

the morning hour be deemed to have expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate then proceed to a period for morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the following exceptions: Senator VOINOVICH, 30 minutes; Senator DURBIN, or his designee, 30 minutes; Senator ROBERTS, 15 minutes.

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

Mr. GORTON. I further ask unanimous consent that following morning business, the Senate begin consideration of S. 1233, the agricultural appropriations bill.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, for the information of all Senators, on Monday, the Senate will convene at 12 noon and be in a period for morning business until 1 p.m. Following morning business, the Senate will immediately proceed to the agriculture appropriations bill, with amendments expected to be offered. Also, amendments to the State Department authorization bill could be debated on Monday in an attempt to complete action on that legislation. Therefore, Senators can expect multiple votes on Monday at 5:30 p.m. on amendments to the agriculture appropriations bill and/or the State Department authorization bill.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GORTON. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I now ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in adjournment under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator DURBIN.

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

Mr. GORTON. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded and that I be recognized in morning business for 15 minutes.

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

The Senator is recognized.

GUN CONTROL

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, during the course of this week we have come to the Senate floor many times to discuss pending legislation of great importance to families across America.

Last night—I guess this morning, in the early morning hours—the House of Representatives failed to pass the gun control legislation which the Senate enacted 3 weeks ago.

You may remember that Vice President GORE came to the floor, cast the deciding vote, broke the tie, and we passed a bill which would try to close the loopholes for the sales of firearms at so-called gun shows, trying to find a way—any way we can—to reduce the likelihood that guns will get into the hands of children and criminals.

America's heart was broken by Littleton, CO. Families across America, who may have heard these numbing statistics about 13 children a day dying, finally realized it could happen there—it could happen in Littleton, CO, in Conyers, GA, in Jonesboro, AR, in Pearl, MS, West Paducah, KY, Springfield, OR, or in Springfield, IL, my hometown. It could happen anywhere.

Guns are just too easy to come by in America. Troubled kids, who are always a problem, become tragedies when they take these guns into the classrooms, killing their classmates and teachers.

So we passed legislation, good legislation, bipartisan legislation, and sent it to the House of Representatives. Frankly, they decided, because of the political heat that might be generated, to call for a vote in the middle of the night, at 1:15 in the morning, to ask the House of Representatives to go on the Record, because the leadership in the House thought Americans would not notice it if it happened in the middle of the night. The National Rifle Association did not think Americans would care. They are both wrong.

America understands what happened in the dark of night. There was a shot in the dark, and it hit American families right where they live—families who worry about whether sending their kids to school anymore is a safe thing to do, families who wonder, when they say good-bye to their child in the morning, if those are the last words they will ever share with their child.

That is where we are in America. That is where gun violence has brought us. But this is not a fatal shot on the American families. They have, I guess, the hope and the confidence that this Congress will come to its senses and once and for all say no to these gun lobbies and yes to safety in our schools.

The big debate in the House was whether or not we ought to post the Ten Commandments in schools. Let me go on the Record and say I support values for families. I support strengthening families. I believe that those families who believe, as my family did, that the practice of religion is an important part of values, those families should be encouraged in every way whatsoever. We should make sure our kids grow up with values. But it is so naive to believe that simply posting the Ten Commandments in schools is going to change the climate in America.

Perhaps, though, we could post the Ten Commandments at the gun shows and underline the Commandment that

says: Thou shalt not kill, saying to people who want to buy and sell these guns without any background checks, accept your moral responsibility for what is about to occur.

The Illinois State Police did a survey of the crime guns they had confiscated recently and found over 25 percent of them came out of these gun shows, sold to people who, frankly, face no background check whatsoever.

We tried to close that loophole in the Senate; the House has failed. We cannot leave this issue alone.

THE PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. DURBIN. But there is another issue that haunts American families beyond the violence in our schools and beyond the question of gun safety. It is the issue of health insurance.

Mr. President, 115 million Americans, when asked, said that either they personally or a member of their family had run into serious problems when it came to health insurance and health insurance companies.

I started speaking on the floor about this issue just this week, and I have started getting letters from my State of Illinois and across the country. People said: Yes, you are right. Let me read you two of these letters to give you an idea.

Here is one that comes from Raymond and Marianne Eberhardt. These are folks who, frankly, could be any of us. They write:

Enclosed is a picture of Theresa, needless to say she is a very beautiful child. She was hospitalized from September 2, 1998 to February 15, 1999 due to fighting the insurance company for certain provisions we could not do without in our home. Her daddy is a police officer and [her] mommy stays at home.

She most likely would not have had to be vented—

She is on a ventilator.

if she were able to leave when the doctors had said she could go. However, we had to fight and fight with the insurance company for things that the doctors had said were needed. So we fought for 2½ months.

Can you imagine, as parents, fighting to keep this lovely little girl alive, getting up every morning and saying a prayer that she will survive, and then getting on the telephone to fight with the insurance company for the basics that the doctors say she needs to continue living? Their battle went on for 2½ months. She writes:

We eventually did get everything that we needed, except it was a very long battle. Can you imagine having your family separated that long because the insurance company did not want to help? Seven months is a long time for a family to have to go through something like this. Theresa caught RSV in the hospital—

This is a malady which clearly is very serious.

while we were waiting for the appeals to go through.

That is, with the insurance company.

That is why she is now vented and has a trach. Theresa copes extremely well with what all has been done to her. It does not