

MOTHER'S DAY AND GUN SAFETY
RECOGNITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, one of the most cherished holidays is pending this week, when so many families will gather to honor mothers, those that live and those who have gone on. This is a special time to recognize the value of an important component of our family.

Many mothers will take this opportunity this week to show their complete horror and great concern for the number of children that we have lost to gun violence. They will take this challenge and take this cause not in a political manner but in a manner of compassion and belief. We expect millions of mothers to come to Washington, D.C. to express to the world, not only this Nation, that America is, indeed, a civilized country that values life and recognizes that it does not have to have this macho holding of guns to be able to show itself a Nation of dignity and laws and humanity.

I would hope that Americans will take a moment as they honor mothers to reflect upon the importance of this message; that Americans will also put aside politics and ask themselves the same question: Do we need to arm ourselves with the numbers of guns that we have so that the guns in America now almost outnumber the population?

Even though we would imagine and hope that our children go to schools that are safe, we pray every day that that is the case, and I applaud the Nation's school districts, urban and rural alike, in their efforts that they have made to be safe and to have our children safe, there is no refusing to acknowledge that the world knows America through the eyes of Jonesboro, and Pennsylvania and Columbine, and it knows this Nation of laws and of dignity and of respect for the Constitution as a somewhat violent Nation.

It seems appalling that we cannot listen to the majority of Americans who are willing to accept reasonable gun safety laws, such as the legislation that many of us have put forward, in particular I have put forward legislation, that asks for adults to be held responsible if guns get in the hands of children; to support trigger locks; to, in fact, provide a nationwide educational effort that reasonably stays away from politics and begins to tell children about the dangers of guns.

But lo and behold, here we go again, to take a moment when mothers are coming forward as mothers, organized by mothers and organized by respective communities, using the resources of their own, not being propelled by any emotion other than there is too much bloodshed with respect to our children, because more of our children die from homicide and die from guns than any

other civilized nation or any other nation, yet the National Rifle Association takes this week, I guess this is their counterproposal, to promote advertisement to suggest that they are prepared to give \$1 million to provide for gun safety in America's schools or to deal with America's children.

Really, what I say to the National Rifle Association and Charlton Heston, and all of those who would propose that they are sincere, is to join the mothers in their march; stand up and actually be seen not as antagonists but a sincere person who believes in gun safety, not the hypocrisy and the outrage of putting on advertisements and to suggest that they have one iota of the slightest concern about passing real gun safety legislation.

For if they did, then they would see the ridiculousness of the gun show loopholes; that anyone, no matter what their background, can walk into the thousands of gun shows unrestricted across America and buy guns. They would understand that that does not violate the second amendment if we simply ask that there be regulations and restrictions on those purchases. It does not interfere with law-abiding citizens who buy guns, it does not interfere with sports enthusiasts, gun collectors, no one who is seriously interested in abiding by the law and holding their guns safely in their homes. And, yes, it does not prohibit anyone from protecting themselves against that intruder, although the statistics show that most gun violence in homes is family to family because the guns are there.

So we are quick to be able to prosecute an 11-year-old boy that tragically shot another human being, but we do not look to the systemic problem of that little boy's condition and the exposure to guns. And we are appalled when a 6-year-old shoots a 6-year-old, but we do not address the question of the systemic problem of guns in America.

So I applaud the mothers and will be supporting them as a mother myself, and I hope that we will mourn over no more lost and dying babies and children because of guns. And to the National Rifle Association I say, take the ads off and stand up and be counted for something that is real; real gun safety, real support for the stopping of the killing of our babies.

SELF-DEFENSE AND RIGHT-TO-CARRY LAWS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, after the speech by my colleague, I think it is useful to perhaps tone down the rhetoric and bring some statistics and some information from Dr. John Lott, a distinguished scholar at the Yale University Law School, and talk about

experts on crime and what they have to say.

Mr. Speaker, I have an article from the Washington Times that is dated April 26 that I will make a part of the RECORD wherein Dr. Lott highlights a number of cases in his article detailing how anti-gun advocates routinely admit facts, figures, and they change statistics to generally develop a misinterpretation of gun ownership in America.

Along with Dr. Lott, a Professor Bill Landes from the University of Chicago has done extensive research on waiting periods, sentencing laws, background checks, and other current gun control laws and they compare those with the effect on deterring so-called "rampage killings." As to their conclusions, Mr. Speaker, I will quote directly from their article:

"While higher arrests and conviction rates, longer prison sentences and the death penalty reduce murders generally, neither these measures nor restrictive gun laws had a discernible impact on mass public shootings. We found only one policy that effectively reduces these attacks: The passage of right-to-carry laws."

Both these professors confirm that law-abiding citizens, possessing a legal right to carry concealed hand guns, had a dramatic impact on multiple victim shootings.

□ 0945

Indeed, these laws, on average, decreased multiple-victim shootings by one-fifth.

Now, in my home State of Florida, they recognized this fact. In 1987, they passed a law to allow law-abiding citizens to carry a licensed, concealed weapon.

What were the results? Florida's homicide rate dropped from 37 percent above the national average to 3 percent below the national average. The decrease in violent offenses involving firearms in Florida continues to decline.

Now, according to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Uniform Crime Report, in 1989, firearms accounted for 30 percent of all violent offenses. Last year, firearms only accounted for 20 percent of all violent offenses.

Mr. Speaker, 31 States today now have right-to-carry laws and have experienced similar results like Florida.

Dr. Lott's article further highlights the need for individual Americans to be able to defend themselves outside their home.

To address this issue, I developed and introduced legislation, H.R. 492, which is identical to my bill in the 105th Congress which was debated in the House Committee on the Judiciary. My bill establishes a national standard providing for reciprocity in regard to the manner in which nonresidents of a State may carry certain concealed firearms into the State.

Now, in order to carry a concealed firearm across State lines, a person