

lying on at the beach, is that going to be a reason to call the FBI and call the flag police in to arrest someone for this desecration? Because we do not define the desecration, we just say we will write the laws to police this type of activity.

Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks we have had many Members in this Congress cite the Constitution. As a matter of fact, the Constitution is cited all the time. Sometimes I see it inconsistently cited, because when it pleases one to cite the Constitution, they do; and when it does not, they forget about it. But just recently we have heard the citing of the Constitution quite frequently. In the impeachment hearings: We have to uphold the Constitution, we have to live by our traditions and our ideals. Just last week we were citing the Constitution endlessly over the second amendment which I strongly support, and which I said the same thing. We must uphold the Constitution to defend the second amendment. But all of a sudden here we have decided to change the Constitution that we are in some way going to restrict the freedom of expression.

We say, well, this is bad expression. This is ugly people. These are people that are saying unpopular things, and they are being obnoxious. But, Mr. Speaker, the first amendment and the freedom of expression was never put there for easygoing, nice, conventional, noncontroversial speech. There is no purpose to protect that. Nobody cares. The purpose of freedom of expression is to protect controversy, and if somebody is upset and annoyed, the best thing we can do with people like that is to ignore them. If we pass a constitutional amendment and people are so anti-American that they want to display their anti-Americanism, they will love it. They will get more attention because we will be sending in the Federal flag police to do something about it.

Some will argue the Constitution does not protect freedom of expression; it protects freedom of speech, and this is not speech, this is ugly expression. But the Constitution does, does protect freedom of expression. That is what speech is. What about religion? To express one's religious beliefs. What about one's property, the right to go in and express what one believes? That is what freedom is all about is the freedom of expression and belief. I do not see how this country can become greater by having an amendment written that is in some ways going to curtail the freedom of Americans to express themselves. We have not had it for 212 years, and here we are going to change it.

It is expected that this will be passed overwhelmingly, and in the Senate possibly as well, and then throughout the country, but I do not see this as a positive step. We here in the Congress should think seriously before we pass this amendment.

NEXT STEPS FOR REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, we first need to go back to the American people and ask them to speak to their representatives. We will work with mothers, fathers, advocates, and I won't stop until 13 children don't die every day.

I will be at front lines as we figure out every strategy open to us to pass real gun violence legislation.

First, we will work with the House and Senate conferees on the Juvenile Justice bill.

Secondly, we don't yet have a date when the conference will be appointed. The Senate first decides to appoint their conferees.

The next big litmus test for the American public to watch is the Motion to Instruct the Conferees. That motion will consist of the House asking the Conference Committee appointees to keep the Senate language on the Gun Show Loophole Amendment.

We will attempt to attach the Gun Show Loophole language to the Treasury Postal bill and Commerce/State/Justice, which both oversee some gun laws. In addition, some of my colleagues have discussed attempting to attach the language to every appropriations bill, including this week's Transportation bill.

I still believe that we need freestanding gun legislation. That's why I will continue to ask that my bill—the Children's Gun Violence Prevention Act—be given a hearing. We will work to include the bill—or pieces of it—in any gun violence legislation.

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

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

GUN SAFETY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Connecticut (Ms. DeLauro) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, last week the House had the chance to do the right thing and pass common-sense gun safety legislation, that, in fact, the American people support overwhelmingly. But the House leadership chose instead to cave in to the wishes of the NRA, the National Rifle Association. It was outrageous. House leaders actually chose to respond to the tragedy at Littleton by trying to weaken gun safety laws.

Never before have I seen the will of the American people so totally ignored.

The House last week failed to take reasonable and needed action to reverse the tide of youth violence, but that will not and must not be the end of the story. The tragic shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, claimed 15 lives and brought sharply into focus the crisis of youth violence afflicting our country.

When 13 children a day die from gunfire, we have a crisis that the Congress of the United States should respond to.

We know that there is no one solution to the challenge of youth violence. We need to encourage stronger relationships between parents and children. We need to make sure that schools have the resources that they need, resources to reduce class sizes so that students get individual attention, and that teachers can handle and keep a handle on their classes. We need resources for counselors and for mental health professionals, and we need to lessen the negative influence of violence in our media. All of these things we need to do.

But we cannot ignore the fact that angry and troubled youth exact the horrible price that we saw in Littleton only when they can get their hands on dangerous firearms. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold used firearms that were purchased at a gun show. T.J. Solomon shot his classmates in Conyers, Georgia, after taking guns without child safety locks from his parents' house. Sensible gun safety measures must be a part of a comprehensive approach to youth violence.

Our colleagues in the Senate did the right thing to respond to our country's crisis of youth violence. They passed limited, but needed, measures to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. The bill passed by the Senate would close the loophole that allows criminals to buy weapons at gun shows; close the loophole that allows importation of high-capacity ammunition clips, and require that child safety locks be provided when handguns are sold.

The measure passed the other body, by the other body are not radical, and they were passed in a bipartisan way. They will not take away anyone's guns. They will not keep any law-abiding citizens from buying a gun. They will simply put in place a few needed protections to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

This House should have passed these measures last week when we had the chance, but we did not. Why did the House refuse to take such a basic step as to close the gun show loophole? I heard a colleague of mine say that closing the loophole would create too much paperwork, that it would be an inconvenience. Imagine that. An inconvenience. Tell that to the parents of a murdered child. Tell them about paperwork. Tell them about the annoyance of waiting 3 days to buy a gun. Compare the hardship of waiting 3 days to buy a gun to the hardship of endless days of agony and mourning the loss of a murdered child.

This Congress should be ashamed for caring more about reducing paperwork than reducing gun violence.

I am disappointed that the House failed to take steps that we needed to last week, but that is not the end of the story. We are here tonight to make clear that we are determined to see

common-sense gun safety legislation passed. The American people deserve no less.

Many Members have strongly supported efforts to keep guns from falling into the wrong hands, and I applaud them for their efforts. Among those who have been the most committed to protecting children from gun violence have been the women in the House of Representatives, and that is not an accident. Women are in tune to the devastating effects that gun violence has on American families and have rightly lead the charge to improve gun safety. We will keep the pressure on House leaders to ensure that effective measures are taken to protect children from violence. House leaders should act quickly to negotiate a compromise that includes the Senate-passed gun safety measures. But if the House leaders once again fail to take a strong stand to keep guns from criminals and kids, then we will keep searching for opportunities to pass the legislation that is called for by the American people.

I call on my Republican colleagues to stand up for gun safety measures. Each time that Congress has passed legislation to keep criminals from getting their hands on weapons, it is because there has been bipartisan support. I am disappointed that a much smaller share of Republicans voted for real gun safety legislation last week than when the House passed the successful Brady law that has blocked hundreds of thousands of gun sales to criminals.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join other members of the Congressional Women's Caucus expressing our disappointment with the gun safety debate of last week. It distresses me both as a mother and as a former County Prosecutor and judge. With the increase in youth violence at schools across America and the countless instances of children killed in gun related accidents, I believe there is a need for increased gun safety.

Parents across America are more concerned about their children's safety after the Columbine incident. We send our children to school to get an education and improve their citizenship, not to be threatened by classmates.

I recognize the fact that legislation restricting the access children have to guns is not the only answer to this epidemic of cultural values. Parents must take a greater responsibility for ensuring children learn right from wrong and how to resolve their problems with others in a non-violent way. Violence should not be a child's first impulse when life does not go the way they expect.

I believe that a combination of greater parental involvement in children's lives coupled with tighter restrictions on access children have to deadly weapons is necessary. As a person matures they learn better control of their emotions, and how to deal with others.

Last week we tried to close the loophole exploited by several known criminals. Unfortunately that initiative was filled with amendments seeking to loosen, not tighten, restrictions on gun purchases. Because of the action taken to weaken the legislation I was unable to support it. I care about our children and families, that is why I took the action I did.

Gun shows have become a haven for criminals and underage gun purchasers as well as those collectors seeking to buy guns. The two young men who attacked their classmates at Columbine High School bought some of the weapons used in that tragedy through a gun show. Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols, the two men convicted of bombing the Oklahoma Federal Building, financed their attack through illegal sales at gun shows.

I do not favor closing gun shows. Rather, I think we need to restrict a person's ability to go to a gun show and avoid the background checks on their purchase. A background check is not an assault on a person's Second Amendment rights. We seek to protect innocent people from the risk of gun violence by criminals and children. The law is clear and right, if you do not pass a background check you cannot legally own a gun.

An issue raised by gun advocates about background checks was the waiting period. The fact is that the majority of safety checks takes no more than a few hours. About 70 percent of these checks goes through immediately. Law enforcement is concerned about those checks that require more time, the minority of background checks. By limiting the time law enforcement has to check a person's record we allow people who are not supposed to own guns to actually buy weapons.

I do not want to prevent law-abiding citizens from seeking a weapon legally for protection, sport, or personal collection from buying a gun. Had we passed the legislation including the amendment offered by Representative DINGELL there would have been 17,000 people allowed to purchase guns who would not have been able to under current law.

I support maintaining the Brady Law background checks in order to prevent criminals and children from buying guns. It is safe to say that those who do not have access to guns and have the will to strike out against others cannot shoot another person. We need to keep it that way.

I am a mother and like all mothers I worry about my son's safety. He should not be at risk from friends who could buy a gun through the loophole in the gun show law. I support true and meaningful gun safety legislation, not taking guns away from law-abiding citizens.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, let us protect our children. Gun violence is not a partisan issue. American children deserve no less.

H.R. 659: PROTECTING AMERICA'S TREASURES

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

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, earlier this afternoon we passed a bill regarding the Paoli and Brandywine Battlefields and the visitors' center at Valley Forge. I had planned to do a 5-minute this afternoon where I touched on some of the points in my comments regarding that bill, regarding a dispute that has arisen in the development regarding Gettysburg National Historical Park.

This past weekend, my son Zachary, who is in fifth grade, was here with the Deer Ridge Elementary School, and

among other things they went to Annetiam, and on my way back to Indiana I joined them and then went on up to Gettysburg. We had a 3-hour hearing of the Subcommittee on National Parks at Gettysburg that I sat through and found the debate fascinating. Partly it is the struggles between a community that does not want to see the visitors' center moved away from where many of the retail attractions are and the National Park Service.

I came away from that, A, not fully understanding the community's opposition. While I understood some concern if the visitors' center moves a half mile, in fact as a former retailer, and actually still own and lease out our retail businesses, it looks to me like this would be a huge advantage to every retailer in the town of Gettysburg, because the increased length of stay, the repeat visits, the more things to see and do will lead to more dollars being spent in the community.

But beyond that, this is a national area, and it raises a number of questions that we have to sort through specifically on Gettysburg, which I hope will move ahead rapidly. This report was just released last week on the final general management plan, and I hope we can proceed. It has been held up for some time, and they have gone through all the procedures, but we need to get going on this. Also, some national debates, the differences between a historical park and a National Park.

For example, this is not a wilderness area. One of the things, when we look at the basic purpose of a historical park is that it should look like it did at the time of the historic event, or at least have the feel of that historic event, and one of the problems that we have on some of our battlefields is, quite frankly, they are overgrown.

One of the points that they make in this report on page 44 is that the peach orchard, which was a very critical point in the second day of the battle at Gettysburg, that it is now fashioned for fruit production, and then it does not look like the current peach orchard.

□ 1900

So we look and say, how could the soldiers have used that as any type of shield as the Confederate Army moved towards the Union line?

Furthermore, the woods from McPherson Ridge, now the woods are overgrown, choked with growth, and we cannot experience the battlefield because we cannot visualize how the troops are moving. In many areas there are woods where there should not be, or farms that have been taken out so one cannot see what it was like for the soldiers to go through.

One of the important parts of the experience is to see what it was like at the time the battle was fought. The National Cemetery movement took place, of which Edward Everett and President Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg. When we had the National Cemetery movement those were places of contemplation, where we reflect what happens when people die in battles. But