

VICTIMS OF GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, it has been more than a year since the Columbine tragedy, but still this Republican Congress refuses to act on sensible gun legislation.

Since Columbine, thousands of Americans have been killed by gunfire. Until we act, Democrats in the Senate will read the names of some of those who have lost their lives to gun violence in the past year, and we will continue to do so every day that the Senate is in session.

In the name of those who died, we will continue this fight. Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today.

October 12, 1999:

Michael S. Chambers, 43, Seattle, WA;

Rueben M. Clark, 22, Memphis, TN;

Kenneth Ditter, 30, Philadelphia, PA;

Charles Guerra, 28, Houston, TX;

Joel Holbrook, 33, Kansas City, MO;

Walton Jerry Holmes, 68, Euless, TX;

J.C. Jones, 48, Miami-Dade County,

FL;

Gregory Mabrey, 27, Baltimore, MD;

Khidetra S. McBride, 22, Memphis, TN;

Jorge Millan, 40, Miami-Dade County, FL;

John Ray, 23, Fort Wayne, IN;

Michael SHELBY, 34, Detroit, MI;

Nicholas Singleton, 19, New Orleans, LA;

Honore Sissoko, 46, Philadelphia, PA;

George THOMAS, 19, St. Louis, MO;

and

Duane G. Weigelt, 69, St. Paul, MN.

One of the victims of gun violence I mentioned, 19-year-old Nicholas Singleton of New Orleans, was shot and killed one year ago today by a 19-year-old friend while the two were having an argument.

We cannot sit back and allow such senseless gun violence to continue. The deaths of these people are a reminder to all of us that we need to enact sensible gun legislation now.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, the final version of the fiscal year 2001 Energy and Water Development appropriations provides \$1 million for the Bureau of Reclamation to initiate a comprehensive Hopi/Western Navajo water development study. This funding was added to the bill at my request, and I would like to take this opportunity to detail the reason why I consider this to be a very important undertaking.

Efforts have been ongoing for several years to settle the various water rights claims of the Navajo and Hopi Indian tribes and other water users in the Little Colorado River watershed of Northern Arizona. Numerous proposals have been advanced in an effort to settle these water-rights claims, including identifying alternative sources of water, means of delivery and points of usage to help provide a reliable source of good-quality water to satisfy the present and future demands of Indian communities on those reservations.

Cost estimates for the various existing proposals run into the hundreds of millions of dollars, the majority of which would likely be borne by the federal government. This study is needed to identify the most cost-effective projects that will serve to meet these objectives.

I have asked the Bureau to hire an outside contractor to complete this study to ensure that a fresh and objective analysis of existing studies and data is conducted. In addition, using a private contractor will enable the Bureau to complete the study in a timely manner without requiring the Bureau to divert personnel needed to accomplish other vital priorities. The study should be complete and submitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee as soon as possible, but no later than April 1, 2002.

I also want to assure the parties that this study is intended to be used to facilitate this settlement, and cannot be used for any other purpose in any administrative or judicial proceeding.

SECURITY AND PENSION REFORM ACT

Mr. L. CHAFEE. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 1102, the Comprehensive Retirement Security and Pension Reform Act.

In my short time in the Senate, I have supported pension and savings reform and expansion, including cosponsoring S. 741, the Pension Coverage and Portability Act, and voting in favor of a pension and savings amendment offered by Finance Committee Chairman ROTH during consideration of H.R. 8, the estate tax phase out bill. I strongly believe that enacting H.R. 1102 will benefit millions of Americans, help boost America's savings rate, and bolster long-term economic growth. Indeed, economists agree that the increased personal savings and investment that would result from expanding pensions hold the key to long-term economic growth, and would shore up the country's savings tendencies.

Currently, only half of all workers have a pension plan. That means about 75 million Americans don't have access to one of the key components to a comfortable retirement. Pension laws have become so convoluted and the annual contribution limit so diminished that many small businesses simply do not bother setting them up.

In fact, the contribution limits to Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs) have not changed since 1981. At that time, when the \$2,000 limit was set, according to the U.S. Census Bureau the U.S. means the U.S. mean household income was under \$23,000. In 1998, mean household income was almost \$52,000, an increase of more than 130 percent. Still, the maximum IRA contribution hasn't budged from \$2,000.

Setting aside \$5,000, rather than \$2,000, will provide the retiree with significant additional savings. For workers who don't have access to an em-

ployer-sponsored retirement plan, the IRA is their primary savings vehicle. Increasing the contribution to \$5,000 helps put these people on a more equal footing with their fellow citizens covered by employer-sponsored plans. Also, it is estimated that more than 61 percent of IRA participants with incomes under \$50,000 contribute the \$2,000 maximum; and 69 percent of all IRA participants contribute the maximum. Workers are ready to invest more—if we in Congress will open the door for them.

H.R. 1102 includes an income tax credit to help those who might not be able to fund their retirement accounts without additional help, or who need more incentive to save. Under this legislation, joint filers of tax returns earning under \$50,000, heads of households earning under \$37,500, and all other taxpayers earning less than \$25,000 will receive non-refundable tax credits for each of five years on a sliding scale from five to 50 percent for contributions to a broad range of existing retirement savings choices. In effect, the federal government will be matching these savers contributions dollar for dollar—through the tax credit—up to the maximum allowable based on their income and filing status.

Another provision will help workers approaching retirement age to jump start, or catch up with, their retirement savings. Many of our younger workers are limited in what they can invest toward retirement due to the other priorities such as saving for a house, starting a family, or setting aside funds for their children's education. With retirement beginning to loom as they turn 50, the current limits on contributions both to their IRAs and to their employer-sponsored retirement plans make catching up extremely difficult. H.R. 1102 allows taxpayers 50 and older to contribute \$7,500 annually to an IRA, or \$5,000 to their employees' retirement plan when fully phased in.

Today, it is commonplace for workers to switch jobs frequently. But, under current regulations, these workers often cannot carry the retirement benefits they have accumulated with one employer to a new job. Provisions in H.R. 1102 remove the final obstacles to full retirement portability, meaning that a worker easily can take his or her accumulated benefits to a new job. This component of the legislation is particularly important to state and local government employees who currently cannot roll over their qualified retirement savings to a new employer when they move to private sector jobs.

In Rhode Island, small businesses are the heart of the economy. Indeed, 98 percent of Rhode Island businesses are small. And, they are important forces in developing two emerging segments of the state's economy: service and technology. H.R. 1102 also will remove disincentives which currently prevent many small business owners from offering retirement plans to their employees. In addition, it will make it easier