

There are too many protesters in prison. There are too many religious persecutions. There are too many military threats. Granting China PNTR now might be economically rewarding, but it would be morally wrong. Last year, I supported and spoke in favor of granting a one-year extension of normal trade relations (NTR) with China. I support a comprehensive engagement with China that includes free and fair trade, but only after China has demonstrated a willingness to become a responsible member of the world community. China should move toward more individual freedom not less. More negotiation with Taiwan and not military threats. China historically is a great nation and can and should be part of this global economic success, but it's not accomplished by persecution and threats. I cannot support granting PNTR to China until the government gives up its reliance on threats and intimidation to achieve their international policy goals.

#### MILLION MOM MARCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, it should not take a million moms to do anything, but that is what we are going to get this coming Sunday, Mother's Day. Actually, it should not have taken the moms whose children died at the Columbine High School youth massacre.

□ 1645

It should not take the moms who are still feeling the reverberations of the Jonesboro, Arkansas, shooting. And it should not have taken what the moms at the Granada Hills Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles went through just last August.

But what has happened with the killing of youth over the past year, and it has been more than a year since Columbine, has caused the mothers of America to take the matter into their own hands, and well they might because this Congress has not taken it into its hands, to do something about it.

These mothers are coming. I do not know if there will be a million, but I know there will be a lot. And this is what they say to us, "We are putting our elected officials on notice that we, the mothers, will not tolerate them putting the gun lobby before the safety of our children any longer. We expect results, and we will hold our elected officials accountable if they do not deliver."

Mr. Speaker, these are some serious women and their families. These are some moms who wanted to test us to see whether if they come they can get the attention that the killings of children throughout the United States have failed to attract.

The moms do not doubt that every Member of this body and of the other body are seriously concerned about the deaths of these and the 80,000 children

who have died from gunfire, accidental, suicidal, and homicidal since 1979. They know we care. They do not know that we have the political will to do what is necessary to stop these killings.

I am grateful that two Members of this body, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY), have introduced a Congressional resolution praising the Million Mom March. They know that this body is full of Members who support gun safety legislation and certainly the gun legislation that is pending before the House at the moment in conference committee. Because that is, by any standards, very modest legislation.

The million moms, of course, are way out in front of us on legislation. Their crusade, and it has taken on the appearance of a mother's crusade, began with a single mother, not with any special interest organization, not with any group of lobbyists sitting around trying to get our attention, but with a single mother who, following the North Valley Jewish Community Center shooting last August, simply could not take it anymore.

One mom started. And if ever there is a meaning to grassroots movement, that is what has happened ever since. It has been 9 months. There must be some symbolic importance of that time since she started this crusade. And it has grown like wildfire in every State of the Union.

It started with suburban, middle class moms. And that is very interesting as far as this Member, who represents a large city, is concerned. Because until the Columbine youth massacre, the real focus had been on the one-on-one shootings, and that is what they mostly were and mostly are, that occur in large cities because kids so easily get ahold of guns.

What has made this a national priority is that mothers and families now see that these guns know no borders and that suburban children are at least as fascinated with guns as anywhere.

So we are going to see hundreds of buses come into this town from Texas and California, to Maine and Michigan. In April they said Pennsylvania was leading in buses. By now I do not know if some other State has overtaken Maine.

Rosie O'Donnell, the television celebrity, who everybody knows is a big opponent of the proliferation of guns, is going to be the MC.

But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, that we will not find many Members of this body speaking because the moms want to speak for themselves. There will be an occasional public official speaking. But, apparently, to qualify to speak, if they happen to be a public official, they have to have been a public official who has suffered gun violence in her own family.

I love it that the march will be open not, as is the usual case, by our mayor, after all, he is not a mom, but by the woman we call Nana Williams, the

mother of the mayor. And then the moms will step forward to tell their stories and to let us know what they want.

Look, everybody else has tried. We begin in quite civil debates on the subject. The media delight in airing the subject. None of that talk has gotten us anywhere on the most modest legislation, the bill pending before us, where we literally are almost at the point of absolute agreement literally with about an inch to go and cannot get that inch accomplished.

That inch, of course, has largely to do with closing the gun show loophole, with most of us agreeing that instant checks would do it but not wanting to let the most dangerous potential owners get through because they will require at least 24 hours.

We hear about the dozen children every day who die from gunshot wounds. These do not always occur in the way, of course, that the terrible tragedy occurred at Columbine. These happen with accidents. They happen with kids playing with guns. These happen with suicides. What they all have in common is the easy availability of guns to kid.

Well, the moms, in all of their literature, insist upon speaking for themselves. Here again is what they say. "Now we moms are mad, and we mean business. We want Congress to create a meaningful gun policy in this country that treats guns like cars."

I have to tell my colleagues that I would save some time if I did not have to get my car checked or the registration renewed. But most of us understand that a car is seen as a dangerous weapon. If that is true about a car that is used normally in a quite benign fashion, I guess the moms have a point when they say they do not understand why guns cannot be treated like cars.

As I contemplated Columbine, which has weighed on my mind for the full year since it took place, I was jolted when a big-city version of the suburban tragedy in Colorado came right here to the Nation's capital at the National Zoo that the House and the Senate established long ago essentially for children.

Seven children were wounded when gunfire broke out on Easter Monday. Thank God none of them were killed. But, Mr. Speaker, one of them lies still gravely wounded in Children's Hospital here.

I, of course, have visited that family. It is a very brave family. They have stayed away from the press. They are very dignified. The family has devoted its energy to prayer and to this 11-year-old child who is fighting for his life.

They call him Pappy because when he was born he looked like a papoose. They delight in talking about him. Because this 11-year-old is no man-child. He is still a child and is still acting like a child, jumping up in his mama's bed, playing with his video games, loving his mom and his dad, and is part of

a big, extended family. So they feel a real hole in their hearts with this youngster lying in the bed.

It is interesting. His mother, in talking to me, brought up the Million Mom March. She said, you know Congresswoman, I go to all these marches. So I intended to go to the Million Mom March, but I am certainly going to go this time.

And so, she will be with me. Mrs. Bates, the mother of Harris Pappy Bates, will be marching with me and with mothers from Maryland, Virginia, and the District on Sunday.

On Sunday, we are going to start out from Freedom Plaza at 11 o'clock and we are going to march together as a region to drive home the point that we know that these borders are porous. The moms in Virginia and Maryland say they know that the guns come from their States and from other States.

We in the District have done our job in banning guns altogether. We are not asking for other jurisdictions to do exactly as we are doing, but we do think that our Government has an obligation to protect us all in the national union of which we are a part by enacting legislation to protect our kids.

So there is going to be a Metro Moms March from Freedom Plaza to the march simply to show solidarity in the region for our kids, to put aside all the rhetoric, to put aside all of the jingoism about where we are from and to stand together with our kids on Sunday and to make our own regional statement.

And just as we will be making our own regional statement, we know that mothers from every State in the Union will be carrying the flag of their State to talk about their experience and to speak directly to us, mom to Congress, about our job, our part of the job in eliminating these guns.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that one of our distinguished Members, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), has come to the floor. I yield to the gentlewoman.

□ 1700

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for her leadership and her passion on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support today's special order and to thank again the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for bringing attention to this serious problem in our Nation. It is a serious issue that is really plaguing the families and the children of our mothers. As a mother and a grandmother, I am moved by the efforts and commitment of mothers across this Nation to draw attention to the thousands of children who have been killed by gunfire. As a legislator, however, I am disturbed that we here in Congress have not heard the pleas for common sense gun legislation. Throughout this session, we have

struggled to keep the focus of Congress on gun safety, one of the most vital issues facing our country today. This Congress has sat idle for some 9 months, refusing to pass common sense legislation or to hold a simple meeting while an alarming number of America's children are gunned down every day.

Mr. Speaker, the question we must ask ourselves is why so many of our American children must die, for God sake, before this Congress takes action to end the epidemic of violence that plagues our communities and especially our families, but, most importantly, our children. In the United States today, a child dies from gunfire every 100 minutes, 12 times the rate of the next 25 industrialized nations combined. That means, Mr. Speaker, that 12 children die from gunfire each day, a classroom full every 2 days. Not one of our congressional districts is immune from gunfire which has taken the lives of children. In my district, Joe and Gerald Hawkins are but two of the victims in this cycle. The names of America's children continue to toll. George Camacho, Armondo Garcia, Yuridia Balbuena, Olivia Munguia, Jessica Yvette Zavala have all been killed by gunfire in California. What do we tell mothers when we in Congress cannot even meet to discuss common sense gun legislation that would have saved the lives of these children and save the lives of many more?

Mr. Speaker, I represent the 37th Congressional District of California, which includes the areas of Watts, Compton and Wilmington, some of the most impoverished areas in the Nation. These areas, like many in the inner city, have been riddled with gun violence. We cannot allow another child from our communities to die while this Congress refuses to move forward with common sense gun legislation.

It is quite simple. While Congress sits on the sideline, more of our Nation's children are dying each day from gun violence. Our Nation's mothers have spoken and will speak again on Sunday. The message is clear. Gun safety is about saving lives. Regrettably, the mothers of this Nation are marching on Washington and in cities across this country not to celebrate sensible gun legislation but to protest an ineptitude which has infiltrated the halls of Congress. A delegation of mothers from my district will participate in one of the two marches in the Los Angeles community. I hope and pray that our message will finally move Congress to address this issue before another day passes and more of our children are lost to gunfire.

It is unfortunate that we have let special interests and political differences interfere with a common sense approach to protecting the lives of America's greatest asset, our children. I have introduced a bill both in the 105th Congress and the 106th Congress that would prohibit any person from transferring or selling a firearm in the United States unless it is sold with a

child safety lock. Common sense gun safety measures that prevent felons, fugitives and stalkers from obtaining firearms and children from having access to guns are the types of items that we want enacted into law in this Congress.

My dear colleagues, wherever you are, we have been entrusted by the people of this Nation to be leaders and visionaries. We have a moral obligation to the people of our Nation to enact legislation before more of our children are sacrificed. Again, I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, and I urge my colleagues to stand up for children and support the Million Mom March this Sunday. Happy Mother's Day to all mothers and to those mothers who will be marching on behalf of our children.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentlewoman from California for her very good intervention and for her work in this Congress on behalf of children and her work in promoting the use of Mother's Day in a particularly meaningful way this year.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Illinois.

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for all of her work on behalf of meaningful gun control legislation, and I want to thank her for allowing me the opportunity to come before this body to discuss gun control legislation and to discuss the Million Moms March. Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Million Moms March organizers for inviting me to share my thoughts on the need for gun control in this country at the Million Moms March on Mother's Day 2000 this upcoming Sunday. This is an issue which has been dear to me for quite some time.

It is with great sorrow that I come to the floor to remember the more than 80,000 children who have fallen victim to gun violence since 1979, great sorrow that is followed with great conviction, great conviction that I rise to advocate for the 13 children who statistics say die today, died yesterday, and therein will die tomorrow from gun violence.

Also on yesterday, the National Education Association held a press conference to draw attention in part to the fact that gun violence robs children of the opportunity to learn and to grow. And on the eve of the Million Mom March, we must remember that at its core the gun control issue is about opportunity. It is about the opportunity for our children to go to school and to learn without fearing for their lives. The gun control issue is about opportunity, the opportunity for our children to enjoy the wonderful innocence of youth. This is an opportunity that they all deserve.

As adults, we make life choices which may be risky or may be dangerous. For example, millions of police officers and other public safety officers go to work each and every day and willingly put their lives on the line to protect and

serve the public. But it is one thing for an adult to die in the course of performing a chosen duty. It is one thing for the parents, the family of that adult to have an element of uncertainty in their lives as their father, spouse, mother go off to perform a chosen duty. But it is another thing for a parent, for any parent, to fear for the life of a young child who goes off to school, a birthday party or even to the local grocery store.

Too often, it is a common occurrence in our Nation for these parents, these siblings, these loved ones, to engage in moments of uncertainty as our young people go off to perform in routine matters, go off to do those normal things that children do, including going to school, going to a birthday party or just going to the local grocery store. These are the routine events of a young life which should never ever be threatening.

So today, on the eve of the Million Moms March, I want every mother in my district in Chicago, every mother in Chicago, every mother across this Nation, to know that I for one stand firmly with them arm in arm, hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder. I am ready to do all that I can to bring this senseless violence to an end. The time has come. This time is now. The time has come for the Congress to listen finally to the impassioned voices of mothers and fathers from all across this Nation. It is high time that we do all that we can to give our children the most important opportunity of all, and that is the opportunity to lead a meaningful life, the opportunity to just live.

Again, I want to thank the organizers of the Million Moms March, and I want to thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for organizing this special order.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentleman from Illinois for coming to the floor this evening. The gentleman from Illinois will be speaking at the march because of his own tragic loss, and I honor the moms for understanding that what public officials should speak are those public officials who indeed have a tragedy that bespeaks why the moms are here. I honor the gentleman for his participation and our prayers continue to be with him in his loss.

It is my great pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for her leadership in so many very, very important issues. Again, the issue that we address today is probably one of the most important. As I reflected on my statement this evening about the upcoming Million Moms March to be held on such an important day, Mother's Day, and focus on such a pressing issue, common sense gun safety legislation, I knew that this momentous occasion deserved profound but heartfelt words.

As I searched my soul for those words, I realized that they had already been written over two centuries ago

and could be found within one of the documents that is sitting right on my desk, the Constitution of the United States of America, for the Constitution's preamble states, "We the people of the United States in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Let me repeat the key phrase that is critical to this issue: "We the people of the United States in order to ensure domestic tranquility . . . do ordain and establish this Constitution."

Many of the opponents of common sense gun safety legislation would interpret this phrase along with the second amendment to mean that our Constitution provides for unregulated access and use of guns by individual citizens in order to protect themselves, their families and their communities. And may I add for recreational use.

On Sunday, Mother's Day, our Nation's mothers will respectfully disagree. In 1999 in one single year, 4,025 children and teens were killed by gunfire, one every 2 hours, nearly 12 every day. 1,262 children committed suicide using a firearm, more than three every day. 306 died from an accidental shooting. I ask the opponents of gun safety legislation, is this domestic tranquility? Nearly three times as many children under 10 died last year from gunfire as the number of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. Is this domestic tranquility? And American children under 15 are 12 times more likely to die from gunfire than children in 25 other industrialized countries combined.

□ 1715

I ask the question is this domestic tranquility? Sadly, many of our neighborhoods and schoolgrounds have become war zones where our children will soon be forced to wear protective gear to protect them from the piercing sting of a bullet, and, ultimately, death.

Again, I ask the opponents of gun safety, is this domestic tranquility? Is this what our Constitution allows? I submit that the framers of the Constitution created a document that serves as the foundation of our democratic society, yes, lending certain freedoms. However, it is also meant to guarantee certain protections, including domestic tranquility.

As lawmakers, it is our duty to pass legislation that breathes life into this constitutional ideal. This means that our Nation's mothers should be guaranteed the right to raise their children in a tranquil environment free from the fear that their child could be killed by gunfire in their own home, in a friend's home, or on the school playground or simply walking to a neighborhood store.

This means common sense gun safety legislation that would make guns

childproof and theftproof and would require increased background checks in order to close loopholes through which criminals gain access to guns.

And so, this evening, the profound heartfelt words that I leave with you, Mr. Speaker, are as such, on Sunday, our Nation's mothers will send us a signal that we have an obligation to uphold the ideals of the Constitution of the United States of America by ensuring that their children are afforded a world of domestic tranquility.

Mr. Speaker, it is our duty to breathe life into these words and protect the lives of our children, for our children are the living messages we send to a future we will never see. Let us rid their lives of gun war zones and replace them with tranquil homes, schools and communities by passing common-sense gun safety legislation.

Our time is running out, one child dead in the past 2 hours, 12 dead today.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the distinguished gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), my good friend, for those very moving remarks.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to yield to another distinguished friend, the gentleman from Manhattan, New York (Mr. NADLER).

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Mr. Speaker, I rise to voice my support for the Million Mom March. I am looking forward to participating in the march this weekend which welcomes concerned mothers, fathers and their children to join in the call for reasonable gun safety measures.

This House should certainly pass reasonable gun safety measures, and we should call upon the leadership to convene the conference committee that has sat for over a year without meeting because they do not want to deal with these issues.

One of the main goals of the march is to urge Congress not to pass merely some of the very mild gun safety legislation that has been considered here, which is apparently too much for the Republican leadership, but to pass, in addition handgun licensing and registration legislation. In the spirit of this effort, I strongly urge my colleagues to cosponsor the handgun licensing and registration bills, H.R. 2916 and H.R. 2917, that I introduced in September of last year.

Senator FEINSTEIN has just introduced very similar legislation in the Senate. Handgun Control, Inc. has endorsed these bills which would require States to establish handgun licensing and registration systems.

H.R. 2916 would require individuals to pass a Brady background check, take a gun safety course and obtain a photo license from their States in order to receive a license to purchase a handgun.

H.R. 2917 would require States to implement handgun registration programs.

These common sense measures are supported by about 70 percent of Americans according to the recent CNN-USA

Today-Gallup polls, if you want to own and operate an automobile, which, used improperly, can be a deadly weapon. Every State in the union requires that the automobile be registered and that you obtain a license to drive.

With respect to guns, which are by definition deadly weapons, we should take similar precautions, and as the polls I mentioned shows, 70 percent of Americans agree with this commonsense assertion.

These bills have been awaiting action by the House Committee on the Judiciary since last September. In response to the huge outpouring of support for these ideas, I, again, urge the House Republican leadership to schedule hearings and markups on these two critically important bills.

The House Republican leadership is fond of embracing motherhood and apple pie; now they should listen to the moms and pass handgun licensing and registration legislation as soon as possible.

Mr. Speaker, I also wish to thank the organizers of the march for their efforts, and I look forward to joining many New Yorkers and tens of thousands of people from all across the country in the Million Mom March this Sunday on Mother's Day.

Let me add, I also want to thank the delegate, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for arranging this special order.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I very much thank the gentleman from New York City for coming down to offer those important remarks and remind us of our own obligations there is much we can do right now in this House to respond to the mothers. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, the need for national gun legislation is brought home by the virtual futility that many of us who have succeeded in getting strong gun legislation in our own jurisdictions now see to that effort.

Many large cities in the United States, including the District of Columbia, have gun bans. There are those with the audacity, some of them on this floor occasionally to say words to the effect the District of Columbia has a gun ban, so what good are gun control laws?

Well, that is a virtual concession to the proposition that we need national gun safety legislation in order to have truly effective local gun safety legislation, and that is all we are asking. That is all we are asking. We are not asking for uniformity, but we do think there should be a minimum standard that any decent civil society should have with respect to the most dangerous weapons in that society, guns. That is what these moms, I take it, are coming to say.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to identify myself, though, with those who have become so obsessed with the national obsession with guns that when it comes to gun violence, they focus solely on guns. I do not believe that guns

are the central source for the violence in American society. I think that their role is overwhelmingly clear, the role of guns in that violence is overwhelmingly clear.

Mr. Speaker, I am a student of history, I have a Master's in history, I read history, I love my country and I love its history, and I am profoundly impressed with the degree to which violence is simply a part of our national character. It was there before guns became the pervasive weapons of choice in the streets of the cities and in the homes of the suburbs.

Violence in the American character has expressed itself throughout American history. We continue to carry forward that sense of violence as simply a part of who we are. It may have to do with the fact that we came, at least those of us who were not African Americans, or American Indians, simply came as immigrants and fought our way, one way or the other, some violently, some nonviolently, into the fabric of this country, from the time that the first settlers fought the native Americans for territory until the time that the Wild West was settled. Whatever it is, we have to face who we are and who we are are folks who have had violence as a part of who we are from the time the country came into being. It is deep within us and guns is but one expression of it.

Indeed, most of the expressions are at least overtly non-lethal, but in my judgment, they probably are as primary in causing the violence as guns are. I am talking about our movies and our videos and our cable, and I am talking about Hollywood and the networks, and I am talking about computer games. I see this as one huge stew. Guns are a part of that stew, but it is a very dangerous mixture of things that we kind of take for granted because everybody has them, as we see the increasing violence in all of the portrayals from our literature to our video portrayals. It is there, it is all around us. It cannot be avoided. We have a love affair with violence and always have had one. We have had a long, deep romance with violence.

Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is not that guns are the source of the problems in our city, even the problems of guns; I am saying that guns are a part of a phalanx of sources and this if we are going at the sources, if we are going at Hollywood, if we are going where the guns begin, with the parents and the communities, if we are going at the networks, then who would leave out the guns? This is a big picture. All of the actors in this picture need to sit around the same table and come to some agreement about how to deal with all the causes of violence.

All I ask my colleagues to remember, or indeed, to ask themselves, is should guns be left out of this picture. Should we take them off the table, while saying to Hollywood and the networks and computer games and cable and literature, you come and see what should

be done. As a virtual first amendment absolutist, I certainly am not calling for censorship, but I do believe if we all sat around the table and frankly admitted that when a child of 5 gets acculturated to who he is in American society through gun and violent-impacted portrayals everywhere he looks, that one should not be surprised if he picks up a gun and tries it out one day himself. Therefore, if we understand how almost as if by osmosis the violence is picked up, then it seems to me putting all of the causes on the table, we can stop the finger pointing and begin where we must begin. All I am asking is that with a million mothers coming in on mothers day, we at least begin with modest gun control legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to sit with those who over and over again tell me that there is not enough enforcement. Right, let us have more enforcement; that we have to do something about the parents, I would begin there; that the communities are racked with violence, we have to draw the churches in, absolutely. Let us sit down and figure out a strategy for that, but let us not take guns off the table. Let us not have more than a year pass since Columbine and sit on our thumbs doing nothing about it. Let us start with guns. Let us start with that youngster with a bullet in his brain in Children's Hospital. Then, let us come to work next week and put everything on the table and sit down and figure out what to do.

□ 1730

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) today to renew our call for gun safety legislation and to highlight the Million Mom March, which will take place this coming Sunday.

As my colleagues have indicated, the Million Mom March promises to be an amazing event. This weekend I, too, will be coming back to Washington from New Jersey. I will join families from across the Nation who will take time out of their lives to come to the Nation's capital to call for passage of commonsense gun safety legislation.

It takes a special kind of parent to spend Mother's Day on Interstate 95 on a bus heading for Washington. It will be moms, and in my case and in the case of others, granddads and dads and grandmothers, but these Americans feel so strongly about this issue that they are making this commitment.

I believe this will be a Mother's Day that few will forget. Mothers are trying to demonstrate to Congress the overwhelming desire of our Nation's families for commonsense gun safety legislation.

Just a few weeks ago our Nation was shaken by events at a Michigan elementary school classroom where a 6-year-old child, a child who had barely

learned to read, knew how to kill another child with a handgun. It is the latest in a long line of gun-related tragedies.

In Columbine we thought it was the last straw, but in West Paducah, in Jonesboro, and in dozens of other communities across America, in each case we thought, this is the straw. This is the last straw. It will break the camel's back. We will get gun safety legislation moving.

Since the murder of little Kayla Roland, citizens across New Jersey have called even louder for passage of strict gun safety laws. But despite the outcry, a few politicians in Congress have been standing in the doorway and blocking the halls and refusing to act.

The National Rifle Association may control a few of the hearing rooms around this Capitol, but we are here today to say that the NRA is going to recoil from the effect of the mom squad. The hundreds of busloads from across the Nation I think will show that they have more clout than Charlton Heston and the gun lobby.

Every school I visit, every PTA meeting I attend, every classroom I teach in, moms, kids, dads, nearly everyone I talk to in New Jersey tells me it is high time that Congress take action to keep guns out of the hands of kids and criminals. They are fed up reading the headlines, and so am I.

As a new Member of Congress, I find it particularly disturbing that Congress has refused to consider this legislation this year, particularly in light of the fact that nearly one child is killed every 2 hours by gunfire.

I am sure my colleague here knows, but it is worth repeating, that more people were killed by guns in New Jersey than in Australia and New Zealand and Korea and Singapore, Japan, Canada, Germany, and Great Britain combined last year. A child in America is more likely to die from gun violence than from all communicable diseases.

Congress has passed laws that allow water pistols to be regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, but real pistols, the ones that kill people, are not regulated. That needs to change.

All of us were shocked last year when a deranged gunman opened fire at the Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles, wounding several people, children, later killing a randomly selected bystander. It was a hate crime that left us numb.

But many people do not realize an additional shocking fact in that story. The gun that was used was originally a police service firearm that had been resold legally by the law enforcement agency and put back on the street. It is an all too common problem that is only recently being recognized. It makes no sense for police to work to get guns off the street, and then to put them right back there where they can be used to harm officers or civilians.

I have introduced legislation to encourage States to mandate the destruc-

tion of surplus police guns when they are at the end of their lives. Furthermore, something I have called for, some say it is politically risky, but I think we should have registration of all handguns in the United States, and licensing of all handgun owners. I have legislation to do that.

As my colleague has said, you need a license to drive a car. You need a license to catch a fish. You need a license to give a haircut or even a pedicure. You ought to need a license to own a deadly firearm. It should not take tragedies like Columbine and the recent shootings in Seattle and Hawaii to get us to admit that.

It is time for Republicans and Democrats, Independents, to look the NRA in the eye and say, enough. It is time to pass gun safety legislation now.

I think the million moms, the moms squad, will help make that change. I am old enough to remember the effect of the Mothers March for Peace. I am sure my colleague remembers this. She was too young, perhaps. But in 1961, it was the outrage of millions of mothers across America that brought us the Atmospheric Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

The power unleashed from these million moms is something to behold, I guess is the way to put it. I think this will be a Mothers Day to remember. Let us just hope that there are enough Members of Congress who hear and heed the message that these mothers bring to Washington this coming Mothers Day.

I thank my colleague for arranging this special order and drawing attention to this important subject.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I very much thank the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. HOLT, for his salient remarks. I must say to the gentleman, when he spoke about the moms and the nuclear ban treaty and said he was old enough to remember it, he might have said, "When I was a child, the mothers insisted on such a ban."

I would say to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT), if I may say so, I found what the gentleman had to say about shootings in the gentleman's own State, New Jersey, comparing them to shootings in nations, huge nations across the world, that there were more shootings in this single State than in what looked like more than a half dozen nations, I found that to be itself profoundly informative.

Mr. HOLT. If the gentlewoman will yield, the point I wanted to make, it is not a particularly large number in New Jersey relative to the other States. New Jersey also has a crime rate that is falling.

It is just that in the United States, there are 30,000 gun deaths a year in the 50 States. Among the 9 million people in New Jersey, yes, we have some, too. And it is, by any international standard, astoundingly large.

Ms. NORTON. The gentleman does point out that crime is falling, and still we are way beyond other countries. Of course, the statistics the gentleman

gave us from New Jersey very frankly could probably have been given from every State in the Union. No State I think would be excluded.

As the gentleman says, it is because we now have pervasive gun violence. None of us is safe. Some thought they were safe if they did not live in big cities. The million moms, most of whom are going to be suburban moms, are leading the country to understand that these guns are everywhere.

I very much thank the gentleman from New Jersey, unless he has some more remarks to make.

Mr. HOLT. Just following on what the gentlewoman just said, no one in America is immune. We have a society where guns are prevalent, are available, are unlocked, and dangerous.

What I hear from so many people is not that Columbine High School is a school where our children might go. In fact, Columbine High School is a school where our children would like to go. It seems to have all of the advantages: An excellent curriculum, excellent facilities. Yet, that kind of tragedy could happen there. Yes, it could happen anywhere.

Ms. NORTON. Indeed so, because when children are acculturated to violence, they get it off the television, off the same CDs, off the same networks, they get it out of the same Hollywood, we really are one Nation. Nothing, ironically, proves that more than the way in which these guns have touched every part of our Nation.

I very much thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) for his very cogent intervention.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to put into the RECORD what the million moms want. They are way beyond our modest gun legislation where we are trying to close a gun loophole, and where we are trying to get gun safety locks. They think that any rational human being should be doing that and should do it quickly.

They are asking for licensing and registration. They say each would work very simply and without a new bureaucracy. They say that the licensing would mean that before one got a gun, one would complete a basic safety course. Would anybody want a gun without in fact making sure that she understood everything that was associated with that gun?

There would be a check to ensure that the person was not a criminal who committed a violent crime, or a mentally ill person. There would be a photo and a thumbprint, and of course, that like any license, it would have to be renewed periodically.

Then they say they also want gun registration. The nerve of them. We have to register for almost everything. I have to make sure my car is registered because the time for that is due this year. They said what would be involved there, if you fill out a form with the gun serial number, the government would make sure, the local government would make sure that the gun buyer is

in fact licensed. A copy of the registration would go to law enforcement authorities.

Of course, there would be renewal of the registration periodically. That way, of course, the tracing of guns would be a snap, and we would make sure that the only people who got guns in the first place were like the 90 percent of the people who pass the instant gun check, those who of course are like you and me and are buying guns not to kill other people.

I want to thank the President of the United States for going with me to our academy, our police academy, where he announced that there would be some funds available for the District to do another gun buyback on June 14.

I have national legislation that would allow localities to receive small amounts from the Federal government in order to do gun buy-backs. They have been enormously successful in the District, where we set something of a precedent, and we would hope that would be repeated and that our national government would take up this notion.

I do want to stress that the million moms stress that they do not advocate the banning of guns. They want particularly their Second Amendment sisters to know that, because they cannot see any part of what they want to do that any mothers would be truly in disagreement with.

As a lawyer, I do want to answer those who are concerned about the Second Amendment. My friends, if the Second Amendment kept the modest legislation we are advocating here from going through, then how could the gun bans, total gun bans, handgun bans that we have here in the District and in every large city, have passed constitutional muster?

We can in fact regulate guns the way we regulate cars. The Second Amendment does not say that there should be no regulation. We can even regulate the time and manner of speech, and that is a more salient constitutional right than the Second Amendment. Let us not keep throwing the Second Amendment up and confusing the matter.

In the recent gun violence, in 1997, of the children killed, 191 were under the age of 10 and 84 were under the age of 5. Most of these children are not shot in shoot-em-ups, in gang wars. Most of these are suicides. Imagine if a gun had not been available. The presence of the gun in the home triples the risk of homicide in the home. If a gun is not handy, then a suicide is less likely to occur, whether by a child or an adult.

Mr. Speaker, the gun safety legislation that we have here is the least that the mothers who are coming on Sunday are entitled to a year after the Columbine youth massacre. They want much more. I think it would be an insult and a show of disrespect if, at the very least, the modest gun legislation pending before us were not forthcoming after their visit here to Washington, where the national government sits.

I know that every Member of this body has the deepest respect for the mothers. The mothers do not represent themselves as a lobby or representative of every mother. They do say they are moms, and they ask as moms for their Congress, their House, and their Senate to hear them and to respond accordingly.

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#### PERMANENT NORMAL TRADE RELATIONS FOR CHINA

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

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I have taken this time out to talk about a very important issue that we are going to be addressing later this month here in the Congress, but I of course would join in extending happy Mother's Day to all of the mothers all over this country and all around the world, for that matter.

Mr. Speaker, the issue that I am talking about is an issue that, according to several of my colleagues, will be the single most important vote that we will cast in our entire careers here in the Congress. The question has to do with whether or not we are going to pry open a market with 1.3 billion consumers in the People's Republic of China and force this very repressive society to live with a rules-based trading system, or are we going to say that the United States of America will have nothing whatsoever to do with that sort of effort.

It seems to me that it is the most important vote that we will cast possibly in this session of Congress at least, because it really says are we going to maintain our role as the paramount global leader, and are we going to maintain our economic prosperity, or are we going to turn our backs on it and cede that to other countries in the world.

Well, I think that we have a responsibility not only to the United States of America, but to the rest of the world. Why? Because the United States of America is the greatest symbol of political pluralism. This building in which I am standing right now is the symbol throughout the world of freedom and democracy. It says to me that we have a responsibility to continue to provide the inspiration and the promotion of those things. And that is a message which I am happy to say is moving widely throughout repressive societies like the People's Republic of China. It is a message which can be sent with even greater enthusiasm if we bring the People's Republic of China into the World Trade Organization and, as I said, force them to live with a rules-based trading system.

There are many people here who regularly talk about the fact that over the last 20 years we have provided one-way

access for China to the U.S. consumer market and they have said why do we not get into their market so that our first class workers and businesses can export goods and services to those 1.3 billion consumers? Well, in the week of May 22, we will have an opportunity right here to cast a vote in favor of opening up that market so that it can benefit our workers and businesses.

But there is an issue which in many way transcends this, and is one that is of great concern to me and I know to many of my colleagues here. That has to do with the question of our western values; the things that we hold here near and dear; the recognition of human rights; as I mentioned earlier, political pluralism, making sure that we have religious freedom. Those things need to expand throughout China.

But guess what, Mr. Speaker. Since we have seen the opening of China, since what was known as the Shanghai Communique in 1972 when Richard Nixon opened China, we have seen improvements take place. There is a great deal of room for improvement. I do not stand here as an apologist for the policies that exist in Beijing, but we do have to recognize that there have been very positive steps taken that move us closer to the kind of China that the world needs.

As was pointed out by President Ford in the event that was held at the White House earlier this week, maintaining stability in Asia is in our U.S. national interest, and this is a very important issue which will play a role in helping to maintain stability there.

I think it is important for us, Mr. Speaker, to take a few moments to look at some of the statements that have been made by outspoken dissidents in China. In this morning's Washington Post, there was an article which talked about three dissidents who actually believe that granting Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China will do more than almost anything to address the very important concerns of human rights and religious freedom and those other concerns that are out there.

Tong Bao, who is one of the most prominent dissidents, actually lays out a really key distinction that needs to be made here. He talks about the division. He said that there are some in China who believe that things must "get as bad as possible."

Mr. Speaker, I believe that that is wrong. I do not think that we should have things get as bad as possible, and neither does Tong Bao. He happens to believe that it is important for us to do everything that we can to improve that situation there, and in so doing, I believe that we will create an opportunity to get our western values through Permanent Normal Trade Relations.

So I will simply close, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I believe that we have a wonderful chance for success. I hope that every single one of my colleagues,