

S.J. RES. 6

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to ergonomics (published at 65 Fed. Reg. 68261 (2000)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, I move to reconsider the vote.

Mr. KENNEDY. I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now be in a period of morning business with Senators speaking for up to 10 minutes each. I think the distinguished Senator from Illinois is going to proceed, and then I shall return to follow him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

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

SCHOOL SHOOTINGS AND GUN SAFETY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise tonight to express my deep sadness for the families and victims of yesterday's high school shooting tragedy in California.

Yesterday, Charles "Andy" Williams, a 15-year-old high school student, snapped. By all accounts, this was a child who was a frequent victim of bullies and was picked on by others at school. A troubled child is a sad reality in America today, but a troubled child with a gun is a tragedy waiting to happen.

Gun safety is not the only issue this tragedy highlights. We need to encourage adults and students to listen more carefully and take swifter action when young people make threats of gun violence. We need more counselors in our Nation's schools who can help young people deal with the pressures of growing up. But we also must prevent troubled children from obtaining firearms.

Once again, I come to the floor to renew my plea—the American people's plea—for Congress to do the right thing, to pass commonsense gun safety legislation. We can continue to throw our hands in the air, shrug our shoulders, and hope this problem will go away by itself—sadly, we know better—or we can begin to face the reality of our situation: We live in a country populated by 281 million people and an estimated 200 million firearms.

Our Consumer Product Safety Commission can regulate the design of a

toy gun, to make sure it will not pinch the finger of a child, but the National Rifle Association has made sure that this same agency has no authority to regulate the safety of a real gun that could blow off a child's finger or worse.

Anyone—let me repeat, anyone—can walk into a gun show today and walk out with an unlimited supply of firearms—no documentation, no background check, no questions asked. And yet we express surprise when, year after year, our children are left defenseless as they attempt to dodge bullets at their schools. We use words such as "tragedy" and "shock" to describe the aftermath of school shootings, when we know they are foreseeable—we know they are foreseeable.

Some in this Senate have argued that the reasonable gun safety legislation we have proposed on this side of the aisle will not reduce gun violence. They said the same thing about the Brady bill, too. They were wrong then; they are wrong now.

It is not enough to wait for deaths caused by gun violence and then "enforce the law" against those who violate it. We must work to aggressively prevent gun violence before it happens, not merely enforce the law after the school shootings.

We must cut off the avenues for children to obtain firearms.

The American people are very clear on this issue, but Congress drags its feet, offering empty excuses for why we cannot pass any gun safety legislation. And what are the excuses? A background check at a gun show cannot be passed by Congress, according to the NRA, because it violates the second amendment. Requiring a child safety lock to be sold with a handgun somehow, according to the NRA, imposes an unreasonable burden on gun stores and manufacturers. A 3-day waiting period for a handgun—well, the NRA says that clearly violates our second amendment constitutional right.

This is a phony facade and a phony argument, one that continues to endanger our children in the one place in their lives they should expect to be safe at every moment—at school. In all likelihood, after the headlines on this most recent shooting will die down, this Congress will return to blissful ignorance with respect to the gun problem in America. But how many more tragedies, such as the one we have seen in California yesterday, have to happen before Congress finally takes action? How many?

Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control reveal that gun violence takes the lives of over 30,000 Americans every year, including 4,000 children. No other nation on Earth has this many gun deaths. When will this problem be big enough for Congress to care? Maybe at 35,000 deaths, 40,000, 100,000? What will it take?

I watched yesterday while this California shooting tragedy unfolded, and I couldn't help but recall Columbine. Only 2 years ago, I walked into that

Cloakroom and watched the live television coverage of students and teachers running and hiding in an effort to escape open gunfire at a school in a "safe neighborhood." I remember the terror and shock on their faces. I remember the child hanging out of the window with one of his arms extended and bloody. I remember the funerals of the 12 young students and the teacher who died as a result. Almost 2 years have passed since the Columbine tragedy. Now we have another high school tragedy in another safe neighborhood, but still Congress refuses to enact sensible gun safety legislation.

Last May mothers across America celebrated Mother's Day, not by staying home with their families and cooking their favorite dish or by getting breakfast in bed. They went out and marched. They marched against gun violence. I joined them on the shore of Lake Michigan as hundreds, maybe thousands gathered to make it clear to Congressmen and Senators alike that they had had enough as mothers. They called on Congress to pass commonsense gun safety legislation. Several of my colleagues and I participated in the march. These moms are mad. They will have their day.

This is a new Congress with a 50/50 split. We found time in this new Congress to consider voiding worker safety legislation. We will find time in this Congress to deal with bankruptcy, clamping down on those who file for bankruptcy but not on the credit industry. And now, sadly, we will find time for a lot of other issues other than gun safety. We haven't heard any clamor from the other side about the need to address gun violence. Mothers are burying their children before they have a chance to raise them while this Congress stands idly by.

Commonsense gun safety legislation, that is all the American people are asking for. As yesterday's shooting tragedy in California tells us, this Congress must act and act now.

I yield the floor and 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. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that when the final order is entered this evening, the Democratic time for morning business be controlled as follows: 10 minutes each for Senators Feinstein, Feingold, and Lincoln, and 15 minutes for Senator Clinton and Senator BIDEN.

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

Mr. REID. 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.