

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Mr. Sherman Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS WITH RESPECT TO THE TRAGIC SHOOTING AT COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL IN LITTLETON, COLORADO

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H.Con.Res. 92) expressing the sense of Congress with respect to the tragic shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 92

Whereas on April 20, 1999, two armed gunmen opened fire at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, killing 12 students and 1 teacher and wounding more than 20 others; and

Whereas local, State, and Federal law enforcement personnel performed their duties admirably and risked their lives for the safety of the students, faculty, and staff at Columbine High School: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the heinous atrocities which occurred at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado;

(2) offers its condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of those who were killed at Columbine High School and expresses its hope for the rapid and complete recovery of those wounded in the shooting;

(3) applauds the hard work and dedication exhibited by the hundreds of local, State, and Federal law enforcement officials and the others who offered their support and assistance; and

(4) encourages the American people to engage in a national dialogue on preventing school violence.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO).

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the veneer that separates civilization from barbarism, that separates good from evil, is very thin, and it appears everywhere to be wearing thinner. Last week it wore through in my hometown, and the evil seeped out and stole the lives of 12 innocent children and one valiant teacher at Columbine High School. Mr. Speaker, yesterday my son Ray gave me something he had written in response to this tragedy. I believe it is not just fatherly pride that compels me to read parts of

it here today. I believe he eloquently captures the nature of the cultural abrasives that ever so relentlessly eat away at our national soul, and I would like to cite just a part of it:

“Do you believe in God?” “Yes, I believe in God.”

“Seventeen year old Cassie Bernal’s life ended with that answer. Our answers to the Columbine High School murders begin with the same question, and our answer must be the same as Cassie Bernal or the nihilistic fury unleashed by those two young murderers will surely prevail.”

People search for meaning in these brutal senseless acts. People question the norms of a society in which monstrous violence can be countenanced. People question the righteousness, even the existence of a God who can allow such pain and violence into the world. These are valid, but unanswerable questions.

We can speculate and hypothesize, we can blame and vent, but in the end we know we cannot fathom the meaning of this event or presume to comprehend this evil. Nevertheless, our choice is stark: Do we believe in God or not? An answer to that question is the whole of what we take away from the Columbine massacre, for the answer means everything.

We either coast in the cultural currents of a facile nihilism, or we embrace God on our knees and pray for His grace and forgiveness. Nihilism or God, that is the choice. The comfortable in-between is now gone.

In reporting on Adolph Eichmann’s 1960 trial in Jerusalem, philosopher Hannah Arendt noted the banality of evil; that is, how small, petty and unoriginal evil appears. She was speaking of Eichmann, a trivial bureaucrat who efficiently and systematically undertook the murdering of the Jewish people in Europe. Likewise here, evil’s banality is made plain to us. Two disaffected punks have changed life in my hometown forever.

In the end my conclusions are unsatisfying and incomplete: sin is real, evil is real. The inscrutable evil of these men made perfect sense from within their world. If I do not believe, if we do not believe, then their nihilism is right, and even if we ourselves do not embrace it, we have no means to stop others from doing so.

Pray the Lord’s mercy on us.

Stopping it is one thing, but where and how did it start? The comfortable, prosperous suburbs of Denver, Colorado should not foster such dark realities. Moreover, high schools have always had this same group of disaffected bright kids, who flirted with the darker regions of the culture. What changed for the diabolical fantasies of murder to be made real? No doubt a confluence of factors coalesced to make these young men’s revenge fantasies turn into reality. I offer some comments on three factors in particular: the culture, technology and institutions.

THE CULTURE

Ours is a culture wrapped in cotton candy nihilism. Poses and attitudes of nihilism are

struck and celebrated. The academy has its au courant ideologies. Feminism, postmodernism, structuralism, scientific materialism all presuppose a purposeless universe without any transcendent order where society is predicted on power and violence. Entertainment has its explicit nihilistic messages—the goth rock of Marilyn Manson and KMFDM—its ironically hip ones—the accomplished, but immoral, films of Quentin Tarrantino—and its implicit nihilism—Jerry Springer, or the titillation cum therapy of MTV’s Loveline. Indeed, nihilism in a soft and weak form is everywhere.

Meanwhile, “adult society” complacently indulges the destruction of cultural traditions. Legal norms are in shambles—murderers and perjurers escape punishment, and civil justice has become an elaborate shakedown scheme. Rampant materialism fuels a vicious cycle of decadent consumption and unending labor. Finally, cynicism and lassitude are the “adult” responses to the widespread cultural decay.

Our culture not only whispers, but veritably screams, that anything goes. While this is the cultural undertow, the current at the surface holds up ideals that are betrayed almost immediately—democracy is in disrepair; big business alternately rentseeks of foists cultural rot onto a complacent public; and education is mind-numbingly dumbered-down and awash in psychological fads.

An idealistic (yes, idealistic) young man regarding this spectacle can easily be drawn into the depths of the undertow. It is a wrong, but facile, conclusion that all is power, and that the ideals of this country are fraudulent. Reinforce this with bombs, guns and music—and someone just might, indeed, did, snap.

TECHNOLOGY

The internet is praised for its promise and ability to connect people in ways hereto before unthinkable. The commercial and intellectual potential of the internet is a marvel. But there is a dark side to all this. An absolute majority of internet traffic is pornography. Subcultures that used to be isolated, can now connect and reinforce one another.

As I said before, the type of student that Harris and Klebold represent has always roamed the halls of American high schools. Such students endure cruelties and indignities in the remorseless culture of high school, but they do not end up killing their classmates and trying to blow up the school.

With the internet, however, instead of hanging out with a few like-minded outcasts in their parents’ basement, these youths can log-on and interact with a whole underground world. These internet “communities” promote the ultimate in social atomization—a whole new self-created virtual identity. Wann-be Supermen could formerly only hear one-way communication through records and, for the semi-literate, books. Now, that communication is two way—bomb recipes can be exchanged, home pages can advertise and promote the rage, chat rooms can stiffen the resolve of would-be mad bombers.

INSTITUTIONAL

Columbine high school houses nearly 2000 students. The principal of the school has said that he didn’t even know these two students; nor had he heard of the “trench coat mafia,” the disaffected coterie of students to whom these men belonged.

It was easy for Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold to get lost at Columbine. They apparently did get lost, to all of our detriment.

The magnitude of 2000 student schools serves no educational purpose, but mainly an athletic one. Parents and students cannot hope to have a stake in a school of that size. In the same way that big business and big government depersonalizes, big education makes it easy for students to feel warehoused and adrift.

Who knows if a smaller school, with more particular attention would have changed these young men? It may well not have. But in this time when we talk about community, let us realize that communities start from the ground up, and are built on personal connection to a group, be it a family, a neighborhood, a church, or a school. Values are shared and friendship is shared in a real community.

Industrial-sized education does not serve community-building. Neither does an education monopoly that must meet the needs of the lowest common denominator.

CONCLUSION

Secular culture has no effective response to the nihilism of these young men, and the subculture from which they emerged. Therapy and "anger management" did not, and could not have, saved them. To the contrary, therapeutic interventions probably only further confirmed their view of our weak and feckless culture.

In reporting on Adolph Eichmann's 1960 trial in Jerusalem, philosopher Hannah Arendt noted "the banality of evil;" that is, how small, petty and unoriginal evil appears. She was speaking of Eichmann, a trivial bureaucrat who efficiently and systematically undertook murdering the Jews of Europe. Likewise here, evil's banality is made plain to us. Two disaffected punks have changed life in my hometown forever.

In the end, my conclusions are unsatisfying and incomplete; Sin is real; Evil is real. The inscrutable evil of these men made perfect sense from within their world. If I do not believe, if we do not believe, then their nihilism is right—and even if we ourselves do not embrace it, we have no means to stop others from doing so.

Pray the Lord's mercy on us.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) for bringing this important resolution to the floor. My thoughts and my prayers go out to all the victims and their families, and certainly my admiration goes out to all the heroic men and women who offered their support and assistance during this time of crisis.

As we mourn the victims of the tragic school shooting in Littleton, Colorado, I think we all come to realize that gun violence and violence in our schools can happen everywhere. It affects all of us on a daily basis. From Pearl, Springfield, Jonesboro, Littleton, Paducah kids are using guns to harm their classmates. Each and every day throughout our towns and our communities we lose 13 young children a day. That is an entire classroom every 2 days.

Mr. Speaker, over the last several years, I have had to stand here and talk about all the shootings, and it starts to wear one down because we realize the pain that all these families are going through, we realize all the pain that the whole community will start to go through, and yet we are seeing constantly more and more and more.

We here in Congress will be doing this resolution because every single Member of this body feels the pain, but I do believe that we also have a moral obligation to try and save other families from going through what they have in Colorado.

We do not have all the solutions. They are all complex. But I do believe that we should start to think about what we can do. I hope that I can look forward to working with all of my colleagues here today to solve the problems of our young people.

□ 1530

I know families across the Nation will join together to demand that politics be taken out of this debate. We must do what we can do to deal with children and guns. Too many children, too many parents and too many families have already suffered. Enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE).

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 148, offered by the distinguished gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO), but with profound sorrow for the loss the community of Littleton has endured over the last 7 days. The horrible tragedy at Columbine High School has left an indelible mark in our hearts and heads, and I want to take this opportunity to express my deep sorrow for the students, for the families and for the friends affected by these grave acts of violence. The thoughts and prayers of every American are with the citizens of Littleton, Colorado, and the families and friends of the victims of school violence endured in other parts of the Nation.

I also offer my sympathy to the gentleman from that area who lives so close to it. I am sure he has been through a very difficult time as well.

Mr. Speaker, today I join this body in initiating a search for answers. We cannot take away the events of April 20. We cannot reclaim the lives that were taken or the hope that was lost. We cannot take away the fear that has been instilled in students, parents and teachers across the Nation, but we can search for answers, and we can take steps to make our society safer and smarter, and, in turn, less vulnerable to any recurrence of this tragedy.

In searching for answers, however, we must be careful to resist the temptation to pin our hopes on a quick fix. There is no easy solution and there is

no single solution. We must face the fact that we have a society-wide problem. We have to look at every aspect of how our society functions to find solutions to this violence.

We must look at the images our children are exposed to in daily life, through movies, television, music videos, video games and on the Internet. We must look at gun control and the access children have to firearms. We must look at parents and their responsibility to be involved in the lives of their children. We must look at teacher training and school counseling to ensure that school personnel can identify and deflate problematic behavior. We must look at prevention and education in the earliest years of a child's life, and we must look at accountability and reforming troubled youth.

Violence is not a simple problem that we can expect our schools to solve alone. We have a societal problem, and it will take the work of schools, families, communities and every level of government together to find ways to reach alienated children and to find ways to prevent the tragic violence that was displayed in Littleton, Colorado.

As chairman of the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Youth, and Families of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, I am working to ensure that Congress contributes to finding solutions to school violence and to making our society safer and smarter.

Again, I want to offer my heartfelt sympathy to the families and friends of the 15 individuals who died last Tuesday at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. My thoughts are with you and will remain with you as we seek to rebuild our society.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, this tragedy touches all of us deeply. My district is only three blocks from Columbine High School. I know families who have students at Columbine. They are my neighbors and they are my friends. These students are also the future of our community. So there is immeasurable sorrow in Denver, in my home State of Colorado and throughout America.

The shootings at Columbine High School transcend party lines, political boundaries and geographic barriers. Each one of us here today shares the grief and sadness shared by parents and students in Littleton.

We struggle to find the words to say. But this tragedy is beyond words; really, it is beyond experience. It leaves us shaken and numb. We try to understand it, but it is beyond understanding. The unimaginable has happened. We are left trying to comprehend the incomprehensible. Somehow we must make sense of all of this.

Many of us went to high schools like Columbine. I went to Denver South High School in the turbulent 1970's,

and Columbine is just a short drive from there. But I did not encounter executions in the library and bombs in the stairwells.

I knew students excluded by popular groups. The truth is, many Members of Congress probably would not have won popularity contests in high school. Yet what we are trying to confront today is the violent turn of our culture, the rationality behind students with guns, and the decision to use those guns on classmates and friends.

Sadly, we must conclude that this country has become more violent in the past quarter century. We are more accepting of violence. We are more tolerant of its manifestation. We have lost some of our natural anger against violence. Violence is glorified in the media, in songs, in movies, in books and on the web. We have lost some of our social cohesion, where neighborhoods are now just where we live, where cities have become impersonal places. We have received a steady diet of nihilism, cynicism and skepticism, with little understanding of how that divides us, fragments us and transforms us. Now we often hear of a murder or robbery and shrug our shoulders saying, "Oh, well, what can you expect?" But violence is not part of life. It is not inevitable. We know better, or at least we should know better. Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Kennedy, our own colleague JOHN LEWIS and others have preached the importance of nonviolence. When will we learn? When will we prize the wisdom of nonviolence over the hasty mistake of gunfire?

We must speak out against those who pedal violence to our young students. We must shine the light of truth on those who believe violence is the answer, when it is only failure. We must no longer accept violence as the way of life, when it can only end a life.

Many Americans look to this House as a barometer of our national attitudes and culture. Today, our sorrow and anger can make us more thoughtful, more dedicated and more forthright in addressing violence in this country.

I hope it will. I hope we remember how we feel right now in the days and months to come, when we have valuable opportunities to work with community leaders, clergy, educators and social workers to institute real dialogue toward nonviolent dispute resolution.

We also need to do whatever we can to eliminate the ability of young people to obtain guns. It is frightening that one-third of the high school students in this country know someone who owns a gun. A troubled youth without a gun is dangerous; a troubled youth with a gun is deadly.

Those who wish to address youth violence in this country cannot refuse to discuss limiting access to guns for kids if they truly care about solving this crisis in America.

As a member of this House, but, most importantly, as a mother and a resi-

dent of Denver and Colorado, I extend my deepest personal sympathies to the students, teachers and families at Columbine High School. Today, the country stands united in your grief. We all share in your tragedy.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA).

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I greatly thank my colleague for yielding me time and for giving all of us this opportunity to adopt this congressional resolution and speak to it, because we must now all transform our horror and our remorse and pain and the sympathy for these families, that we sense for these families, and for those innocent children, those innocent children cut down in the springtime of a happy youth. That is what our dialogue is about today.

It is in their names, the names of these children, and in their memory, that I stand here this afternoon to plead with my colleagues for action, and that this national school dialogue should result in enforceable legislation to reduce the threats of school violence.

Yes, now is the time to address, in a loving and deeply meaningful and constructive way, to find methods to reduce the potential of these types of horrors being visited, and that they not be visited on other communities, on other innocent children, on other families.

There is a lot that we do not know about the event that led up to last week's massacre, but we do know this: Apparently the schools, the local communities and the components of the juvenile justice system did not communicate. Therefore, they were unable to apply in an informed or systematic way the things that we know about youthful behavior, namely the early warning signs of deviant and dangerous behavior, and we were unable, therefore, to use the knowledge that we have to act to get these young people and their parents into therapeutic programs that recognize and treat the trauma that causes such anger and violent attacks.

Just 11 weeks before this horrific rampage, these two young people were released from the probation system, apparently with flying colors, according to the newspapers. At the same time, these two young people were working on a complicated plot to destroy 500 lives. Indeed, the deputy sheriff assigned to the high school said last night that he did not even know the two teens had been arrested a year earlier. Evidently the school authorities did not know of the arrests. Whatever the reasons, there was a failure. There was no action taken to monitor their behavior or to communicate with the parents.

Mr. Speaker, we need to refer and develop working therapeutic support systems to deal with this kind of sickness. Mental health therapy must be an active component of our juvenile justice

system, and our schools must have the information they need to protect their students, to reach out to the parents, and give them the advice and counsel they so desperately need.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I would simply say, we must do this with reverence in the names of those innocent children and their parents and the heroic teacher, David Sanders.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, my heart is heavy with shock and sorrow at the unspeakable violence at Columbine High School. Congress cannot pass a "magic" law to guarantee that our children are safe in their schools, but we must still act.

As a school nurse, I have repeatedly stressed the importance of school counseling, and I call on my colleagues in Congress to fully support a school coordinator initiative which will provide violence counselors in middle schools across the country. Trained counselors in our schools can and have demonstrated that they are able to spot troubled kids and help them resolve conflicts peacefully before they escalate into violence.

Sadly, Littleton, Colorado, is not the only place where young lives have been taken from us. This past week in San Luis Obispo, California, the bodies of two young women, local college students, were finally discovered and their alleged killer was finally arrested. I join the entire community of San Luis Obispo in expressing heartfelt sorrow to the families and friends of Rachel Newhouse and Aundria Crawford. Because of the heroic efforts of our local law enforcement, the painful ordeal of these families of waiting has ended.

These students in Littleton, Colorado, and San Luis Obispo, California, have died way too soon. We must now, across this country, come together in our resolve to ensure that they have not died in vain.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3½ minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY).

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend I attended with the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) the memorial service for the students and the teacher who died, and, as I looked over the sea of 70,000 grieving faces, I realized that the media has touched the utter devastation Coloradans and, indeed, most Americans feel in the wake of this brutal attack.

In shopping malls, grocery stores, public parks, churches and other venues across Colorado, people are grieving. They are moving slowly, they are talking in subdued voices, they are weeping at a moment's notice. There is unpalatable grief overwhelming the State of Colorado as we mourn the death of our children and friends and our neighbors.

□ 1545

In the days following the attack, many have tried to assign blame or to

identify a reason for the tragedy. Unfortunately, one cannot find a reason for something so senseless.

There have been calls to judgment and proposed quick-fix solutions to the problems that appear to plague some of our Nation's youth. A parade of commentators have appeared on television and radio shows, each trumpeting their own solution to ensure that such a tragedy never occurs again. There have been calls for more gun laws, stricter gun laws, armed school guards, armed teachers, school metal detectors, parental advisory boards and random student searches. While there is merit in some of these so-called solutions, I fear that we are missing the bigger picture. In fact, all of the guns and all of the bombs that were used in this brutal attack were illegal. There are already laws against them.

One commentator said these young people exercised very bad judgment. Very bad judgment? Very bad judgment is going the wrong way on an one-way street. Very bad judgment is to drink a little too much at a party, at a high school party. That is very bad judgment. These young men exercised evil. They were evil; they plotted evil, and they carried out evil, brutal acts of violence.

For over a year they methodically and systematically plotted this vicious attack, and as has already been indicated by the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA), they intended a great deal more. They were going to kill at least 500 students. Then they were going to go into the neighborhoods. Then they were going to hijack an airplane and they were going to crash it into New York City. So obviously they lived in a fantasy world, an evil fantasy world during the process of that.

It is a tragic wake up call to all Americans, particularly adults, that there are children in this country who are so mentally ill and in such need of guidance that their only outlet for attention is by identifying themselves with deviant music, games, books, movies, even Adolph Hitler.

Mr. Speaker, to revere Lincoln and Martin Luther King is not the moral equivalent of revering Adolph Hitler, but unfortunately, too often in the name of tolerance we say this is okay. It should be no surprise that once a child is immersed in evil thoughts, evil actions often follow. As a society, we try to mask evil through tolerance. We tend to ignore the signs of deviant behavior because we think people have a right to engage in their corruptive activities and we must be tolerant. While people do have this right, it cannot come at the expense of others.

There are video games, movies, books, music that promote violence and corrode our society with a pervasive sense of evil, and we can no longer ignore these thoughts, activities and products in the name of tolerance. We need to call evil evil and take action against it. We cannot in our society tolerate evil.

We as a society and as adults need to pay more attention to our children. We need to reach out to our children before they reach for evil. We need to provide them with a moral framework from which they can guide their lives. Hopefully, by listening to our youth and learning who they are, we can identify those children who need help.

This is a tragedy that has deeply affected every community in my home state. My deepest condolences go to the city of Littleton, the students of Columbine High School, and especially the families of the students and teacher who were killed in last week's tragic shooting.

Yes; 13 died. Many more will never be the same. I ask for your prayers at this terrible time.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL).

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution offered by my colleague, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO), which I am sure expresses the thoughts not only of the Colorado delegation, but of the entire House.

I want to acknowledge my colleague from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO). He and I came to this body as freshmen this year and went through our orientation as new Members together. I hold a fond memory of that experience, and am profoundly saddened that a tragedy in our home State has been the occasion for our partnership on a legislative matter.

My guess is that parents all over America hugged their children a little tighter last night, and I am sure parents will worry just a little bit more as they send their children off to school tomorrow. We cannot allow what happened at Columbine High School to dampen our hopes for the future of America's schools or our children. It must remain an aberration and not a precursor of things to come.

In addition to offering our condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of those who were killed and injured in this awful crime, I think it is important for this body to speak with a unified voice in condemning such violence. It is also crucial for this body to offer leadership to the American people by initiating a thoughtful dialogue on the problem of gun violence in our schools.

Mr. Speaker, I hope, I pray that we as a Nation will respond to this tragedy by looking beyond our prejudices and our political leanings. This tragedy challenges us to place an even greater priority on the quality of the lives we build for all of our children. I urge adoption of this resolution.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I sincerely appreciate the comments of my colleague, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. UDALL).

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. SALMON).

Mr. SALMON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from Colo-

rado (Mr. TANCREDO) for sponsoring this resolution.

In the time that I have been here in Congress, the 4½ years that I have been here, I do not think I have met a gentleman with more compassion, more love or more care and concern than the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) has shown me in the last few months since his election. What a sad thing it is to have to engage in this kind of a discussion on the floor at a time so short in his tenure in the House.

Words cannot express, they are completely inadequate to express, I think, the sorrow and the feelings that many of us here feel. So many of us who ran for this office did so because we wanted to come and we wanted to change the world. We wanted to be able to come and address all of the heartfelt problems of the people that we represent. We really wanted to make this a better place to live.

As so often happens when a tragedy like this occurs, we look at ourselves in the mirror through tear-stained eyes and we try to come up with answers that we can pose that will solve these problems. But they also seem so inadequate.

So I looked into the faces of my two high school students before I left, and I gave them an extra tight hug and I tried to place myself in the situation of these parents, and try as I might, I cannot. Our hearts go out to them.

Mr. Speaker, I know that all too often we try to use things like this as a way to move forward our issues. We try to use these senseless tragedies as points in a debate for gun control or for this or for that.

In fact, I was even going to try to reference some of them in a written speech that I had, and I have thrown it out because frankly I think the most important thing that we as a Nation can do right now is to pray. Pray to God Almighty that his compassion and love will be sent down on us and those families will feel his arms of mercy wrap around them. Because frankly, that is the only respite that we have. I offer my prayers and my condolences, and I hope they feel the love emanating from this body.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT).

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, my wife and I have four children who are all in different schools everyday. As we grieve for the parents of the children killed in Colorado, we also join every parent in America as we fear for the safety of our own children.

Congress must be a part of eliminating this danger, because one of the most important roles of government is to keep our citizens safe, especially our children. We must do more to protect Americans against senseless violence.

But our goal to make America safer cannot be achieved with knee-jerk solutions that are blurted out in haste every time there is a tragedy. So as we

condemn this horrible act, let us also commit as a Congress and as a Nation to seriously study and seek to understand the causes of this violence and to develop a comprehensive plan to make our children safer and more secure in their schools.

But to get the right answers, we have to ask the right questions. And I hope one of the questions will be, have we created a spiritual void in our schools which is now being filled with drugs and sex and violence? It is clear there were very deep spiritual problems in this case. Yet, we prohibit the free participation in spiritual and religious activities in our schools. The sad fact is if a teacher had recognized these troubled youths and tried to counsel them with positive, life-oriented religious principles, that this teacher could very likely lose their job or end up in court.

Let us ask the right questions. Let us commit as a Nation to make our schools safer, and we can find the right answers.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 6 minutes for the purpose of engaging in a colloquy with the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA).

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, I would be more than happy to engage in a colloquy.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, and certainly to my colleague who sits on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, in the past year we have been able fortunately to have so many different committee meetings to talk about the things that have been going on in our schools, and school violence as a whole. I personally found it very educational.

There is no one answer, there is not, but I did learn a lot, as a nurse, and certainly my colleague, the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. ROUKEMA), who talks about mental health.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, in my role as a former teacher.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Yes, as a former teacher, if the gentlewoman would talk to us about mental health.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, if the gentlewoman will yield, this is such a wide topic for discussion, but I would like to reference the mental health aspect of this, particularly in areas where I know that even the Department of Education a few years ago tried to deal with some of these aspects of student mental health and violence in the schools. They issued, and I do not remember exactly the year, I want to say maybe it was 1992 or 1994, a department brochure called the Early Warning Program and distributed it to school systems across the country.

Mr. Speaker, an early warning program description of mental health problems that are discernible in children in school is really not enough. If the school system does not have a team, guidance counselors, administrators, teachers and mental health pro-

fessionals, maybe psychologists, maybe social workers, but with a psychiatric consultant to the school system who are able to review the early warning signs of students and some of the abnormal or violent behavior that they have displayed.

I guess another way of looking at it, in this particular case, as has been testified to by the school system and certainly the probation period, and looking at the yearbook, these students just did not turn up one day in their trench coat garb and talking the way they did; this had been a pattern for some period of time. And those are the kinds of early warning signs that teachers and really probation officers should be very conscious of and set up a system whereby they bring in, reach out to the parents in the community and work with them in a very private way to get them the advice and counsel that they might need.

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Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I think that is something that we have learned. Because when we talk about how to handle, hopefully, the violence that we are seeing in our schools, I think we have learned an awful lot on our committee.

There are a number of factors, whether it is mental health and being able to pick up the signs at an early grade, which we have found a number of times in all the school shootings there were warning signs there; certainly to work with our young children and our teenaged children also, to say if they hear something that is going on, it is all right to go to an adult, it is all right to go to your friends or your parents, let someone know.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. I do want to add something also to what the gentlewoman has referenced here. These warning signs are out there, and people should be reporting.

This is not novel or new or innovative or crusading. There are numbers of school systems all across the country, and one was featured on national television within the past week in Wisconsin, and another one I know of through the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GOODLING), who is the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, in his home State of Pennsylvania who have some very advanced programs, or not programs, systems whereby the educational and the juvenile justice system reaches out to the parents and works up a therapeutic environment for these students.

It does not mean, and by the way, I am not denying what the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) said that there is evil, there is evil. But what I am saying is that so much of this is subject to therapy, if properly diagnosed and properly seen at an early age with these young people.

I think there is so much knowledge out there, it would be unfortunate if in this national dialogue that this resolution is calling for, if we did not under-

stand that this is almost central to an area of improvement that we can initiate almost immediately.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. I think we do have the knowledge here in Congress. We do have a very knowledgeable body. I think the information that has come to us over the years because of the violence we are seeing in the schools is something that we can address.

I think one thing that came back and forth, also on our committee hearings, in dealing with something like this is that the whole community has to become involved. It is the church, it is the school, it is definitely the parents. The parents have to learn how to be parents. They should stand up and say, I am going to be a parent.

I see today so many young people that want to be friends and not parents, and I think that is something they have to learn. So parenting skills are needed, also. There are a lot of things that we can do, and I think we can do it.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. There are resources throughout each community that can help the parents, the schools, and the correctionS officers, and most of all, bring a bright life for those young people who need our help.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, the only thing further that I would like to say is that the majority of our schools are safe, and we have to keep them that way.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my colleague, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER).

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, to all of my colleagues here and to the rest of this country, I would like to say that all of us in Colorado, and on behalf of the entire State, are very gratified by the outpouring of support and prayer from throughout the country.

Our Governor addressed the country just the day before yesterday about the tragedy, and I include for the RECORD his words.

The statement referred to is as follows:

This is Governor Bill Owens of Colorado. A terrible tragedy occurred here in my home state this week. At Columbine High School in the town of Littleton, 15 people died in an outbreak of brutal and senseless violence.

I know this tragedy has shocked and moved all Americans. I know that the victims and their families have the prayers and condolences of people from across the land. And, for that, though we grieve, we are grateful.

We live in a nation that is the richest and freest on Earth—the richest and freest in history. Yet events like this one warn us there is a virus loose within our culture—and too many of our young people are susceptible to it. What happened to the two boys who committed these crimes?

Why didn't anyone see where they were heading—and do something about it? There was no shortage of signs—from the clothes

they wore, to the Internet games they played, to the "music" they preferred, to their expressed passion for Hitler, to their brushes with the law. They even made a video acting out their killing spree for a class project.

Were we perhaps afraid of being "judgmental"? Afraid that criticizing them—and correcting them—would hurt their self-esteem? These were minors with criminal records. The guns and homemade bombs they carried onto school property, they carried illegally. Yet they had broken the law before—and they had been dealt with gently.

And, perhaps the most important—and least asked question—is this: Why did these boys themselves not understand that what they were doing was wrong?

Not just wrong but evil? Or if they did understand, why did they not have enough moral sense to stop themselves—to seek the help they needed from a parent, a relative, a clergyman or a doctor?

We still have more questions than answers about what happened in Littleton on a sunny April afternoon. And the truth, I think, is that there are no easy answers—no quick solutions, much as we might wish there were.

There is no one place on which we can lay all the blame—though some people will try to do exactly that. We do need to think about these things, and talk about these things—not as politicians and partisans and members of factions, but as parents and neighbors and fellow Americans who have a responsibility to preserve what's best in our community—and improve the rest.

We do need to take a look at the sub-culture of violence, death, anarchy and incoherence that seems, in recent years, to have become so appealing to so many young people. We need to understand who and what feeds and profits from this dark subculture. And why is it that so many Americans patronize a mass media which all too often glorifies violence rather than condemns it?

We need to ask ourselves: What is lacking in all too many of our children's lives—despite the freedom and prosperity they enjoy?

And I would ask every parent in America: Do you know if your child has a homepage? Do you know what is on your child's homepage or whom they talk with on the Internet? If not, please find out. Please teach your children to discern from the good and bad on the Internet as well as on television, movies, and on video games—and if they can't—then parents should.

And how can parents, religious leaders and, yes, political leaders, too, help fill the void—the black hole in these young souls that sucks in so much anger, hatred and cruelty? I know all this will be on my mind, and yours, for a very long time to come.

I also know that this is a great country and that Colorado is a great state—and that we have met many challenges in the past and, with God's help, we will meet this challenge as well.

What the Governor said to the country and what we need to keep in mind is that such a profound tragedy as the one we have experienced in Colorado is one that needs to be considered within the context of our moral character as a Nation.

We are a Nation that seems more and more to be preoccupied with death and sex. Our children are confronted daily with the glorification of violence. The lines between tolerance and indifference have been almost erased in this country, for those of us as leaders, not just political leaders but community leaders of all sorts, through a sick evo-

lution of political correctness seem to have become timid about asserting what is right and what is wrong, and speaking out strenuously about the difference between the two.

We have been warned about such occasions. The Apostle Paul almost 1,950 years ago, in a letter to the Romans, said, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect."

The dignity of human life is what we need to keep in mind. This is at the heart of the tragedy that took the country last week. There are some who believe human life is expendable, that it is a matter of someone else's choice or convenience or sometimes even amusement. But this is a bedrock issue for us as a country.

We have, in fact, enshrined the value of life right into our own Declaration of Independence. That Declaration, Mr. Speaker, says this: "We are endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights, and among them is the right to life." We need to be rededicated to that concept by the brilliance of the lives that have been lost.

Some suggest that we need new laws. The individuals who perpetrated this crime broke about 17 of those, and I would like to enter that into the RECORD, as well.

The material referred to is as follows: VIOLETIONS OF FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS BY THE ALLEGED PERPETRATORS OF THE CRIME AT COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL, LITTLETON, COLORADO

Details of the explosives and firearms used by the alleged perpetrators have not been confirmed by law enforcement authorities. The crime scene is still being examined and cleared. It is unknown how the alleged perpetrators came into possession of the explosives and firearms they used.

The alleged perpetrators, obviously, committed multiple counts of murder and attempted murder, the most serious crimes of all. And they committed many violations of laws against destruction of property, such as in the school building and the cars in the parking lot outside. All told, the prison sentences possible for these multiple, serious violations amount to many hundreds of years.

Additionally, in the course of planning and committing these crimes, the alleged perpetrators committed numerous violations of very serious federal and state laws relating to explosives and firearms, and, depending on details not yet known, may have committed other such violations. Cumulatively, the prison sentences possible for these violations alone amount to many hundreds of years. A partial list of those violations follows:

1. Possession of a "destructive device" (i.e., bomb). (Multiple counts.) Prohibited under 26 U.S.C. Chapter 53. Each violation is punishable by 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Other explosives violations are under 18 U.S.C. 842.

Colorado law [18-12-109(2)] prohibits the possession of an "explosive or incendiary device." Each violation is a Class 4 felony. Colorado [18-12-109(6)] also prohibits possession of "explosive or incendiary parts," defined to include, individually, a substantial variety of components used to make explosive or incendiary devices. Each violation is a Class 4 felony.

2. Manufacturing a "destructive device" (i.e., bomb). (Multiple counts.) Prohibited under 26 U.S.C. Chapter 53. Each violation is punishable by 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

3. Use of an explosive or incendiary device in the commission of a felony. Prohibited under Colorado law [18-12-109(4)]. A class 2 felony.

4. Setting a device designed to cause an explosion upon being triggered. Violation of Colorado law. (Citation uncertain)

5. Use of a firearm or "destructive device" (i.e., bomb) to commit a murder that is prosecutable in a federal court. Enhanced penalty under 18 U.S.C. 924(i). Punishable by death or up to life in prison. A federal nexus is through 18 U.S.C. 922(q), prohibiting the discharge of a firearm, on school property, with reckless disregard for the safety of another person.

6. Use of a firearm or "destructive device" (i.e., bomb) in a crime of violence that is prosecutable in a federal court. Enhanced penalty under 18 U.S.C. 924(c). Penalty is 5 years if a firearm; 10 years if a "sawed-off" shotgun, "sawed-off" rifle or "assault weapon;" and 30 years if the weapon is a "destructive device" (bomb, etc.). Convictions subsequent to the first receive 20 years or, if the weapon is a bomb, life imprisonment. Again, a federal nexus is through 18 U.S.C. 922(q), prohibiting the discharge of a firearm, on school property, with reckless disregard for the safety of another person.

7. Conspiracy to commit a crime of violence prosecutable in federal court. Enhanced penalty under 18 U.S.C. 924(n). Penalty is 20 years if the weapon is a firearm, life imprisonment if the weapon is a bomb. Again, a federal nexus is through 18 U.S.C. 922(q), prohibiting the discharge of a firearm, on school property, with reckless disregard for the safety of another person.

8. Possession of a short-barreled shotgun or rifle. Some news accounts have suggested that the alleged perpetrators may have possessed a "sawed-off" shotgun or "sawed-off" rifle. (A shotgun or rifle less than 26" in overall length, or a shotgun with a barrel of less than 18", or a rifle with a barrel of less than 16".) A spokesman for the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office reported, possibly, at least one long gun with the stock cut off. Prohibited under 26 U.S.C. Chapter 53. A violation is punishable by 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Colorado law [18-12-102(3)] prohibits possession of a "dangerous weapon" (defined to include sawed-off guns). First violation is a Class 5 felony; subsequent violations are Class 4 felonies.

9. Manufacturing a "sawed-off" shotgun or "sawed-off" rifle. Prohibited under 26 U.S.C. Chapter 53. Each violation is punishable by 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

10. Possession of a handgun or handgun ammunition by a person under age 18: Some news accounts report one alleged perpetrator as being 17 years of age. It is yet unclear what firearms were involved in the crime. A person under age 18 is prohibited from possessing a handgun or handgun ammunition, except for legitimate target shooting, hunting, and firearms training activities, and similar legitimate reasons. [18 U.S.C. 922(x), part of the 1994 crime bill.] A violation is punishable by one year in prison.

11. Providing a handgun or handgun ammunition to a person under age 18. Prohibited under the same provision noted in #4, above. Penalty of one year, unless the provider knew the gun would be used in a crime of violence, in which case the penalty is 10 years.

12. Age restrictions on purchasing firearms. Again, the age of the second suspect and how the alleged perpetrators came into possession of firearms are unclear. However,

licensed dealers may sell rifles and shotguns only to persons age 18 or over, and handguns to persons age 21 or over. [18 U.S.C. 922(b)(1)].

13. Possession of a firearm on school property. Prohibited under 18 U.S.C. 922(q). Five year penalty. Colorado also prohibits a gun on school property. (Citation uncertain.)

14. Discharge of a firearm on school property, with a reckless disregard for another's safety. Prohibited under 18 U.S.C. 922q. Five year penalty.

15. Possession, interstate transportation, sale, etc., of a stolen firearm. Prohibited under 18 U.S.C. 922(i) and (j). A violation is punishable by 10 years.

16. Intentionally aiming a firearm at another person. Violation of Colorado law.

17. Displaying a firearm in a public place in a manner calculated to alarm, or discharging a firearm in a public place except on a lawful target practice or hunting place. Violation of Colorado law.

Let me say this on this House Floor, Mr. Speaker: There are great leaders whose sculptures are all around us. Moses looks at us from straight ahead, and delivered us the most important and profound law of all. In his eyes and through God, we needed 10: Thou shalt not kill. That is a law that we should all, Mr. Speaker, live by.

Mr. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO).

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STEARNS). The gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) is recognized for 3 minutes.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York, for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I should say that having now lived through this horrible experience and participated in all of the events, as many as I could in Colorado, it has certainly touched my soul in a way that few other things that I have experienced in this Congress have.

Mr. Speaker, I assure my colleagues who have spoken to this point that I personally will be more than willing, I would be happy to look at any proposal, any idea anyone has to address this kind of issue, any solution. I yearn, I ache for a solution, just like anyone else in this Congress.

I fear so deeply, however, that what we can do here cannot even begin to touch or make a dent in the problem that has created Columbine High's tragedy. It is a problem that is close to home, close to home for all of us.

We must look in the mirror, every single one of us, for the real reason, for the real answer here, because we have created a culture in which a generation at least has grown up without the ability to look at life through the same sort of eyes that many other generations have, and without the ability to actually have a sense of worth, of value.

When I was younger there was a popular movie, "Easy Rider," and the characters in the movie spent the entire thing living the high life, literally and figuratively, on drugs. At the end, however, they looked up and said, we

blew it. We blew it. That was the message that not too many people got.

But I must tell the Members, I look at our generation and I look at all the things that have happened, and I look at the life we tried to live and provide for our children, thinking it was the right thing, it was a life that we decided was not worthy of restrictions, that we would not impose them on our children, that we would be pals instead of parents, and we live the high life, and we blew it. We blew it.

I think of my neighbor, whose son cradled Mr. Sanders in his arms as the last breath left his body, and he said to my neighbor's son, "Please tell my family I love them."

And I think of the scars that that child now takes with him for the rest of his life, and not just the physical scars that we know are on there from the people who are surviving in the hospitals, but all the mental scars that we will have no idea, we will never know the depth of them. We will never know the extent to which they exist. We will never know how to treat or who to treat, because we will never know. We will not see with our eyes how they affect these children.

And I think to myself, for some children there is still hope, but we have to look at ourselves as families. We have to look in the mirror. There is nowhere else to go. As John Donne says, ask not for whom the bells toll, they toll for thee and for me.

I accept the responsibility, and I hope with all my heart and I pray to the ever-living God that he gives me the wisdom, and my colleagues, and my community, and the culture, the wisdom to know what action we individually can take so as to avoid a tragedy like this ever happening again. I pray for that wisdom.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply saddened by the tragedy at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. It brings back emotions my hometown experienced last year when a group of students at Thurston High School were shot by a fellow student. Last week's violent rampage was an incomprehensible and devastating act and I know my community joins me in sending our thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families in Colorado.

We can't legislate all solutions, but we can take prudent steps to help prevent similar acts in the future. As we learned in Springfield, the changes needed to prevent similar tragedies are going to require an enduring commitment from each and every one of us. Preventing youth violence depends on our ability to support children and families. Each of us needs to look for ways to do more to help our neighbors and communities. In small ways and large, we can all help keep our children and families safe.

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, this nation is shocked and deeply affected by the lives that were lost in Littleton, Colorado on Tuesday, April 20, 1999, as a result of a senseless shooting rampage. We must work harder to deter violence and promote safety in our nations schools.

I agree with the President: We need to "wake up to school violence," and "if it can

happen here, then surely people will recognize [t]he possibility that it can occur in any community in America, and maybe that will help us to keep it from happening again."

My prayers go out to the students, teachers, faculty, staff, and parents of students who attend Columbine High School and to the suburban Denver community rocked by this shooting rampage.

This nation has made little progress in the way of making our school and communities safer and preventing these horrific tragedies from reoccurring. In fact, this was the ninth such incident of tragic school violence in recent years.

Many schoolchildren have access to weapons and they do not have the support systems to deal with their grievances.

Yesterday was a poignant reminder to all of us that communities, parents and gun makers have an obligation to act responsibly to keep our communities and schools safer.

But, parents and communities should not have to meet these challenges alone. Government has a role in keeping products such as assault weapons off of our streets and out of the hands of schoolchildren.

I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join me in making our schools, our communities, and our nation safer.

Mr. BARCIA. Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of the tragedy in Littleton, the nation has been splintered by blame and torn apart by finger-pointing. As we all try to decide who or what is to be blamed for the terror wreaked by two young men, the fabric of our national community is being shredded. While there is a need to find some concrete thing to be culpable for this horrible event it is important for us to stand united as one people, as one country, to support those who need it the most.

As a Congressman, but first as a citizen of this nation, I would like to express my sincerest condolences to the people of Littleton, Colorado. I would also like to express the condolences of my district, the Fifth District of Michigan. I have spoken with many constituents, and received many letters, from those who are deeply saddened by this horrific event.

After the healing has begun, after we have all decided that we are ready to proceed, we need to become involved in our young people's lives. We need to support and nurture them like the incredible resources they are. Whether at home or in school, adults as well as peers need to take a vital interest in their children, students and friends. The sadness, frustration and anger that these two young men felt should never again be dismissed. What a disgrace it would be to the memory of those children and their heroic teacher if we should let the lessons fade from our collective conscience. Littleton should not be the "worst school massacre in our nation's history," it should be the last school massacre in our Nation's history.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in tribute to the students of Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado whose tragic deaths have shocked and saddened our nation.

The images coming out of Littleton, of grieving families and students, of terrified children and communities struggling to cope with the devastating loss of those dear to them, are becoming all too familiar. We saw them last year, in Jonesboro, in Springfield and in West Paducah.

Mr. Speaker, this tragedy has again dramatically highlighted the inadequacy of current gun control laws in preventing these types of senseless tragedies. Therefore, I believe it is vital that we strengthen our Nation's gun control laws to keep guns out of the hands of children and work to help our young people express their anger and feelings of alienation through words and thoughts, and not weapons.

Our nations schools are supposed to be a safe haven for students striving to reach their full potential in a safe and secure learning environment. Instead, with increased access and availability of guns to our nations youths, we are seeing our nations schools turn into war zones.

Mr. Speaker, it is also imperative that we do more in our communities to ensure that tragedies such as the one in Littleton never occur again. That is why I strongly support programs such as the Federal Safe Schools-Healthy Students Funds to help communities put in place comprehensive violence prevention programs.

These funds can be used for everything from establishing conflict resolution groups to hiring more mental health counselors, to establishing new mentoring programs, to installing metal detectors and other security equipment.

In addition Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that this week the Department of Justice and Education will distribute 150,000 additional copies of early warning timely response; A Guide To Safe Schools.

The guide, written for teachers, principals, parents and others who work with young people, provides information on how to identify and respond to early warning signs of troubled youth that can lead to violence in schools.

Mr. Speaker, we can no longer turn a blind eye to the devastating impact that guns can play on our society.

We must be vigilant in our efforts to prevent further senseless gun related tragedies and make sure that no more children's lives are needlessly cut short.

By taking actions to prevent future acts of violence in our schools, we can best honor the memories of those who lost their lives.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I stand today to express my profound sadness concerning the tragic events of last week in Littleton, Colorado. I would like to extend my deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of those horrific shootings. I support the Resolution that is on the floor today, and I hope that it will lead to a national dialogue on the need for mental health services for children.

Schools should be safe and secure places for all students, teachers and staff members. All children should be able to go to and from school without fearing for their safety. Unfortunately, we live in a time of metal detectors, mesh book bags and armed police in our schools. Instead of imprisoning our young people in school, we need to look into real solutions that will protect our children from harm.

This incident underscores the urgent need for mental health services to address the needs of young people. Without concerted efforts to address the mental health disorders that affect our children, we may witness even more terrifying violence in our schools.

The statistics on youth violence and adolescent death trends are startling: homicide deaths for teenagers between 15 and 19 accounted for 85% or 2,457 deaths by firearms and suicide rates have increased by more than 300% in the last three decades.

In addition, there has been a 1,000% increase in depression among children since the 1950s. This means that depression, one of the earliest indicators of poor mental health, is not being properly addressed. We must help our schools identify troubled children early and provide counseling for them before it is too late.

According to news reports, these young suspects were members of a group called the "Trench Coat Mafia." These young men felt that they were outcasts in the school community because they were teased constantly by the other students. The motive for this tragedy was reportedly revenge and racial prejudice. At the end of the day, 15 people were killed, including the two alleged shooters, who committed suicide.

I implore parents, teachers and the other adults who impact the lives of our young people to be on alert for the early warning signs of a young person who is troubled.

These warning signs include isolation, depression, alienation, and hostility. Recognizing these signs is the first step to ensure that troubled youngsters get the counseling and social skills training they need early to address their mental health needs before it is too late.

For the young people who witnessed this tragedy and survived, there is also a need for mental health services to help them make it through these difficult weeks ahead. The trauma of witnessing such an event will undoubtedly leave scars that may never fully heal. These children need counseling and support as well.

To the families and the community that has been devastated by this tragedy, our hearts and minds are with you at this difficult time. My thoughts and prayers are also with you.

Ms. MCCARTHY of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H. Con. Res. 92 and to express my condolences and sympathy to the victims' families and to the citizens of Littleton, Colorado, in the wake of the tragic shooting that occurred there last week. What can we as a Congress say to our children and their parents in light of such a devastating event? This resolution states that the House of Representatives "condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the heinous atrocities which occurred at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado; offers its condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of those who were killed at Columbine High School and expresses its hope for the rapid and complete recovery of those wounded in the shooting; applauds the hard work and dedication exhibited by the hundreds of local, state, and federal law enforcement officials and the others who offered their support and assistance; and encourages the American people to engage in a national dialogue on preventing school violence."

It is important to pass this resolution and officially state our condemnation, condolences, and hope, and yet it is not enough. How will we, as individual Members of the House of Representatives, choose to act in response to this atrocity? Will we be satisfied with the passing of this resolution? We must not allow

ourselves to believe that with this resolution, we have done all that we could. We must honor the memory of those that were killed: Dave Sanders, Kyle Velasquez, Matt Kechter, Corey DePooter, Steven Curnow, Isaiah Shoels, Rachel Scott, John Tomlin, Lauren Townsend, Kelly Fleming, Dan Rohrbough, Dan Mauser, and Cassie Bernal. I say their names aloud on this day, in this room, to honor their memory and to urge my colleagues to remember that this teacher and these children had bright futures that will never be realized.

Vice President AL GORE asked the community of Littleton at the memorial ceremony on Sunday, "Now, as we are brought to our knees in the shock of this moment, what say we?" I repeat this question to you, my colleagues. What say we in the shock of this moment, and what will we say as the shock passes and our lives go on, even as the lives of those thirteen have ended? Will we say, "No more!"? Or will we turn away from the harsh reality of the world we have helped to create and hide our faces from the dangers our children face every day?

We must provide for our children alternatives to violence and opportunities for creative expression which will allow them to deal with their anger and hurt in productive ways. A pilot educational intervention program being developed in the fifth district of Missouri is the E3 system—Emotional and Ethical Education for Children. This curriculum seeks to foster the emotional, cognitive, and ethical development of children through the arts. The E3 system utilizes the theory of multiple intelligences and the arts within the curriculum in order to increase test scores and decrease conflicts and violence. Strong arts programs in schools provide emotional outlets for children and teach them to deal with their emotions without resorting to violence. We must make arts in schools a federal initiative and an essential component to the solution we all seek.

I urge my colleagues to remember the shock of this moment as we debate and consider bills in the upcoming months that raise difficult questions regarding individual freedoms and the safety of our children. Let us put partisanship aside as we enter these debates, and let us each consider in our own hearts the responsibility that we hold for the children of this nation and their future.

Mr. EVERETT. Mr. Speaker, the Nation is reeling from a terrible tragedy. On Tuesday, April 20, Columbine High School in Littleton, CO, was taken over by two students with the apparent malicious and premeditated intent to kill and main students and teachers. Students fled from the building while others hid inside, hoping the gunmen would not find them. As we watched the scene unravel the intensity rose as we realized there were at least 25 students still inside the building. The scores of law enforcement officers could only wait outside the building sizing up the situation and figuring out how to rescue the students. We watched and prayed and began to realize that this could be our community.

The final count after the SWAT teams had fully searched the school was 15 dead and 20 wounded. The damage inflicted by these two disgruntled students is the worse we have seen in a series of school attacks. The pain of the situation reaches past our understanding

and grabs our hearts. In a world where we must be strong, our frail humanity is awakened when something beyond our control happens. The damage that has occurred in Littleton, CO, has touched every American family, and the healing process is only beginning.

Columbine High School will never quite be the same. Schools across the Nation are even at this moment figuring out how they can prevent something as horrible as this from happening to them. There is no way to heal the pain felt by the parents who have lost their children, and in our democratic society, there is not way for us to assure our students they will be completely safe at school. The tragedy of the situation is that there is no perfect answer. The innocence lost by our children can never be regained, and we can only place them in God's hands as we send them out into the world. My prayers go out to the community in Littleton, that God would grant them strength and peace in the midst of such an unfathomable nightmare.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise in support of this resolution that we are considering today. A senseless and horrific tragedy has stunned the nation, shocked a community, and devastated countless families. The name Columbine High School will be forever remembered in tragedy. In horror, we watched the events of last Tuesday and even now we are in disbelief as we have learned of the magnitude of the devastation caused by two teenage boys turned violent murderers.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time we have seen children become deadly criminals and turn their violence against other students and their teachers. Jonesboro, Arkansas, Paducah, Kentucky, Norwalk, Connecticut, Pearl, Mississippi, Edinboro, Pennsylvania, and now Littleton, Colorado, are synonymous with violent school tragedy. Schools should be sanctuaries of education and a place of safety for our nation's children.

This resolution condemns in the strongest possible terms, the heinous atrocities which occurred; offers condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of those who were killed; expresses hope for the rapid and complete recovery of those wounded; and applauds the hard work and dedication exhibited by the hundreds of local, State and Federal law enforcement officials and others who offered their support. But, it is with hope that we ask, through this resolution, for a national dialogue to understand this tragedy and stop school violence from ever occurring again.

As a parent, an educator, and a Congressman, I can only imagine the pain and suffering of the families and my heart and prayers go out to them. It is my hope that we will find answers to preventing these heinous and senseless actions so that no other community must face the nightmare of Littleton.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I have the honor of representing the citizens of the Third District of North Carolina. Like all Americans, my constituents back home offer their prayers for those that lost friends and loved ones in last week's tragedy at Columbine High School.

Mr. Speaker, in the past year and a half, at least 29 people have been killed as a result of school violence.

Just last week, 15 lives came to an abrupt end in an environment that is meant to foster learning and development.

Each time our nation experiences such a tragedy we ask ourselves why.

Some blame violence in the media, music, the Internet, children's access to guns, parental neglect, but the truth is, it is all of this and more.

Mr. Speaker, the answer lies with each one of us.

In today's culture, when children are no longer shocked by violence and have easy access to technology, we must call on the parents, educators, and students to work together to prevent another senseless tragedy.

If we can foster interaction between parents, teachers, and students—to recognize potential problems—we have a greater chance of keeping our schools safe.

It will take work and cooperation, but when we look at the lives cut short at Columbine High School, I think we can all agree it is worth the extra effort.

Mr. Speaker, today, my thoughts and prayers are with the community of Littleton, Colorado, as they begin their healing process.

As a tribute to the family and friends who lost loved ones, let us turn this tragedy into an opportunity.

I ask all Americans to take a greater interest and responsibility in the education of our children.

Help us work together so that our nation's students can once again look to school as a haven for learning.

God Bless the community of Littleton during this difficult time and God Bless America.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, "It's kind of sad that it's not surprising anymore."

Mr. Speaker, these are the words of a high school sophomore at Irving High School in my district. She was speaking about the brutal and horrific rampage where two high school youngsters armed themselves and began a violent killing spree at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO. When their campaign of terror finally ended, 16 students and teachers were dead. In addition, some 20 other students were wounded.

Mr. Speaker, not only did I find myself naturally shocked by this incident, I was even more shocked by the aforementioned response to it by this high school student. Indeed, violence has so penetrated the lives of our youth that the shock value over events like those in Littleton, CO, has worn off. Between ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and young gunmen targeting minorities and athletes at Columbine High School, we certainly find ourselves in an environment where violence is expected, is the norm, and is not surprising anymore.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask this mourning Nation to be more attentive to the thoughts and words of our young people. We must come together and address this deadly mix of violence and racism. If we do not, then our young people will become more jaded, disenchanting, and numb over the loss of life. If we do not address the root causes of hate, then violence will rule the day and cease to be surprising anymore.

Unfortunately, we have been lacking in our commitment, zeal, and work to combat hate and violence. That is why I understand the words of this high school student and others throughout the country that look at this loss of life through such a bleak prism. I certainly cannot blame them. Although the madness perpetrated by the assailants was

unexplainable, the hate that motivated them was not.

Mr. Speaker, what must be explained to our youth is that we will make a concerted effort to understand them, teach them better ways to resolve their problems, and present more opportunities before them while removing guns from their lives

Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in the House of Representatives, my constituents of the 30th Congressional District of Texas and the entire Nation in sending my prayers and thoughts to the families and friends of those people taken away from them in this tragedy.

Mr. Speaker, I also pray for other young people who may feel shunned by society and filled with misunderstanding, hate, and a feeling of being losers. I pray that we can all instill in these youngsters a better sense of self-esteem and purpose. The two students who gunned down their classmates before killing themselves at Columbine High School felt that they were losers. It was that feeling of being losers that motivated them to create such a loss.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, the recent events at Columbine High School in Littleton, CO, marks another sad chapter in the many recent tragedies that have occurred far too frequently in our nations schools.

Too often today, we hear of acts of violence perpetrated in our schools by troubled youths. Equally too often, the reasons behind these acts eludes us, leaving parents, teachers and fellow students to search for the reasons.

The Columbine High School tragedy is a stark reminder we need to do all that we can in an endeavor to understand the motivations behind such acts in an effort to prevent future tragedies. We must also encourage parents and teachers to reach out to children whom they feel may be troubled to provide the help that they need.

While we may never know the true motivations behind the actions of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, we must do all that we can to ensure the safety of our schools so that teachers and students can attend class without fear.

I invite my colleagues to join in offering our condolences to the families, friends, and loved ones of those who were killed at Columbine High School and expressing hope for the rapid and complete recovery of those wounded in the shooting and also in recognizing the hard work and dedication exhibited by local, State and Federal law enforcement officials and others who offered their expert support and assistance to all affected by this tragic incident.

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 92.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within