

about whether he learned. At the new school, skipping class and not showing up the next day was a major infraction. For the first time, Virginia was told by her son that he actually felt safe walking through the school's hallways. Not only did Virginia's young son graduate, but unlike many of his friends at the old school who had dropped out before graduation, he graduated with a 3.8 grade average. And, indeed, today he proudly serves in the Marine Corps. Virginia believes that going to private school literally saved her son's life.

That is one story. There are thousands of stories like that in terms of better opportunities. But there are thousands more parents who want the same for their kids, who want that opportunity, who simply don't have that opportunity but who will now have that opportunity if the bill that was passed yesterday in the Appropriations Committee ultimately becomes law.

It is nonsensical to withhold from these parents the opportunity to have their kids be able to go to a school where they will thrive, where they will have those new opportunities.

Yesterday, as I looked at the vote and who voted which way, it is clear that a majority of Senators in the Appropriations Committee—and I believe a majority of Senators on the floor of this Senate—are parents like Virginia who will demand better options for their children, and thus the Senate will support giving them those options.

I, for one, support each child's right to learn to read and write and add and subtract. Basic education for our schoolchildren simply cannot wait. It is incumbent upon us to act.

Cardinal McCarrick, who is the Archbishop of Washington, DC, understands how crucial choice is to the future of this city's kids. I had the opportunity to discuss with Cardinal McCarrick this very issue. He stressed to me the importance of this piece of legislation to open up that opportunity to families and to kids all across the District. He wrote me a letter earlier this summer, which I ask unanimous consent to be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON,  
Washington, DC, July 21 2003.

Hon. Senator Bill Frist,  
Dirksen Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR FRIST: As the U.S. Senate committees review legislative proposals for appropriations to fund the DC School Initiative, I would like to restate in the strongest terms my support for this initiative and all that it represents.

Our Catholic Schools in the District of Columbia have served the children and families of Washington for over 100 years, and we are determined to continue to provide for these families in the future. We are committed to the City and to all its families and children. In fact, the majority of our students in the District are not Catholic. As stewards of education we recognize the need for every student to have equal access to educational opportunities that will best serve the needs of

both the family and the child. It is because of this commitment that we wanted to work in partnership with Mayor Williams and our colleagues on the City Council, on the School Board, in the Superintendent's office, and in the private sector. Working together, putting politics aside, we realized the need for a three-sector initiative. It is a simple collaborative model, and yet it continues to remain a controversial concept to some.

This three-sector concept has formed the basis for the DC School Funding Initiative. This approach provides the opportunity for all in leadership to support the strongest strategy to date for improving and increasing educational options for low-income families. Just as a triangular structure is the sturdiest of structures, because each side reinforces the other, the three-sector approach allows the whole of DC education to be greater than the sum of its parts.

The Archdiocese of Washington is committed to this solid approach and strongly supports legislation that provides 45 to 50 million dollars over five years for:

a. DC public schools to bolster the Transformation schools, to recruit principals and teachers, and to provide for professional development programming;

b. DC charter schools to support building renovations; and

c. Non-public scholarships for the neediest families in the District to be used to pay for the cost of education at the school of choice.

Let me just say a further word about the third part of this triangle, the help for parents who want to exercise their right to choose a non-public school for the education of their children. If they are poor—as so many of our families here in the District are—they have the right in theory, but they cannot exercise it in fact because they cannot pay the cost of their education. Some are working three and four jobs just to make their choice possible and your heart breaks to see this sacrifice made year after year. This three-sector program will help them as it will help the youngsters in the public system as well.

It is our sincere belief that this partnership model is significant and worthy of legislative support, funding, and assessment. This unique model of cooperation and strength affords all three sectors opportunities to engage in shared research, planning, and the continued development of services to support all children.

Hoping these legislative initiatives will be successful, the Catholic Schools of Washington, DC are prepared to accept 1,200 to 2,000 students. Many of these students may attend schools that already serve low-income neighborhoods. In fact eleven of our Center City Consortium schools currently serve a population that is 99% non-white, with 65% non-Catholic, 50% living below the poverty level, and 70% of the students living in single-parent households. More important, these schools are successful—with 100% of the graduating students accepted at Catholic High Schools, where 99% of the graduates go on to college. The average cost of educating our children is approximately \$7,000 per child compared to the \$12,000 cost for the District of Columbia. This ground-breaking initiative to participate as partners in education is an opportunity each of our District of Columbia Schools welcomes.

This is a unified and comprehensive strategy to level the playing field for under-resourced communities by ensuring economically disadvantaged families a chance to pursue all options, giving all children access to quality educational choices.

The Archdiocese remains committed to the three-sector initiative. Together with the Mayor, the City Government, the School Board, and our colleagues in all charter and

non-public schools, we share this dream of giving the children and the families of our nation's Capital one of the finest educational opportunities in the land. All three sectors need to be supported for this partnership strategy to succeed. Each sector gains strength and stability from the other sectors. This is a partnership representing a long-term commitment of cooperation for the good of our children.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our commitment to this vision.

With every good wish, I am

Faithfully yours,

THEODORE CARDINAL MCCARRICK,  
Archbishop of Washington.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in that letter, he tells me that he regularly in the course of his counseling and in the course of his work sees parents who work “three and four jobs just to make their choice possible.”

He goes on to write that “your heart breaks to see this sacrifice made year after year.”

My fellow colleagues, parents are breaking their backs in this District to send their kids to schools that work, schools that really teach, schools that really provide an environment in which learning can take place. When you learn that only 10 percent—only 1 out of 10—of the District's fourth graders are proficient readers, your heart breaks all over again. These children almost certainly will never be able to catch up.

I would like to close these brief remarks with a statement from the editorial page of the Washington Post. Although I don't quote the editorial pages of the Washington Post often, on this issue the Post is absolutely correct. The editorial reads:

It is inexcusable for a group of Senators, many from distant States, to turn this into a partisan issue of their own. Instead, they should fight to make the District of Columbia school system work better for more children, in public, private and charter schools across the city.

“They should fight to make the DC school system work better for more children.”

Mr. President, we should—and we must—fight to do just that. The District schoolchildren should not be trapped in the shadows of our shining city on the hill. They deserve, and their families deserve, our best efforts to make their classrooms models of success. They deserve, just as much as any other child—as much as a child of a U.S. Senator—to achieve the American dream. We can give them that opportunity.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SENATE AGENDA

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I have a few comments to make about the fall

and some of the progress we have made to date, and then I plan on closing the Senate for the weekend. Not having had the opportunity this week, the first week back after our August break, I did want to comment a bit on the agenda.

Over the course of the week, we have had time to have our conference, and I talked to the Democrat leader as well, and I think over this week we have made good progress. There has been not quite as much progress today as I would like. I am very hopeful we will make more progress on the Labor-HHS appropriations bill. But after discussions with our own conference and the leaders on the other side, I am optimistic and very excited about the agenda for the next several weeks and into the fall.

Over the course of this week, we have made good progress. We have had seven rollcall votes. We have disposed of a number of other amendments, and I remain hopeful we can complete action on this bill early next week so we can continue with other appropriations bills.

In addition, this week we passed several important banking reforms under Chairman RICHARD SHELBY's leadership, including hospital mortgage insurance and the FHA mortgage commitment. I thank Senator SHELBY for his tremendous leadership on both of these issues.

Next week, once we complete Labor-HHS, we will go, as I mentioned, to other appropriations bills. Chairman STEVENS this week was able to process all of the remaining appropriations bills. We have done three of the 13 bills. We are on our fourth appropriations bill. The rest of those bills were processed in committee and, indeed, all of them now are awaiting Senate action. That is why again and again, as majority leader, I will be encouraging our colleagues to work together and continue to make progress because all of this we are directed to do over the next 30 days. So I ask for patience, cooperation, and partnership so we can continue to move in the direction of completion of these bills.

Next week, we will continue working with the Democrat leader on the commemoration we will have in this body for the anniversary of September 11. With all of these efforts and the accomplishments of the last 8 months, if you put it all together, the Senate has made steady, consistent progress. That is what the American people want, that is what the American people deserve, and that is what they expect. So I think we are on course.

If we look back over the last several months at issues such as our jobs-and-growth package to tax relief to global concerns, such as HIV/AIDS and the commitment we have made and the legislation we have passed, we see a whole range of policies that directly impact people's lives, at a very personal level, a very intimate level, both here at home and, indeed, across the globe.

Over the August recess, I had the opportunity to spend much time in Africa, to be able to look firsthand at the ravages of HIV/AIDS and the devastation that this greatest of all humanitarian causes has inflicted upon a people, but also the great hope that can result and is resulting from the commitment of the United States of America in this regard.

We will continue into the fall season with a very clear mission. It is the mission that I have stated on the floor, in our leadership meetings, and in our caucus: to move America forward and to do it in such a way that serves the cause of the freedoms that we all cherish, the freedoms for which we fight, the freedoms upon which this country was founded.

That mission is coupled with forging a path of security in a whole range of fields—in military, defense of the country, and health care—and to forge a path of strength and opportunity as reflected in my statement just a few minutes ago for the American dream of the people in the District through expanded school choice.

As we look at this mission of moving America forward, I very quickly think of the issue of energy. We left before the August recess having passed very important legislation, the energy legislation under the leadership of our colleague from New Mexico, Chairman PETE DOMENICI. Little did we know that within 2 weeks of that we would have the August 14 blackout that blanketed the Northeast and Canada and dramatically brought home to us, in a concrete way, the importance of that legislation and the importance of completing that legislation which addresses the issues of the energy supply, abundance, and a more secure energy policy.

Although I am not sure if they are finished now, a few hours ago the conference committee on energy between the House and Senate were meeting. Going into that meeting, I talked to Senator DOMENICI. He said how excited he is that we have an opportunity now that we have tried to realize in the past, an opportunity to realize something that the American people again deserve and expect and that will impact the lives of every single American in such a positive way.

The chairman and members on the conference committee have been hard at work with the administration in developing a policy that is consistent with what we are working towards today, and that is solutions to the energy crisis which address everyday Americans, whether we look at production, consumption, or transmission of electricity. So as we look into the fall and project ahead, I am confident we will have an Energy bill on the President's desk by the end of the year.

This week, there has been much discussion on the supplemental to our efforts in Iraq. Although we do not know what that figure from the White House will specifically be, it is clear, at least

to my mind—and there will be debate and discussion and points will be made, but at the end of the day, we will stand behind the President and the request of the President of the United States, and we will provide those resources and provide them proudly because we must win. We will win. There is no question in my mind we will win, but we must be fully behind that effort to make sure that those freedoms, which are the very freedoms upon which this country was founded, are preserved for our current generation but also for the future.

Our work around the world and with the world community to bring Iraq into that world community of nations not only advances freedoms across the globe but a safer and a more secure Iraq indeed makes Americans safer and more secure.

We have the challenges before us, but there is no question that we will win that war on terrorism, that we will win those battles for security in Iraq, and that we will provide those appropriate resources.

As we look at moving America forward, we started by passing a Medicare prescription drug bill in this body, but our full impact has not been felt and will not be felt until we have a final product in the conference report, which is currently underway. Meetings among colleagues have taken place this week on both sides of the aisle to help develop that final product in Medicare and really to develop a Medicare system that, for the first time in the almost 40 years of its existence, will offer help to people who need that help for prescription drug coverage.

There is a lot of talk about: Can it be done? Is there going to be a backlash to it? It is going to cost too much. It is too complicated to do now. There is still a lot of partisanship. Some say it is going to get mixed up in elections. I hear all of that again and again, but this is a particular issue that this body has spoken on strongly and overwhelmingly.

There were over 70 votes in favor of this legislation. It is legislation that will have an impact, again, on millions of seniors' lives.

It leaves me to fairly confidently say we are going to have a bill that is going to be on the President's desk sometime this year—I cannot predict exactly when it will be—that will represent the most significant legislative change, and I should also add the most significant increase in resources applied for health care security for seniors and individuals with disabilities; this gets lost a lot, but a bill that focuses on low-income people who simply do not have the resources to buy what we know are very expensive drugs, lifesaving drugs, quality-of-life-improving drugs.

This bill will cut the burden of prescription drugs by over half on people who are low income or simply have no health insurance or no access to those lifesaving drugs. It is a bill that will provide immediate relief. We are not

talking about 5 years from now or 10 years from now but literally within probably around 8 to 9 months after the President signs that bill, every senior will have a prescription drug card that will give them help immediately with the purchase of those prescription drugs.

We have a challenge. The challenge is basically to take the very best of the Senate bill and the very best of the House bill, bipartisan, bicameral, and put it together to accomplish those goals. I am confident we are going to be able to do that in spite of the naysayers, who—and I am not sure what drives it—basically say it cannot be done, it will not be done. I am confident it will be done. It will be challenging, but it will be done.

When I think of security in Iraq and the security of our freedoms or energy security, it comes back to health care security because if one is a senior or a near senior, their greatest fear is something is going to happen to them or to their mom or spouse, and it is going to wreck their life. They are going to die, their spouse is going to die, or their mom is going to die because of lack of access or lack of ability to access that can be lifesaving.

Looking at other areas of health care, these are all things that we will be addressing very directly over the coming weeks.

There is the issue of frivolous lawsuits. People will say, well, we addressed this 3 months ago, or tried to address it, and therefore we do not need to come back to it for another 3 or 4 years. That is not the way we are going to approach it. We are not going to approach it because it is a problem that affects access to health care to people all over the United States of America with now 22 of the 50 States in what can be classified as a health care crisis because these frivolous lawsuits have now—maybe unlike 10 years ago—come to the point that it affects health care for everybody who is listening to me. Frivolous lawsuits are increasing in number every year—frivolous, unnecessary lawsuits. The lawsuits that are legitimate need to be there and there needs to be fair and just compensation. I am talking frivolous, unnecessary lawsuits which are driving up the cost of health care, premiums to doctors, causing doctors to leave their practices and causing doctors to leave certain communities and move to other States, thus affecting—for everybody listening—access to quality health care.

When it gets to that level, it becomes a crisis. It is our job to respond. Although when we brought it to the floor 3 months ago we were unsuccessful in transforming the system, it will come back in the next several weeks. We will bring it back. Until we educate those who do not fully understand access and quality of care are being affected by the unnecessary, frivolous lawsuits—until people are fully educated, we will keep bringing it back and, indeed, make a difference.

Another health care issue, although it is as much a jobs issue and an issue of the economy, but also health related, is asbestos. It is interesting because as a thoracic surgeon, a chest surgeon—which is what I did before coming to the Senate—when I thought of asbestos, I thought of a disease called mesothelioma, a disease of the chest which is encasement of the lung, probably one of the most difficult operations a thoracic surgeon can do. People think transplants are difficult. That is fairly straightforward compared to trying to resect and fix a mesothelioma of the lung, chest cavity, which is caused by asbestos.

The asbestos legislation was reasonable, and the intention was to have adequate and fair and equitable reimbursement for asbestos-related disease. That is positive, that is good, and good legislation.

The problem today is a little bit like the medical liability issue. We have unnecessary claims being filed. People see there is a big pot of money out there. We have around 600,000 people who filed claims because they think there is a pot of money and because the legal system has gone awry. They know that by filing a claim, they will be able to claim some of the pot of money.

Again, like the medical liability issue, we need to, in a rational and balanced way, fix the system. It is a system that has gone awry because of certain incentives. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee, ORRIN HATCH, has done a fantastic job and said let's get everybody together, from the left, right, Democrat, Republican, union, nonunion; let's all get together—business, workers, patients, consumers—and develop legislation, work through the committee. That is the first step. Now we need to take that legislation, improve it, strengthen it, educate this body broadly.

People will soon realize it is health care in many ways but it is also a jobs and stimulus package. Since the early 1980s, 70 good-sized companies have gone bankrupt because of the liability that has been thrust upon them. Some OK, probably, but a lot not OK. A lot has been irrational that has been thrust upon them, and they have gone out of business through nothing intentional, because of the way the legislation is written. Of those 70 companies over the last 20 years, a third of them have been in just the last 2½ years.

So the problem is getting worse as we go forward, although the estimates of the cost of asbestos with the runaway lawsuits vary, and they are very rough. I recall one figure, that over 420,000 jobs have disappeared because of these inequities associated with asbestos and the legislation that was originally written.

It is a health issue, it is an equity issue, a fairness issue, and also a jobs issue. If we fix the problem, and fix it appropriately, we are going to have jobs actually created in the future. As people spend more time with this legislation, they will understand that.

Class action litigation, although I don't know exactly when we will address it in the Senate, is an issue we will address on the floor of the Senate. Frivolous lawsuits are clogging the system. When they clog the system and we have this use of resources, it is dollar resources, it is also person power resources. When we use the resources in a wasteful way, we cannot use the resources in a way that is productive, that will help individuals in whatever realm of life. The class action suits have clearly gotten to that point with frivolity, the waste, the unnecessary suits. That is something we on this floor sometime in the next several weeks will address.

If we have the frivolous lawsuits, it is obvious they clog the system. They stifle innovation, they stifle creativity, they cost jobs, and they can even endanger the lives of our fellow citizens—all of that, as we talk about the proposal which is before the Senate, a bipartisan proposal that can bring more order and efficiency to the system. This will become more obvious to both colleagues who do not focus on this and also to the American people.

We can bring order, we can bring efficiency, and we can bring balance and rationality with the best use of resources to the system.

I add that we will be able to protect Americans listening right now, Americans and American consumers, from unscrupulous and exploitative litigators who are out there in many ways grubbing for that dollar to take advantage of the system.

Environmental concerns. We had the opportunity to meet with the President this week, and we talked about a whole range of issues, starting with Iraq and the security issues, moving quickly to the importance of jobs and the economy, and talking about several of the issues I mentioned, but very early coming to a range or group of environmental issues.

It is very obvious that in the West, the long drought and dry timber have created a dangerous situation, a perilous situation. We see on television and hear from those Senators who represent the States, when you fly over the country, you foresee the mammoth fires that can start with just a single spark. Overnight they threaten property, threaten communities, and threaten lives.

The President of the United States, President Bush, has proposed legislation that will reduce the danger of fire. How? By sensibly and rationally managing forests with a better balance of forests—conservation on the one hand and citizen safety on the other.

I have to mention that tax issues will likely come up in the next several months. People clearly on our side believe strongly we need to make the tax relief that the President has put on the table permanent so people can plan for the future, so citizens can have more money—or at least do not increase taxes. Citizens will have more money

to be able to spend and invest the way they wish rather than send it to Washington, DC, and let Washington, DC, decide how to spend that money. That does give economic stimulus and creates jobs.

We will most likely examine in the Senate, under the leadership of Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON of Texas, the marriage tax penalty. Once again, the complexities of the Tax Code, combined with peculiarities of our budget laws, have created a tax, a penalty for people who are married. Maybe a teacher and a policeman are married and they are paying more if they are married than if they were not married. It does not make sense. People do not understand it. We know these couples have been unfairly taxed. We will argue that it is unfair. I hope this inequity that we have made some progress in addressing in the past we can really permanently erase.

In the area of family—partial-birth abortion is something we have debated on this floor. We passed it in this body. It was vetoed by President Clinton in the past. We have passed it in the body, and the House has passed it in the past. Now we have to pull those two together in conference. The problem is, we can't appoint and can't fulfill appointment of the conferees until we have another debate on the floor of the Senate. I am working very hard to get that scheduled so we can go to conference, have a bill and send it to the President so we can finally, finally ban partial-birth abortion. We don't need to get into the issue right now, but it has been described by Members on both sides of the aisle as close to infanticide as you can get. Yet we still have not been able to come to agreement on both sides of the aisle about the conferees, go to conference, and send the bill to the President. We are going to bring this to closure sometime here in the next several weeks.

Senator MIKE DEWINE from Ohio and Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM—I can't come to this floor without them saying, What about our Unborn Victims of Violence Act? It is something we debated on this floor, we made the case for, and now is the time for us to complete our legislative activity so we truly can protect unborn victims of violence.

All of this is ambitious, but it is time to be bold and it is time to be ambitious. I think this body demonstrated this again for the most part in a bipartisan way over the last several months. But each of these issues that I have mentioned will be addressed on the floor of the Senate.

Yesterday an event happened. Again, I don't need to rehash that today, but the withdrawal of Miguel Estrada's nomination yesterday was a tragedy. It was a sad day for this body. At the end of the day I had the opportunity to call and talk to Miguel Estrada, and there is just simply nobody to my mind who is better qualified for the position for which he was nominated and who was more unjustly treated by this body.

These blocked judicial nominations are maybe the biggest challenges we have before us—unprecedented filibusters, unprecedented partisan filibusters on the floor of this Senate are unpardonable, I believe.

We are going to stay focused. We are going to do our very best to educate, to break these filibusters. I think one day the consequences of the minority blocking highly qualified nominees without good reason will come home to roost.

Other issues, reauthorization issues, and then I will close. I know it is late on this afternoon and we need to move on. But reauthorization I at least wanted to mention. There are many so I don't want to mention them all, but reauthorization of welfare, of the highway bill—again, a lot of discussion this week as we look forward to addressing these sorts of issues in the coming weeks.

There are a lot of opportunities. It is a huge responsibility for each of us in the coming weeks. But I am absolutely confident that by pulling together, by working as a team, by working across the aisle, we will be able to advance the mission I mentioned of moving America forward and to do it in a way that celebrates the freedoms we all enjoy.

We will be able to make meaningful progress in our Nation's economic life. We will be able to make meaningful progress in our Nation's moral life. We will be able to make meaningful progress in our Nation's civic life.

We are going to have a very busy and we are going to have a very productive fall.

#### SECTION 189 OF THE FAA CONFERENCE REPORT, H.R. 2115

Mr. COLEMAN. I would like to engage the Senator from Mississippi in a colloquy regarding section 189 of the conference report in order to clarify the intent of the conferees.

Mr. LOTT. I would be pleased to engage in a colloquy with the Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. COLEMAN. It is my understanding that this section is a very limited, temporary funding restriction that will not affect noise mitigation funding in any significant way. Federal airport improvement program monies from the "Noise set aside" have not normally supported noise mitigation projects below a Day-Night Average Sound Level (DNL) of less than 65. This is because under the FAA's system of ranking projects for the use of the noise set aside, projects to reduce higher levels of noise having funding priority and projects below 65 DNL have not normally ranked high enough to get such funding. I further understand that nothing in this section or any other provision of the FAA conference report would prohibit an airport from using either passenger facility charges, PFC, or other locally generated monies to fund noise mitigation projects below

a DNL of 65. It is also my understanding that the provision is not intended to change the FAA's current approach of not disapproving an airport's entire part 150 noise program, where there is only a portion or portions of the program that are problematic. The FAA would continue to be able to disapprove portions of a part 150 program, while approving other portions, as they do today. Furthermore, the provision would not affect noise set-aside funding that would not require part 150 approval, such as school soundproofing or noise mitigation for an airport expansion project in an FAA environmental record of decision.

Mr. LOTT. The Senator is correct. The intent of this provision is a narrow one and does not affect the use of non-AIP funds by any airport. Nothing in this section or any other provision of the FAA conference report would prohibit an airport from using either passenger facility charges, PFC, or other locally generated monies to fund noise mitigation projects below a DNL of less than 65. It is my understanding that the FAA agrees with this interpretation of the effect of the provision.

#### CHANGE OF VOTE

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, with respect to rollcall vote No. 323, I was recorded as voting "nay." I ask unanimous consent to change my vote to "yea." This change will not affect the outcome of the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### COACHES AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I want to bring to the attention of my colleagues a new and innovative program created by the Alliance for Justice called Coaches Against Gun Violence.

This program asks high school coaches to dedicate one game or event each year to gun violence prevention. The dedication can take a variety of forms, including inviting a local speaker to talk about gun violence, recognizing a victim or his or her family, having a school assembly devoted to the issue, or distributing ribbons in remembrance of lives lost to gun violence.

Each year, millions of students take part in athletic activities. Coaches are leaders and mentors and have an enormous impact on the lives of many of their players. Harnessing this influence to educate students about the deadly effects of gun violence is an excellent idea.

According to statistics compiled by the Alliance for Justice, there are an estimated 3,400 firearm-related injuries and 1,000 deaths each year in Michigan. In 2000 alone, 133 Michiganders under the age of 20 were killed in incidents of gun violence, and 3,894 people under 20 years old were killed in firearm-related incidents in the United States. These statistics are sobering. The Coaches Against Gun Violence Program is a