

BACKGROUND CHECKS ARE  
NEEDED

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, an op-ed column in Tuesday's New York Times highlighted how fast, easy and unintrusive background checks for gun purchases can be if performed properly. Yet, this is not the story we are told by groups that oppose closing the gun show

loophole. According to the National Rifle Association, background checks often take days to complete. But according to the Department of Justice, 95 percent of background checks are completed within two hours, and according to the Violence Policy Center, a vast majority of background checks are completed within a few minutes.

The New York Times op-ed also highlighted why it is so important that we conduct these checks at gun shows. The author, Nicholas Kristof, cited the availability of .50 caliber semiautomatic rifles and assault rifles which sellers claim are powerful enough to penetrate bulletproof glass. It is common sense to make sure that criminals and other restricted buyers are prohibited from buying such lethal weapons. While any legitimate purchaser can buy such weapons from a federally licensed dealer after an instant background check, they can also be purchased from an unlicensed dealer at any gun show without a background check.

According to Bureau of Justice Statistics, between 1994 and 1999, over 22 million background checks were completed and more than 536,000 felons, fugitives and other prohibited persons were prevented from illegally purchasing firearms. But convicted criminals and suspected terrorists have reportedly used the gun show loophole to purchase firearms and smuggle them out of the United States. For example, in Florida, a man accused of having ties to the Irish Republican Army testified that he purchased thousands of dollars worth of machine guns, rifles and high-powered ammunition at gun shows and proceeded to smuggle them to Ireland. A 1999 study by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms found 314 cases of fraud at gun shows, involving 54,000 guns. To help eliminate this type of activity, I cosponsored Senator REED's Gun Show Background Check bill to close the gun show loophole. This bill simply applies existing law governing background checks to persons buying guns at gun shows. I cosponsored that bill because I believe it would prevent criminals from getting guns.

The gun show loophole is an even more serious problem if .50 caliber semiautomatic rifles are available for sale. Gun dealers recognize that these weapons represent a very dangerous amount of firepower. The .50 caliber rifle has apparently been promoted as a weapon able to "wreck several million dollars worth of jet aircraft with one or two dollars worth of cartridge." These weapons are among the most powerful,

and least regulated, firearms legally available. According to one seller's Web site, "Never mind that the gun haters don't want you to have'em. Forget about the lily-livered whiners in Congress. Exercise your rights before it's too late." Even some dealers know that .50 caliber weapons are too powerful and too accessible to be ignored any longer. Tighter regulations are needed. That is why I cosponsored Senator FEINSTEIN's Military Sniper Weapon Regulation Act. This bill would strengthen the regulation of long-range .50 caliber sniper weapons.

I believe both pieces of legislation are common sense steps to ensure that guns do not get into the hands of criminals and other prohibited buyers. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting them and other pieces of common sense gun safety legislation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO JOLENE FRANKEN

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, next week will mark a new beginning for the Iowa State Education Association when Jolene Franken steps down as President. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize Jolene for her many accomplishments as a teacher and the outstanding job she has done as the head of the organization representing Iowa teachers. She has done Iowa proud.

We are all familiar with the expression that teachers touch the future. Whenever I see these words I think of teachers like Jolene Franken, a woman who is passionate about education and our children. As an elementary teacher for thirty years in Iowa, she has touched the lives of thousands of children.

Jolene Franken earned her Bachelor of Science degree at Greenville College in Greenville, IL and Masters Degree from Northwest Missouri State University. Jolene exemplifies life long learning and has participated in additional professional development activities at the University of Northern Iowa and University of Iowa.

Most of Jolene's career has been spent teaching first grade, but she is always open to new challenges. Most recently, she taught academically talented elementary students in the Denison Community School District's Extended Learning Program. Jolene has also been active in the creative problem solving competition, "Destination Imagination," and has served as coach of the Iowa team for five years. Her Destination Imagination teams have participated in two World Championships. She has also been a driving force behind the Iowa State Academic Decathlon since its inception.

Jolene has also been an active member of the Iowa State Education Association and National Education Association throughout her career where

she has held numerous offices. As President of ISEA for the past four years, she has been a tireless advocate for children and public education. She has fought to increase awareness of the teacher shortage in Iowa, fought to increase teachers' salaries and has pushed for quality teacher mentor programs.

As a first grade teacher, Jolene understands the importance of reading and has been an avid participant in NEA's Read Across America Day. Every year on Dr. Seuss' birthday, Jolene dons a "Cat in the Hat" costume to visit Iowa schools and read to the children.

I commend and thank Jolene for her hard work to improve Iowa schools and educate Iowa's youth. Jolene's community, her State and her country are better off because of her years as an educator and leader for the futures of all of our children. While I have highlighted some of her accomplishments and interests over the years, the list is so much longer, and I speak from the heart when I say she will be missed. I know she will continue to be active on behalf of Iowa's children

I also know that ISEA will be in good hands as John Hieronymus takes over as President. John is a math teacher from Iowa City and has served as vice-president of the organization for the past several years. Jolene Franken is a tough act to follow, but I know he is more than prepared to take on the challenging mission of leading ISEA. •

COMMEMORATING THE 58TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NORMANDY D-DAY INVASION ON JUNE 6, 1944

• Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate an event that took place 58 years ago today. Of course, I am speaking about the invasion of Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944. The magnitude of the event, its scope and complexity, even now, instills a sense of awe in all of us. It remains the largest air, land, and sea invasion ever undertaken. The invasion force of over 150,000 soldiers was supported by over 5,000 ships and 10,000 airplanes. These troops were from the United States, Britain, and Canada and included Free French and Polish forces under the overall command of General Dwight David Eisenhower.

The invasion sites, from west to east, were designated as Utah, Omaha, Sword, Juno, and Gold. The British Second Army was responsible for Sword, Juno, and Gold, while the U.S. First Army was responsible for Utah and Omaha. The U.S. 1st and 29th Infantry Divisions landed at Omaha Beach, the U.S. 4th Infantry Division came ashore on Utah. The 82nd and 101st Airborne Division were dropped behind the beaches. I might add that some of the Airborne troops arrived by glider, an operation in which I was a participant.

Although the invasion was ultimately successful, it was a very hard

fought battle with many challenges. However, the individual initiative and courage of common soldiers saved the day. Many were teenagers or just in their twenties; most were frightened and on foreign soil under fire for the first time. Actions of courage and bravery were everywhere.

Now it seems so long ago, but I vividly remember this event. I remember these gallant men and their heroic actions. I remember those that paid the ultimate price for our freedom. During this military operation I landed at Normandy with the Glider Infantry of the 82nd Airborne Division, First U.S. Army. I am proud to have been a part of that endeavor and bear witness to the heroism and gallantry demonstrated that day.

One of the most challenging and rewarding experiences of my life has been to serve my Nation as an Officer in the U.S. Army. Although it has been many years since I last wore an Army uniform, my love for the service and pride in its heritage remain as strong today as it was when I was commissioned a Second Lieutenant. As I think about the sacrifice being made today by a new generation, I continue to remember the great effort and sacrifice made by so many young lives at Normandy. They paid the ultimate price for the freedoms we continue to enjoy today.

With each passing year, the number of Normandy Invasion veterans grows smaller. This is the final opportunity that I will have, as a Member of the Senate, to mark the anniversary of this occasion. I call upon my Senate colleagues and all Americans to never forget what happened on those French beaches 58 years ago. I encourage all Americans to remember the courageous men who fought and those who died to defend our liberties.●

#### TO COMMEMORATE THE DEDICATION AND UNVEILING OF THE DETROIT ARSENAL TANK PLANT HISTORICAL MARKER

● Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to call my colleagues' attention to a significant event taking place in my home state of Michigan. On June 6, 2002 in the City of Warren, elected officials, business and community leaders, and members and staff of the Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command, will join with the Warren Historical Commission and the Michigan Historical Commission to dedicate and unveil a Historical Marker at the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant site. Also joining them will be veterans and former workers of the Tank Plant who well remember the contributions of this facility to the American war effort. Together, they will reflect back over 60 years ago, when on 113 acres of farmland in what was then Warren Township, the Detroit Tank Arsenal emerged as the nation's largest defense plant. And they will note that the Tank Arsenal marked the beginning of a legacy of how government and business can

unite for the common purpose of equipping our military and advancing our defense capability.

The Detroit Tank Arsenal success story began in 1940 when the U.S. Army contracted with the Chrysler Corporation to create a separate armored force of ground vehicles. Albert Kahn was called upon to design the mammoth structure needed to mass produce the Army's tanks and when it was completed it was the largest building of its type in all the world. The first prototype rolled off the assembly line on Good Friday, April 11, 1941. By early December 1941, the plant had shipped its 500th tank. Production continued to increase to a total of five assembly lines, and in December 1942, the plant set an all-time monthly production record by delivering 907 Sherman tanks.

President Roosevelt visited the Detroit Tank Arsenal in 1942 as part of his tour of the nation's defense facilities. He made the plant his first stop, touring the operations and watching the tanks run along the arsenal's test tracks. After returning to Washington, the president called the Detroit Tank Arsenal "an amazing demonstration of what can be done by the right organization, spirit and planning." FDR further proclaimed the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant in Warren "The Arsenal of Democracy."

During World War II the Detroit Arsenal lived up to its motto "Enough and On Time" by delivering more than 22,234 tanks such as the Sherman. Production continued through the Korean and Vietnam Wars, throughout the Cold War, and right into Desert Storm. By 1996, however, all tank manufacturing ceased at this facility. But the Tank-Automotive Center that was created through the Arsenal in 1942 has evolved into the Tank-Automotive and Armaments Command which is housed close to the original plant site. I am sure that my Senate colleagues join me in paying tribute to the great history of the Detroit Arsenal Tank Plant and in celebrating the future of progress that it opened to us.●

#### COMMUNITY HEROS

● Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, today I salute a community leader in my home State of Oregon. Today, I want to recognize the efforts of Susan Abravanel, Education Coordinator at SOLV, a non-profit organization in Oregon, in advocating for service-learning, one of the most exciting educational initiatives taking hold in our nation today.

Service-learning gives students the opportunity to learn through community service, but it is important to note that it is much more than just community service, Mr. President—it is a method of classroom instruction that engages a student's intellect through hands-on work outside the classroom that benefits the community at large. Research shows that students

participating in service-learning make gains on achievement tests, complete their homework more often, and increase their grade point averages.

In addition to producing academic gains, service-learning is also associated with both increased attendance and reduced dropout rates. It is clear to educators across the country that service-learning helps students feel more connected to their own education while strengthening their connection to their community as well. It is for all of these reasons that Susan Abravanel is working so hard to advocate for service-learning in classrooms in Oregon and across the nation.

Ms. Abravanel is working closely with my office and with education leaders in Oregon to ensure that my home state remains a national leader in service-learning. Just two months ago, I introduced a bill with my colleague, Senator EDWARDS, to strengthen our nation's commitment to service-learning. I feel confident that this bill will soon become law and that with Ms. Abravanel's continued efforts both here in Washington, D.C. and at home in Oregon, students will continue to benefit from an education tied to civic engagement.

Ms. Abravanel exemplifies the type of engaged citizen our schools must endeavor to produce, and her persistence will ensure that future generations of Americans will give back to their communities just as she has. I would also like to note that Susan isn't just concerned about education—her interests and efforts in Portland's Jewish community are well known and highly appreciated—she is the new President of the Oregon chapter of the American Jewish Committee. I look forward to working with Susan in her new role at the AJC and thank her for her continuing devotion to service-learning.●

#### THE DEATH OF LEW R. WASSERMAN

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to my dear friend and a true Hollywood legend: Lew Wasserman, a man who stood as a giant among giants. On Monday, June 3rd, Lew passed away at his home from complications of a stroke.

My heart goes out to his wife Edie, daughter Lynne Kay Wasserman, his grandson Casey and granddaughter Carol Leif, and to members of his extended family.

Lew was a great pioneer in the entertainment industry. He began his career in show business while in high school, working as an usher at the Palace Theater in Cleveland.

Together Lew and Dr. Jules Stein built the world's largest talent agency representing such legends as Bette Davis, James Stewart, Alfred Hitchcock, Tommy Dorsey, Kay Kyser, and Errol Flynn to name a few.

He also built a conglomerate of motion picture and television companies that produced the memorable hit movies "American Graffiti", "ET—the