

high school students, young people participate in local activities as well as actively campaigning in New Hampshire for the presidential candidate of their choice in the state primary.

Mr. Speaker, I commend an outstanding, tireless campaigner, and congratulate her on receiving this award. I know all of my colleagues join me in paying tribute to her today.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 339, on September 13, 2001, I was unable to record my vote. At the time I was at the Pentagon surveying the damage and encouraging the rescue workers.

Had I been present, I would have voted "yes."

VERMONT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT CONGRESSIONAL TOWN MEETING

HON. BERNARD SANDERS

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, today I recognize the outstanding work done by participants in my Student Congressional Town Meeting held this summer. These participants were part of a group of high school students from around Vermont who testified about the concerns they have as teenagers, and about what they would like to see government do regarding these concerns.

I am asking that these statements be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, as I believe that the views of these young persons will benefit my colleagues.

ON BEHALF OF KEVIN DECAUSEMACKER
REGARDING GUN CONTROL, MAY 7, 2001

Kevin Decausemacker. Thank you for this opportunity. It is a really great thing you let the youth of Vermont come and express their opinions.

Congressman Sanders. Thanks very much for coming, Kevin. Give us your name for the record.

Kevin Decausemacker. The year was 1938. Congressman Sanders. Your full name.

Kevin Decausemacker. I'm sorry. I'm a little tired. I'm Kevin Decausemacker. A little hard to pronounce. The year was 1938, one year before the invasion of Poland. It was now that Adolf Hitler implemented the first example of gun control. He prohibited the Jewish people from owning firearms, and by so doing took substantial power away from the people. He made it easier to commence his mission of genocide with little resistance from his victims. This is what a government can do with too much power: Whatever it wants. Our government has created three different branches to limit the power it possesses. The United States promotes a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The more we constrict the rights that the Second Amendment states we have, the more power is taken away from the peo-

ple and given to the government. I feel that the more power the government has, the more the people are at risk of being taken advantage of by it. Why implement gun control then? Solely for safety. However, if safety is the main concern, in England and Australia, where there are strict gun-control laws, there have been rising breaking-and-entry and burglary numbers. So what gun control has done there has only made the criminals bolder, it gave them knowledge that their victims are unarmed. Now, compare these countries with Switzerland, where nearly every home has a firearm. In Switzerland there is a very low crime rate, perhaps because the criminals are afraid. Why, then, would any country want to make criminals bolder, despite the fact that power would be taken away from the people, and criminals would operate with little fear? Anti-gun legislation, at least under the Clinton administration, has progressed. The Brady bill is an example of anti-gun legislation and that was put into effect during Clinton's eight years. The Brady bill has prevented many, many gun purchases. But there hasn't been a noticeable decline in violent crimes due to the Brady bill alone. Why is it there then? The registering of firearms is rather pointless. The sole purpose behind any gun-control argument is to protect the people. But how will registering firearms help if criminals don't have to register them? The Haynes Supreme Court decision held that criminals are exempt from federal anti-gun laws regarding registration because it violates their Fifth amendment protection against self-incrimination. In other words, only people who are not criminals can be prosecuted for failing to register a firearm or being in possession of an unregistered firearm. Anti-gun laws would do nothing to deter criminals from committing heinous deeds with the aid of a firearm. Criminals don't obey laws as it is. Why would they listen if gun law were stricter? Anti-gun laws would only give criminals the same freedom Hitler had, to leave his victims defenseless, at his mercy. Even if a criminal cannot obtain a gun, they can still commit a murder or violent crime without a gun; they could use a knife, a chain, a blunt object. Even a shoelace can be used as a garrote. Why focus on guns? When things happen, the object the criminal uses shouldn't be attacked. What we should do is focus on preventing the criminals from spreading further harm by means of rehabilitation in correctional facilities. Anti-gun legislation needs to be put at rest, and people need to be more educated about gun safety. If educated on gun safety, the number of accidents would decline dramatically. I myself have been exposed to firearms in a safe environment and understand their danger. I know how to operate and store a firearm safely and responsibly. We can coexist with firearms safely, and all we need is some education.

ON BEHALF OF JORY HURST, ROBBY SHORT,
EMILY WRIGHT, AND KERRY MCINTOSH RE-
GARDING, SCHOOL STANDARDS, TRACKING IN
SCHOOLS, MAY 7, 2001

Jory Hurst. On the program, I think it listed us as doing—we are switching topics. We are doing the tracking, and the other group is doing drop-out rates. Not that it matters. We go to Mt. Anthony Union High School, which is a very socioeconomically diverse school, especially for Vermont. And coming into high school, there are kids coming in from lots of different educational backgrounds, so people have all different kinds of experience. In our school, you kind of have

to track classes, just because of where everybody is at. So we have five different levels of tracking. There is the honors, there is the college prep, there is the B, there is the applied, and then there is the remedial. We want to talk about some problems we see in tracking, even though we feel it is necessary. In our school, the honors is about 10 percent honors, about 25 in the college prep, 35 percent in the B, and about 30 percent of the kids are in IEPs, individual plans, and they are in special classes.

Robby Short. Let me talk about getting into honors. It all starts out in the 7th and 8th grade. You have to take a test in 7th grade. It is a math test, and then, the next year, if you pass the math test—I think it is 75 percent—you get into honors classes for the 8th grade year, which is, you end up getting into—all your core classes are honors classes. Which is kind of unfair, because it is just a math test that decides English, social studies and science. And if you are not in 8th grade honors, and you're going into high school, you are pretty much on your own getting into honors for your 9th grade year. You have to try your hardest with the guidance office, if you have come in contact with many conflicts. And if you are in honors, you automatically get into it in the 9th grade. Once you get into high school, it is really a battle to try and get into honors classes. Some students have it easy and some don't. The students that have it easy usually have a teacher backing them up by just really fighting for them with the guidance office to get them in. And the other students have to go through tutoring over an entire summer. They have to double up in math classes—not just in math classes, but double up on honors classes in high school, and drop like classes that they really need. If we could come up with one of one set of standards that gives everyone equal chances, it would be the best for all.

Emily Wright. Jory was talking about how there is honors and college prep, and then there is B, and then the applied and remedial. The problem with that is, the honors kids and the applied kids get most of the privileges, and the college-prep and B students are left in the middle, with little motivation from teachers and support from parents, per se. Most college-prep kids do want to go to college and have some support from home, but the B kids, on the other hand, have little support from home, if any, and no motivation whatsoever. And the college-prep kids usually want to go into honors classes, but don't know how to go about the procedure, because teachers don't seem to be reaching out to them and motivating them to get a better education if they can, possibly. And that's one of the biggest problems, because about 60 percent of our students are in college prep and B, and they have less materials to work with and less support from the guidance office and teachers, and it just seems unfair for that middle percent.

Kelly McIntosh. Another negative effect of tracking that must be kept in mind is that it can create like social class systems in the schools. Like students are grouped according to what track they're in, like the honors students, the B students, college prep, and often the groups of students, often they do have similar interests, but they are just always together. And integration is important, because being with the same group all the time allows for no variety, and you don't really get to see other perspectives. Like a student coming from a different area from you. And also, some of the academic class systems can lead to generalizations that can go