

all those who wish to debate this issue come over. I am going to suggest the absence of a quorum for 15 minutes or so to give everybody an opportunity to come over.

I am hopeful that with a good outcome on this coming vote, we will be well on our way to passing this bill. I urge, again, anyone who has an amendment, Senator SARBANES and I are willing to look at them to see if we can take them, so please let us see that amendment.

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. ROBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. VOINOVICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be permitted to speak in morning business.

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

(The remarks of Mr. ROBB pertaining to the introduction of S. 973 are located in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, 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. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to proceed in morning business for 5 minutes.

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

VIOLENCE IN OUR SOCIETY

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, earlier this week I addressed the Economic Club of Detroit, one of the most influential groups of community leaders in my State. I expressed the depth of my continuing concern about the level of violence in our society, particularly youth violence. I committed myself to continue to speak out against the easy access to guns, especially by young people. I intend to comment on this subject every week in the Senate, when the Senate is in session, to highlight the need of our Nation to face this critical issue, to discuss the growing crisis fueled by weapons among our young people, and to urge action to meet our responsibility in the Senate to work towards solutions.

There is no one cause of youth violence. The causes are many. But among them there is one that cannot be ignored or denied, the easy access to deadly weapons for our young people. If we are honest with ourselves, we will

admit it is too easy for children to get their hands on guns because we made it too easy to get guns, period; too easy to get guns that have nothing to do with the needs of hunters and sportsmen, guns that are too often used to kill people.

Yes, we have all heard the glib rhetoric of the NRA, that "guns don't kill people, people kill people." This bumper-sticker logic obscures the real truth. People with guns kill people, and they do it some 35,000 times a year in this country. That is more deaths than we suffered in the 3-year-long Korean war. The number of times that handguns were used to commit murder is itself staggering, some 9,300 times in the United States in 1996. In that same year in Japan, a nation almost half our size, there were 15 murders with handguns—just 15 handgun murders for a country with half our population. There were 9,300 murders here in the United States.

We have every right as parents and as consumers to expect some responsibility from the entertainment industry. But I am told Japanese popular culture is even more violent than our own.

However severe this plague of gun violence is for society as a whole, for the young it is far worse. For young males, the firearm death rate is nearly twice that of all other diseases combined. A National Centers for Disease Control study found 2 of every 25 high school students reported having carried a gun in the previous 30 days. If those numbers were evenly distributed among communities and schools, that would mean that in the average classroom, two students have carried guns at some time in the previous month.

These figures are shocking, but they are hardly secret. We have grown so accustomed to the carnage that guns cause in America that only the most horrific acts of violence are capable of shaking us from our slumber. As I told the Economic Club of Detroit, the question we have to ask ourselves in the wake of the Columbine High School tragedy is: Are we willing to say that enough is enough? And will we say it not just today but next week and next month and next year?

The NRA is betting we will not. They believe their brand of single-minded, single-issue politics can once again paralyze us from acting, once these images of death and pain in Colorado fade from view. They are going to go on telling their members that even the most measured gun control proposal is a thinly veiled attempt to take away their legitimate hunting weapons. It will not stop there. They will use that membership as a potent political tool to intimidate candidates for office. It is a sad fact that, thus far, too many Americans and too many American children and their parents live in fear of gun violence because too many of us in Washington live in fear of the political power of the lobbyists of the NRA.

I believe there is also a power when people unite to demand action—

businesspeople, labor union people, parents, teachers, police officers, young people, the clergy. When I look at the kind of coalition that could be represented by groups like that, I see a potential power that could dwarf any narrow special interest. The question is not whether we are in the majority. The polls show that a large majority of Americans will support strong action to reduce access of minors to guns. The question is not whether we have the power. We do. The question is whether we are willing to act to make America a safer country. For starters, we must ban the possession and sale of handguns, semiautomatic weapons, by and to minors.

We paused in this Chamber to observe a moment of silence in honor of the victims of gun violence in Colorado. We observe these moments of silence to pay tribute to those who have died and to express our sympathy for their loved ones. But now, with this latest tribute behind us, we need to be anything but silent. Those of us who want to act to reduce the gun violence need to be louder and clearer and stronger and, yes, more persistent than the NRA.

Mr. President, 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. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

FINANCIAL SERVICES MODERNIZATION ACT OF 1999

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when Senator SHELBY offers an amendment related to operating subsidiaries there be 2 hours equally divided in the usual form prior to a motion to table, and that no amendments or other motions be in order to the amendment prior to the vote on tabling.

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

Mr. GRAMM. 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. DORGAN. 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. DORGAN. Mr. President, I have sought recognition, because I intend to offer a couple of amendments to the pending legislation. I would like to discuss the underlying bill just a bit more, and then also offer the amendments and discuss the amendments.

I spoke earlier today about this legislation, which is called the Financial