

to decide whether politics or science should prevail in establishing radiation standards for Yucca Mountain. I urge you to respect the role of the courts in its decision determining the EPA did not follow the law, and respect the right of those who live in Nevada to challenge the notion that Yucca Mountain is safe.

Science, not politics, should guide this Nation's policy on nuclear waste disposal. That is what George Bush promised when he first campaigned for President in the year 2000, and that is what he said when he came to Nevada just 3 weeks ago. He said he would respect any court ruling against Yucca Mountain.

The courts have spoken. Now it is time for the President to act on his promise as well. The second highest court in the Nation has spoken. Work on licensing Yucca Mountain cannot continue until a new radiation standard is crafted that incorporates the work of the National Academy of Sciences.

□ 2045

The President ought to stop this folly and stop it now and demand that the EPA comply with the U.S. Court of Appeals decision.

As Members of Congress, we have a responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interests of our Nation. Waiving a science-based radiation standard to expedite this project means waiving the health and safety protection that we have promised all of Americans. The last time I checked, the great State of Nevada is in the United States and deserves the same protection as any other State.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

EXPIRATION OF ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, next week, the assault weapon ban expires. This ban, enacted 10 years ago, on some models has been supported by

past Presidents Ford, Reagan, Bush I, and President Clinton. It has been supported by police chiefs and officers across America, and the majority of the public. Even candidate Governor George Bush 4 years ago said he supported extending the assault weapons ban.

Today, we stand poised in 120 hours to see the assault weapons ban expire because of a lack of leadership on the part of President Bush and of the Republican leadership in Congress. It appears that there is no intention to stand up to the National Rifle Association and bring forward an opportunity for the men and women in this Chamber to be heard on this critical issue.

I suppose this should not come as a surprise when we saw the administration, President Bush, Attorney General Ashcroft cave in to the NRA when it came to eliminating within 24 hours the previous gun registration records that would have been available to this administration, to law enforcement authorities, to help in the fight against terrorism. Having the NRA trump this potentially important tool in the fight against terrorism in this country is unfathomable to most of the people I represent. But sadly, it makes sense in the upside-down way that we deal with politics and the politics of gun violence in this Chamber and in the American political system.

America has the worst record of gun violence of any developed country. There are a wide array of simple, commonsense provisions that would help deal with gun violence that would not in any way deny any legitimate hunter an opportunity to use their weapons to go out and hunt, to target shoot, legitimate collectors. There are, however, people who resist any effort at record-keeping, at enforcement, at dealing with the most simple, direct, commonsense, and nonintrusive proposals.

Does anybody think in America that we are going to be safer if the assault weapon ban expires and there are more opportunities to have assault weapons in the United States? There are people ready now to market, if the ban expires, to market new gun lines. There are people that have kits to convert weapons to make them, previously illegal, that would be lawful if the ban expires, to have these kits so they can make the conversion.

I would find it disappointing on several levels if this tragedy occurs. First, we are not going to be safer. I hear repeatedly from the people I represent that sports people do not need assault weapons to hunt game in this country. There are lots of opportunities for target shooting, for sportsman activities. Assault weapons are designed to shoot with great firepower very quickly and to generate maximum carnage on people. We will not be safer.

It will be a blow to the credibility of the political process if candidate Bush can make a promise that President Bush is not going to deliver on.

Finally, it continues the chipping away at our ability to function here

with real live legitimate problems. Gun violence is a legitimate problem. There are legitimate policy options, and we are taking them off the table.

I would hope that President Bush remembers what candidate Bush said 4 years ago and takes a small step to provide real leadership that he had promised in coming out in support of extending the assault weapon ban and calling upon the Republican leadership in Congress to follow through, allowing a vote to prevent that expiration. We have 120 hours left. I hope that the American people will avail themselves to dealing with these candidates who are out around the country to have that conversation with President Bush to follow through on his commitment.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

SUICIDE BOMBINGS IN ISRAEL AND SYRIA'S HARBORING OF HAMAS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to express my condolences to the families of the victims of the suicide bombings in Israel last week and to urge my colleagues to support Israel's continued construction of the security fence to protect their citizens from further terrorist attacks. I also ask my colleagues to join with me in calling on the Syrian Government to turn over the leaders of Hamas, the terrorist organization that has claimed responsibility for these and countless other attacks in Israel, currently operating in Damascus.

Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday, two buses were simultaneously bombed in Beer-sheba, a city in southern Israel, killing 16 passengers and injuring 97 others. It is no coincidence that the city chosen by Hamas for the attacks is in a region of Israel that is not yet protected by the security fence. Hamas terrorists were dissuaded by the fence and an Israeli military presence in other areas and opted for an easier and more vulnerable target in Beersheba. These attacks are further proof that continued

construction of the security fence is necessary for the protection of Israeli citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the security fence is doing exactly what it was designed to do: save lives. Since the fence's construction, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of suicide attacks. This was the first suicide attack in Israel in 5 months. There have been only nine suicide attacks in Israel this year, down from 23 last year. While even one attack is clearly too many, the fence is clearly making a difference.

For those in the international community who questioned the route of the fence, the Israeli Government has stated that the fence is temporary and can be moved or rerouted contingent on future peace agreements. Furthermore, the Israeli Government has also proven its willingness to reroute the fence. When the Israeli Supreme Court declared early this year that a section of the fence impeded on the civil rights of Palestinians living in the area, the fence was, in fact, moved.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken on several occasions here on the House floor of my visit to Israel last year and my opportunity to view the security fence firsthand. After my visit, I believe very strongly that we need to support Israel's right to protect their citizens. This fence provides a sense of security to border families and to outerlying cities like Beersheba that remain unprotected. The fence will help prevent continued attempts to derail the peace process through violence.

Mr. Speaker, another point that I want to mention that is related to the terrible attacks in Beersheba is the issue of Syria's decision to continue to turn a blind eye to Hamas and other terrorist organizations that operate within their borders. I ask my colleagues to join with me in calling on the Syrian Government to immediately turn over the leaders of Hamas to the Israeli Government for their responsibility in last week's attacks.

I fully support continued U.S. sanctions against Syria provided for under the Syria Accountability Act. If we are serious about achieving lasting peace in the region, we cannot allow Syria to continue to play host to Hamas, Hezbollah, and other terrorist groups.

LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS NOT RECEIVING FEDERAL FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KING of Iowa). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, one of the constant comments and questions that I have had regarding our education policy on the Federal level is that local teachers have constantly said, we think that the No Child Left Behind provisions are underfunded; we think that it is an unfunded mandate. Our office has continually researched the

problem, and we recognize that in the last 10 years, Federal funding has increased from \$23 billion to \$56 billion, a 132 percent increase. So, Mr. Speaker, the numbers never quite matched the explanations that were coming from our teachers in the district. Knowing that the teachers were, to their best knowledge, presenting the facts as they were told them, we began to dig even deeper.

In July, it began to come to our attention that many times the funds that we have allocated on the Federal level have not been made available from the States to their local school districts. I am not sure exactly why that has occurred, but it still is a fact that, for instance, in New Mexico, we have \$78 million in unspent Federal funds. The situation is even so bad that \$16.7 million has been allocated so long that now it is going to revert to the Federal Government on September 30.

So as I spent my time at home during the summer recess the last week of July and the 4 weeks of August, I began to talk to the teachers and the principals and explain to them that much of the money, much of the \$78 million that is there and is available is actually in title I funding that is for the low-income programs. And then also, there is money for the Reading First programs. New Mexico needs both of those kinds of fundings in the extreme. The teachers and principals were somewhat shocked to find out that as they were telling me there was no funding for No Child Left Behind, that actually there were unspent funds, and then we began to understand that possibly the facts that were given to the teachers and to the principals were not the same as existed in reality.

In July, I had the opportunity to meet with three principals from my district who were here in Washington for a national conference. I began to bring my concerns to the attention of these three principals and gave them the facts about the unspent money in New Mexico. One of the principals took it on himself to share those facts with the leadership of this conference, with that national conference, and with the other principals in attendance in the meeting. Upon hearing the information, to their credit, the national leaders at the conference began to do their own research, and they found that almost every State has the same problem, that money has been allocated, but the State departments of education are not either making people aware of it, or maybe there are just no requirements for these monies; and no one is making application for the grants that could improve the education to our students in America. They have been funded already; and yet, sadly, the money is not being allocated.

The situation was so extreme that one State, on September 30, is losing \$16.7 million because the time has elapsed in which it is possible for the State to make application. One State has the extreme circumstance of turn-

ing back on September 30 \$90 million. And across the Nation, teachers are being told that No Child Left Behind is not funded, that it is an unfunded mandate. But, Mr. Speaker, the facts are exactly opposite, that the funds are there and they are available; it is just that the local schools and the principals are not made aware of it.

This national association felt so compelled that they stopped their intent. Their intent was to have a national education advertising program criticizing the unfunded mandate of No Child Left Behind; and this national organization decided, based on the facts that were provided by my staffer to them, that, in fact, they were not going to run this national ad, and they could no longer contend No Child Left Behind as an unfunded mandate.

□ 2100

Just some of the figures so that my colleagues would understand, Mr. Speaker, total dollars unspent on the Federal level, \$13.4 billion. Under education for the disadvantaged, \$5.2 billion is unspent. Special education, \$3.9 billion is unspent. School improvement programs, \$3.38 billion is unspent. English language acquisition, \$231 million is unspent. Vocational adult education, \$701 million is unspent, and yet the teachers unions nationwide are castigating anyone who supports No Child Left Behind for supporting an unfunded mandate, and I would respectfully make the observation that their facts appear to be in error.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to bring these facts to my colleagues' attention and possibly to the attention of other legislators.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KING of Iowa). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, on September 11, 2001, 3 years ago, I watched in horror as America, and part of my district specifically, was attacked and destroyed. The extreme sense of pain and loss I felt as a New Yorker and as an American, as someone who knew many of the victims, does not even begin to match the pains that the families of that attack must have felt.

This attack on the United States was an attack, a deliberate attack on civilians. It was a deliberate attempt to kill as many American civilians as possible for the simple and great crime of being