

each of the country's 191,000 voting precincts is estimated to cost at least \$4 billion and some estimates have voting modernization costs exceeding \$8 billion.

The current presidential tax checkoff has had mixed results, but I believe Americans will respond favorably to an opportunity to help defray the costs of new voting equipment if it will ensure accurate election results. Using Census figures as a guide, if 12 percent of Ohio taxpayers opted for the checkoff, it would amount to \$1.35 billion in revenue that could be used to update voting equipment and pay to train poll workers.

Participation in the checkoff to help pay for presidential elections has fallen since it was first initiated in 1972, and studies show that only 12.5 percent of Americans checked the box on their 1997 returns. The remainder left the box blank or checked "NO." Through 1999, about \$1.2 billion had been designed for presidential elections.

I blame the low participation for the presidential checkoff on two factors: The public's unwillingness to help pay for increasingly hostile presidential elections, and widespread misunderstanding that checking off the box increases one's tax bill.

It is my belief that folks will be willing to do a tax checkoff if it will ensure that their vote will be counted and counted accurately. I think when folks realize this won't negatively impact their tax refund or tax bill, they will be willing to check the box.

Secretaries of State across the Nation agree that voting machines need to be modernized but they realize the costs will be enormous. The voting modernization checkoff will be a temporary measure to generate funds, and will only appear on tax return forms as long as there is a need to pay for new voting machines.

Mr. Speaker, States will be able to use money generated by the checkoff to purchase and maintain modern voting equipment, and educate and train those using the new voting equipment, including those working the polls on election day. Decisions about specific equipment and training would be left up to the States. Also, Puerto Rico will be excluded from this plan because it does not pay Federal taxes.

Mr. Speaker, I believe VEMA offers a simple, common-sense solution to a problem that must be remedied as soon as possible so we can restore accuracy and integrity to our voting system. I urge my colleagues to support the Voting Equipment Modernization Act of 2001.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JIM MATHESON

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2001

Mr. MATHESON. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, March 13, 2001, I was unable to cast votes on rollcall votes 46 and 47. However, had I been present, on rollcall vote 46 I would have voted "yea", and on rollcall vote 47 I also would have voted "yea".

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CONDEMNING HEINOUS ATROCITIES THAT OCCURRED AT SANTANA HIGH SCHOOL, SANTEE, CALIFORNIA

SPEECH OF

HON. JIM LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 13, 2001

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the victims of gun violence at Santana High School, the countless lives that have been affected by this tragic incident, and the numerous similar tragedies that have happened over the past few years. The violence at Santana is deeply disturbing. No child should fear for her life in school, and no child should feel so alienated that he perceives violence as his only option.

When Charles Andrew Williams entered school on Monday, March 5, he had already cried out for help. He had told his friends his plan. He had even told his friend's parent. In all, Andy Williams told over 20 people what he planned to do. But no one took him seriously and now two children are dead. While this was clearly an act of rage, it was also one of fear and desperation.

And sadly, Andy was not alone. Within 48 hours of his arrest, 16 other children in California had been arrested or detained for suspicion of gun-related violence. In fact, since Dylan Kelbold and Eric Harris killed thirteen of their classmates at Columbine High School almost two years ago, over eighteen separate incidents of student-to-student gun violence have occurred. Many more planned attempts to emulate this violence have gone unreported or perhaps never even known. Just six weeks ago in East Providence, Rhode Island, a hit list was found that was written by four fifth graders.

Many of us are at a loss to explain this explosion of school violence in recent years, but everyone agrees that we must address the mental health needs of our children. Education Secretary Rod Paige has attributed the rash of school shootings to 'alienation and rage.' A recent Secret Sservice study concluded that the common theme underlying perpetrators of violent crimes in schools is depression. Three-quarters of children committing these crimes have talked about or attempted suicide. More than two-thirds report having been bullied by their peers. Disturbing emotions of alienation and rage in our nation's schools are real and pervasive and deep-seated. We must take steps to alleviate this pain and provide the help that our children are crying out for in these violent actions.

Our schoolchildren need professional counselors who can help them cope with the pressures of being a teenager. They need supportive adults in their lives. They also need a moral compass that will help them sort through the violence that permeates our culture. What they do not need is easy access to weapons. Whatever alienation Andy Williams was feeling, he could not have committed such a heinous act without the help of a .22 caliber revolver.

Guns are simply too accessible to children today, and American children are suffering the

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consequences. The accidental death rate among children from gunshot wounds is nine times higher in the United States than in the other largest 25 industrialized countries combined, and at least six loopholes still exist that allow children and violent offenders obtain guns. Guns alone do not kill children, but in times of extreme emotional distress they enable a disturbed innocent child to become a murderer.

Efforts to increase children's self-esteem and to reduce their access to guns will decrease the number of these incidents. While I applaud my colleagues in honoring the children and families of Santana High School, I urge you to let this be the first step toward change, not the last. As one whose life was forever altered when a gun accidentally discharged, I know first hand that guns are dangerous and far too often fatal. For the sake of our children, I implore my colleagues to pass meaningful legislation to end school violence once and for all.

TRIBUTE TO JOE ORTIZ CARDONA

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 14, 2001

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to salute Joe Ortiz Cardona, of California. Joe has been recognized by Adelante, California Migrant Leadership Council and American Legion Merle Reed Post 124 as an outstanding individual who has made significant contributions to the improvement of education opportunities for Latino children in California.

A highly-respected community leader in Earlimart for more than 33 years, a Barber by trade, Joe Cardona has spent most of his life helping others. He is active in improving the conditions of the people of Earlimart, in such areas as flood control, schools, health care, food and clothing acquisition and distribution, and support for families in need.

Joe was born in 1933 in Somerton, Arizona. His family migrated to Earlimart in 1940, where Joe enrolled in first grade at Earlimart Elementary School. Following the seasonal crops, Joe's family moved to Brawley where he graduated from eighth grade in 1948.

Joe enlisted in the Army in the late 1950's serving two years. In 1957, Joe studied and obtained his apprenticeship for Barbering from Moler Barber College, Fresno, California. In 1959, Joe married Cruz Amaya Cardona and raised four children, Larry, Joe Jr., Frankie and Vicky. In 1974, Joe was determined to receive a high school diploma. He enrolled in Adult Education at Delano Joint Union High School. Along with the forty-seven area citizens, he was one of the proud graduates of the commencement exercises in June 2, 1975.

Joe Cardona is a man of integrity, dependability and dedication. In 1967, understanding the poverty and hardships of some of the community members of Earlimart, he had an idea to have members of the community contribute to a fund, which could be used to assist families on the occasion of bereavement. With this idea the Earlimart Funeral Fund Association was formed and to-date Joe is still an active member of this organization, and besides