

Every day in the United States, over a million children go home to homes where there are loaded guns that they have access to. There are over a third of a million firearm deaths every year in this country. If we take the simple, common sense approach to have smart gun technology available, we can make a significant step towards reducing that carnage. For the Federal Government, to lead by example, by putting its money where our mouth is, would be an important step.

Mr. Speaker, and last, and by no means least, as I mentioned, I do hope that the leadership in this assembly will enable us to vote on the Senate-passed provisions to take those simple steps towards safe gun storage, reducing the magazine size for automatic weapons to 10 or fewer bullets, and having background checks at gun shows. These are things that can make our families safer, healthier, and more economically secure.

GRANTING CHINA PERMANENT MOST FAVORED NATION TRADE STATUS

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

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to voice my concern about granting China permanent normal trade relations. According to the recently released 1999 State Department human rights report on China, it says, "human rights deteriorated markedly throughout the year." Every Member ought to read the report before they vote.

The State Department's human rights report describes the People's Republic of China as "an authoritarian state in which the Chinese Communist party is the paramount source of power." Did my colleagues know that the human rights report, it says that the Chinese Government carries out "numerous executions after summary trials"? Did my colleagues know that more people were executed in China last year than anywhere else in the world? My goodness, this Congress and this administration wants to give China MFN. For example, the State Department reports that a radio station in China reported that eight people were arrested and quickly executed right after being sentenced.

Do my colleagues know that the report says that China has still not accounted for those missing or detained in connection with the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrators? Eleven years. The moms and dads do not know where their children are. And this administration and this Congress wants to grant China permanent trade status? Shame.

Do my colleagues know that the State Department says that the Chinese Government has, "Intensified its efforts to suppress this dissent." The

report says that by last year's end almost all the leaders of the China Democracy Party were serving long prison terms or were in custody without formal charges.

Do the Members of this body know that the report says that the Chinese Government sentenced numerous leaders of the Falun Gong spiritual movement to long prison terms and sent them to psychiatric hospitals? Do the Members know, does the Clinton administration know, does anybody care? The American people care. I do not know who cares up here or in the administration.

Do my colleagues know that the State Department reports that the Chinese Government ignores its own laws that are supposed to provide for fundamental human rights? Do my colleagues know that the report says the Chinese Government ignores these laws in practice with abuses that include extrajudicial killings, torture, mistreatment of prisoners, forced confessions, arbitrary arrests, detention and lengthy incommunicado detention? I have been in Beijing Prison Number One, and I can tell my colleagues that it is grim.

Do my colleagues know the report says the Chinese Government continues to restrict freedom of religion and has intensified controls on unregistered churches? Do my colleagues know that the report says the government infringes on its citizens' privacy rights, freedom of movement, freedom of press, freedom of free assembly?

Do my colleagues know that the report speaks to violence against women, including coercive family planning practices, which sometimes include forced abortions and forced sterilization? They track the women down and force them to have an abortion. The report speaks to trafficking, prostitution, discrimination against women, trafficking in women and children, abuse of children, discrimination against disabled and minorities. These are all problems. This is in the State Department report that every Member ought to read.

Do my colleagues know the report says that the Chinese Government continues to restrict tightly workers' rights and forced labor in prison facilities remains a problem? Do my colleagues know the report says child labor persists in China?

Do my colleagues know the report says that "Particularly serious human rights abuses persist in minority areas, especially in Tibet." The Chinese government has plundered Tibet. They are persecuting the Muslims; they are persecuting the Catholic Church; they are persecuting the Protestant Church. Do my colleagues know that the report says that unapproved religious groups, including Protestant and Catholic groups, continue to experience varying degrees of official interference, repression and prosecution?

Do my colleagues know the report says that the Chinese "government

continues to require all places of religious activity to register with the government." Do my colleagues know the report says that Chinese authorities, guided by national policy, make strong efforts to control unapproved Catholic and Protestant churches? Religious services were broken up and house church leaders or adherents were harassed and fined, detained, beaten and tortured? This is in the State Department report.

I could go on with other examples of human rights abuses by the Chinese Government, but I would end by asking if my colleagues know that the Chinese Government refuses to allow Catholics to recognize the authority of the Pope in matters of faith and morals?

Do my colleagues know the report says that numerous Catholic bishops and believers have been imprisoned and beaten? Do my colleagues know the report says that in May of last year, Bishop Yan Weiping was found dead in Beijing shortly after being released from prison? Do my colleagues know, looking at this picture, that this report says that the whereabouts of some of these bishops, like Bishop Su, reportedly arrested in 1997, are still unclear?

Every Member ought to read this report. And after reading this report, I know my colleagues will be with the American people and they will not support permanent normal trade relations for China.

A NINTH TIME ZONE FOR GUAM AND THE NORTHERN MARIANAS

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

Mr. UNDERWOOD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak to a bill which I will introduce that fills a time void which has long existed, and that is the naming of a time zone which exists under the American flag but which has no official title.

Wherever the flag behind us flies there is a title for each time zone in which it flies, whether it is in the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, with its Atlantic time zone; this city, with its eastern time zone; Chicago, with central time; Denver, with mountain time; Los Angeles, with Pacific time; Honolulu, with Hawaii standard time; Anchorage, with Alaska standard time; and even Pango Pango and American Samoa, with Samoa standard time. But there was a ninth time zone, where Guam sits and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas sits as well; and where there is no official title for this time zone. Not that there is no time there, but that there is no specific name for this time zone.

Perhaps this is an oversight. The fact that this time zone is on the other side of the international date line and could appropriately claim the title of being the first American time zone, could get

the competitive spirits of those in the Atlantic time zone aroused. But when information is being sent out about changes in national time or announcements concerning time, this ninth time zone, in geography going west but first in terms of time, frequently gets ignored. After all, the existing law only allows for eight time zones under the American flag.

Consequently, Madam Speaker, I am introducing today a bill which fills the void, which corrects this oversight, and which appropriately designates each and every American time zone. If all Americans count, then all Americans should be included in time, in political participation, and in the national census. Each and every time we look at the clock or look at our watch, we should recognize that there exists nine time zones.

□ 1245

The unique feature of this particular piece of legislation is that it is responsive to a quandary that does not quite exist in the other time zones. We have two jurisdictions with two distinct names. We have Guam and we have the Northern Marianas. We could call it the Guam slash or dash Marianas time zone. However, in time, Guam would take center stage and the remainder of the Marianas would be ignored. Or we could call it the Marianas time zone, but that would be taken as a signal that Guam is not included.

Therefore, in honor of the historical unity of both Guam and the Northern Marianas and the people who were the original inhabitants of the entire island chain, I have designated in this legislation this new time zone as Chamorro Standard Time. The word "Chamorro" refers to the indigenous people, possesses a proud cultural heritage, and forms the basis of the underlying historical and cultural connection between the people of Guam and the people of Luta, Tinian, Saipan, Agrihan, and other islands in the Northern Marianas.

ManChamorro ham todū gi tinituhon. We were Chamorros in the beginning.

ManChamorro ham esta pa'go. We are still Chamorros today.

This amendment to the Calder Act has been discussed with Federal officials in NIST of the Department of Commerce, and we anticipate only support for this effort.

Madam Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to cosponsor and pass this legislation quickly, dare I say it, in a timely way. Let us not waste any time. Let us take the time to make time for all Americans.

ELIMINATION OF MARRIAGE TAX PENALTY

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

Mr. WELLER. Madam Speaker, today is a big day. The House Committee on Ways and Means is going to act on another item on our agenda, an issue of fairness; and today, in the House Committee on Ways and Means, we are going to move forward on an item on the Republican agenda which helps 800,000 senior citizens, senior citizens over the age of 65, who because they need to work or want to work, they want to be active longer, or maybe they have two pensions, had their Social Security benefits taxed away. And that is called the earnings limit, or the earnings penalty.

Today we are going to pass legislation which will wipe out that unfair quirk in Federal law which taxes away two-thirds of the Social Security benefits of 800,000 senior citizen who happen to earn more than \$17,000 a year.

We can all think of seniors that we know in our local communities who have to work, maybe they are waitresses, maybe they work or have a little hobby or they set aside some money and saved and invested well that they are making more than \$17,000 a year, and today they are punished; they are penalized.

We are going to pass legislation which deserves bipartisan support which wipes out the earnings limit for 800,000 senior citizens. That is a big victory as we work to bring about fairness to every American.

Today I want to talk about another issue of fairness, an issue which this House has voted to address, an issue which responds to a fundamental question of fairness, the difference between right and wrong; and that is, is it right, is it fair that under our Tax Code 25 million married working couples on average pay \$1,400 more in higher taxes just because they are married?

Is it right that a working married couple with an identical income, identical circumstances, pays higher taxes than a couple that lives together outside of marriage with identical circumstances? Of course not. It is wrong; it is unfair that under our Tax Code a working married couple pays more in taxes just because they are married.

I want to introduce to my colleagues in the House Shad and Michelle Hallihan, two public school teachers from Joliet, Illinois. Shad and Michelle, of course, teach public school; they just had a little baby, a young couple, a nice couple. They suffer the marriage tax penalty just because they are married.

They have a combined income of about \$62,000. They are two public school teachers supposed to have identical incomes of about \$30,000 each. They are middle class. Well, they pay the average marriage tax penalty.

Michelle pointed out to me, she said, Congressman, as you work to eliminate that marriage tax penalty, let your colleagues in the Congress know that that marriage tax penalty that the Hallihans pay would buy about 4,000 diapers for their newborn child.

It is real money for real people. And for other families in Joliet, Illinois, the hometown of Michelle and Shad Hallihan, that \$1,400, the average marriage tax penalty, is 1 year's tuition at Joliet Junior College or a local community college. It is 3 months' of day-care at a local childcare center in the south suburbs of Chicago. It is 7 months' worth of car payments. It is a washer and a dryer for couples like Michelle and Shad. And they are a beautiful couple. They are young.

But the marriage tax penalty is suffered by the elderly, as well. We have all heard the stories about elderly couples who get divorced because they can save money. Well, the marriage tax penalty punishes young and old just because they are married. And this House has done something about that. We have been working over the last several years to wipe out the marriage tax penalty. And 230 Members of this House joined together to cosponsor H.R. 6, the Marriage Tax Elimination Act, legislation which wipes out the marriage tax penalty for couples like Michelle and Shad Hallihan.

I am proud to say that this House voted, in fact 48 Democrats joined with every House Republican to vote to wipe out the marriage tax penalty, benefiting 25 million married, working couples who suffer the marriage tax penalty.

Our legislation will essentially wipe out the marriage tax penalty for Shad and Michelle Hallihan. We do it in several ways. It has three key components. It is legislation designed to help everybody who suffers the marriage tax penalty, and we do it in three approaches.

One is, first we help the working poor. Those who participate in the earned income credit, which helps those working poor families, particularly with children, well, there is a marriage penalty and we adjust the income threshold so that working, married couples who participate in earned income credit will see their marriage penalty eliminated.

Let us remember that the biggest part of the marriage tax penalty is caused when we have a husband and wife like Shad and Michelle Hallihan, who, because they are married, they file jointly, they combine their income. We eliminate the marriage tax penalty by widening the 15 percent tax bracket as well as doubling the standard deduction.

The Senate needs to act. I hope the Senate will join us and move in a quick way, a timely way, and in a bipartisan way to join us in wiping out the marriage tax penalty.

IMPROVING BUDGET PROCESS—KEEPING SOCIAL SECURITY AND MEDICAID SOLVENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 19, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized