CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

June 14, 2000

DEAR AMI MEMBER: I am writing to express how disappointed I am with your Washington lobbyists and their efforts to misrepresent and thus undermine my efforts to help American farmers.

You may have read a recent "Inside AMI" story claiming that, "Senator Grassley pushed conferences to provide for a $35 million Agriculture Marketing Equity Capital Fund. The proposal was yet another attempt to fund an NPPC proposal that seeks to establish a national pork cooperative and use government funds to buy, build, or purchase equity in a pork slaughter and processing facility."

This claim is a blatant misrepresentation of the facts. The truth is that the provision your lobbyists were attacking had nothing to do with publicly financing the construction of a pork plant. These funds are intended to be used by independent grain and livestock producers to develop business plans, feasibility studies, and business ventures with packers and processors. While some may believe the truth is no longer relevant in Washington, D.C., that attitude will be given no quarter in dealings with me.

My staff reached out to your's to make certain they understood the error in their representations of my proposal, as well as to request alternative suggestions. No response ever came. Unfortunately, many of my colleagues were misled by your staff, and my proposal was gutted.

I wanted you to hear directly from me because I have had a long and positive working relationship with many AMI members over the years and I hope that this can be the case in the future. I believe that it would be appropriate to investigate for yourself the concerns I have raised about your Washington representatives.

Sincerely,

CHARLES E. GRASSLEY,
U.S. Senator.
Mr. ASHCROFT. Mr. President, I rise in support of S. Res. 319, which the Senate approved on Friday, during National Homeownership Week. I thank my colleagues for supporting this important resolution which addresses the security and welfare of Missourians and all Americans. This resolution addresses the importance of placing quality housing within reach of a greater number of Americans as well as improving housing opportunities for Americans at all income levels. I, along with my colleagues, support the efforts of Habitat for Humanity and “The House the Senate Built” project.

As you know, the largest debt most families take on in their lifetimes is a home. Over 65 percent of Americans own a home, as do approximately 80 percent of Americans over the age of 50. This represents real progress. In 1940, fully 56 percent of Americans were renters. Clearly, America has come a long way. People buy homes for different reasons. A home can be a place of safety to raise a family, the potential of financial security, a sense of community. All around Missouri, and across this great nation, couples of all ages agree that buying a home is among the essential steps a family takes to ensure stability and prosperity in their lives.

While homes are a worthwhile investment, they also are expensive. Real estate experts recommend that families buy homes valued at over three times their annual income—a sum far greater than what families could pay back in a year, or two, or even five. So, most Americans take out a mortgage. Once this burden of debt is behind them, they are free to dream new dreams and other investments.

Homeownership is an important factor in promoting economic security and stability for American families. The level of homeownership among foreign-born naturalized citizens who have been in the United States for at least six years is the same as the level of homeownership of the Nation as a whole. When families such as these, who are new to our shores, prosper, we as a nation prosper.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read some of the names of those who lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is in session. In the name of those who died, we will continue this fight. Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today, on June 14, 1999:

- Juan Avina, 21, San Antonio, TX.
- Theo Espada, 33, Dallas, TX.
- Samuel Foster, 30, Chicago, IL.
- Jonathan Hayes, 28, New Orleans, LA.
- Johnny Jackson, 21, Detroit, MI.
- Jamie Jones, 21, Miami-Dade County, FL.
- Frank Ivery Odom, 23, Washington, DC.
- Antonio Rodriguez, 20, Kansas City, MO.
- Carlos Santiago, 23, Chicago, IL.
- Michael Theard, 35, New Orleans, LA.
- Lakecia Wesley, 20, Washington, DC.
- Samuel Wesley, 53, Charlotte, NC.
- Antonio Williams, 33, Newark, NJ.

This resolution expresses the Senate’s concern for improving homeownership in America. The resolution