Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DORGAN, and Mr. DURBIN concur with the views expressed on the part of the Senate.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I believe that we completed action on this bill in almost record time.

I want to personally thank Steven Cortese, majority staff director, and Charles Houy, minority staff director, for their very intense work, and their respective staffs. Since last Friday we have been working to try to eliminate some problems in this bill. Without question, they are responsible for the speed and dispatch with which we have been able to handle this bill.

There are many amendments we are now taking to conference that may be subject to later modification. We will do our very best to defend the Senate position as represented by the vote that has just been taken in the Senate.

I thank my distinguished friend and colleague from Hawaii for his usual cooperation. Without it, passage of this bill would have been impossible.

I yield the floor.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for 10 minutes each.

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

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, it has been nearly 14 months since the Columbine tragedy, and over a year since the Senate passed common sense gun safety legislation as part of the Juvenile Justice bill that still the Republican majority in Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until Congress acts, Democrats in the Senate will remain the only champions of sensible gun laws.

Since Columbine, more than 20,000 Americans have been killed by gunfire. Since Columbine, more than 20,000 Americans have been killed by gunfire.

Mr. Pierce was killed in a late-night drive-by shooting after a confrontation between one of his friends and two young men, one 18 and one 21, at a marina on the Providence River waterfront. After an initial scuffle, the two young men departed and returned within an hour in a car. One of them opened fire with a handgun, killing Pierce. It’s another example of a quarrel that, in another time in America, might have resulted in a bloody nose and a bruised ego, but instead took the life of Mark Pierce.

And, Mr. President, the gun violence continues every day across America. Three weeks ago, a 15-year-old girl in Providence, who was a key witness for the prosecution in an upcoming murder trial, was shot with a handgun at point blank range in her front yard on a Sunday evening. She died the next day. She was to testify in the trial of a 19-year-old charged with shooting to death a 17-year-old last August.

Just this past Friday, in Providence, Rhode Island, two college students were carjacked at gunpoint, robbed, taken to a nearby golf course, and shot execution style with a .40 caliber semiautomatic handgun. The handgun was stolen from the car of a freelance photographer while he shopped at a local convenience store in February. This case makes a strong argument against concealed carry laws and other liberal gun laws that encourage citizens to bring their handguns out of their homes and into the streets of our cities. It also underscores the need for aggressive research into smart gun technology to ensure that a weapon can only be fired by its legitimate owner.

Finally, although in this instance the police were able to trace the gun relatively quickly because it was stolen in Providence and recovered by the owner, in many cases crime guns cannot be traced because law enforcement is completely dependent upon the record keeping of gun manufacturers and gun dealers, and post-retail private sales are usually unrecorded. If we registered handguns and licensed handgun owners, the police could put out an immediate alert when a weapon is reported stolen, and they could trace a weapon more quickly upon its recovery after a horrible crime like this one. In addition, the assailants would face yet another felony charge for illegal possession of a weapon not registered to them.

Mr. President, twelve young Americans lose their lives to gun violence every day. That’s a new Columbine tragedy every 24 hours. It is time for Congress to do its part to reduce gun violence by passing sensible gun safety legislation to keep firearms out of the hands of children and convicted felons. We should do so without further delay.

I yield the floor.

REMEMBERING THE ISRAELI MISSING IN ACTION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in remembering the Israeli soldiers captured by the Syrians during the 1982 Israeli war with Lebanon.


Since that terrible day in 1982, the Israeli and United States Governments have been working to obtain any possible information about the fate of these missing soldiers, joining with the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations, and other international bodies. According to the Geneva Convention, the area in Lebanon where the soldiers first disappeared was continually controlled by Syria, therefore deeming it responsible for the treatment of the captured soldiers. To this day, despite the promises made by the Syrian Government and by the PLO, very little information has been forthcoming about the condition of Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman, and Yehudah Katz.

June 11 marks the anniversary of the day these soldiers were reported missing in action. Eighteen pain-filled years have passed since their families have seen their sons, and still the Syrian Government has not revealed their whereabouts.

One of these missing soldiers, Zachary Baumel, is an American citizen from Brooklyn, NY. An ardent basketball fan, Zachary began his studies at the Hebrew School in Boro Park.

In 1979 he moved to Israel where he had been accepted to study psychology. But fate decreed otherwise, and on June 11, 1982, he disappeared with Zvi Feldman and Yehudah Katz.

Zachary’s parents Yonah and Miriam Baumel have been relentless in their pursuit of information about Zachary and his compatriots. I have worked closely with the Baumels, as well as the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, the American Coalition for Missing Israeli Soldiers, and the MIA Task Force of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. These groups have been at the forefront of their pursuit of justice. I want to recognize their good work and ask my colleagues to join me in supporting their