CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

June 14, 2000

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I, too, was attending the joint committee hearing this morning on the situation at the laboratories at Los Alamos that Frank Murkowski chaired, along with Richard Shelby.

I must tell you that it was shocking and angering to watch an administration that recognized a problem and failed to do anything about it—or very little—and then to ignore a Congress that recognized the problem after extensive hearings and which passed legislation last year into law; and we have a Secretary of Energy who ignored it and openly denied that he would do it. And then for the Secretary not to show up today and testify—I am not sure how we respond to it.

But I will tell you how the American people ought to respond to it. They ought to say: Mr. Secretary, you have failed and you have failed us in the security of our country. We ask that as we find someone better to serve in that capacity.

That is what the American people ought to be saying. And I hope they will.

THE RIGHT TO SELF-DEFENSE

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I have come to the floor for the next few minutes to talk about something that is very important to our country. Last week, I rose in defense of the second amendment to our Constitution. Why? Because it is under relentless attack at this moment by our colleagues on the other side of the aisle. A relentless attack by the White House and has been now for nearly 8 solid years.

They want to deny that there is a second amendment or that there are legitimate rights under that amendment, and they simply want to control or shape what many Americans believe to be their constitutional right under the second amendment, and that is the right to own a firearm in this Nation.

The second amendment reads: A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.

It is a simple amendment, but, oh, what a powerful force it brings; and, oh, what important emotions it engenders in our country.

The enemies of the right to keep and bear arms tell us that because the word Militia is in the second amendment it only protects the right of the Government to keep and bear arms.

If anyone in this body is a student of American history and understands the
thinking of our Founding Fathers, they recognize their hostility toward a central government and their willingness to come together to give the citizens the greater expression of freedom but, most importantly, power over that central government.

Somehow, our colleague would like to ignore those thoughts and the mind set and the belief of the framers of our Constitution. But let me tell you that our framers knew what they were talking about. They said, “A well regulated Militia” means, in the words of George Mason, “the whole people”—“the whole people” was the regulation militia—“except a few public officers.”

So never mind their restrictive reading of the Constitution. I think our scholars of history have widely recognized and rejected the idea that there is a narrow interpretation.

They tell us the second amendment only protects hunting and sport shooting. Read the Constitution. It is so very clear. It doesn’t even mention the words “hunting and sport shooting.” I don’t know the term “sport shooting” was something used in those days. Hunting certainly was perceived to be a right, and even a responsibility, and a necessary tool of many families to put food on the table.

They cite Supreme Court cases—such as United States v. Miller—that state the second amendment protects private ownership of military-style weapons; then they try to ban private ownership of military-style weapons. How can you use the argument to argue its purpose and then turn and try to do quite the opposite?

I will simply point out for a few brief moments this afternoon the real inconsistencies in the argument that is presented by my colleagues on the other side and the ignoring of the Constitution by the White House. But then those of us who are observers of the White House are not terribly surprised by that.

Am I being harsh? I don’t think so, Mr. President. I think I am being very clear in what I say.

Senate gun controllers have said they do not want to confiscate the guns of Americans. But then other leaders in other countries—including Great Britain, Cambodia, Australia, Cuba, and Soviet Georgia—have said the same, and they would only license and register, and not confiscate. And, of course, they did license, they did register, and then they confiscated.

With my time remaining, let me point to a few examples as to why our Government said there was a right and why our Founding Fathers said under our Constitution there is a right.

Every 13 seconds, the stories I am about to tell you are repeated across this Nation. Every 13 seconds in America, someone uses a gun—not to kill someone else, but to stop a crime, to protect their property, to protect their life. Every 13 seconds across America, our citizens do what our Founding Fathers knew they must do as a free citizen: the right of self-defense. That is so much what our second amendment is about.

Let me tell you about this lady, whom I show here on the chart, from Spring Hill, FL, May 24 of this year. It says: “A pistol-packing grandmother with a license to carry calmly approached a man with a knife who was scuffling with employees at a Wal-Mart and ordered him to drop the knife. He dropped the knife. She held him at bay. They called the cops, and the cops arrested him.”

Thank you, grandma, for being willing to defend your rights and the integrity of others.

Let me talk about someone who involved themselves in one of our citizens in Benton Harbor in Berrien County.

Prosecutor Jim Cherry announced Thursday he will not file homicide charges against a man who shot and killed Rodney Lee Moore last month at a Benton Harbor housing complex.

Why? Because this man was defending his life and defending the life of his family. He had been attacked. He had been injured. And yet, he struggled, he found his gun, and he protected his person by taking the intruder’s life.

That is the right of a free citizen in a free society—to defend oneself and one’s property.

One more example. I know there are other colleagues on the floor who wish to speak on other issues. But it is an important example.

It was the night of January 31 of this year in Apache Junction, AR, 25 miles from Phoenix. It began when a woman was getting into her SUV in a Walmart parking lot in nearby Chandler. She was approached by a man riding a bicycle. He pulled out a gun, forced her into her SUV, and made her drive to an isolated area 15 miles away. He raped her. Then he abandoned her in the desert.

According to the Chandler Police Department sergeant, Ken Phillips, “He left her in a desert area and starts to drive away, but turns around, comes back, and he shoots her twice.” The woman, suffering from bullet wounds in her face, chest, and her arm, was miraculously able to walk a quarter of a mile for help.

This dangerous criminal then drove his victim’s SUV to the home of his former boss, Jeff Tribble. In that home, Tribble’s 28-year-old wife Bricie, and their 9-year-old nephew resided. The criminal broke into their house. What happened? Sergeant Phillips said that this gentleman’s wife, Mr. Tribble’s wife, got her gun and shot the criminal; twice—one in the face and one in the chest—and he dropped dead. Then she called 911 to report the shooting of an intruder who had just hours before raped and shot another person.

Those are the stories that are not being told to America today. And they happen every 13 seconds across our Nation. And one-half of all Americans annually use the second amendment right to protect themselves, their property, their children, and their spouses. That is the right of a free citizen. That is why the second amendment is in the Constitution.

I do not in any way by these statements fail to recognize the tragedies that occur when a gun is misused in our society. It is misused much too often. But it is time we speak out.

I have said several times to those who may be listening or who might read my statement to call me or write me. Tell me about your story. Tell me about what happened in your community. Literally, citizens are now doing that. They want the right of the free citizen to protect themselves and their property.

It is very simple. It is, LARRY CRAIG, U.S. Senator, Washington, DC, 20510.

I would like to hear from you. I think it is time America is heard, how other Americans use their sacred right of the second amendment to protect themselves and their loved ones.

I yield the floor. THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

UNITED STATES NONMILITARY ARSENALS

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, thank you very much.

I take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee, Chairman WARNER, and also the ranking member, Senator LEVIN, for the amendment I offered, that they have accepted, I am told. My amendment addresses the situation with our Nation’s military arsenals.

We have the Rock Island arsenal in Rock Island, IL. It lies on an island in the Mississippi River between the border of Illinois and Iowa. The Rock Island Arsenal dates back to just about the time of the Civil War. It has been producing outstanding equipment, with outstanding personnel, to our Nation’s military for well over 100 years.

A few years ago, the military changed its procurement rules to require our Nation’s arsenals, when they were bidding on a contract, to provide military hardware to our Army or Defense Department. It requires them to submit bids that not only include their marginal cost for producing the product but, in fact, requires them to add into their bid the entire overhead.

This new policy which the Defense Department established a few years ago has actually been harming taxpayers. Why, someone might ask, has that been harming taxpayers? What has been happening, as our Nation’s arsenals—and there are three in this country; in addition to one in Illinois,