EXTENSION OF NTR FOR CHINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the House on the issue of our policy towards the People's Republic of China.

I believe the United States' policy toward China should be guided by three primary and pragmatic goals.

First, we must safeguard American security against a potential adversary. Second, we should pursue economic trade relations that promote American economic interests. And finally, we should encourage policies that will allow individual liberty and the rule of law and, thus, respect for human rights to flourish in China.

Today, Mr. Speaker, Congress voted to renew normal trade relations, or NTR, with China for another year. This renewal of NTR will advance all three of the above-mentioned China policy goals.

On the national security front, NTR and the expanded trade opportunity that it brings in non-militarily sensitive goods and services will reduce the likelihood of military conflict between the United States and China.

Countries with extensive trade relations are simply less likely to go to war with each other than countries without those ties. This is no surprise. With extensive trade comes extensive interests in maintaining peaceful relations and thus more trade.

But make no mistake, NTR does not and should not imply trade in militarily sensitive technologies. Any technology with a direct military application should not be exported to China nor to any other country that is not a close ally of the United States.

The Clinton administration's appalling lapses in safeguarding military technology must be rectified immediately. But denying American and Chinese citizens the opportunity to exchange non-military goods and services will not accomplish that.

Instead, the U.S. should reinstate penalties on companies whose negligent sales compromise our security and rebuild a system of controls on the spread of potentially dangerous technologies.

Renewing NTR with China will benefit our economy by providing American consumers access to low-cost goods and by expanding U.S. export opportunities. Revoking NTR would have subjected Chinese imports to dramatically higher tariffs, and that is another word for taxes. These taxes would not be paid by China but by American consumers. Revoking NTR would have subjected American consumers to up to $29 billion in new taxes.

A second economic benefit from extending NTR will be accelerated growth in high-paying, export-related jobs across America and particularly in my home State of Pennsylvania. Exports in industries such as chemical products, industrial machines, and computer components, where wages average 20 percent higher than the national average, are already fueling much of Pennsylvania's impressive economic growth.

Renewing NTR is a prerequisite to China's ascending to the WTO, which, in turn, will dramatically accelerate further growth and opportunity in U.S. and Pennsylvania exports to China.

But finally, Mr. Speaker, freedom works. By renewing NTR with China, we are helping to provide the opportunity for the Chinese people to liberate themselves from the dictatorship under which they currently live.

China's communist leadership has embarked on what is, for them, a very dangerous course. Unlike most other communist dictatorships this century, from Stalin to Mao to North Korea's Kim Il Jong, Deng Xiaoping chose to open China to foreign investment, limited free enterprise, and engagement with the West. His bet was that he could enjoy the economic benefits of capitalism without losing the communist party's monopoly on political control.

Well, in the long run, Mr. Speaker, if we continue to engage China, Deng's successors will lose that bet and the people of China will be the winners. And they will be the winners of freedom because freedom is ultimately indivisible.

People who enjoy economic freedom will eventually demand political freedom. People who read American newspapers will eventually demand their own free press. The people who travel to the United States on business will see incomparable superiority of freedom and will eventually demand that liberty for their own country.

Freedom once tasted is irresistible. Eventually the Chinese people will demand a free, open, and just Democratic society, just as their fellow countrymen enjoy on Taiwan. Only that kind of society will properly respect the Chinese people's human rights.

These changes to Chinese society will not happen overnight, but having extended NTR will increase the pace at which they develop and, best of all, will be helping ourselves in the process.

□ 2215

REVIEW OF FORUM ON GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) is recognized for half the time until midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in Chicago I hosted the first of 16 women's forums on gun violence that will be conducted by Democratic women Members of Congress. The goal of these forums is to develop strategies and build grassroots movements to pass sensible gun safety legislation this year.

I will tell my colleagues more about this event, Mr. Speaker, during the hour and how much all of us, men and women alike, hope these forums will contribute to making our country safer for our children and our grandchildren.

When discussing gun safety legislation, it is easy for us here in Washington to get lost in all the many intricacies of this subject. We can argue fine points of the law, the real meaning of the second amendment to the Constitution, the difference between a 3-day waiting period and a 72-hour waiting period. We can talk about the features of different weapons and ammunition clips and demonstrate our knowledge of the hardware. But for most Americans, it comes down to this. Is my child safe on her way to school? Can I stroll in my neighborhood on a beautiful summer evening? Is it safe for me to walk home from the synagogue after services or from church? No one is secure enough in our country anymore to answer ''yes.''

After the tragedy at Columbine High School and the shootings and killing in my district during the Fourth of July weekend, Americans are asking, what does it take? What does it take before something is done in the United States Congress? How many children have to die? How many parents must prepare for another funeral?

We want to talk to you tonight as mothers and as grandmothers. This is about my granddaughter Isabelle and about the horror of gun violence and the simple steps that we can take to reduce it. We know that legislation will not eliminate it, but just ask the devastated families of victims if stopping the killing of even one child is not worth it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE Johnson).

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the Juvenile Justice bill passed long ago, and the House still has not appointed conferees. This legislation and its accompanying gun safety provisions are vitally important to all American families.

Each day in America, 14 kids age 19 and under are killed by guns. In 1996, almost 5,000 juveniles were killed with a firearm. In 1997, 84 percent of murder victims age 13 to 19 were killed with a firearm. Fifty-nine percent of students in grades 6 through 12 know where to get a gun if they want one, and two-thirds of these students say they can acquire a firearm within 24 hours.

Kids and guns do not mix. Yet the Republican leadership refused to consider common-sense gun safety measures that would only serve to protect our kids. It is far too easy for kids to get and use guns. Trigger locks, or locked safety boxes, would keep this from happening.

We have continually passed up the opportunity to act on this vitally important issue. I urge the Republican

leadership to move to appoint conferees before we lose another child.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. I think that the gentlewoman has expressed the kind of impatience that many Americans are feeling right now. They want to know when we are going to do something. That is particularly true right now of the residents in my district, who are just beginning the healing process after having suffered the violence of hate over the Fourth of July weekend.

I want to put a face to one of the victims of gun violence. Ricky Byrdsong was a former basketball coach at Northwestern University. He was a father, a community leader, and an inspiration to his family and all those who knew him, a deeply religious man. Ricky Byrdsong was committed to a cause, and his cause was to help underprivileged youth reach their full potential and follow their dreams. His work took him to neighborhoods where violence was all too common a feature of everyday life. He lived with his wife and three children in Skokie, Illinois, a quiet community of ordinary homes and bungalows, quiet streets, good schools, and he once commented to a friend on how happy he was to live in a safe neighborhood. He did not have to worry about his kids being hurt. He did not have to worry about the violence that is so common in other neighborhoods. He was happy to live in the peaceful community of Skokie, Illinois.

But that all changed on Friday, July 2nd, when Benjamin Smith murdered Ricky Byrdsong when he was outside playing with his children. He was killed because of the color of his skin. And Mr. Byrdsong was not the first target that night of Benjamin Smith's hate. Six men were shot in Rogers Park. They were walking home from synagogue, they were orthodox Jewish men who were praying that evening. It was a warm summer evening as they walked home. Twenty bullets found their way into six people that night. It is only a miracle really that none of those people was killed. The mother of one of those victims said, ''This was not just hate. This is what happens when hate is given a gun.''

Dr. Michael Messing was another victim that night. He and his son were the first people who were shot at that evening. He and his son were walking home and he described this at the forum that I held yesterday how Benjamin Smith actually stopped his car, got out and pointed his gun at Dr. Messing and he knew that right away he had to flee, that this was clearly a dangerous situation, he was shot at, his son was shot at, and again miraculously the bullets missed him. But he stood there to watch his neighbor down the street get shot and suddenly from victim, he turned into physician and ran down the street to care for them.

He faxed me a statement today that said:

''As a recent victim of Benjamin Smith's anti-Semitic and racist shooting spree, I implore you, our leaders in Congress, to pass the necessary legislation on gun control which would inhibit easy access to weapons for criminals. In doing so, you will create a safer, healthier and more optimistic future for our country. If you fail to do so, my living nightmare might one day become yours as well.

You can imagine what a nightmare that is to be with your son and friends walking home and being shot at on the streets of your community.

Littleton, Colorado; Rogers Park in Skokie, Illinois; Bloomington, Indiana; Springfield, Oregon; Fayetteville, Tennessee; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; Jonesboro, Arkansas; West Paducah, Kentucky; and Pearl, Mississippi. Is your hometown next, Mr. Speaker? No one knows for sure.

At the forum yesterday, a number of incredible people testified. They are victims of gun violence that perhaps gave the most dramatic testimony of all.

One was Maureen Young, who comes from my town of Evanston, Illinois. She spoke about her 18-year-old son who was shot in the heart by a person who was told to kill someone for their gang initiation. As she was speaking, she held up the printout from the hospital heart monitor that showed her son's flat line. She held up that tape that showed the flat line on the heart monitor that indicated that her son was dead. And she said, ''How many mothers are going to have to come home from the hospital with a tape like this indicating that their child has died?''

Mrs. Young is one of many victims, many mothers, many fathers, who has turned their own personal tragedy into a crusade, and now she is a leader in the Bell Campaign, a campaign designed to wake up America, to organize victims and people who care about those victims into a grassroots campaign to make this Congress more afraid of people who want sensible gun safety legislation than they are from the small minority of people who resist passing even the most sensible and simple pieces of legislation.

It is hard to imagine what Maureen Young has experienced. But there are an average of 13 mothers every single day who experience that. We talk about Columbine and Littleton, Colorado, because it is a community where we do not expect some things like this to happen, just like Skokie, Illinois, and Rogers Park, Illinois. But 13 mothers every day experience the same kind of horror. In my own little town, I have attended three funerals in the last year. I am tired of these funerals. I guess Ricky Byrdsong's funeral makes four.

Mark Carlin, President of the Board of Directors of the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence, urged us to apply the same common-sense practices that we apply to cars to guns. Why can we not treat guns with the same common-sense regulation as we do our cars? Are we any less free because our car is registered?

He talked about transferring the registration of his father's automobile to himself and how he had to go down and fill out the paperwork. And no one would question that that is not a good thing to do. He talked about the fact that we have to get a driver's license and renew that driver's license, and why is it not that every single gun owner does not need to register for that gun? We would not think of saying people should drive a car without a driver's license. And he said, ''What is more sacred in our culture than the automobile?'' It defines us in some ways, our mobility, our freedom, our independence, and yet we understand that automobiles and drivers are heavily regulated. And yet not guns.

The gun lobby says guns are somehow a sacred object, that it should escape all that kind of regulation.

At the forum yesterday, I held up a TEC–9 in one hand and a baby rattle in the other hand. Baby rattles are governed by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. We have laws about it. We have laws about how big the parts are in toys that we give to our children. Guns are exempt from regulation by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Why is that? It is one of the only products, I think it is the only consumer product that is exempt from that kind of regulation. So Mark Carlin was saying, let us at least treat guns with the same respect, if you will, as we do our automobiles.

We had Dr. Kathryn Coffer Christophel who is a respected pediatrician at Children's Memorial Hospital and also an expert on gun safety approaching it as a health issue, reframing this debate as a public health crisis.

□ 2230

She talks about how every year over $1 billion is spent on medical costs associated with the treatment of individuals who have been shot. Of course, these dollar figures do not take into account the lost earnings to their families while they are recuperating. She pointed to a chart that we had there yesterday that showed that in 1996 there were 15 handgun murders in Japan, 15 in the whole nation in the whole year. Thirty handgun murders in Great Britain, Mr. Speaker; 106 in Canada; 213 in Germany; and 9,390 in the United States.

She said, if we looked at that chart and we were talking about a disease, a virus or a bacteria, and we saw how many people were afflicted in the United States, is there any question in our minds that we would say, what are these other nations doing? They seem to have conquered this epidemic, or dramatically reduced it. What are they doing that we are not doing to confront this health crisis. And the answer is really very simple. They have far tougher gun laws. Oh, we may want to bring in all other kinds of cultural issues and maybe they affect some few cases. By and large, the explanation for the difference is we have more guns.

Mr. Speaker, we heard from a remarkable young man, Albert Smith, who just graduated from Evanston Township High School and his family also was touched by a gun-related tragedy in which a member of his family was killed. Albert really does not like to go into details about the tragedy that struck his family, but what he likes to talk about is how it spurred him into action on antiviolence issues, including gun control.

What Albert did was organize a conference on violence and gun control at Evanston Township High School in May which included the U.S. attorney from Massachusetts who came to talk about strategies that they had developed to reduce gun violence, particularly among youth, where they had a long period, I think over 2 years, where not a single child in the City of Boston was lost to gun violence, a coordinated strategy of prevention and control.

Albert had just one simple challenge for all of us who were gathered yesterday and that is, what are you going to do about it? What are you going to do about it? What are we going to do about it?

I have received, as I am sure many, many Members of Congress have, letters from my constituents, letters that tell sad stories and cry out for help, and tell about fear, tell about the fear now of ordinary kids that are afraid to go to school who now think yes, indeed, it could happen to me.

Dear Representative Schakowsky: Hello. I am currently a high school student at Niles West. I know that I am not old enough to vote for anything, but I would appreciate if you would take the time to consider what I had to say. I think that there should be stricter laws about guns.

Too many kids are getting their hands on guns. I don't know how, but there should be a way to keep guns off the streets. In the Colorado shooting, those kids had some big firearms. How did these kids get their hands on such guns? I am not sure that I feel safe in school, ever since the Colorado shooting. If, by chance, this topic comes up,

and I hope, Mr. Speaker, that my colleagues are listening to that. This child from Illinois is saying,

If, by chance, this topic comes up, please vote for stricter laws against guns. I heard too many stories about little kids and guns, and I am afraid that someone I care about might get hurt by a gun. I thank you for taking your time to listen to what I say.

And I hope that all of us here, Mr. Speaker, will take time to listen to what this student had to say.

Another:

Like most people, I have been disturbed by the rising violence in our lives. But Littleton really brings it home. It seems ridiculous to me that guns can be picked up at gun shows without even a background check. It is even worse that people not old enough to legally drink beer can buy assault rifles. Why aren't guns regulated for safety, like every other consumer product? Thousands of children could be saved from disability or death by simple child safety standards for handguns.

Yesterday at this forum, I also held up a TEC–9 and a child safety lock. For $5 or $6, one can get a lock that will be put on guns that will prevent the accidental shooting of children. Let me tell my colleagues a few of those stories.

In Florida in 1999, an 11-year-old boy got angry with his 13-year-old sister. He went to a closet at home, took out a gun his parents kept there and killed his sister. The gun was in an unlocked box, was next to the ammunition, and had no trigger guard.

In Tennessee in May in 1998, a 5-year-old boy found a loaded hand gun on his grandfather's dresser and carried it to school, threatening to kill his teacher and classmates.

In Cleveland, a 13-year-old boy took his father's unsecured handgun and killed himself while playing Russian roulette. The city prosecutor brought charges against the boy's father for violating the ordinance that prohibits minors from having access to a gun.

In Florida, a 14-year-old boy found his father's gun in a closet and shot a playmate in the head after school. The victim lives, but suffers, as we can imagine, from medical problems as a result.

This is one of the sensible gun safety measures that was passed by the Senate to require a child safety lock on every weapon. Why not? Why not, America is asking us. We talk about closing the loophole in the Brady Bill and requiring background checks at gun shows.

Mr. Speaker, Benjamin Smith, who terrorized my community and then killed two people and then himself, and we can talk about the hate groups that he was associated with and hate Web sites on the Internet, and we should. But Benjamin Smith again was able to convert this hatred into violence.

Now, he went to buy a weapon and was turned down because he had an order of protection against him, and fortunately that turned up in his background check. What he did was go to an illegal gun dealer, someone who had legally purchased an arsenal of weapons. If we had had legislation that said that only one gun a month could be purchased, this illegal gun dealer would not have been able to have this arsenal that Ben Smith was able then to buy two guns from this man.

We need to do sensible things. The gun show loophole is another place Ben Smith could have gone to a gun show to purchase those guns, and if he would have found an unlicensed dealer, he could have bought his guns there too. He would have been able to purchase those guns and murder two people in a way that was not intended when we first passed the Brady law. How many lives would be saved if we would close that simple gun show loophole?

When the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) stood on the floor of this House and said, ''All we want to do is keep guns out of the hands of criminals,'' let me just quote from her. She said, ''That is all I am trying to do. My amendment closes a loophole. I am trying to stop the criminals from being able to get guns. That is all I am trying to do.'' And she said, ''This is not a game to me. This is not a game to the American people.''

Mr. Speaker, this is our colleague, a woman from New York, a hero in the battle for gun safety legislation and someone herself who has experienced the tragedy in her own family.

America is asking us to do something. Let me just refer my colleagues to an editorial, Mr. Speaker, that appeared June 20 in the Chicago Tribune. It says, ''The statute of limitations on responsibility in the United States House of Representatives expired after 59 days, just 59 days after two students shot up Columbine High School in Colorado. The House decided that more dead children is the price to pay to protect the national gun lobby.''

And the Chicago Tribune again, on July 18 said, ''Last weekend, a bigot with a heart full of hate, a couple of guns and a load of ammo left a trail of blood through Illinois and Indiana. This week, congressional conferees from the House and Senate will start to decide whether the country needs tighter gun control laws.''

Mr. Speaker, I only wish that had been true. I only wish that conferees had been appointed and that they were starting to decide whether we need tighter gun laws.

The editorial goes on, ''Poll after poll has shown that Americans want to close the loopholes in the existing gun laws governing the sale and use of firearms, but Members of the House who flatly rejected meaningful gun control legislation last month are not listening to the polls, they are listening to the National Rifle Association.''

Let us review in closing, Mr. Speaker, the three simple measures that the Senate passed that we hope will become the law of the land, that we hope that the Speaker will appoint conferees, that we can get down to the business that the American people are asking us to do. Those three things are: close the loophole in the Brady Bill, the gun show loophole; the second is to require child safety locks; and the third is to ban, another loophole, ban the importation of high capacity ammunition clips.

If we do those things, we will have made the first small step in addressing the concerns of the Americans for their own safety, for the safety of their children. We will be saying to the American people that we want your children to be able to walk to school and be in school in safety. We want you to feel safe in your neighborhoods. We do not want another child to die; we do not want another police officer to die. We want to address this problem in our country, and we are going to make those first steps. Let us do it, Mr. Speaker. Let us do it soon.

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, in the last few months and years, a series of tragic events has made it clear that there are serious shortcomings in our gun laws that must be addressed. The U.S. Senate, after lengthy consideration, finally passed a bipartisan measure

that would begin to close loopholes that have too often resulted in guns getting into the wrong hands by allowing vendors at gun shows and flea markets to sell firearms without conducting background checks. The Senate is to be applauded for this action. The Senate had the courage to pass a bill that dealt with the issue of juvenile justice and gun violence in a sensible and thoughtful manner.

In the House, that same courage appeared to be lacking in too many of our colleagues. As a mother of five and grandmother of thirteen, I empathize with the families who lost children in Littleton, Colorado and with the thousands of other families across this nation who have seen violent crime rob them of their loved ones. These are losses that can never be forgotten and that leave a lasting void no one can fill.

Unfortunately, the American people were the big losers in the debate on the House floor over gun safety last month. Hours of floor debate over three days and nights produced nothing that can comfort those who have already lost a family member to gun violence and provided no real meaningful measures to ensure the future safety of our children.

The fight for sensible gun control is not over. Those of us who believe in closing gun loopholes will continue our efforts. Three months ago, I spoke to many members of Family and Friends of Murder Victims assembled in Rose Hills Memorial Park to honor their slain loved ones during Victims Rights Week. I pledged to them that I would work to ensure we establish laws and programs that help prevent the additional loss of innocent lives and to strengthen victims' rights. I intend to keep that pledge.

Let us look at the facts: In the five years that the Brady Bill has been in effect, requiring a three business-day waiting period for a gun purchase, more than 400,000 illegal gun sales, two-thirds of which involved either convicted felons or people with a current felony indictment, were blocked. This is clear evidence that this law works and that we are on the right path.

However, we still have far to go. Studies show that one in four gun murders are committed by people aged 18 to 20. Furthermore, about two-thirds of all homicides involve the use of a gun. Also consider that domestic violence often turns into homicide in many instances where guns are readily available, and that law enforcement officials support gun safety because it saves police officers' lives.

These facts demand our immediate attention. It is no wonder that a recent Pew Research survey found that 65% of the nation believes gun control is more important than the right to bear arms. Similarly, a Gallup Poll shows that 79% of Americans support mandatory registration of all firearms.

I wholeheartedly support a rational gun safety policy to close loopholes that have allowed too many individuals to skirt laws designed to prevent guns from getting into the wrong hands—often the hands of felons or minors.

We should strengthen the Brady law and fight for new gun safety measures that include: a three business-day waiting period to complete background checks on people buying guns at gun shows and flea markets—just like sales at retail outlets; banning the import of large-capacity ammunitions clips; raising the national age of handgun ownership from 18 to 21; gun safety locks to accompany all new firearm sales; and preventing serious juvenile felons from ever owning guns.

We can achieve all of this if the members of the House have the will and the American people make it clear to their representatives that they demand action on gun safety. Let us stop the delay. Let us pass meaningful gun safety legislation.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on my Special Order this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

THE REPUBLICAN AGENDA

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. TANCREDO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the recognition for this hour that I reserve on behalf of the Republican majority. And, specifically, for those Members of the Theme Team and any Member of the Republican Conference that has anything to discuss this evening, I invite them to come down to the floor now and join me in the next hour in discussing topics relative to our majority agenda on the House floor.

That agenda, of course, includes an effort to save and secure a retirement security system through Social Security and Medicare. It also involves our efforts to reduce the tax burden on the American people. The third item is to build the strongest national defense in the country, in the world, one that allows for complete security for our Nation and for our children, and the third effort is to try to create the best education system on the planet.

□ 2245

Those are three goals towards which we are working vigorously, and hoping to accomplish and achieve.

I want to start out by talking about a fifth topic, one that is important to my constituents and one that is fresh on my mind just coming back from a weekend of visiting with constituents. The topic back home was the Endangered Species Act.

The Committee on Resources has a special task force that visited Colorado and held a hearing in the town of Greeley. We had a great hearing. One of our colleagues, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), was able to come up to Greeley and join us, as well as one of the members of the Senate, Senator CAMPBELL. Also, the fourth member of that group was the chairman, the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO).

We had a great hearing. We heard from many, many people involved in agriculture in Colorado, and those who are in the business of wildlife management and the science of trying to preserve and protect endangered species, and prevent certain species from becoming listed on that list.

We also heard from a number of individuals from environmental groups. But the consensus clearly was that the Endangered Species Act is broken and needs to be fixed; that the act needs to be addressed in wholesale fashion and dramatically reformed.

It is very clear that the notion of protecting and preserving endangered species is a good one, and one that ought to be maintained. It is a noble goal, a worthwhile goal. It is a public goal.

The unfortunate consequence, however, of the Endangered Species Act is that the individual who happens to find one of these species on his or her property bears the almost exclusive burden in shouldering the cost of protecting and preserving and achieving this public goal of species recovery. That is the unfortunate part of it. It is the unfair part of the Endangered Species Act.

Once again, I want to suggest that those we heard from in Colorado, from the farming and ranching community, from the homebuilders in Colorado, those who represent municipalities, as well, we heard from a county commissioner, a State legislator, all of these people really and truly believe that we ought to do everything we can to protect and preserve species, and we certainly do not want to see them go extinct as a result of any human activity.

But they also understand the importance of a local perspective in achieving a strategy to secure these public goals of species recovery and protection of species.

We heard from a county commissioner, for example, Kathay Reynolds, the county commissioner in Lambert County, who was disappointed that the Fish and Wildlife Service did not reach out enough to her and her constituency in devising the rules to protect a mouse, a mouse called the Prebles Meadow Jumping Mouse. This is a mouse that looks just like the Western Jumping Mouse that is a more hardy variety in Colorado.

The mouse has been listed. Let me say that the mouse seems to like water. It hangs out around rivers and streams and irrigation ditches, which in the West is critical in a semi-arid region such as ours when it comes to agriculture. So the mouse likes to be around the water and in the tall grass around the water.

If you happen to find a mouse, one of these Prebles Meadow Jumping Mice in and around your property, your life is about to change, because under the proposed rules by the Fish and Wildlife Service, that means that you can no longer maintain your irrigation canals and ditches. It means that, in many cases, you may have to divert your