

during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, gun violence against children in this country has reached a point where even Congress can no longer ignore its consequences. Even though there still have been the 10 to 15 children, victims of violence across the country, finally it was some very stark school shootings that focused the attention.

I sat on the floor of this Chamber and heard the Speaker articulate from this well how finally Congress and the House of Representatives would be coming forward. We could not rush to judgment before Memorial Day bringing something to the floor of the House. We had instead to take a more deliberative course of action.

Well, we have seen what has been the result of that more deliberate course of action. After the NRA has been spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per day over the last couple of weeks, even more in their fund-raising efforts, we now have coming before the House of Representatives a rather confused set of provisions, and we are poised to pull another Kosovo where we cannot go right, left, sideways or forward.

Mr. Speaker, that is unfortunate because there is, in fact, a very simple answer for the House of Representatives to move forward. First and foremost, it is to refine and pass the provisions that did secure approval in the U.S. Senate restricting the magazine clips, having child access protection and dealing with the gun show loophole to the Brady bill. These are modest steps, but the American public supports it, and it would be an opportunity for us to show that we have got the message and can work together.

The next step would be to consider Representative CAROLYN MCCARTHY's comprehensive bipartisan bill to reduce gun violence amongst our youth. The Child Gun Violence Protection Act, H.R. 1342, with bipartisan support, contains provisions that will make a difference and should be considered in short order before this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, finally, and I think most interestingly for me, is an opportunity for us to take a step back and look at the same sort of approach that made a difference in reducing the carnage on our Nation's highways. If we would have taken a step back in history a third of a century, we would have heard the same arguments against being able to make a difference in auto safety that we hear today about gun violence. The Americans have a love affair with the automobile that, if anything, is more pervasive than the attachment to firearms. There is no single step that is going to make the total difference, that is going to solve the problem. Some of it may actually cost money investing in making things safer.

Well, we heard all of those arguments, but Congress finally was provoked to act, and it did so in a comprehensive way. It produced legisla-

tion, consumer product safety-oriented, that made automobiles safer. We had manufacturers, instead of fighting auto safety, understand that it was important to produce the safest possible product and competed in terms of providing the amenities of a safer vehicle. It was a selling point.

We found that the American people would rise to the occasion, and, even though it was inconvenient for some or perhaps a modest infringement on their lifestyle, we have seen dramatic changes take place in terms of attitudes of people; driving and alcohol, for instance. We have changed America's patterns. A third of a century later, we have cut in half the rate of death and destruction on our highways.

I am absolutely convinced that we can do the same thing dealing with the reduction of gun violence with our youth, that we can have as much consumer safety for real guns as we have for toy guns. The key will be whether or not the Members of this Chamber are willing to stand up for our families and for our children to look at the apologists for gun violence, look past their misrepresentations and political threats and do what is right. If we were able to do it to change a climate of carnage on our highways, I think we can do the same thing to reduce gun violence for our children.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to Congress this week taking this important first step to avoid a debacle like we had, an inability to make some decisions on Kosovo, and send clear statements about our commitment to reduce gun violence for our children.

KEY TO SUCCESS OF 2000 CENSUS IS LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, we are less than 10 months away from the upcoming decennial census, the 2000 census. And the magical date is April 1 of 2000 would be conducted to count all the people in this great country, and it is essential to our entire democratic process that we have the most accurate census possible and one that is trusted by the American people.

It is fundamental to our elective system of government because most elected officials in America are dependent upon the census. The key to the success of the census is local involvement; local involvement in the planning for the census, local involvement in the process of developing the addresses which is taking place today, and local involvement at the conclusion of the census to allow a quality check and verification that we have counted everybody the census.

Sadly, the administration and most of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are opposed to local involvement at the end of the census, the

quality check that was provided in 1990, and they are opposed to letting local communities, the mayors and city councils and county commissioners and city managers and such across this country, to have one last chance to check their numbers because they say we are going to allow them to be involved before the census takes place, and that will solve all the problems.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the problem. That there are mistakes. We all make mistakes, and there are going to be errors in the census in 2000, and we need to do everything that we can to correct those.

Now, this program that they are advocating is called LUCA, Local Update of Census Addresses, is a good program because it is allowing communities that want to participate to check addresses at this early stage. Unfortunately, not enough of the communities are involved in that, and that is a problem, but those that are involved are finding major problems with the Census Bureau.

Mr. Speaker, there was an article on the AP wire service last Friday identifying exactly the type problem that we thought would happen. A lot of this is anecdotal because we are going to talk about it community by community as we go through this. This is Flathead County in Montana.

"Flathead County officials said they found errors in two-thirds of the first addresses they checked in data provided by the Census Bureau in preparation for the 2000 count. Rick Breckenridge, the head of the county computerized mapping project," and this is a fairly advanced community because they have computerized their records, so we should not have the type of errors that the Census Bureau has come up with, "said of the first 100 addresses supplied by the Census Bureau, there were 67 discrepancies. In one case, the Census Bureau had one address where he had 16; apparently, the Census Bureau missed an apartment complex, he said. In other cases, the bureau had addresses where the county records showed none.

"Breckenridge said the errors could lead to a serious undercount when the 2000 Census is conducted next spring. Clerk and Recorder, Sue Haverfield, said the errors occurred although the county gave the Bureau computer maps of its roads last summer. That information was not incorporated into the Census Bureau maps returned to the county recently. She said, 'Frankly, with the technology now available, what they are providing is ridiculous.'" Mr. Speaker, this is the type of errors we have got to catch, and thank goodness Flathead County caught it, and hopefully we can get it corrected. I encourage every community to be involved to catch these types of errors because the Census Bureau and the administration refuses for them to have a chance to look for the errors at the conclusion of the census as was provided in the 1990 census.

A program called Post Census Local Review, which the House passed, by the way, with, unfortunately, most of the Democrats opposing it because they do not want to trust the local communities to look at these numbers, I do not know what they are afraid of, but they will not allow them to look at numbers, but in 1990 it caught 400,000 errors. Four hundred thousand mistakes in the census were corrected because of Post Census Local Review, and they added 124,000 people that would not have been counted before.

Mr. Speaker, this is strongly supported by most elected officials in this country. The National Association of Towns and Townships fully supports it. The National League of Cities supports it. The National Association of Developmental Organizations supports it. The only ones that do not support it, surprisingly, are big-city mayors, who are the ones who gained the most from it the last time around. Detroit added over 40,000 people in 1990, and now their mayor is opposed to it. Explain that one to me, because that just makes no sense that he is opposed to have one last quality check. That is all it is.

Mr. Speaker, all we are asking is after the census is completed next year, end of 2000, to give them a period of time to review the numbers to see if any errors, because if those errors continue to exist, they cannot be corrected after the fact. So we need to get as much local input as we can and get the most accurate and trusted census as possible.

NO REPEAL OF SECTION 907 WHILE AZERBAIJAN ILLEGALLY BLOCKADES ARMENIA AND NAGORNO KARABAGH

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, late last month Secretary of State Madeleine Albright renewed the administration's unfortunate and misguided effort to repeal Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act. Section 907 restricts direct U.S. Government assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan until the President certifies that Azerbaijan has taken demonstrable steps to lift its blockades of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh. Azerbaijan's illegal blockades of its neighbors has resulted in the disruption of supplies of vital goods to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh, causing severe economic hardship and real human suffering.

Mr. Speaker, Section 907 was good law when it was passed, and it remains good law 7 years later. Azerbaijan has done nothing to merit the repeal of Section 907, and despite these facts, the administration, with the strong backing of some of the major oil companies, is trying to urge Congress to repeal Section 907.

Mr. Speaker, the Caspian Sea, which Azerbaijan borders on, is believed by some to contain vast oil reserves. The tantalizing prospect of a new source of petroleum resources has caused the administration to look the other way in terms of Azerbaijan's poor human rights record, its corrupt and undemocratic government, and its pattern of regional aggression.

In written testimony submitted to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Secretary Albright stated that the administration would renew its request to repeal Section 907. Presumably, the foreign operations bill which we will be debating later this summer would be the vehicle for repealing Section 907, just as was attempted last year. But, Mr. Speaker, I am proud to say that we succeeded in taking that language out of the bill on the House floor. A bipartisan coalition of Members of this House kept Section 907 as the law because it was the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that it would be even more imprudent and unjustified now to repeal Section 907. As I mentioned, Azerbaijan's blockade is against both the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Nagorno Karabagh. With the breakup of the Soviet Union, as the countries of the collapsing empire attained their independence, Azerbaijan attempted to militarily crush Nagorno Karabagh and drive out the Armenian population. But the Karabagh Armenians ultimately won their war of independence, and a cease-fire was signed in 1994.

The U.S. has been one of the countries taking the lead in the peace process under the auspices of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Late last year, the U.S. and our negotiating partners put forward a proposal known as the Common State Proposal as a basis for moving the negotiations forward.

Despite some serious reservations, the elected governments of both Nagorno Karabagh and Armenia have accepted this Common State Proposal in a spirit of good faith to get the negotiations moving forward. And what was Azerbaijan's reaction to the proposal from the United States and our negotiating partners? An unqualified no.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, unbelievable as it sounds, our State Department is trying to push Congress to reward Azerbaijan, a country that rejects our peace plan, by repealing Section 907, to the serious detriment of Armenia and Karabagh, the countries that accept our proposal. Furthermore, the administration's budget request actually proposes increasing aid to Azerbaijan and decreasing aid to Armenia. What kind of a message does that send? That rejecting peace is okay?

Current law, Section 907, makes good sense and is morally justified. Section 907 does not prevent the delivery of humanitarian aid to the people Azerbaijan; to date, well over \$130 million in U.S. humanitarian and exchange as-

sistance has been provided to Azerbaijan through NGOs, nongovernmental organizations. The blockade of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh has cut off the transport of food, fuel, medicine, and other vital supplies, creating a humanitarian crisis requiring the U.S. to send emergency life assistance to Armenia.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is that Azerbaijan has failed to live up to the basic conditions set forth in the U.S. law pursuant to Section 907, and that is: "Taking demonstrable steps to cease all blockades and other offensive uses of force against Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh."

Mr. Speaker, I just hope that Secretary Albright and the State Department will reconsider their plan to repeal Section 907. And if not, Mr. Speaker, I hope that Congress will reject this effort as we have done now for several years.

Mr. Speaker, late last month Secretary of State Madeleine Albright renewed the Administration's unfortunate and misguided effort to repeal Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act.

What is Section 907? And why is it so important? Section 907 restricts direct U.S. government assistance to the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, until the President certifies that Azerbaijan has taken demonstrable steps to lift its blockades of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh. Azerbaijan's illegal blockades of its neighbors has resulted in the disruption of supplies of vital goods to Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh, causing severe economic hardship and real human suffering.

When the Freedom Support Act was adopted in 1992, establishing our new, post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy for the newly independent states of the former Soviet Empire, Section 907 was included as a way of holding Azerbaijan accountable for its blockades of its neighbors. Ideally, it might have been hoped that the Section 907 sanctions would prompt Azerbaijan to lift the blockades. But Azerbaijan has stubbornly maintained its counterproductive strategy of trying to strangle Armenia and Karabagh.

Mr. Speaker, Section 907 was good law when it was passed, and it remains good law seven years later. Azerbaijan has done nothing to merit the repeal of Section 907.

Despite these facts, Mr. Speaker, the Administration—with the strong backing of some of the major oil companies—is trying to push Congress to repeal Section 907. You see, the Caspian Sea, which Azerbaijan borders on, is believed by some to contain vast oil reserves. Much of these reserves remain unproven, and recent disappointing test drillings have prompted several international oil consortiums to pull out of Azerbaijan. But the tantalizing prospect of a new source of petroleum resources has caused the Administration to look the other way in terms of Azerbaijan's poor human rights record, its corrupt and undemocratic government, and its pattern of regional aggression.

In written testimony submitted to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Secretary Albright stated that the Administration would renew its request to repeal Section 907. Presumably the Foreign Operations bill, which we will be debating later this