

of nutrition, conservation, and environmental protection while saving money. They advocate harnessing the power of that farm bill to protect sustainable agriculture and the production of specialty crops—which most of America calls “food”.

In the midst of some of the most bizarre accusations one will ever hear, theirs is a clarion call of rationality and wisdom for the ratification of the Treaty of the Sea that is languishing. Despite the support of the Bush, Clinton, and Obama administrations and an unprecedented coalition of business, industry, and educational leaders, the United States continues to be an outlier, to the detriment of our defense and commercial interests.

These are just a few of the areas that they concentrate on during their Washington visit. Most important, they connect what is happening at the local level with people who care about clean air, the beauty of the landscape and the treasures that enrich our souls, as well as the things that protect the environment for future generations. I strongly urge my colleagues to find time to visit with the Garden Club representatives from their State not just here in Washington, D.C., this week, but reach out to them at home and hear what they have to say. There will be no more productive meeting you will have with the inspiration that comes from listening to clear-headed, clear-eyed voices of wisdom and restraint. These meetings will stand out as an oasis in the war of words over our next round of manufactured crises.

#### VIOLENT MEDIA AND GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the failure to discuss mental health issues and the impact of the violent media in the whole debate following the tragic shooting in Newtown, Connecticut. There needs to be a three-legged approach to this problem. It is disappointing that the President only addressed the issue of guns in the State of the Union speech.

In a number of these tragic shootings, there has been a pattern of the shooters' playing violent video games. Do you remember Columbine? And do you remember the movie theater shooting in Aurora, Colorado? Now comes a report from the Hartford Courant. I quote from the Hartford Courant:

During a search of the Lanza home after the deadly school shootings, police found thousands of dollars worth of graphically violent video games. And detectives working the scene of the massacre are exploring whether Adam Lanza might have been emulating the shooting range or a violent video game scenario as he moved from room to room at Sandy Hook spewing bullets, law enforcement sources have told the Courant.

Before he killed his mother and set off for Sandy Hook Elementary, Adam Lanza de-

stroyed the hard drive on his computer, which probably kept some of the records of the games he played and whom he played with. He also may have destroyed any chance to see if he had a manifesto or had written down anything indicating that he planned the shootings, or why he chose the elementary school.

Soon after the Newtown shooting, I asked the National Science Foundation, which is funded as a result of the subcommittee which I chair, to pull together experts, some of the best experts—and the National Science Foundation picked them—from across the country to look at the impact of all three contributors to mass violence. Earlier this month, the National Science Foundation released its report.

This is the report, “Youth Violence: What We Need to Know,” which supports my belief that rampage shootings are a result of multiple factors, including access to firearms, mental health issues, and exposure to violent media, including violent video games. This report can be found on my Web site. I would urge anyone who really wants to see what we need to do to go look at the National Science Foundation report. It is guns, it is mental health issues, and it is violent video games.

It is easy for the President of the United States to take on the NRA. Why hasn't he asked the entertainment industry to play a greater role in this debate? Common sense tells us that the level of violence on TV, in the movies and in many video games is a problem. One only has to read the piece from the Hartford Courant to understand that this is a very serious problem.

You have to look at guns, you have to look at their mental health—and, quite frankly, the administration has not looked at mental health, and this Congress is not looking at mental health—and you have to look at violent video games and media. The administration is not looking at that, and, quite frankly, this Congress is not looking at it.

#### MEDIA VIOLENCE AND YOUTH VIOLENCE

Brad J. Bushman, Ph.D., Professor of Communication and Psychology, Margaret Hall and Robert Randal Rinehart Chair of Mass Communication, The Ohio State University & Professor of Communication Science, VU University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

When violent shooting spree occur, people want to identify “the” cause. Violent behavior is very complex and is caused by multiple risk factors, often acting together. One possible risk factor is exposure to violent media (e.g., TV programs, films, video games). Of course, it is impossible to know whether exposure to violent media causes shooting spree because researchers can't use guns in their laboratory experiments! However, in one experimental study, we measured what could be considered assaultive behavior. Dutch boys ( $M_{age}=14$ ) played a violent or non-violent video game for 20 minutes, and rated how much they identified with the game character (e.g., “I wish I were a character such as the one in the game”). Afterwards, they competed on a task with another “boy” where the winner could blast the loser with loud noise through headphones. They were told that the highest noise levels (i.e., 8, 9, or

10) could cause “permanent hearing damage.” Boys who played a violent game, and identified with the violent character in that game, did in fact administer potentially damaging noise blasts. During the debriefing, one boy said, “I blasted him with level 10 noise because he deserved it. I know he can get hearing damage, but I don't care!” Another boy said he liked the violent game “because in this game you can kill people and shoot people, and I want to do that too.” A third boy said, “I like Grand Theft Auto a lot because you can shoot at people and drive fast in cars. When I am older I can do such things too. I would love to do all these things right now!”

A comprehensive meta-analysis of violent video game effects, which included 381 effects from studies involving 130,295 participants from all over the world, found that violent video games increased aggressive thoughts, angry feelings, physiological arousal, and aggressive behavior. Violent games also decreased prosocial behavior (e.g., helping, cooperation) and feelings of empathy for others. The effects occurred for males and females of all ages, regardless of the country they live in. Similar effects have been found for all types of violent media (e.g., TV, film, music and music videos, comic books). A meta-analysis of 26 studies involving 13,661 participants found that violent media exposure is also significantly linked to violent behavior (e.g. punching, beating, choking others), although the effects are smaller than for aggressive behavior. This makes sense because violent criminal behavior is rarer and more difficult to predict than less severe aggressive behavior. As one example, a recent CDC-funded, cross-sectional study involving incarcerated delinquents (and a comparison group of high-school students), parents/guardians, and teachers/staff, found that consumption of violent media was related to serious violent behavior such as using a weapon against another child.

It is well known that people who consume a lot of violent media come to view the world as a hostile place. People who consume a lot of violent media also think violence is “normal” behavior, because media characters often use violence to solve their problems.

It is useful to consider a child's life as filled with a succession of social problems that must be solved. The child uses a set of programs (called scripts) for solving social problems. In theater, scripts tell actors what to do and say. In memory, scripts define situations and guide behavior: The person first selects a script for the situation, assumes a role in the script, and behaves according to the script. In many shooting spree, the perpetrator puts on a uniform (e.g., hockey mask, trench coat, movie costume, military uniform), as if following a script. This allows the perpetrator to identify more closely with other killers. The perpetrator then gathers up a bunch of guns and ammunition, goes to a place where there are a lot of people gathered, kills as many people as possible, and then often kills himself. For most people, carrying out such a script would be impossible. But it can occur for some people who don't experience negative emotions or who see such acts as normative, or for whom performing such an act might be perceived as achieving a sense of accomplishment and “leaving their mark on the world.” Consider, for example, statements made by the two killers at Columbine High School. Dylan Klebold said, “Directors will be fighting over this story.” Eric Harris added, “Tarentino, Spielberg.”

There is also a downward spiral between aggression, rejection, and consumption of violent media. Aggressive youth tend to be rejected by their peers, and therefore spend their time consuming media (often violent

media) and associating with other aggressive youth (who have also been rejected by others), which, in turn makes them even more aggressive.

Aggressive youth often consume violent media because it allows them to justify their own behavior as being normal. A child's own aggressive behavior normally should elicit guilt, but this guilt is relieved if the child who has behaved aggressively consumes violent media. The reduction in guilt that consuming violence provides makes continued aggressive and violent behavior by that child even more likely.

Violent media often contain guns, and research has shown that the mere presence of guns, even at a subliminal level, can increase aggression. In summary, violent behavior is very complex and is caused by multiple risk factors, often acting together. One possible risk factor is exposure to violent media (e.g., TV programs, films, video games). Although it is not the only risk factor, or the most important risk factor, it is one of the easiest risk factors to change. Other risk factors (e.g., being male, social rejection) are difficult or impossible to change. Parents can, however, restrict the amount of violent media their children consume.

Parents are the key, but producers of violent media can help parents out. For example, there could be a universal rating system on all media (TV, films, video games), with universal symbols that are easy for parents to understand. The PEGI (Pan European Game Information) system, for example, has five age-based ratings (3+, 7+, 12+, 16+, 18+) and six well-recognized symbols for potentially objectionable material (violence, sex, drugs, discrimination, fear, gambling). The current rating system is like alphabet soup and is confusing to parents (e.g., R for movies; TV-MA for TV, FV for fantasy violence in video games). Another possible idea is to put warning labels on violent video games. In 1964, the U.S. surgeon general issued a warning on tobacco, and that warning appears on all tobacco products. In 1972, the U.S. surgeon general issued a warning for violent TV programs: "It is clear to me that the causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and immediate remedial action . . . There comes a time when the data are sufficient to justify action. That time has come." Warning labels are like a double-edged sword. On the one hand, parents find warning labels informative. On the other hand, they are like magnets to children.

Educating parents about the research on violent video games is also important. This is an uphill battle, however, because the source of news and information for parents is the mass media, and the mass media are reluctant to report that violent media are harmful.

Almost all of the research on violent video games has been conducted using single-player video games. But players often play with others. In a pair of studies conducted in our lab, participants were tested in pairs with an ostensible partner of the same sex (actually a confederate). Participants in the cooperative condition were instructed to work together with their partner to get as many points as possible by killing enemies and staying alive. Participants in the competitive condition were instructed to try and kill their partner more times than their partner killed them. Participants in the control condition played the game in the single player mode. After gameplay, participants competed with their ostensible partner on a task in which the winner could blast the loser with loud, unpleasant noise through headphones. In both studies, participants in the cooperative condition were less aggressive

than participants in the other conditions. More research on multi-player games is clearly needed.

More research is also needed on what types of individuals are most strongly affected by violent video games. Many of the spree shooters have been described as "social outcasts." Are such individuals more likely to behave aggressively after playing a violent game? Are such individuals more likely to play violent games alone?

Research should test whether aggression is enhanced by playing in a first-person compared with third-person mode, and by whether the enemies are realistic humans versus aliens. Some research has shown that the gorier the video game, the larger the effects, but more is needed.

#### A PLACE AT THE TABLE

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

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, once again, I rise to talk about the issue of hunger in America. There are over 50 million Americans who go hungry each year. That is about one in every six Americans who don't know where their next meal is coming from on any given day. Mr. Speaker, in the richest, most prosperous country in the world, that is unconscionable. Unfortunately, too many people simply don't know that there's a hunger problem in the United States. But that is going to change with a new documentary called "A Place at the Table."

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Mr. Speaker, this powerful film shows how hunger actually affects everyday Americans. Specifically, "A Place at the Table," documents people from all walks of life—from inner-city Philadelphia to rural Colorado—and it shows how they struggle not just to put healthy food on their kitchen tables, but in some cases to put any food on their tables at all.

The film doesn't just show how people struggle with food. It shows how the lack of food impacts the health of children and the capacity for kids to pay attention and learn in class.

In all candor, Mr. Speaker, I play a small part in this film, and I'm pleased the filmmakers allowed me to give my thoughts on the problem of hunger in America in ways that we can address it. But this film is not about my opinions; it's about the challenge facing the people in this movie. It's about how our country got to the place where over 50 million people—or one in six Americans—are food insecure or hungry. It's about how our legislative policies are not meeting the needs of the hungry, especially as low- and middle-income families continue to struggle during this economic recovery. It's about how parents and grandparents are trying to take care of their families, but are falling short of doing it on their own. It's about how private organizations like churches and synagogues and food banks are trying to fill the gaps, but are struggling to do so be-

cause the need is so great. Ultimately, it's about how we as a Nation have the chance to rise up and end hunger now. It's about how we can and must develop a plan to end hunger now.

Mr. Speaker, we have the means to end hunger now. We have the food to end hunger now. We have the knowledge to end hunger now. We just haven't mustered the political will to end hunger now, and we—Members of Congress—should all be ashamed that one person, let alone over 50 million, goes hungry in America.

In 1968, CBS News broadcast an hour-long program called "Hunger in America." It reshaped the view of hunger in this country. The day after that show aired, then-Senator George McGovern formed the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and worked with Senator Bob Dole and President Richard Nixon to reduce hunger in America. They almost eradicated it completely, but we've clearly regressed in the decades since.

I hope "A Place at the Table," this critically important film, is the catalyst that jump-starts a new effort to end hunger now. I believe we need White House leadership on this issue, and I urge President Obama to watch this film and to follow up with a White House conference on food and nutrition in order to tackle all of the issues associated with hunger and nutrition and specifically to come up with a coordinated, unified plan to end hunger now. President Obama's leadership is critical if we're going to end hunger now.

Directors Kristi Jacobson and Lori Silverbush, along with executive producer Tom Colicchio, have made a film that tells a powerful story. It's a story of a struggle in America, but a struggle that we can overcome. It's a struggle to address a problem that we have the answer to. It's my hope that this film will spark a new movement to address both hunger and obesity and nutritional issues so that we no longer see people struggling to put food on their table.

"A Place at the Table" is hard to watch because we all share the blame for the struggles faced by those in the film. I challenge anyone who watches it to walk away feeling unaffected. I've seen it many times already. I've been inspired by the individuals who are featured in the movie, people who struggle in poverty with great difficulty and who struggle with great dignity.

I'm also frustrated and angered by this film. It shows our failures—our moral failures—to end the scourge of hunger. The title of the film is appropriate. We all have our place at the table, and we need to take that place in order to end hunger now.

#### AVERT THE SEQUESTER AND ACT NOW

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

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, there are just 3 days before \$85 billion in harmful