

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate go into a period of morning business for the Senator from New Jersey to speak.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the Senator from New Jersey is recognized for 30 minutes.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I am going to continue discussing the issue we were talking about earlier. In my earlier remarks, while talking about trade, we talked about the value of trade with the sub-Saharan nations, whose economic subjugation created all kinds of problems. We talked about the economic strangulation that presents so many problems and creates violence and corruption and lawlessness in some of these countries. We are hoping that this trade can suppress those differences and that violence.

I was making the point that we in this country have a problem of our own regarding gun violence, which is very detrimental to the harmonious functioning within our society. We have these huge differences between those who think that "guns unlimited" ought to be the rule. I had the opportunity to hear a brilliant author, Gary Wills, talk about why it is that people distrust Government. One of the issues he brings up—and I am paraphrasing some here—is that when people see that violence pervades our society, we have to have some sense of a regulation. He pointed out that if we didn't have regulations on our highways, highway safety programs, our system would be rendered useless because people would be afraid to go out on the highways because of the mayhem it would create.

I think it is a fairly simple thing to understand that if you were able to drive as fast as you wanted on either side of the road, we would be killing and maiming one another. I don't understand why it is that we can't have some sensible gun violence control in this country, some regulation. Why is this one part of our society so exempt from any kind of sensible regulation that says a person who wants to buy a gun ought to be qualified physically and emotionally to do so, and that if

they want to buy a gun they ought not have any history of violent behavior?

I wrote legislation regarding spousal abuse. I said anybody convicted of a misdemeanor for spousal abuse ought not to be able to own a gun. I had terrific resistance in this place. I could not get it through, really. Finally, we got it through as a piece of legislation on a budget.

What has happened in 3½ years? Well, 33,000 people who are not qualified by virtue of violence against a spouse or their children—domestic abusers—have been prevented from getting guns, where maybe they pointed a gun at somebody and said, "If you don't listen to me, I will blow your brains out." I think it was a positive measure.

The Brady bill was fought tooth and nail before it was passed. The Brady bill gave Government time to check out these individuals who are applying for guns or gun ownership at such a prolific rate that we ought to have some measure of control. Well, after a long debate and a lot of suffering, had Jim Brady, who was shot while an attempt was made on the life of President Reagan, not wheeled himself around the Capitol, it never would have passed.

What was the effect of the Brady bill—the thing the gun lobby was so afraid of that would "impair freedom"? Baloney, as we say. Well, 500,000 people were prevented from getting guns, thank the Lord. What would have happened? Those 500,000 people who were not qualified either by virtue of personal characteristics, background, a tendency toward violence, or trouble, could have gotten guns. Thank goodness they were not able to get guns.

We wonder whether or not, with a Million Moms March imminent on Mother's Day, anybody thinks mothers are clamoring to leave their homes and march in protest because they have nothing better to do on Mother's Day. That is the most revered holiday, next to Christmas, that we have in our society. It is when people flock to see moms. I know my children want to see their mother. My grandchildren want to see their mother. A lot of them in my family will be out there marching because they are sick and tired of worrying about whether or not their children, when they go to school to learn, to sing, to play, to make friends, are going to get shot, are going to get assaulted, are going to get killed or wounded in such a way that they never recover. That doesn't only mean those who were hit with a bullet. It means friends who saw their classmates at Columbine lying down and trying to crawl out windows to get away from the madness, in fear for their lives.

What was the impact of that throughout the school? Did the wounding stop with those hit with a bullet? Or do those wounds go on forever?

Some lost friends who were 16 and 17 years old—kids in the prime of life. Those wounds will last forever. So it is not only those who are involved in the fracas; it is everybody—all of us across the country.

Look at the physical cost: metal detectors, guards, cameras, rigid processes for transportation. It costs a fortune. Frankly, I think we should just put a lid on this proliferation of guns and stop the unlicensed gun dealers from selling guns and not asking any questions of the buyer—"buyers anonymous"—at gun shows across the country. If you want to buy guns, just put your money down, brother, and you can have all the guns you want and walk away. You could be one of the 10 most wanted criminals in the United States on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. Even if they recognize you, they have no obligation in the States that don't have control because the Federal Government doesn't have it all; they are under no obligation to say, hey, we know you are sought after. We know you are a criminal.

There are no rules. We ought to stop that and we ought to make a pledge to the mothers who are going to be out there on Sunday that we are going to do something about it, instead of sitting on our hands over a year since Columbine. It is almost a year now since we passed the gun show loophole closure in this body and sent it over to the House as part of a conference. That is what we do here. The House and the Senate confer and they try to agree on a bill. They don't want to act on it. The action is no action. That inaction is the rule because they don't want to bring up the gun issue. It is too sensitive. It might be too offensive to the NRA. It might be too offensive to the gun lobby. We are saying, no, we have to do something about it. The least thing we are going to do today is offer a resolution and, we hope, get it passed.

We ask those on the other side who won't join us to stand up in front of the American public and say: I don't think you are entitled to send your child to a safe school; you have to run the risk. After all, guns are more important than my kids or my grandchildren. I can tell you that the so-called "freedom to own a gun and maim people," and the Constitution says you are allowed to shoot at anybody you want to, is not a matter—in the wildest imagination—of the second amendment.

Mr. President we have a limit of time. How much time do I have remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLARD). The Senator has 20 minutes.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I want to give as much time as my colleague from New York needs, not more than 7 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from New Jersey

for yielding. I thank him for not only his generosity in yielding time but for his leadership this year and last year on this issue, and in the 18 years he has been in the Senate. We will really miss him in many ways as he goes on to other things, but one of the most important reasons we will miss him is as the leader in this fight to bring sensibility and rationality to gun laws.

I hope we will pass the resolution the Senator from New Jersey is offering and that it will not be blocked. I hope people will let us vote because we are voting in the shadow of a momentous movement that is taking place in America.

I have been fighting in the Congress for gun control for 20 years. I have seen the various ebbs and flows in public opinion on guns. I have seen modest gun control measures, such as this one, bottled up in committee and picked to death by those who do the NRA's bidding. I was on the front lines when we scratched and clawed our way through a few victories such as Brady and the assault weapons ban.

We are on this floor now because the world changes on Mother's Day. On Mother's Day, the political landscape will undergo a seismic shock. There is a classic sign in the movie "Network" where a TV commentator shouts, "I am mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore." And that leads to a spontaneous reaction where families leave their TV set out the window.

That is what the Million Mom March is. It is a spontaneous assemblage of ordinary citizens who are not going to take it anymore. It is bigger, more passionate, and more widespread than any movement we have seen in years. It is a movement more powerful and more numerous than any of us could ever have hoped.

When the mothers of this Nation gather on Constitution Avenue, their collective footsteps will sound like a shot heard around the world. They are not going to put up with lame excuses from Congress about why the Lautenberg amendment is bottled up. They are not going to put up with any more reasons about why we can't pass the most basic, commonsense gun measures.

Let me say to George Bush, and anyone else who is standing in the way of closing the gun show loophole, that our mothers are watching. On Mother's Day, the mothers of this Nation will give us the gift of common sense. There is a new force in the country today and its name is Mom. Today we are simply giving this body a chance to not make Mom too angry.

I thank the Senator and yield any time I have not used to the Senator from New Jersey.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Senator from New York.

Mr. President, we are in morning business, I believe. Is that correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 17 minutes remaining in morning business.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I would like to make a unanimous consent request. In fairness, I want to see a Republican on the floor before we make that request about time. So if the staff would arrange to have someone come to the floor, I would appreciate it because I want to continue talking about this resolution we have already sent up to the desk.

We are looking for very simple, commonsense changes. I can't imagine anybody saying we should not prohibit juveniles from possessing assault weapons. It is hard to oppose that. Does anyone seriously believe juveniles need assault weapons? Additionally, we should require child safety locks to be sold with handguns. It is a simple step we can take to try to protect kids who get a hold of guns. We know that the 6-year-old who used a gun to murder another 6-year-old would not have been able to do so, A, if the gun had been properly protected from reach by a child; or, B, if the gun had had a safety lock, the child wouldn't have been able to operate it.

We also ought to study—I know the Senator from California wants to talk about this—the marketing of guns to juveniles. She spoke about it a few moments ago. I heard her talk about it. It was so clear and so precise that it is hard to argue against it.

Why shouldn't we examine what it is we are doing to convince little kids that their mark of maturity is going to be to own a gun? I don't understand why.

When it comes to guns, we are talking about deadly weapons. We are not talking about play toys that might turn over or something such as that. This is automatically associated with killing, with death, with injury—a gun in the wrong hands.

No, we are not saying that every gun owner is out for murder. We are not saying every gun owner is out to hurt people, but there are enough people that it makes an enormous difference whether or not guns are out there in the hands of the wrong people. We ought to make sure they are not being sold as toys.

These are all commonsense measures. They passed this Senate as part of a juvenile justice bill just about a year ago next week. It was sent over to the House. We got our conference committee together.

How much time do I have, Mr. President?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 14 minutes remaining.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I would like to yield 10 minutes to my colleague from California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California is recognized.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I thank my friend from New Jersey. Let me echo what he has said on the floor in this matter—that we want to protect our children and our families from gun violence. He will be sorely missed.

I want to pick up on something that was said about the million moms. I think Senator LAUTENBERG, as a grandfather, has spoken most eloquently as to what the women of this country really want.

It is hard to generalize about it to people, but I can truly say, if there is anyone in our society who is more selfless than any other, it happens to be moms. When you love someone more than you love yourself, that is what happens. The fact that they are coming here in such amazing numbers is truly remarkable. I think when everyone across the Nation who is coming here on this issue is added up, it will be a million moms.

There is a web page for the Million Mom March. It is called the Tapestry, and moms are calling that site; they are writing their stories.

One woman from El Cerrito writes:

Ten years ago, my beautiful son, Andrew, killed himself with a bullet to his brain. He was mentally ill, and never should have been able to buy a gun. I will be at the March with one of my daughters, who is also a mother, because something has got to bring Congress to its senses.

Then there are several others. One wrote the following:

Once I wrote a letter to my Congressman asking him to support sensible gun laws. He sent me back a three-page letter upholding the second amendment, but this had no effect on me as in my life I have lost my father and uncle and a nephew by marriage to guns. One was murder, one was a suicide, and one was accidental. Had guns not been around and easy to get, none of these untimely and sad deaths would have occurred.

We are at a time in our history when we can look back at what is happening to our people. When I was a young mom—now I am a grandmom—the reason I got involved in politics was that I thought the Vietnam war was wrong. I marched with my children in California at that time to say enough is enough; let's end the killing.

We lost 58,168 of our valued sons and daughters in that war. For that period of 11 years, let's look at the statistics we have in our Nation from a different kind of war, a war in our streets, in our suburbs, in our schools, in our counties, our cities, in churches and child care centers: 395,441 dead. If the moms of America marched to end the war in Vietnam where 58,168 died—and they did help end it—we can turn around this tragic number and win this war in our streets.

I say straight from my heart, we will not win this war unless people in this body have the guts and the courage to stand up to the gun lobby. We will not win this war if people in this body and in the House of Representatives do not

have the heart and the guts and the courage to stand up to the gun lobby and its power. I pray that we will have that courage and we will have the strength to do it and turn around what is happening.

Senator LAUTENBERG has talked about the juvenile justice bill. It is stuck in limbo, twisting in the wind in the conference committee after we had five sensible gun laws attached to it. They are very sensible and include: closing the gun show loophole so that people who shouldn't have a gun cannot get a gun at a gun show; banning the importation of high-capacity ammunition clips for automatic weapons, Senator FEINSTEIN's amendment; requiring child safety devices be sold with every hand gun, Senator KOHL; an amendment by Senator ASHCROFT that says it is illegal to sell or give a semi-automatic to anyone under the age of 18; and the fifth, requiring the Federal Trade Commission and the Attorney General to study the extent to which the gun industry markets to juveniles.

If we thought Joe Camel was bad—and we know Joe Camel was bad—let's look at what the National Rifle Association is doing to market to our children. This is the beautiful, quite lovely NRA logo with the eagle. This is their logo. Here we see the cartoon version of that eagle, "Eddie the Eagle." This is the gun lobby kids' cartoon. This is the eagle of the NRA. These kids are not 18. They are nowhere near 18. They are babies.

What makes us think the gun lobby wants to market to kids? Let's take a look at what they say in an ad from a firearm manufacturer: "Building the next generation of customers takes work and commitment. But it must be done." "Our greatest threat is the lack of a future customer base." "We continue to look for every opportunity to reach young people. . . ."

There shouldn't be any question about it. Just as Joe Camel was aimed at kids, so is Eddie the Eagle aimed at kids.

Here is Joe Camel, the cartoon version of the camel advertisement. Here is the gun lobby kids' cartoon. It is hard to do this all in 10 minutes, but that is all my colleagues on the other side would let me have. Here are Eddie Eagle products for kids: Eddie Eagle lunch box, Eddie Eagle Jitter Critter, 3D glasses, tattoo pac, Eddie E. B-Nee baby.

That is not marketing to grownups, my friends; it is marketing to kids. The gun lobby doesn't want us to look at it, but we will.

When they had the tobacco lawsuits, we were able to find out what the tobacco company said in secret memos: "If our company is to survive and prosper . . . we must get our share of the youth market." "Today's teenager is tomorrow's potential regular customer."

Sound familiar to the gun lobby?

Look at what they say: "The greatest threat we face is the lack of a future customer base. . . ." "We continue to look for every opportunity to reach young people. . . ."

Cigarette companies, Joe Camel, firearms company, Eddie the Eagle.

I don't have any objection in terms of a family learning to hunt, but tell me what is right about teaching a 4-year-old child how to load a handgun. Yet this ad is proudly displayed in gun magazines. This child is 4 years old.

This sums it all up. How is this for an ad in Gun World: "Start 'em Young! There is no time like the present."

This is a very young boy, maybe 15, holding a toy gun, that looks like a real gun, shooting at a can of soda. It is a little bit of a love letter from him about shooting. "Start 'em Young!"

In the juvenile justice bill, I was fortunate enough to get through this Senate, by a unanimous vote, a study of the gun dealers marketing to children. Guess what, ED MARKEY took that on the House side and got the same thing passed. So we have identical amendments in the House and Senate. Out of all of the gun amendments we passed, this is the only one that had identical language in the House and Senate. What does that mean? It means we could make this the law of the land tomorrow if there were good faith in this Republican Congress. We can in good faith take my amendment that passed here by unanimous vote, and passed over in the House unanimously, and start this study right now.

But no. To all who say politics doesn't matter, let me state what this wasted time means. It means that every day they are starting them young. It means that every day, a child might pick up a gun because it so much fun—they see it in the ads. And they can pick up a gun and accidentally injure themselves or someone else.

It is an unbelievable situation that a year after we passed five sensible gun measures, we have done nothing.

Let me close with something from the Million Mom March from Janet Lazar of Menlo Park, CA. Listen to this.

As a social worker for children and families, I have heard the voices of many children who have become victims of violence. Listen to the still voice of a child describing her mother held at gunpoint by her father. Listen to the cold, dead voice of a beautiful 15-year-old girl describe the six friends and relatives she lost to gang warfare. Listen to her bewilderment as she wonders if she will live to raise children of her own. Listen to the suicidal voice of the young man who accidentally killed his best friend as they fooled around with an unlocked handgun.

She writes:

My heart cries for someone to listen to the children. The time to act is now.

To the creator of the Million Mom March, who is a constituent of Senator LAUTENBERG—and how appropriate

that is—I say thank you. I say thank you for caring about the children. I say thank you for giving up your Mother's Day and coming here. I say thank you for taking a risk that maybe your idea would not catch on. I say thank you for doing what we Americans do best, acting—acting on facts, acting on information, and, yes, acting on anger.

It is an honor to be on the floor today with my friend, Senator LAUTENBERG. It is an honor to stand by his side as we, together, fight to make sure the laws of this land reflect the priorities of the people and the mothers and the children and the families.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. I thank the Senator from California for her ever persistent fight to protect children and protect the families in this country. We are going to continue, no matter what turn of events we see. We want the public to be heard.

Mr. President, how much time do I have left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 2 minutes.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I have a resolution that simply commends the participants of the Million Mom March this weekend for rallying for their communities to demand sensible gun safety legislation. It calls on Congress to complete action on the juvenile justice bill before the Memorial Day recess.

I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 305, which was introduced by me, that the resolution and the preamble be agreed to en bloc, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I object, as a Member of the Senate from the State of Colorado.

Objection is heard.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, and ladies and gentlemen who can hear me, what an irony it is. What an irony it is. The Senator from Colorado objects to simple gun safety legislation. What an irony it is that this place is empty, but the voice of negativism creeps through.

I want all the million moms across the country to hear this. They are saying: No, no to sensible gun safety legislation. They are saying: No, Mom, your kids are going to go to school and it is too bad, it is too bad if some little maniac, or some confused child has a gun in his or her hand. Too bad, too bad, unless it is their kid, God forbid.

What are we witnessing here? Foolishness. The public ought to know it. They ought to stand up and shout: We are not going to take it anymore. A million mothers marching across this country—I hope they are made furious by this objection.

Object to a resolution? A resolution, for my friends who do not know, is not a law. It is simply a thought. It is the way we think we ought to do things.

We are far from legislation. We just think we ought to protect children. We think we ought to make it tougher for people to have guns randomly. We think we ought to make it tougher for young children to learn that guns are a step toward manhood. They ought to learn. They ought to learn.

Remember the image—the kids at Columbine, the bleeding boy reaching out the window for help: Somebody, help me before I get killed. Or the little children at the school in California—little kids, like my grandchildren, like your grandchild, being led by policemen so they could get away from a gunman. Or the youngsters saying a prayer in Waco, TX, heads bent in prayer, and some idiot comes by and starts shooting. Or that 6-year-old child killing another 6-year-old child.

So we cannot enact a law that says you have to put your gun away if you have one, so a child can't get ahold of it? Or make it childproof?

The Republicans say: No. We have 51-50 vote when the Vice President cast a tie vote and it went to the House. The House didn't want to cooperate, the Republican majority there said: No, no, let's bury this thing.

Bury it. What a terrible term. What a terrible term. Because we are talking about funerals and burials, instead of laughter, instead of love, instead of friendship. It is a black day, a bad day for America. I hope the million moms, when they get together, will talk about this.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for one last question?

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Yes.

Mrs. BOXER. Was it part of my friend's resolution, welcoming the million moms to Washington?

Mr. LAUTENBERG. It was a resolution to welcome them.

Mrs. BOXER. Let's be clear here about what is being objected to. This is a resolution that says to the million moms: Thank you for caring about our children; thank you for being good mothers; thank you for giving up Mother's Day to be here, to stand for a cause that is bigger than each of us separately.

It is hard for me to believe the Republicans would object to welcoming the million moms to this town, moms who are Democrats, Republicans, those declining to state—maybe they don't have a party. This is not a partisan issue.

I say to my friend, thank you for bringing this to the floor. I think the American people are finally going to see who stands up for what is right.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I yield the floor, not in exhaustion, not in fatigue, but ours to fight another day.

I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I commend our colleague, Senator LAUTENBERG, for his efforts. He has done the Senate a service and has called the Senate and the Nation's attention to the importance of the Million Mom March. I appreciate as well the participation and the leadership Senator BOXER is always able to provide for our caucus on so many issues before the Senate. They have articulated very ably and admirably for our caucus today in expressing to all of those coming from all parts of the country how important it is they express themselves, how important it is they exercise their constitutional opportunities in this great country, how important it is they send a message to the rest of the country, as well as to Members of the Congress, the critical nature of the need to address the gun issue in an effective way.

That is all they are coming to express themselves on, and it is appropriate at this time, and given the tremendous message that numbers of women will send by their presence, that we acknowledge their presence and welcome them to this city; that we tell them we are listening; that we resolve to respond in as effective a way as we can.

Again, I thank the senior Senator from New Jersey for his efforts, and the Senator from California for participating, for sending that message loudly and clearly and for doing all they can to recognize the importance of what will happen in Washington on Sunday.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, did the Senator wish to respond?

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Can I have 1 minute?

Mr. WARNER. Without losing my right to the floor, I yield to my colleague.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Virginia for his always courteous response to a request.

It was disheartening to see we could not get a resolution adopted—not law, a thought, an idea, what we would like to do, that says we welcome the committed women who are involved in the march who are going to gather in places across this country to protest the threat of violence to their children.

I thank our leader, and my colleague from California, for being such active supporters of this protest against violence. I am sorry we did not have a chance to get a vote on it. I thank the Senator from South Dakota for his friendly remarks as well.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, this weekend, hundreds of thousands of mothers and "honorary mothers" will convene in Washington, DC and communities around the country to call for sensible gun legislation for safe kids.

On Sunday, Americans will unite for the Million Mom March, the first-ever national march for gun-safety. The mothers from Michigan and around the country come from all walks of life. They live in cities, in suburbs and in rural America. They are of all races, all religions and all political persuasions. They are our friends and neighbors, our community leaders.

On Mothers' Day, 2000, these "mothers and others" will join together to grieve over the loss of their loved ones, and the loss of more than 4,000 young people who are killed by gunfire each year.

Among these mothers will be Veronica McQueen, the Michigan mother who lost her six year old daughter, Kayla Rolland, to gun violence earlier this year. Ms. McQueen said, "I just don't want to see another parent have to bury another baby over this, over something that is preventable, something that is very, very preventable."

Gun violence is preventable. But mothers can not act alone. Mothers in the Million Mom March know: In order to reduce the level of gun violence in their homes and communities, Congress must pass legislation to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals.

Some of us in this Congress have heard the cry of families around this country and worked to pass sensible legislation to protect our nation's children. That legislation would limit access to guns by prohibited persons by, among other things, closing the gun show loophole—applying background checks to guns sold at gun shows.

The Lautenberg-Kerrey gun show amendment that passed in the Senate, but not in the House of Representatives, is one of the most important provisions we can pass this Congress. It will close the loophole that allows criminals and other prohibited persons to buy guns at gun shows that they would not otherwise be permitted to purchase.

It is a loophole that is often exploited by those who do not want to undergo background checks—including Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, the Columbine killers. Harris and Klebold used four semiautomatic assault weapons in their now infamous attack on their classmates. Of the four guns, three were purchased by Robyn Anderson at a gun show in Adams County, Colorado.

Robyn, who was 18 at the time, bought three semiautomatic assault weapons for her younger friends. She later testified before the Colorado Legislature about her purchase and the

need to close the gun show loophole. She said: "Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold had gone to the Tanner gun show on Saturday and they took me back with them on Sunday. . . . While we were walking around, Eric and Dylan kept asking sellers if they were private or licensed. They wanted to buy their guns from someone who was private—and not licensed—because there would be no paperwork or background check."

Robyn continues: "I was not asked any questions at all. There was no background check. All I had to do was show my driver's license to prove that I was 18. Dylan got a shotgun. Eric got a shotgun and a black rifle that he bought clips for. He was able to buy clips and ammunition without me having to show any I.D. The sellers didn't write down any information."

"I would not have bought a gun for Eric and Dylan if I had had to give any personal information or submit any kind of check at all. I think it was clear to the sellers that the guns were for Eric and Dylan. They were the ones asking all the questions and handling all the guns."

Robyn concluded: "I wish a law requiring background checks had been in effect at the time. I don't know if Eric and Dylan would have been able to get guns from another source, but I would not have helped them. It was too easy. I wish it had been more difficult. I wouldn't have helped them buy the guns if I had faced a background check."

The Columbine killers took advantage of the gun show loophole and the result was deadly. Congress has the chance to close this loophole with the Lautenberg amendment. That amendment requires prospective purchasers to undergo background checks at gun shows and gives law enforcement up to three business days to those checks if there is any potentially disqualifying information—as set forth in the current Brady law.

Honest, law-abiding Americans are not affected by these background checks. 72 percent of the checks are completed within three minutes, and 95 percent are cleared within two hours. FBI records reveal that the five percent of people whose background checks take more than 24 hours to complete, are 20 times more likely to have a criminal record or otherwise be prohibited from accessing weapons.

Congress must pass legislation that gives law enforcement up to three business days, when needed, to complete background checks at gun shows, and truly close the gun show loophole. As of this day, Congress has failed to do so, and has subsequently failed the families of the Columbine victims and others who have lost loved ones to gunfire.

On this Sunday, I will march with the families of those victims from

Michigan and around the country, who are calling on Congress to end their agony. In the words of one mother, it's time to turn tears into action. Congress must pass "sensible gun laws for safe kids." Let's start by closing the gun show loophole today. It's time to end the plague of gun violence on America's children.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join my colleagues in welcoming the Million Mom March to Washington this weekend. Their campaign for sensible gun control has captured the attention of the nation, and it deserves to capture the attention of Congress too. Their message is irresistible. Gun crimes and gun violence are a serious challenge to the nation, and it is wrong for the United States Senate to bury its head in the sand on this fundamental issue. More than a year has passed since the Columbine tragedy, and we have failed to finish the job we began last year on the Juvenile Justice Bill. Democrats have repeatedly asked for the House and Senate conferees to meet and approve a final bill that includes the Senate-passed gun control provisions. We wait and wait and wait, while schools and children across the country continue to suffer from the epidemic of gun violence that plagues so many of our communities.

Too many children are in continuing danger of gun violence in their homes and schools and neighborhoods. These are not new problems, but they have become increasingly serious, and it is irresponsible for Congress to look the other way and ignore them.

Our goal is to support parents, youths, educators, law enforcement authorities, and communities. We have a shared responsibility to find solutions to these problems. Fifty million school children are waiting for our answer.

The greatest tragedy of the school shootings across the nation is they have not shocked us into doing everything we can to prevent them in the future. By refusing to learn from these tragedies, Congress is condemning the country to repeat them. How many wake-up calls will it take before Congress finally responds?

Current statistics on children and guns are unacceptable.

For every child killed with a gun, four others are wounded. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the rate of firearm deaths of children 0–14 years old is twelve times higher in the United States than in 25 other industrial nations combined.

Over 6,000 students were expelled in 1996–97 for bringing guns to school. The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that between 36% and 50% of male eleventh graders believe they could easily get a gun if they wanted one.

In a 1997 survey, 9% of high school students had carried a weapon to school during the 30 days preceding the survey; 6% had a gun.

Between July 1, 1994 and June 30, 1998, there were 173 violent deaths in schools.

In a recent survey of over 100,000 teenagers conducted last month, 30% said they could get a gun in a few hours and 11% more said they could get a gun in one day.

1 in 5 of these teenagers have felt afraid at school since the Columbine High School shootings a year ago.

4 in 10 of these same teenagers said there are guns in their homes, and more than half of them say they have access to those weapons.

In 1996, more than 1300 children aged 10–19 committed suicide with firearms. Unlike suicide attempts using other methods, suicide attempts with gun are nearly always fatal, which means that a temporarily depressed teenager will never get a second chance at life. Two-thirds of all completed teenage suicides involve a firearm.

The firearm injury epidemic, due largely to handgun injuries, is ten times larger than the polio epidemic of the first half of this century.

The nation's gun laws are a disgrace. We need to close the gun show loophole, support child safety locks on guns, and provide greater resources for strict enforcement of the gun laws now on the books.

The guns used to kill nine of the 13 people murdered at Columbine High School were purchased at a gun show. The woman who bought the guns for Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold said that she would never have purchased those guns if she had to submit her name for a background check.

More than 800 Americans, young and old, die each year from guns fired by children under the age of 19. It shouldn't take a Columbine, a Jonesboro, or an urban drive-by shooting to persuade us to act.

Perhaps six-year-old Kayla Rolland would be alive today if the gun that her classmate used had a child safety lock on it.

Perhaps a 13-year-old school girl in Deming, New Mexico and a school vice-principal in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania would still be alive if the young shooters did not have access to the guns.

American children are more at risk from firearms than the children of any other industrial nation. In a recent year, firearms killed no children in Japan, 19 children in Great Britain, 57 children in Germany, 109 children in France, 153 children in Canada—and 5,285 children in the United States.

Shame on the National Rifle Association, shame on the Republican Party, and shame on the United States Congress for tolerating figures like that. My fervent hope is that the Million Mom March will succeed where so many other efforts in recent years have failed, and that Congress at long last will be persuaded to act. The irresistible force of the Million Mom March is

about to meet the immovable object of Congress—and I intend to do all I can to see that the immovable object of Congress finally moves.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I am proud today to recognize and welcome the visit to Washington, DC by a group of my fellow West Virginians for this Sunday's "Million Mom March."

The Million Mom March, coinciding with Mothers' Day, is a grassroots effort led by people across the country—Dads and Kids included—dedicated to educating our children and our nation about guns; both the dangers posed by their misuse and the tragic toll this misuse has taken on our country's youth, their friends, and their families. The people who attend this event here in Washington will have gathered in the parking lots of schools, churches, and synagogues across the country, and will have come here to let those of us in Congress know, in no uncertain terms, that we need to be doing more to protect our children.

I am pleased to say that among those relaying that message this weekend will be a delegation of Moms from West Virginia, many with their entire families in tow. As they point out, one difference many of these West Virginian Moms may have from others participating in this weekend's events is that they also have hunters in their own families. In fact, it would not surprise me at all to find out that more than a few of the folks marching were hunters themselves.

In West Virginia, we respect the rights of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms, and we consider parents and children hunting together to be a time-honored tradition. Yet our state legislature has already taken the responsible step of limiting possession and legal ownership of handguns to those 18 and older. Now the West Virginian Moms join with their counterparts from around the nation to demand that Members of Congress respond appropriately to the epidemic of American children killed and injured by accidents and crime involving guns.

Unfortunately, all too often when we in Congress discuss the misuse of guns, the debate turns into a pointless back-and-forth about whether we have too many gun laws, or too few. Rather than engage in that debate, I would just invite my colleagues to consider these staggering statistics:

One in 910 American children die because of the misuse of guns before the age of 20.

American children under the age of 15 are twelve times more likely to die from gunfire than children in 25 other industrialized countries combined.

Seventy-seven percent of murder victims aged 13–17 are killed by a firearm.

Last year:

4,205 children and teens were killed by gunfire;

2,562 were murdered by gunfire;

1,262 committed suicide using a firearm; and

306 died from an accidental shooting.

Each day:

Two children under the age of 5 are murdered;

Six children and youths under 20 commit suicide;

Ten children and youths under 20 are homicide victims; and

Twelve children and youth under 20 die from firearm misuse.

Between 1979 and 1997, gunfire killed nearly 80,000 children and teens in America—25,000 more than the total number of American soldiers killed in battle in Vietnam.

Firearms wounded an additional 320,000 children during this same period.

In that period, more than 25,000 children took their own lives with firearms, and nearly 10,000 died as a result of an accidental shooting.

In 1997, my home state of West Virginia lost 23 children younger than 20 to firearm misuse, up seven from the previous year. Nine were murdered, ten committed suicide, and three were the victims of accidents.

Mr. President, last year the United States Senate passed the Juvenile Justice bill. Among its provisions, this bill contained some courageous efforts to address the culture of crime and violence in which our children are being raised. The bill also featured some common-sense measures designed to make guns safer, and provisions to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals. The Senate also sought to close the so-called gun show loophole. Sadly, our seeming inability to have any discussion about guns has kept the conferees on this bill from reporting back to the respective houses with a version for final passage.

My purpose here today is to join the Million Moms in calling attention to the bottom line. We live in a society in which the lives of children are tragically at risk because of the virtually unfettered availability of guns. Our respect for the constitutional rights of gun owners should never overwhelm the love and caring we have for our children. I commend the Moms, from West Virginia and around the country, who come to remind us what our priorities should be.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia has the floor.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001—Continued

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I make a parliamentary inquiry. Are we now out of morning business and on the bill?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We are on the military construction bill.

Mr. WARNER. Fine.

Mr. President, in the course of the deliberations before the Senate Appro-

priations Committee on this measure, the distinguished senior Senator from West Virginia, Mr. BYRD—former majority leader of the Senate; one who has served in the Senate 41 years—brought before that committee an amendment entitled the Byrd-Warner amendment dealing with the issue of the balance of power in the Constitution between the executive branch, the President, and the legislative branch, the Congress of the United States, as it relates to matters of foreign policy but, most particularly, as it relates to the matter—and perhaps the most important entrusted to both the President of the United States and the Congress—the most important matter of when the President, as Commander in Chief, sends beyond the shores of our great Nation men and women in uniform into harm's way in the cause of peace.

This week, those of us on the Republican side of the aisle had our weekly luncheon, as did our good friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle. At our luncheon, Senator STROM THURMOND stood and asked if we could observe a moment of silence as he recounted the closing day of World War II, when hostilities ceased in Europe—the bloodiest of all wars, in which 292,000 men and women, wearing the uniform of the Armed Services of the United States, lost their lives.

You could have heard a pin drop in that caucus as that great soldier, as that great statesman, asked for remembrance of the veterans of those generations.

In a very humble way, I have a brief memory. At age 17, I joined the Navy. It was January of 1945. I was simply trained, as were thousands of other youngsters my age, because at that point in January, in the winter of 1945, both the war in Europe and the war in the Pacific were inconclusive. I simply was at training command, waiting for the invasion of Japan. I thank God that last battle in the Pacific never occurred, not only for myself but for millions of others who would have been involved.

I look back very humbly on the modest contribution I made in uniform, both in that war and again during the Korean war, where I served in the Marines for a brief period.

The military did far more for me than I did for the military. Today, that 17-year-old sailor as of 1945 is privileged to be the chairman of the Armed Services Committee of the Senate, a dream I thought would never be fulfilled.

I again reiterate, my service was modest. On both sides of the aisle, there are men who have served and show the scars of war, who understand the burden on the President of the United States as he sends forth troops into harm's way. I respect these individuals greatly for their knowledge, for