

## HIGH-LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, on June 6, 2012, I offered an amendment to the Energy and Water appropriations bill to do the final scientific study to certify Yucca Mountain as the repository for high-level nuclear waste in this country, and I was joined by a large bipartisan amount from this Chamber, 326 “yes” votes, which I appreciate my colleagues who supported this amendment.

Among those in the Michigan delegation, which has 15 Members, there were 11 “yes” votes and only four “no” votes. Why is this all important? Because what I’ve tried to do over the past year and a half is help the educational process in explaining where nuclear waste is in this country and where it should be. We did pass a law back in 1982. I wasn’t here then. Many of us were not. Then there were amendments to that law in 1987 that said Yucca Mountain in Nevada would be our repository, a long-term geological repository for high-level nuclear waste.

In Michigan, there are five nuclear power plants. They are all located along the Great Lakes. There’s three on Lake Michigan, one on, I think, Lake Erie, right next to large bodies of water. Let’s compare one of those, Cook, which has high-level nuclear waste on-site next to Lake Michigan, to where it should be, which is Yucca Mountain.

Currently at Cook, there are 1,433 metric tons of uranium of spent fuel on-site. At Yucca Mountain, which should be our single repository, there’s currently none. Again, we started this in 1982. If it was at Yucca Mountain, it would be stored 1,000 feet underground. At Cook, it’s stored aboveground in pools and in casks. If it was at Yucca Mountain, it would be 1,000 feet above the water table. At Cook, the nuclear waste is 19 feet above the water table. At Yucca Mountain, it would be 100 miles from the Colorado River where it is right next to Lake Michigan.

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Yucca Mountain is obviously a mountain in a desert. There is no safer place.

So, as I mentioned, in the vote total from my colleagues here on the floor, we addressed this on the floor. We took a vote, 326 out of 425. That’s a huge bipartisan majority.

Where do the Senators stand on this position? Well, you have three “yes” votes and one “no” vote. And actually, the “no” vote is a very good friend of mine, a former classmate in the House, Senator STABENOW of Michigan, who has voted against moving that nuclear waste out of her State into a mountain underneath the desert.

And part of this process is, because it is now politicized with the majority leader blocking any movement on this—elections have consequences;

they matter—and it’s time to educate the public throughout the country about which Senators support moving nuclear waste out of their State to a single repository and who does not. And, unfortunately, my friend Senator STABENOW is on the list as not being helpful.

I also have done this numerous times. I have gone through the whole country and covered all the Senators as far as public statements or actual votes. And as you see, we have 55 Senators who said, yes, let’s move this to Yucca Mountain. You would think, oh, that is a simple majority. It should be done. But the Senate operates on interesting rules. They have to have 60. We have 22 who have never taken a position, either “yes” or “no” or any public statement. Some of these have served 5½ years. It’s pretty amazing that we have such an important issue pending as this, and the Senate has yet to get on record. If only five of these 22 would say “yes,” we could continue to move forward on addressing our nuclear waste issues.

Now, nuclear waste is not just spent nuclear fuel. It’s World War II defense waste that might be in Hanford, Washington. It could be scientific waste that might be in Idaho or in Tennessee. And especially after Fukushima Daiichi and the Blue Ribbon Commission, we have to have a single long-term geological repository.

We’ve gone on record in the House. We passed a law that said it should be Yucca Mountain in Nevada. It’s time for the Senators to get past their leadership and do what’s in the best interest of this country and their own individual States.

## THE SECOND AMENDMENT IS NOT LIMITLESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, 2 nights ago, six people were shot inside of 15 minutes in my home city of Chicago. Seven more victims were killed just last weekend by gunfire, including two 16-year-old boys. In Chicago, this year alone, over 200 people have been killed in shootings. And nationwide, every day, 34 people are killed by guns.

In the hours following the horrific tragedy in Colorado, we paused to reflect and send our prayers to families grieving an unimaginable loss. But now is the time to have a national discussion about how to stem these epidemic levels of gun violence.

I wish this tragedy in Aurora were an isolated incident, but it seems to be part of a recurring pattern: 19 people were shot, and eight were killed in Tucson in 2011; 29 people were shot, and 13 died at Fort Hood in 2009; 21 people were shot, and five were killed at Northern Illinois University in 2008; and 17 people were wounded, while 32 people died at Virginia Tech in 2007.

When will we have enough? When will we stand up and say we may not be

able to stop every crime, but we can stop some of them and at least minimize the damage of others?

The gun lobby doesn’t want us to have this conversation. First, they accuse anyone who tries to spark a national debate about how to mitigate gun violence with exploiting the deaths of innocent people. Yet no one was accused of exploitation when, after Hurricane Katrina, we discussed how to improve FEMA’s emergency response, or after a deadly salmonella outbreak, when we debated how to improve public safety.

After such national tragedies, society should engage in a discussion about how to address and potentially prevent such tragedies from happening again. We might not all agree; but this is a democracy, and this is how public policy is made.

Next, the gun lobby seeks to stymie debate by arguing that guns don’t kill people, people kill people. I don’t buy this argument. I don’t buy that there’s nothing we can do to stop criminals and the mentally ill from killing if they want to. Sure, we can’t stop them with 100 percent certainty; but we can make it a lot harder for would-be assassins.

We can ensure every gun is purchased after a background check, rather than only 60 percent of guns, as is the current case. And we can reduce the fatality rate by banning assault rifles and high-capacity magazines that are designed exclusively for killing dozens of people at once.

Finally, the gun lobby tries to argue that any attempt to regulate gun access is an attempt to restrict all gun access. This is simply not true.

There is such a thing as common-sense, middle-ground gun reform, and most gun owners support it. Eighty-one percent of gun owners support requiring a background check on all firearm purchases.

Yet 40 percent of U.S. gun sales are conducted by private sellers who are not required to perform background checks. These private sellers operate at gun shows where anyone can walk in and buy whatever gun they want. Convicted felons, domestic abusers, the severely mentally ill, and even people on the terrorist watch list can—and do—go into gun shows and buy any gun they want.

Ninety percent of all Americans also support strengthening databases to prevent the mentally ill from buying guns. But, sadly, 10 States have still failed to flag a single person as mentally ill in the national background check database, and 17 other States have fewer than 100 people listed as mentally ill. Over 1 million disqualifying mental health records are still missing from the database.

Finally, we must have a conversation about getting assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, machines designed exclusively for killing people, off the streets. When you have a 100-round clip on your gun, you are not