

the other side ought to get familiar with it. Just as we are going to come back to the issue of minimum wage, we are going to come back to it, and back to it, and back to it, if you want to dust off your speeches already and say that that is politics.

The idea of guaranteeing someone who works 40 hours a week, 52 weeks of the year, that they are not going to live in poverty is a fairness issue which the American people understand. We ought to guarantee that minimum wage for work in America. You can name it or call it anything you want, as long as we vote on it and get it and make sure they get the fair increase they deserve.

I thought we would have the chance to get into the debate and discussion on a number of these issues, but we are not having that opportunity today. I look forward to debating the issues the first of the week.

Mr. President, Congress can pass bipartisan legislation that provides meaningful protections for all patients and guarantees accountability when health plan abuse results in injury or death. The question is "will we"?

The American people are waiting for an answer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Senator from Georgia is recognized.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. HARKIN. 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.

June 23, 1999:

Abdalla Al-Khadra, 23, Salt Lake City, UT;

Khari Bartigan, 18, Boston, MA;

Joseph Coats, 26, Chicago, IL;

Wendell Gray, 22, Chicago, IL;

Derwin K. Harding, 21, Oklahoma City, OK;

Hosey Hemingway, 27, Miami-Dade County, FL;

Teresa Hemingway, 30, Miami-Dade County, FL;

Steven Henderson, 17, Baltimore, MD;

Jim Johnson, 31, Dallas, TX;

Monique Trotty, 22, Detroit, MI;

Nichole Vargas, 18, Chicago, IL;

Unidentified male, San Francisco, CA.

These names come from a report prepared by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The report includes data from 100 U.S. cities between April 20, 1999, and March 20, 2000. The 100 cities covered range in size from Chicago, IL, which has a population of more than 2.7 million, to Bedford Heights, OH, with a population of about 11,800.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

INTERNATIONAL PARENTAL KIDNAPPING AND GERMANY

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I am troubled—deeply troubled. I am troubled by a report in the Washington Post that—yet again—illustrates Germany's reluctance to return American children who have been kidnapped by a parent and taken to Germany. The Post article details the latest event in the continuing international struggle that American Joseph Cooke has endured as he seeks the return of his children. As my colleagues may recall, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder recently promised President Clinton during the President's visit to Europe that Germany would help Mr. Cooke and grant him and his family visitation rights. Well, despite this promise at the highest levels government, the Kostanz Special Service for Foster Children now is limiting the access that Joseph Cooke's mother has to visiting her grandchildren—apparently as a punishment for all the recent media attention the case has received. This is outrageous, Mr. President. And it simply cannot be tolerated.

Let me take a moment to review the events that have led to where we are today on this issue. At the recent European conference on "Modern Governance in the 21st Century," President Clinton met with Chancellor Schroeder to discuss several pressing international concerns. One issue, in particular—one I had urged President Clinton to raise with the Chancellor—was the tragic situation of U.S. children being abducted by a parent and taken to Germany.

It was necessary to raise this issue with Chancellor Schroeder because parents—and not just American parents, either—have had a very difficult time getting their children back when they have been abducted and taken to Germany. Although Germany has signed the Hague Convention, our ally—yes, our ally—has not taken their obligations under the Convention seriously. In fact, from 1990 to 1998, only 22 percent of American children for whom

Hague applications were filed were returned to the United States from Germany—and that percentage includes those who were voluntarily returned by the abducting parent.

Last month, I spoke on the floor about the Joseph Cooke case—a case that illustrates perfectly Germany's reluctance to return kidnapped children. In Mr. Cooke's case, his wife took their two children to Germany, and without his knowledge, turned them over to the German Youth Authority. Despite Mr. Cooke's desperate attempts to get his children back, a German court decided that they were better off with a German foster family than with their American father. Only after President Clinton's meeting with Chancellor Schroeder and only after Mr. Cooke's case received considerable publicity and media attention, did Germany agree to help Joseph Cooke.

The Germans promised to allow Mr. Cooke and his family visitation with his children. The Germans also promised to form a working group with the United States to examine pending abduction cases. Chancellor Schroeder agreed to "think about organizational and institutional consequences to be taken" to speed up the German court process and make changes in German law to allow visitation rights for those parents previously prevented from seeing their children at all. Although the Chancellor acknowledged that it would be difficult to reverse German custody decisions, he assured President Clinton that this soon-to-be-created commission would work on providing the so-called left-behind parents access to their children.

But now, as the Washington Post reports, Germany is restricting visitation of the Cooke children's American grandmother from open, six-hour visits to supervised, two-hour visits in a psychologist's office. We must take a very tough stance against this, Mr. President. We must judge Germany by its recent actions—not its recent words—recent, empty words. We must hold Germany to its promises and see to it their government matches words with deeds and returns every single American child.

Given Germany's reversal on the visitation agreement, I am even more skeptical now about the sincerity of Germany's commitment to return kidnapped children. I say that partly because German officials have repeatedly blamed their non-compliance on the independence of their judiciary system. They say that they are reluctant to challenge court rulings because the courts are separate and independent from the parliament. Chancellor Schroeder even likened such interference to the days of Nazi Germany, when he told a German newspaper that: "We have always fought for the well-being of the children to be at the core of divorce and custody cases. That is