can bring what is best out of the most complicated problems.

Thank You for Your goodness given so lavishly to our Nation throughout history. Today, again we turn to You for Your guidance for what is good for our country. Keep us grounded in Your sovereignty, rooted in Your commandments, and nurtured by the absolutes of Your truth and righteousness. May Your goodness always be the source of our Nation's greatness. In the name of our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Honorable MIKE CRAPO, a Senator from the State of Idaho, led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER**

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

**SCHEDULE**

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. Following morning business, the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. to accommodate the weekly party conference meetings. When the Senate reconvenes, there will be 10 minutes equally divided prior to the vote on invoking cloture on S. 2285, the Federal fuels tax holiday. Therefore, Senators can expect that the vote will occur at 2:25 p.m.

By previous consent, all second-degree amendments must be filed by 2:20 p.m. today. If cloture is not invoked, it is hoped the Senate can begin consideration of the marriage tax penalty bill.

As announced by the majority leader, the Senate will consider the budget conference report as soon as it becomes available later this week.

It is also possible for the Senate to consider executive nominations before the Senate adjourns for the Easter recess.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

**RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME**

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

**MORNING BUSINESS**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be a period for transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 5 minutes each.

Under the previous order, the Democratic leader, or his designee, is recognized to speak for up to 75 minutes.

The Senator from Illinois is recognized.

**SCHOOL SHOOTINGS**

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this week is the last week the Senate will be in session before we take a break for the Easter holiday. During the period of that break, on April 20, we will remember an anniversary. It is a sad remembrance. It is the 1-year anniversary of the shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado.

Most of us can remember the scenes from television played and replayed so often. The scenes of children, not unlike our own children, racing out of the school away from other kids who were shooting away with weapons. You can remember, I am sure—I will always remember—a young man who dragged himself, having already been shot, out of a window, trying to fall to the ground and get away from danger. We saw that terrible scene on television.

We watched as the funerals unfolded one after another; 12 innocent students were killed and 23 were injured.

We finally came to realize as a nation that the tragedy which struck in Colorado could touch any one of us anywhere and at any school. Columbine was not the most predictable place for this to occur. Columbine was

a place where you would have thought that would never occur. But sadly, this is the reality of America where too many guns are used in crimes of violence.

If you look through the chronology of school shootings since 1997, Bethel in the State of Alaska; Pearl, MI; West Paducah, KY; Jonesboro, AK; Edinboro, PA; Fayetteville, TN; Springfield, OR; Littleton, CO; Conyers, GA; Deming, NM; Fort Gibson, OK; Mount Morris Township, MI—you will remember that episode in Michigan. It wasn't that long ago. On February 29, a 6-year-old boy went to his first-grade classroom, pulled out a 32-caliber Davis Industries semiautomatic pistol, pointed it at his classmates, and then turned the gun on Kayla Rolland, 6 years old, and fatally shot her in the neck.

This sad reality is on the minds of American families. The obvious question of the Senate and the Congress is: Is there anything you can do? What can you do? What will you do?

The first anniversary of Columbine will come and go next week, and sadly Congress will have done nothing—absolutely nothing.

We passed a bill last year on the floor of the Senate which at least moved us closer to the possibility of keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

There was an idea behind this law that was not an unreasonable or radical idea, which was the suggestion that if a person bought a gun at a gun show, that person would be subject to the same background checks as a person who bought one from a licensed gun dealer. We don't want to sell guns to criminals. We don't want to sell them to people with a history of violent mental illness. We certainly don't want to sell guns to children. Why wouldn't we check at a gun show to make certain that we are keeping guns away from those people? That is what the law said. That was what was passed here in the Senate.

The background check has become automated and computerized. Within 2 hours after the name is submitted, some 95 percent of all of the names submitted—they run them through—95 percent of the people who buy a gun at a gun show would be delayed 2 hours from buying a gun. For the 5 percent where questions are raised and they can't give them an immediate answer, that 5 percent is 20 times more likely to be in a prohibited category; that is, they are 20 times more likely to be criminals, people with a history of violent mental illness, or those who should otherwise be disqualified.