

HIGH-LEVEL NUCLEAR WASTE

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, on June 6, 2012, I offered an amendment to the Energy and Water appropriations bill to do the final scientific study to certify Yucca Mountain as the repository for high-level nuclear waste in this country, and I was joined by a large bipartisan amount from this Chamber, 326 “yes” votes, which I appreciate my colleagues who supported this amendment.

Among those in the Michigan delegation, which has 15 Members, there were 11 “yes” votes and only four “no” votes. Why is this all important? Because what I’ve tried to do over the past year and a half is help the educational process in explaining where nuclear waste is in this country and where it should be. We did pass a law back in 1982. I wasn’t here then. Many of us were not. Then there were amendments to that law in 1987 that said Yucca Mountain in Nevada would be our repository, a long-term geological repository for high-level nuclear waste.

In Michigan, there are five nuclear power plants. They are all located along the Great Lakes. There’s three on Lake Michigan, one on, I think, Lake Erie, right next to large bodies of water. Let’s compare one of those, Cook, which has high-level nuclear waste on-site next to Lake Michigan, to where it should be, which is Yucca Mountain.

Currently at Cook, there are 1,433 metric tons of uranium of spent fuel on-site. At Yucca Mountain, which should be our single repository, there’s currently none. Again, we started this in 1982. If it was at Yucca Mountain, it would be stored 1,000 feet underground. At Cook, it’s stored aboveground in pools and in casks. If it was at Yucca Mountain, it would be 1,000 feet above the water table. At Cook, the nuclear waste is 19 feet above the water table. At Yucca Mountain, it would be 100 miles from the Colorado River where it is right next to Lake Michigan.

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Yucca Mountain is obviously a mountain in a desert. There is no safer place.

So, as I mentioned, in the vote total from my colleagues here on the floor, we addressed this on the floor. We took a vote, 326 out of 425. That’s a huge bipartisan majority.

Where do the Senators stand on this position? Well, you have three “yes” votes and one “no” vote. And actually, the “no” vote is a very good friend of mine, a former classmate in the House, Senator STABENOW of Michigan, who has voted against moving that nuclear waste out of her State into a mountain underneath the desert.

And part of this process is, because it is now politicized with the majority leader blocking any movement on this—elections have consequences;

they matter—and it’s time to educate the public throughout the country about which Senators support moving nuclear waste out of their State to a single repository and who does not. And, unfortunately, my friend Senator STABENOW is on the list as not being helpful.

I also have done this numerous times. I have gone through the whole country and covered all the Senators as far as public statements or actual votes. And as you see, we have 55 Senators who said, yes, let’s move this to Yucca Mountain. You would think, oh, that is a simple majority. It should be done. But the Senate operates on interesting rules. They have to have 60. We have 22 who have never taken a position, either “yes” or “no” or any public statement. Some of these have served 5½ years. It’s pretty amazing that we have such an important issue pending as this, and the Senate has yet to get on record. If only five of these 22 would say “yes,” we could continue to move forward on addressing our nuclear waste issues.

Now, nuclear waste is not just spent nuclear fuel. It’s World War II defense waste that might be in Hanford, Washington. It could be scientific waste that might be in Idaho or in Tennessee. And especially after Fukushima Daiichi and the Blue Ribbon Commission, we have to have a single long-term geological repository.

We’ve gone on record in the House. We passed a law that said it should be Yucca Mountain in Nevada. It’s time for the Senators to get past their leadership and do what’s in the best interest of this country and their own individual States.

THE SECOND AMENDMENT IS NOT
LIMITLESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, 2 nights ago, six people were shot inside of 15 minutes in my home city of Chicago. Seven more victims were killed just last weekend by gunfire, including two 16-year-old boys. In Chicago, this year alone, over 200 people have been killed in shootings. And nationwide, every day, 34 people are killed by guns.

In the hours following the horrific tragedy in Colorado, we paused to reflect and send our prayers to families grieving an unimaginable loss. But now is the time to have a national discussion about how to stem these epidemic levels of gun violence.

I wish this tragedy in Aurora were an isolated incident, but it seems to be part of a recurring pattern: 19 people were shot, and eight were killed in Tucson in 2011; 29 people were shot, and 13 died at Fort Hood in 2009; 21 people were shot, and five were killed at Northern Illinois University in 2008; and 17 people were wounded, while 32 people died at Virginia Tech in 2007.

When will we have enough? When will we stand up and say we may not be

able to stop every crime, but we can stop some of them and at least minimize the damage of others?

The gun lobby doesn’t want us to have this conversation. First, they accuse anyone who tries to spark a national debate about how to mitigate gun violence with exploiting the deaths of innocent people. Yet no one was accused of exploitation when, after Hurricane Katrina, we discussed how to improve FEMA’s emergency response, or after a deadly salmonella outbreak, when we debated how to improve public safety.

After such national tragedies, society should engage in a discussion about how to address and potentially prevent such tragedies from happening again. We might not all agree; but this is a democracy, and this is how public policy is made.

Next, the gun lobby seeks to stymie debate by arguing that guns don’t kill people, people kill people. I don’t buy this argument. I don’t buy that there’s nothing we can do to stop criminals and the mentally ill from killing if they want to. Sure, we can’t stop them with 100 percent certainty; but we can make it a lot harder for would-be assassins.

We can ensure every gun is purchased after a background check, rather than only 60 percent of guns, as is the current case. And we can reduce the fatality rate by banning assault rifles and high-capacity magazines that are designed exclusively for killing dozens of people at once.

Finally, the gun lobby tries to argue that any attempt to regulate gun access is an attempt to restrict all gun access. This is simply not true.

There is such a thing as common-sense, middle-ground gun reform, and most gun owners support it. Eighty-one percent of gun owners support requiring a background check on all firearm purchases.

Yet 40 percent of U.S. gun sales are conducted by private sellers who are not required to perform background checks. These private sellers operate at gun shows where anyone can walk in and buy whatever gun they want. Convicted felons, domestic abusers, the severely mentally ill, and even people on the terrorist watch list can—and do—go into gun shows and buy any gun they want.

Ninety percent of all Americans also support strengthening databases to prevent the mentally ill from buying guns. But, sadly, 10 States have still failed to flag a single person as mentally ill in the national background check database, and 17 other States have fewer than 100 people listed as mentally ill. Over 1 million disqualifying mental health records are still missing from the database.

Finally, we must have a conversation about getting assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, machines designed exclusively for killing people, off the streets. When you have a 100-round clip on your gun, you are not

protecting your home. You are hunting people.

Let's be clear, this is not about restricting anyone's Second Amendment rights. The Supreme Court has ruled and made clear the right of Americans to own guns. But while reaffirming the Second Amendment, the Court was careful to note that the amendment is not limitless. Justice Scalia explained in *Columbia v. Heller* that "like most rights, the Second Amendment is not unlimited. It is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose."

Can we stop every shooting? No. But can we reduce their frequency and deadliness? Absolutely. Can we do it while still respecting the Second Amendment? Of this I am certain. But the first step toward keeping dangerous guns out of the hands of dangerous people is to begin the conversation. Let's break the silence, stop the violence, and start that conversation.

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH REGULATORY BURDENS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BROOKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROOKS. Mr. Speaker, as chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Subcommittee on Research and Science Education, I have seen Federal overregulation stifle research universities.

Earlier this year, the National Research Council of the National Academies released its report entitled, "Research Universities and the Future of America: Ten Breakthrough Actions Vital to Our Nation's Prosperity and Security." This report examined Federal regulatory burdens on America's research universities.

On June 27, the Research and Science Education Subcommittee held a hearing on that report and whether regulatory red tape stifles scientific research. I asked our witnesses how we can enhance university scientific research capabilities. Their responses are instructive:

Mr. Chad Holliday, chairman of the National Academies Committee on Research Universities testified:

Federal policymakers and regulators should review the costs and benefits of Federal regulations, eliminating those that are redundant and ineffective, inappropriately applied to the higher education sector, or impose costs that outweigh the benefits to society.

Dr. John Mason, Auburn University associate provost and vice president of research, testified:

A comprehensive review of policies and regulations is perhaps the most important in this report. Streamlining the process, relieving unnecessary and costly administrative burdens, and coordinating research priorities among disparate Federal agencies will invigorate research universities exponentially.

Dr. Jeffrey Seemann, Texas A&M University chief research officer and vice president for research, testified:

Federal agencies and Federal regulators must reduce and/or eliminate unnecessary, overly burdensome, and/or redundant regulatory and reporting obligations for universities and their faculty in order to maximize investments more directly into research priorities and allow faculty time to be optimally utilized.

Dr. Leslie Tolbert, University of Arizona senior vice president for research, testified:

The growing burden of compliance with the increasing numbers and complexity of Federal regulations consumes increasing amounts of time and money, leaving less for more direct support for research.

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Finally, Dr. James Siedow, vice provost for research at my alma mater, Duke University, testified that research universities have been subjected to a:

Growing number of research-related compliance regulations that have flowed down from Federal agencies over the past 10 to 15 years. In that regard, the research-related and quality assurance costs to Duke between 2000 and 2010 rose over 300 percent. This perceived piling on of new reporting requirements has led to negative responses on the part of faculty, who see more and more of their time being committed not to actually carrying out the funded research but to a myriad of mundane administrative duties. The extreme to which some of these regulations have gone of late seems well beyond that needed to accomplish the original regulatory ends.

Consistent with their views, the National Academies recommended:

Reduce or eliminate regulations that increase administrative costs, impede research productivity, and deflect creative energy without substantially improving the research environment.

I asked our witnesses to identify specific regulations to amend or repeal. They are preparing their lists. I look forward to receipt of their recommendations and working to repeal counterproductive red tape that does more harm than good.

According to the National Academies, if we successfully cut wasteful regulations, we:

can reduce administrative costs, enhance productivity, and increase the agility of research institutions. Minimizing administrative and compliance costs will also provide a cost benefit to the Federal Government and to university administrators, faculty, and students by freeing up resources and time to support education and research effort directly. With greater resources and freedom, universities will be better positioned to respond to the needs of their constituents in an increasingly competitive environment.

Mr. Speaker, America's research universities are essential to America's scientific innovation. If we clear the red tape from their path and free them up, they will produce the fundamental research that fosters American exceptionalism and, equally important, results in economic growth and jobs.

TRIBUTE TO REVEREND JAMES LIGHTFOOT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it saddens me today to rise to pay tribute to the late James Lightfoot, pastor of the Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, who lost his life just a few days ago.

I am delighted I had the opportunity to visit Pastor Lightfoot and his church on their 44th anniversary. It was an exciting time, and he looked forward to the celebrating of the 44th year of his pastoral leadership of that church, as he started in 1968. I am gratified to salute this distinguished gentleman and distinguished American. He used faith in a way of service not only to his parishioners and to those whom he lead as a shepherd, but to those outside those bricks and mortar.

He concentrated on philosophy and ministry. That was his concentration at Southwestern Seminary. He completed a master's in education at Texas Southern University. He holds a Master of Divinity from Houston Graduate School of Theology, and a Doctorate of Ministries from the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. At Houston Graduate and Austin Presbyterian the emphasis was on the philosophical implications of ministry as it affected the culture of today. He has done advanced training at Texas Southern University and Houston Graduate School of Theology in counseling. He did an internship at Bellaire Columbia General in their Rapha Unit.

He served as a lecturer in church administration in the Central Baptist Convention and teaches pastoral ministry. He was a conferee to the Transitional Church—Church Conference/Southern Baptist Convention. And as well, he was honored to serve as third vice president to the Independent General District Sunday School and BTU.

He was a gentleman that uses faith to be of service. He deals with the philosophical implications of peace and justice, issues for today's church. How important that is when so many people are hurting. In the backdrop of the tragedy of Aurora, it is imperative that our faith leaders are engaged in our community and pray for their deliverance.

I am delighted to say that he also worked with young people. He was a kind spirit. He was a charitable spirit. He was a professor at LeTourneau University—that's how much he cared for young people—where he taught Bible and Family. He was likewise an adjunct professor. He served on the mayor's affirmative action committee. He served as the chairperson of a Black Ministries Committee of the Union Baptist Association. As well, he has served in many civic and community affairs. As I indicated, he always had a summer program for young people who needed a place to come. He always had a smile on his face. He was always joyful. And, of course, he was a wonderful husband to his wonderful and devoted wife.