

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EHLERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PRESCRIPTION DRUG BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. GUTKNECHT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, tonight I would like to talk about an issue that is becoming increasingly of concern to the American citizens, and that is the high prices that Americans in general and seniors in particular are being required to pay for prescription drugs.

A number of stories have appeared recently. A number of national news publications, MSNBC, the New York Times, a number of stories, the Washington Post, a Minneapolis paper recently did stories about what is happening in America relative to the high cost of prescription drugs.

Now, it has a tremendous impact on all Americans, but of particularly high impact on senior citizens where many of the people in my district, and I suspect this is not unusual to my district, it happens all over the country, seniors are paying two, three, four, in fact I talked to one couple that is paying over \$1,000 a month for prescription drugs. It is a serious problem. It is here now. Every one has an opinion.

But let me just talk about what I think is one part of the problem that we could do something very serious about solving very quickly.

But before I do, I would like to read excerpts from a letter to the community from George Halvorson. George Halvorson is the president and CEO of HealthPartners in Minneapolis.

Let me just read, "The cost of prescription drugs varies to an amazing degree between countries.

"If you have a stomach ulcer and your doctor says, 'you need to be on Prilosec,' you would probably pay about \$99.95 for a 30-day supply in the Twin Cities. But if you were vacationing in Canada and decided to fill your prescription there, you would pay only \$50.88.

"Or, even better, if you were looking for a little warmer weather south of the border in Mexico, the same 30-day supply would cost you only \$17.50.

"That's for the same dose, made by the same manufacturer.

"If we could get only half the price break that Canadians get, our plan alone", he is talking about one HMO in Minnesota, he says, "our plan alone could have saved our members nearly \$35 million last year."

Imagine what we are talking about throughout the entire country. He goes on to say, "When the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) was passed by Congress to allow free trade between us and our neighboring countries, HealthPartners decided to follow the lead of in Minnesota Senior Federation and buy drugs in Canada at Canadian prices. We were disappointed to learn of the rules and processes that kept us from succeeding. There is no free trade in prescription drugs. We need to do something about this."

Well, I tell Mr. Halvorson, we intend to do something about it. But before we do something, one has got to understand what the problem is. It all comes down to section 381 of U.S. Code, Title XXI, section 381.

Let me just read for my colleagues what this section basically says. "The Secretary of Treasury shall deliver to the Secretary of Health and Human Services, upon his request, samples of food, drugs, devices, and cosmetics which are being imported or offered for import into the United States." The operative expression is "giving notice thereof to the owner or cosignee".

It goes on to basically say that people can bring drugs into the country as long as they are legal drugs and they have a prescription. But if there is a challenge to them, the burden of proof falls upon the FDA.

But, unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, that is not what is happening. What is happening today is, when seniors try to bring drugs, and particularly if they do it through mail order, back into the United States, the FDA puts the burden of proof on the seniors to prove that they are legal drugs and were manufactured in an FDA-approved facility.

What I am going to be doing here in the next day or two is introducing legislation to clarify that Americans will be able, going through their local pharmacy, to order drugs over the Internet or by web or through faxes with correspondent pharmacies in Canada or in Mexico as long as they are legal drugs produced in an FDA-approved facility to allow them to do that.

We are talking about savings for some seniors of \$300 or \$400 per month.

Now, that may not seem like much to some of the folks in this room, but let me tell my colleagues, if one is living on a fixed income of \$10,000, we are beginning to talk real money.

It is time for us to say loudly and clearly that we will not allow the FDA to stand between our consumers and our seniors in particular. We will not allow the FDA to stand between our consumers and lower drug prices.

It is a simple bill. I would hope that my colleagues would contact my office because we want to make this a broad-based bipartisan coalition to support this bill. We hope to introduce it in the next day or two. Please take a look at this legislation. We would like to have my colleagues join us on it.

STOP STALLING ON GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, we finished one major piece of legislation, and I noted that many of the Members of this House were applauding the success of passing a financial services reform bill. I think there are many people in America that will appreciate that we have made that giant step.

But in the shadow of passing a bill that deals with numbers, statistics, and pieces of paper, and computers, we are still stalled on a real gun safety reform legislation and juvenile justice.

What a tragedy that, in about 5 days, more than 100 hours from now, this House may come to a conclusion for 1999. We will do so in the shadow of seven deaths in Hawaii, two deaths in Seattle in the last 48 hours by individuals obviously deranged and using guns to kill people.

We will do it, likewise, in the shadow of four murders of teenagers this past weekend in Washington, D.C., in the shadow of a closing of a Cleveland high school where it is alleged that about four students have threatened to kill many, many students in that high school; or do it in the shadow of conversations we had just a few weeks ago that noted that many students that go to high school in America are fearful for their lives, are afraid of violence, have seen guns, have been bullied, have experienced prejudice.

Yet, the conference that is supposed to be on gun safety and juvenile justice idles away its time, refusing to concede to the National Rifle Association, refusing to provide real gun safety for America.

What are the issues that we are discussing in that conference? Are they so threatening to those of us who have taken an oath of office to do what is best for the American people that we would not want to do it?

Does it make any sense that we continue to allow guns to get in the hands of criminals and children? Does it

make any sense that gun shows proliferate themselves around this Nation with the concept of unlicensed gun dealers being able to randomly sell guns to anybody who walks through the door?

Just recently in California, one of the largest gun shows in America was able to be held because the ordinance and law that had been passed by local officials who came together and said we do not want any more gun shows in our community after the tragedy of the Jewish Community Center was thwarted by a court.

I believe in the democratic process, the process of the judiciary, but there they were selling guns, selling guns by unlicensed dealers, and who knows how many criminals and possibly children had access to the guns.

This conference will provide opportunities to close the loopholes for gun shows so that unlicensed dealers could not get up or get where they could sell guns to criminals and children.

It provides for trigger locks. It will eliminate the ammunition clips of fast guns that we really do not need for sports and other recreational activities.

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And I would offer an amendment to ensure that children are accompanied by adults when they go into these gun shows if, because of the laws of this land, these gun shows continue to proliferate.

Do my colleagues know that in many States, unlike movies, where we are looking to curb the violence and we require children to be accompanied by an adult depending on the rating of the movie, they can walk in randomly in many States into these gun shows looking at weapons of war, fast ammunition clips, or guns with automatic clips to them? They are looking at these. They are seeing these weapons of violence with no one attending to them.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is a tragedy that in these waning hours we will watch more children die, maybe the tragedy of more workplace violence, more criminals getting guns illegally; yet we are sitting by as the hours are tick, tick, ticking away doing absolutely nothing. I think this is a shame on this Nation. I think it is a shame on this Congress.

I would ask Members in these waning hours to lift their voices and ask the collective leadership why, why we have not met in conference to talk about gun safety in America. When will we raise up our voices but, at the same time, lift ourselves to act and to ensure that children are protected?

I hope that we will hear from someone in the near future. I hope we will hear from the Speaker of the House, I hope we will hear from the majority leader, I hope we will hear from the majority whip, I hope we will work in a bipartisan manner with the leadership in the Democratic caucus that has

been asking that we move forward. I hope that we will hear from the other body that has been dragging their feet.

The hours are tick, tick, ticking away. Thirteen children are dying, Mr. Speaker, every single day. What a shame on this House. What a shame on America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. METCALF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. METCALF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IN SUPPORT OF SENATOR CAROL MOSELEY-BRAUN'S AMBASSADORSHIP TO NEW ZEALAND

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to express strong support for the confirmation of Senator Carol Moseley-Braun to the ambassadorship of New Zealand. I have known Carol Moseley-Braun both personally and professionally for many years and look forward to her service in this position.

Senator Moseley-Braun is an extraordinary woman who has led an extraordinary life, a life of breaking stereotypes, a life of shattering glass ceilings, a life of public service. She earned her law degree from the University of Chicago in 1972 and served as an assistant United States attorney from 1973 to 1977. In 1978, she was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives where she became the first female assistant majority leader. In 1988, Senator Moseley-Braun was elected Cook County Recorder of Deeds, racking up several more firsts. In 1992, she was elected to the United States Senate, becoming the first African American woman to serve in that honorable body.

Sometime ago, President Clinton nominated Senator Moseley-Braun to become our ambassador to New Zealand. As ambassador, Carol Moseley-Braun would be the highest ranking diplomatic official accredited to represent our interests in that Pacific Rim nation. I can testify from personal knowledge that Senator Moseley-Braun is well qualified to undertake those solemn responsibilities.

Throughout her career in public life, Senator Moseley-Braun has displayed tremendous ability, insight, and perceptivity on the great issues of the day. She is a woman of great personal charm who has been blessed with a remarkable talent to interact with people, to engage them in dialogue, and to represent her position to them with logic, clarity, and persuasiveness. In short, she would represent us well to the people of New Zealand.

Mr. Speaker, it is the long-standing tradition of the Senate to welcome

former colleagues who have been nominated to high office by the President of the United States and to extend them the courtesy of prompt hearings, in accord with their constitutional responsibilities to advise and consent. Only six former Senators have been turned down for nomination this century, all for Cabinet or Supreme Court positions. A Senator has not been rejected for an ambassadorial appointment since 1835.

Up to this point, Senator Moseley-Braun's nomination has been blocked by the chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, who, according to news reports, has demanded an apology for a speech Senator Moseley-Braun made criticizing the use of the Confederate flag.

A study by the Alliance for Justice determined that the nomination of an average nonwhite candidate took 60 days longer than that of a white candidate. Couple these two facts and we have a profound malfunction in our democracy.

Senator Carol Moseley-Braun will do just fine in whatever direction life takes her. She will be a success as an ambassador if she is confirmed; she will be a success in some other endeavor if she is denied. But democracy in the United States faces a bleaker choice. Mr. Speaker, make no mistake, our democracy is being weighed in the balance in the coming days. If fairness does not prevail, if Senator Carol Moseley-Braun is denied confirmation, then those responsible will have offered up proof, proof to the American people, proof to the world, that fairness and justice are still wanted in America five generations after the end of the Civil War. I find that possibility abhorrent, detestable, and obscene.

So I add my voice to those urging the Senate to bring the nomination of Senator Moseley-Braun to a quick vote and to approve the nomination by the largest vote possible. I hope that on tomorrow the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations will move promptly to approve the nomination of Carol Moseley-Braun as our next ambassador to New Zealand and America will be well served.

WHEN WILL ADMINISTRATION ASK YELTSIN FOR LOCATIONS OF BURIED WEAPONS IN U.S.?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, when will we ask the question? When will this administration formally ask Russia to provide the details contained in secret KGB documents that define the significant number of locations throughout America where, during the Soviet era, military equipment, hardware, and possibly even material for weapons of mass destruction was stored in buried sites?

Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago the highest ranking foreign intelligence officer