

The truth is, if somebody wants to kill someone with a firearm laws banning guns aren't going to stop them. A lot of guns used in robberies and murders are stolen. Well, if we got rid of the runs in the world, then we would have a solution, right? Nope, people would use other homemade weapons, bombs, knives, etc.

A gun is a tool, not a weapon. It is a tool for hunting, recreation and protection. It can be a historical piece, it can be a keepsake, it can represent something. Guns are not to blame for the Columbine High School incident.

By now you might be asking yourself what is to blame. Unfortunately, it's a problem not many people want to face. It starts at the home. It starts with a lack of discipline, a lack of love, and a lack of values. I'm sure that if the parents of the boys involved in this shooting incident has been more involved with their kids, this incident would have never occurred.

The parents are not completely to blame. Today's violent televised society illustrates this violence as a normal everyday thing. This makes it difficult to draw the line between right and wrong. These things, added together, resulted in the final problem: The boys responsible for this shooting. In the end, it is they who are responsible.

So, what can be done to prevent another tragedy like this one? To all the parents who are reading this talk to your kid! Even though you may not want to and your kids may act like they don't want to talk to you, just their knowing you're willing to talk often helps. Spend time with them, draw them to activities that keep them busy and feeling wanted such as sports, church, even target shooting! If parents teach their kids how to use and respect a firearm, they'll be less likely to abuse it than if their parents avoid telling them about guns.

To all of the kids and teens reading this: talk to your parents. They can be a valuable source of information and can help you when you feel there is no one else to turn.

Other things you can do include complimenting people instead of insulting them, always remembering that you are important, having good friends, and reporting to authorities if anyone you know makes dangerous threats against you or anyone else. By doing this we might be able to prevent another incident like the one that occurred at Columbine High School. I hope that everyone reading this will pray for the families affected by the shooting and take my advice to heart.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE TO THE SENATE

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, it is with some sadness but also with some pride, that I stand before the Senate today to recognize Austin Smythe—a longstanding and highly respected member of the Senate Budget Committee staff. After nearly 15½ years of service to the Senate and the Congress, Austin will begin employment in the private sector at the end of this week.

Those who know Austin in this Chamber, know he is a Senator's dream staffer. Austin is dedicated, loyal, intelligent, and above all else possessing integrity beyond reproach. He came to the Senate Budget Committee in December 1983, as the committee's energy budget expert. Over the years, he gradually took on more responsibilities to where today, as he leaves the Sen-

ate, he is my staff director's right-hand man on issues related to the budget act, process reform issues, and the often arcane world of budget score keeping.

He has been instrumental in the passage of many a budget resolution and reconciliation bills over these last many years. He has also taken the lead on helping to reform the process by his work on the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990, the Unfunded Mandates Control Act of 1995, and the Line Item Veto Act of 1996—that unfortunately was ruled unconstitutional. He has been my key budget committee staffer on my quest to get Congress to change its appropriation and budget process into a biennial system—that work, I promise you Austin, will continue.

Along the way, Austin was able to find the time to get married and start a family. It is his wife, Katie, and his two young girls that have borne the real burden of Austin's dedicated service to the Senate and his country.

The American public is unaware of the role staff play in helping us elected officials "to do the right thing." Sometimes even with good staff, we get it wrong, and of course, when it doesn't come out right we blame our staff. But if the legislation advances public policy in an affirmative way, we will take the credit for success. In truth, of course, it is to staff like Austin Smythe, who work under very difficult circumstances, long hours, and sleepless nights, that we—and indeed the country—all owe a tremendous debt of gratitude. For without Austin's dedication, and staff like him, the things we have gotten right would never have happened.

I wish Austin and his family the best. And on behalf of all the Budget Committee members, the committee staff, and indeed the entire Senate, thank you Austin for a job well done. We all will miss you.

KIDNAPPING OF SENATOR CORDOBA IN COLOMBIA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I rise today to express my deep concern over the kidnapping of Colombian Senator Piedad Córdoba de Castro. Senator Córdoba was abducted on May 21 by paramilitary forces under the command of Carlos Castaño. I urge the Government of Colombia to take all appropriate measures to obtain her safe release and to bring those responsible for this kidnapping to justice.

Senator Córdoba, as President of the Colombian Senate's Human Rights Commission, is a strong voice in Colombia for the promotion of human rights. She has also been a leader in efforts to bring peace to Colombia after fifty years of political violence. Senator Córdoba's role as a leading advocate of human rights and peace makes this crime particularly shocking.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has also condemned the kidnapping of Senator Córdoba and has urged the Co-

lombian authorities to do everything possible to obtain her release. Secretary-General Annan called Senator Córdoba "a firm supporter of peace" who had "performed invaluable work towards the achievement of fundamental rights and freedom".

It is extremely disturbing to see that paramilitary forces and guerrilla groups involved in Colombia's internal conflict continue to resort to kidnapping as a means of political pressure. This violent action against a prominent human rights advocate emphasizes the importance of the efforts of President Pastrana to eliminate all links between the Colombian Government and the paramilitaries.

I urge the Government of Colombia to take all necessary and appropriate measures to break these links, obtain Senator Córdoba's release, and bring to justice those responsible for her kidnapping.

THE SATELLITE HOME VIEWERS ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome this opportunity to express my strong support for S. 303, the Satellite Home Viewers Act. This legislation will enable many more consumers in Massachusetts and across the nation to receive network signals by satellite.

The Act achieves a fairer balance between the interests of satellite TV firms, local broadcasters and cable firms. It reverses a federal court decision that has caused millions of satellite TV subscribers throughout the country, including in many rural areas of Massachusetts, to lose their access to network television stations. Consumers will be major winners with the passage of this legislation. It means greater choice, particularly to those in rural areas.

This legislation will also promote competition between the satellite and cable industries by enabling satellite providers to offer local broadcast signals in the same local market. In recent years, "must carry" rules have protected small broadcasters from being left by the wayside during the rapid growth of the cable industry. Similarly, this bill protects small broadcasters by requiring satellite carriers re-transmitting local signals to the local market to comply with the "must carry" rules by January 1, 2002.

Consumers everywhere will benefit from the passage of the Satellite Home Viewers Act. I commend Senator MCCAIN and Senator BURNS for their leadership in providing more choices and better service to consumers.

COSPONSORSHIP OF THE MOTOR VEHICLE RENTAL FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, yesterday, I introduced two bills, S. 1130, the Motor Vehicle Rental Fairness Act and S. 1125, the Telecommunications Merger Review Act of 1999. Later in the day, I asked that Senator CONNIE MACK be

added as an original cosponsor to the Motor Vehicle Rental Fairness Act. Despite the fact that my request specifically stated "the Motor Vehicle Rental Fairness Act", the Bill Clerk's office inadvertently added Senator MACK as a cosponsor to the Telecommunications Merger Review Act. It is my understanding that this error has been corrected. I want the record to reflect that Senator MACK was an original Cosponsor of the Motor Vehicle Rental Fairness Act.

"SHALL ISSUE" LAWS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss concealed weapons laws. Currently, in Michigan, if a person wants to obtain a permit for a concealed weapon, he or she must apply at the local county gun board. Each one of these gun boards is made up of three members: the local sheriff, county prosecutor and a designee of the state police. The gun boards base their decisions on a person's demonstrated need for a gun, and that person's criminal record, if any, and on local conditions.

Local decisionmaking makes sense. Local law enforcement officials know the local environment, local citizens, and can best assess the local impact of increasing the numbers of weapons carried in public. Last night, the Michigan State Senate passed a bill that, if signed into law, would take discretion away from local gun boards and put more weapons on our streets and in public places. In my view, eliminating the authority of local gun boards would be detrimental to public safety in Michigan and take us in the opposite direction than we are heading in Congress. More important than my opinions are the views of the law enforcement community in Michigan. Every major law enforcement agency in the state of Michigan including the State Police, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, Michigan Prosecuting Attorneys Association, Michigan Municipal League as well as many other organizations such as the Michigan Municipal League have made statements opposing this bill.

One of the bills that is now before a conference committee of the Michigan Legislature is referred to as a "shall issue" bill. The NRA has been lobbying Michigan legislators to support a "shall issue" policy. The legislation is called "shall issue" because it mandates that if a person passes an FBI Federal background check, the gun board "shall issue" him a permit to carry a concealed weapon, without requiring a show of need or the condition of other local circumstances.

This legislation goes in the wrong direction. It would increase the danger of gun violence in our communities. I have seen no evidence, that people who have a legitimate need to carry a gun for protection are being denied the ability to do so. The numbers demonstrate that the overwhelming majority of requests for concealed weapons

permits are approved. It's important for public safety that local gun boards continue to make such judgments.

Here in Congress, we are working hard to reduce the easy availability of lethal weapons to people who should not have them. I do not want to see my State go in the other direction by passing a law that encourages the spread of concealed weapons in public places.

Michigan has not been the only state targeted for these NRA-backed concealed weapons bills. Yet, despite the best efforts of the NRA, the "shall issue" policy has been rejected by a bipartisan group of legislators in more than 10 States. That's because of the power of people in those States who united to demand action. Voters in the State of Missouri recently defeated a "shall issue" proposal much like the one in the Michigan Legislature. Missourians voted to keep in place prudent regulations for carrying concealed weapons—regulations that were first enacted in reaction to the days of Jesse James and the outlaw gangs.

I believe the majority of Michigan's citizens feel the same way.

MEMORIAL DAY COMMEMORATION REMARKS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, in anticipation of Memorial Day this coming Monday, I wish to honor the memories of the 1.1 million Americans who gave their lives in defense of America and American ideals. Americans have fought and died in various wars spanning over two centuries. Her fallen soldiers have left indelible marks on the annals of history in conflicts notable for the good attained over the evil vanquished: independence over monarchical tyranny; freedom over slavery; and democracy over fascism and communism. Indeed, in this century alone, American servicemembers can be hailed for turning the tide of history's two world wars. As we head towards the dawn of a new millennium, I ask my colleagues to join with me to give homage to America's patriots, in deed as well as word.

I believe the best way to commemorate the spirit of those who gave their lives is to honor, respect, and care for the 26 million American veterans living today. As Chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I have striven to accomplish this goal through a number of legislative measures and processes. After a successful battle over the budget resolution, I and 52 of my Senate colleagues signed on to a letter urging the Appropriation's Committee to match the budget resolution's recommendation of an additional \$1.66 billion for veterans' health care. This funding is vital to ensure that our nation's veterans get the highest quality of health care available. I have also pushed for enactment of legislation which would increase veterans' education benefits; allow for a Medicare Subvention demonstration project; require additional national cemeteries to

be built in areas with high veteran populations; and ensure that construction of the World War II Memorial begins next year.

The Athenian leader Pericles had these words to say about those who lost their lives in the Peloponnesian War over 24 centuries ago: "Not only are they commemorated by columns and inscriptions, but there dwells also an unwritten memorial of them, graven not on stone but in the hearts of men." This Memorial Day, I challenge my colleagues to make a commitment to engrave the memory of 1.1 million Americans not only in our hearts, but in the legislation we enact for veterans and servicemembers during the remainder of the 106th Congress.

ELECTION OF EHUD BARAK AS PRIME MINISTER OF ISRAEL

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to congratulate Ehud Barak, on his victory in the recent Prime Ministerial election in Israel. Mr. Barak is a man of courage and a proven leader. He is eminently capable of leading our closest ally in the Middle East at this important juncture in its history. His resounding victory reaffirmed the Israeli people's strong desire for peace.

Not only was the election a victory for Mr. Barak, it was also a victory for Israeli democracy. Nearly four out of five Israeli citizens over the age of 18 cast ballots on May 17, 1999. That figure is even more astounding when you consider that Israelis—even those living overseas—are not permitted to cast absentee ballots. More than ten thousand Israelis purchased airline tickets and traveled great distances in order to exercise their right to vote. This dedication to the most basic pillar of democracy is enviable, for if people fail to exercise their right to vote they quickly lose their voice.

This election also marked an important milestone. For the first time in Israel's history, an Arab campaigned for Prime Minister. Although Azmi Bishara withdrew from the race shortly before the election in order to boost the chances of Mr. Barak, he should be commended for his courage in running. While members of Israel's Arab minority have long been represented in the Knesset—Israel's parliament—Mr. Bishara's campaign demonstrated that Arabs are welcome in all segments of Israel's political life.

Mr. Barak is both a true son of Israel and a worthy leader of the only democracy in the Middle East. Born on a Kibbutz six years before Israel's independence, he has served his country well as its most decorated soldier, Chief of Staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, Member of the Knesset, Minister of the Interior and Foreign Minister.

After the polls closed on May 17th, when it was clear that he had been elected, Mr. Barak traveled to Rabin Square in the center of Tel Aviv. Standing just feet from the spot where an assassin's bullet struck Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin three and a half