

index it for inflation so we don't have to do this every 3 or 4 years just to keep up with inflation.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The assistant majority leader.

REMEMBERING PRESIDENT NELSON MANDELA

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to join my colleagues and people all around the world in expressing my condolences to the people of South Africa on the passing of their great leader Nelson Mandela.

Nelson Mandela ended his extraordinary autobiography, entitled "Long Walk to Freedom," with these words:

I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb. I have taken a moment here to rest, to steal a view of the glorious vista that surrounds me, to look back on the distance I have come. But I can rest only for a moment, for with freedom comes responsibilities, and I dare not linger, for my long walk is not yet ended.

Sadly, President Nelson Mandela's long walk and his noble life are indeed now ended, but his influence on the world will endure for a long time to come. As the editorial cartoonist for the Washington Post put it, Nelson Mandela was "larger than life—and death."

Through enormous strength of character and a determination unlike many people in this world, Nelson Mandela helped his beloved South Africa to end the vicious system of apartheid and begin a new walk toward multiracial democracy. His dream, he often said, was that South Africa would become "a rainbow nation at peace with itself and with the world."

Nelson Mandela astonished the world with his capacity to forgive—even to forgive those who jailed him and persecuted his family. There was an interview on television I saw yesterday morning on ABC in which Nelson Mandela spoke about his imprisonment shortly after he had been released. He had spent 27 years in prison, part of it on Robben Island, which I have had the opportunity to visit, to actually stand in Nelson Mandela's tiny cell. It is an island off of Capetown. The waters around it are shark infested so the prisoners won't try to escape from that island. They can just barely make out the land mass away from that island, but they are separated—separated on this piece of land in the middle of this ocean. There Nelson Mandela lived for almost 25 years. He lived in this cell, many times in isolation. He labored in a quarry nearby, which we visited. The sunlight bouncing off of the rocks in that quarry virtually blinded him for the rest of his life. He wore sunglasses and begged photographers not to use flashbulbs the rest of his life because of the damage that had been done to his eyes.

The prisoners on Robben Island—many of them sharing his political philosophy and opposing apartheid—tried to create a university atmosphere where they taught one another all they could remember and all they knew. They devoured information from the outside world in an effort to try to keep in touch with what was going on.

In this interview, as he was released from his imprisonment, Nelson Mandela was asked by the interviewer about his warden and his guards at the prison. He talked about the deep emotional ties they developed, how this guard he came to know—I believe his name was Gregory—was a real gentleman, in the words of Nelson Mandela, and how, when Mandela was finally released, there was a moment of emotion as they knew they would part after all these years of such a close relationship. I recall that story because so many times when I have given commencement addresses I have used as an example Nelson Mandela's decision, when elected President of South Africa, to invite that guard from his prison to be there as one of his honored guests at his inauguration as President of South Africa. That, to me, speaks volumes.

Nelson Mandela taught us powerful lessons about justice, tolerance, and reconciliation. As the first democratically elected President of South Africa, Mandela was the father of a new nation. Like George Washington, the father of our Nation, he chose consciously, deliberately, to walk away from power. In doing so, he reminded us that the peaceful, orderly transition of power is one of the hallmarks of a real democracy.

The prestigious Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership was created in 2007 to recognize African leaders who served their people by voluntarily stepping down from power, as President Mandela did. Sadly, this year, for the second year in a row, the award committee couldn't identify one African leader who met that standard. Leaders in neighboring Zimbabwe, as well as Syria, Egypt, Venezuela, Cuba, and so many other nations torn by conflict and manipulated divisions, would do well to ponder this measure of Nelson Mandela's greatness.

One of the great honors of my life was meeting President Mandela when he came to Washington in September 1998, near the end of his Presidency, to receive the Congressional Gold Medal. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor this Congress can bestow on a civilian. President Mandela noted that he was humbled to be the first African to ever receive it.

In his brief remarks at the Gold Medal ceremony, President Mandela thanked the American people and Congress for our help in bringing an end to the odious system of apartheid through congressionally imposed economic sanctions and other measures. These are Nelson Mandela's words:

If today the people of South Africa are free at last to address their basic needs; if the

countries of southern Africa have the opportunity to realize the potential for development through cooperation; if Africa can devote all her energies and resources to her reconstruction; then it is not least because the American people identified with and lent their support to the struggle to end apartheid, including critically through action by this Congress.

I remember that battle. I remember that debate. I was brand new to the U.S. House of Representatives, just a few years in service, and the debate came up as to whether the United States would continue to impose sanctions on the apartheid racist Government of South Africa. I sat on the floor, convinced that we should do so, and listened to the critics of that policy. Many of them came to the floor and said things I couldn't believe. They characterized Nelson Mandela as nothing more than a Communist who should never be trusted to lead that country. I thought to myself, he might have had a flirtation with communism at some point in his life, but this man is speaking to the basic principles that are consistent with America's values and principles.

I found it interesting last week, after Nelson Mandela died, to read the editorial in the Wall Street Journal about Nelson Mandela. I commend it to people to understand where that thinking came from, that belief that the United States should not be involved in trying to strike down the apartheid form of government. If you will read that editorial about Nelson Mandela's death, you will find the following names mentioned: Carl Marx, Lenin—I am trying to recall who else. I think Che Guevara was mentioned, as well as communism. Stalin was mentioned in there. In just a few sentences about Nelson Mandela, the Wall Street Journal editors decided to put all those names in there as touchstones and reference points to his life. It is an indication of how people can get it just plain wrong even at the highest levels of journalism in the United States, as they did in the debate in Congress.

We passed the sanctions legislation in—I believe the year was 1985 or 1986. We sent it to President Reagan, and he vetoed it. We overrode President Reagan's veto so that the sanctions went forward to condemn apartheid and do what we could to change it in South Africa 30 years ago.

I can recall that because a Congressman at the time, Howard Wolpe of Michigan, was the chairman of the Africa subcommittee. He came to me one day as a new Member of the House and said: I want to do a congressional delegation trip to Africa. Would you like to go?

I said: I would be honored. I have never been there, and I would like to go.

We put our itinerary together, included South Africa, and then, when we applied for visas, that apartheid government denied visas to all the Members of Congress who had voted for sanctions, which included Chairman

Wolpe and myself, and so the trip never took place. It took several years, a change in government, and the arrival of Nelson Mandela to see a welcoming South Africa and visas issued to Members of Congress who wished to visit.

President Mandela asked the American Congress and the people to continue to walk with the people of South Africa to help them develop their economy and strengthen their democracy. As I have said, I have traveled to the countries in Africa. I have seen the progress that can occur when governments are accountable to their people and really serve democracy. This Congress can pay a truly fitting tribute to President Mandela's life by heeding the request he made to us to help Africa, to help South Africa strengthen its economies in ways that will benefit not only that continent but the United States of America.

I mentioned earlier the parallels between President Washington and President Mandela. Nelson Mandela was also his nation's Abraham Lincoln. I do not exaggerate. I will close with a story.

We all know the words of President Lincoln's majestic second inaugural address, which took place right outside those doors. It was in 1865. As he looked forward to the end of the Civil War, he turned to this war-torn nation that had lost so many in this battle that had gone on for years, and he said:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are on.

A friend would later note that Lincoln's features when he gave that address were "haggard with care, tempest tossed and weather beaten." But with the nightmare of the Civil War almost over, Washington, DC, was poised for a joyous celebration of victory.

For the first time, African-American troops marched down the streets in the inaugural parade after President Lincoln gave that address, and Blacks mingled with the inaugural crowd right outside here on the Capitol lawn.

It was a rainy, overcast day when Lincoln gave his second inaugural address. But a friend of his noted: Just as President Lincoln stepped forward to take the oath of office, the Sun, which had been obscured by rain clouds, burst forth in splendor. President Lincoln saw it. The next day the President asked a friend: Did you notice that sunburst? It made my heart jump.

The skies were also overcast the day Nelson Mandela received the Congressional Gold Medal here in Washington. On that day, the dark bronze bust of Martin Luther King, Jr., had been moved from one side of the Rotunda so that Lincoln and Dr. Martin Luther King appeared to preside together over the ceremony awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to Nelson Mandela. As President Mandela started to speak, rays of sunlight began to pour into the Rotunda. They illuminated the base of the statues first and then rose gradually until, by the time President

Mandela finished speaking, both Lincoln and King were bathed in bright sunlight. With a little imagination, you could almost hear Lincoln say: Did you notice that sunburst? It made my heart jump.

Like Lincoln, President Mandela now belongs to the ages. And while our hearts are heavy today with President Mandela's passing, the world can take inspiration from the lessons he taught us while he walked among us.

REMEMBERING DU QUOIN MAYOR JOHN REDNOUR, SR.

As we mourn the passing of Nelson Mandela, the great noble leader who changed history, we also take a moment to recall other leaders closer to home. One of those leaders, and a friend of mine, had his memorial service this week. His name was not well known to many outside of southern Illinois, but he was a good man and a good friend, and he worked throughout his life to create opportunities and a sense of community. His name was John Rednour, although almost everybody skipped the first name and called him Rednour. He passed away on December 1, at age 78. He had just retired as mayor of Du Quoin, IL, a small town in southern Illinois, where he presided as mayor for a remarkable 24 years. During his tenure, he prided himself on balancing the budget and investing in the city's future. He did it year after year.

Amazingly, public service was his third career. John Rednour began his working life as an ironworker—a member of the United Ironworkers. He also worked as a shoemaker. In 1970, he moved to Du Quoin with his wife Wanda and three kids. In the early 1980s, he began his second career, when he brought together local shareholders and took control of a struggling local bank. He converted it into one of the soundest, most profitable banks in southern Illinois. But it was John Rednour's third career—his work as mayor of Du Quoin—that really distinguished his public service. As a mayor, he was a fiscal conservative. But he was also a person who believed in giving people a chance.

John Rednour was a proud Democrat. In fact, he was the former chairman of the Illinois Democratic Party. He rode on Air Force One with President Jimmy Carter and had good relationships with Presidents including President Obama. The politicians whose careers he helped launch or advance could have filled a stadium. But he knew there were things more important than party politics. He always made it a habit to meet with new Du Quoin city council members and offered the same advice: Do what is good for Du Quoin. Do what is right for the people. That is certainly good advice for any officeholder.

Over the years, my wife Loretta and I were fortunate to be visitors at John Rednour's home at their annual State fair parties for the Du Quoin State fair. We always appreciated seeing that

great crowd at the social event of southern Illinois for the year, and then staying overnight and waking up in the morning as Wanda, his wife, made her famous Texas pancakes. We loved them. And people gathered from all over the community as Wanda kept making the pancakes.

John's funeral last week was attended by the Governor of our State, Pat Quinn, Members of Congress, including current Congressman BILL ENYART, former Congressmen Glenn Poshard, Jerry Costello, and Ken Gray, and many other elected officials.

The anecdote that best captured the spirit of John Rednour was offered in eulogy by his grandson. He said he once asked his grandfather why he gave money to homeless people every time he saw them. John Rednour replied: Because it's the right thing to do. Simple as that, it was the right thing to do.

Carl Sandburg, another son of Illinois, wrote a poem called "Prayers of Steel." It is a prayer of a working person asking for a useful life. John Rednour was an ironworker. These words about a steelworker apply to him as well:

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls.
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.
Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights into white stars.

John Rednour must have prayed those words, or something like them, often. And God must have heard them, because John Rednour achieved much good in his life—a leader of workers, a businessman, a banker, a mayor, a husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and a friend to legions.

For decades, John Rednour was the great nail that held his community together and helped move it forward. His contributions will enable his beloved Du Quoin to continue to reach for the stars for years to come.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

Mr. President, last week fast-food workers across the country led a 1-day strike to bring attention to low-wage workers who can't make a living on their current wages. In Chicago, 200 workers took to the streets.

But this is only one part of a much larger debate, a debate in recent days about the growing economic disparities in the United States of America and the struggles of low-wage workers.

In November, Pope Francis stated:

While the earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few.

Just last week, President Obama echoed those concerns in an address on income inequality. He spoke at the Center for American Progress, and he

noted that more than half of all Americans at some point in their lives will experience poverty.

The week before Thanksgiving, a Walmart in Ohio was running a food drive to help the hungry have a happy Thanksgiving. That kind of generosity and empathy is commendable. What was noteworthy, though, is the food drive was specifically to support their associates—their own employees. It reminded me of an effort McDonald's launched earlier this year to help their employees create a budget. According to that budget, the only way to make ends meet for someone making minimum wage and working 40 hours at McDonald's was to take a second job.

Washington Post's Wonkblog analyzed the chart and found that a worker making minimum wage would have to work 75 hours a week to have the aftertax income this company thought was basic to a family budget.

Low wages aren't a problem just in the fast-food industry, and I don't want to pick on Walmart and McDonald's. It is catching up in many other traditional jobs that used to be able to support a family.

There may be fewer better examples of this than in the banking sector. The banking industry in America last year posted \$141.3 billion in profits. The median executive pay in the banking industry in America is \$552,000 a year. Yet a recent report found that 39 percent of bank tellers in the State of New York are on public assistance.

Low-wage work is just not enough to get by. Working 40 hours a week at \$7.25 translates into \$15,080 a year. That is about \$400 less than the Federal poverty level guidelines for a family of two.

If you accept the sample budget we have talked about, a worker making the minimum wage would have to work 75 hours a week to have the aftertax income necessary to make ends meet. Working 75 hours a week at a minimum wage with few or no vacation days and limited benefits, if any, you can make \$24,720 a year after taxes. I want to say it is not impossible to do that, but the reality is many people actually have to do it. How do you raise a family working 75 hours a week? When do you have time to sit down with your kids and even read a book?

One way people get by is they are forced to turn to government assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the SNAP program, historically known as food stamps, or the LIHEAP program, Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program, which helps to pay for heating and cooling bills; the Children's Health Insurance Program, the CHIP program, which provides health insurance for the children of the poorest families; the Emergency Food Assistance Program, TEFAP; the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, TANF; the section 8 housing program; and, yes, the Affordable Care Act, which is providing for the first

time health insurance for some of the working poor who have never had insurance as a benefit at any time in their lives.

According to a recent study at the University of California-Berkeley undertaken in partnership with the University of Illinois, 52 percent of families of fast-food workers are on public assistance. Thirty-nine percent of the bank tellers in New York, 52 percent of the families of fast-food workers are on public assistance.

Subsidizing low-wage employment through these programs costs the Federal Government \$3.9 billion annually. Think about what that means. It means that working families across America paying their taxes are not only sustaining this government, they are sustaining the low-wage workers in their communities who cannot survive without a helping hand from a government program that keeps food on the table or may provide health insurance.

Instead of trying to find solutions to ensure full-time work so it is adequate to support a family, many of my colleagues are now attacking these programs. The House Republicans oppose the farm bill primarily because they want to make deep cuts in the food stamp program for families barely getting by and feeding their children. That strikes me as wrong. We are too good a Nation.

If we are going to have a political fight over saving money and cutting spending, for goodness sake, let's not start first with the children, the elderly, the disabled, and the veterans who are receiving food stamps. That, to me, defines the politics and the values of some Members of Congress.

SNAP is the first place many people turn when they struggle, this food stamp program. At a time when almost 15 percent of households in America have trouble keeping food on the table, SNAP helps 47 million Americans buy their groceries. In Illinois, more than 2 million people—about one in seven of our residents—rely on food stamp benefits. In my lifetime, we have seen many companies that are selling food across America now finding they are selling a large part to those who are coming in with food stamps.

After working at a grocery store all day, imagine having to turn to your SNAP benefits to buy the groceries you need to take home to feed your family; or, after working at a grocery store all day, you go to your local food bank. I have visited quite a few of those. I am sure the Presiding Officer has too. What is amazing going to a food bank is the people who are there. They are not the people you might expect. Some of them are elderly people on Social Security, barely getting by. They need that food bank, twice a month sometimes, to have enough food on the table to live for another month.

There are also a lot of people who work for a living in those food banks. I remember going to central Illinois and visiting one of those food bank ware-

houses. I saw a well-dressed young lady there who I thought was on the staff. I learned later she was a single mom with two kids. She had a part-time job that didn't pay very well. She qualified for food stamps and also went to the food bank with some frequency. But she wanted to come and thank me, because the food stamp program now allowed her to use her food stamp benefits at farmers markets so she could take her kids out to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at that time of year. For her it was a great side trip for the kids to meet the farmers and learn a little more about life here. She thought getting them the food was secondary to that experience for which she wanted to come and thank me.

The farm bill conference needs to reach an agreement which will not penalize the poorest people in America—not penalize the children, the veterans, the elderly, and the disabled who count on food stamps.

One of the biggest challenges we face is to make sure our workers all across America have a minimum wage they can get by on, have food stamps, if necessary, but also have access to health insurance. That is where the Affordable Care Act comes in. Now 1.8 million Illinoisans have no health insurance. Many are going to have their first chance to be covered by health insurance because of the Affordable Care Act. According to the Congressional Budget Office, 12 million people in America are going to be eligible for Medicaid, and 23 million will for the first time buy private health insurance, and they won't be discriminated against because someone in the family has a preexisting condition. They will not be caught in a situation where there are limits on the amount of coverage these policies offer. They are going to have opportunities for preventive care and regular wellness checkups. For many of them it is going to be the first time in their lives they have ever had this luxury and peace of mind.

We have to protect these programs and we have to do more. More and more working families make it clear that the Federal minimum wage needs to be increased. Since 1967 it has gone up \$1.40 to \$7.25. This may seem like significant progress, but when you adjust it to current dollars, the value of the minimum wage has actually declined over that period by 12 percent. Had the minimum wage kept up with inflation, it would be \$10.74 today, not \$7.25.

If the minimum wage is increased to \$10.10—which I support and we want to bring it to the floor for a vote—more than 30 million American workers will get a raise. What will they do with that money? They will go shopping, of course. They live paycheck to paycheck. A little more money means shoes, clothes, food, the basics in life. When they go shopping and create more economic activity, it creates even more jobs.

Workers in America—full-time workers, hard-working Americans—are falling behind through no fault of their own. Attacking or cutting programs that help these struggling families is just wrong. We have to work together to help them.

In the coming weeks I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will restore the bipartisan tradition of supporting working families. I urge my colleagues to support an increase in the minimum wage and to resist these efforts to make deep cuts in the food stamp, or SNAP, program.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. This is an announcement to all the Senators. Due to the myriad of problems with the weather, there are Senators who are still stranded and trying to get here, so we are going to have to put off the votes this afternoon. We will not have votes this afternoon. We will have votes in the morning.

I ask unanimous consent that the previous order with respect to the vote on the confirmation of the Millett nomination be modified so the vote will follow leader remarks on Tuesday, December 10. Also, there will be no morning business tomorrow morning. Following leader remarks, we will go right to the business of the day.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I apologize to everyone for the late notice, but we have been trying to scramble around to see if we could have enough participation tonight. Most people have been able to get here, but some of them—certainly it is not their fault—tried to get here last night and still are not here. I am sorry for the late notice, but that is where we are.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Connecticut.

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

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

Mr. MURPHY. I ask unanimous consent to speak in morning business.

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

UNDETECTABLE FIREARMS ACT

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, we are about to hit the 1-year mark since the

tragic shooting in Sandy Hook, CT, which took the lives of 20 little boys and girls, 6- and 7-year-olds, and 6 of their educators who cared for them.

It should be a source of great embarrassment to the Senate and the House of Representatives that we have not moved the ball forward 1 inch when it comes to the issue of protecting the thousands of people all across this country who are killed by guns every year. This is the case even while 90 percent of Americans agree that people should have proof that they are not a criminal before they buy a gun and that there is really no reason why we should allow military-style weapons to get into the hands of ordinary Americans. We should be embarrassed by the fact that we are not doing more to try to stem the scourge of gun violence that plagues our Nation today. But we should be even more embarrassed if this week we cannot pass a commonsense extension and update to the Undetectable Firearms Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation that has been on the books since 1988. Most people in this country have no idea it exists because up until this week it has been so noncontroversial.

In an effort to explain to my colleagues a little bit about why this is so important, I wish to take my colleagues back 60 years to World War II. In World War II the allies developed a very small firearm called the Liberator. The Liberator was capable of only firing one shot. It was a very small, little gun. The idea was that we would get this out to the resistance movement in Europe and they would be able to conceal this very small firearm so they could get close enough to a German soldier, use the one bullet in the gun to kill the soldier, and then take his weapon. That program never went very far.

Fast forward to 70 years later, to a University of Texas student who came up with a design for a new undetectable firearm—a plastic gun that can be reproduced on what is now known as the 3D printer—named the Liberator. It is very similar to the gun that was developed by the resistance movement during World War II. Witness also the fact that once he posted the plans for that plastic undetectable gun online, those plans were downloaded 100,000 times in short order across this country before the Department of State used its authority to take down those plans.

I don't know exactly what the designs for this gun were, but it can be used in the exact same way the original Liberator gun was used. It is a plastic gun which is undetectable by imaging equipment, by metal detectors. It can be used to get into a very secure place such as, let's say, a government building. The ones being designed today, such as the one the young guy in Texas put online, can't fire more than a couple of bullets, but it can fire enough bullets to injure a law enforcement officer or a security officer, take their gun, and do even more damage.

So we have two problems today when it comes to this new issue of undetectable plastic guns:

First, the law passed in 1988 that bans the manufacture, possession, or sale of undetectable firearms—firearms that can't be picked up with a metal detector, that can essentially move into secure locations without being identified—expires today. If we don't pass an extension, tomorrow it will be legal in this country to create an undetectable firearm.

The second problem is this new technology that is pretty widely available, already called 3D printing, has made it very easy to make firearms that comply with the existing law but are still potentially undetectable.

Why is that? Because to be a legal weapon, you have to have a certain amount of the weapon be metal so it can be picked up by a metal detector or an x ray machine. But because we can now make very creatively constructed weapons with 3-D printers, that piece of metal can be easily removed before it goes through a metal detector and still be used without the metal on the other side of the detection unit, thus essentially erasing the benefit of having a metal component if the metal component can just be stripped out.

It is a pretty simple update we have to make here. All we have to say is that the metal piece of the gun has to be integral to the firing mechanism of the gun so that if you take the metal out to get it through a metal detector it does not work on the other end. But we are having a hard time getting that commonsense update—just recognizing the advancement of technology—passed in the Senate and in the House of Representatives.

So we have these two problems: one, the underlying bill—which is still really good law even without the update—is expiring. We have to pass it here. Second, we need this update to be taken care of.

This is not science fiction anymore. The threat of undetectable firearms has always been around and that is why in 1988 both parties got together to pass it. It has been extended since then. But it is no longer science fiction that somebody can make a gun in their basement basically obliterating the utility of all of our Nation's firearms laws and use it to perpetrate great evil throughout this country.

Mr. President, 3-D printers cost only about \$2,000 today. Most futurists are pretty certain that in maybe a decade or more most Americans will have access to this technology. Just like the photocopier and the personal computer seemed out of reach at some point for most middle-class Americans, maybe today the 3-D printer is, but in a decade or more it might be another household appliance that sits right next to your computer printer.

Second, we know how dangerous plastic guns are because people have tested this premise. One investigative journalist in Israel took a plastic gun into

the Israeli Parliament—got through the serious security that surrounds that building, got into the Parliament, and sat 10 rows behind Benjamin Netanyahu with a plastic gun in his possession. So this is not science fiction. It is not just a perceived or imagined threat. This is real, this is now, and we have to do something about it.

One of the things that has happened in the wake of Sandy Hook is that schools have invested in enormous amounts of security. I am somebody who does not believe ultimately that is the way you keep schools safe. But to the extent that schools have put in more metal detectors, have put in more security platforms around their entryways and exit ways, it does not do any good if somebody can walk through that school, who wants to do great damage within it, with a plastic firearm that will be legal in this country in one way, shape, or form if we do not pass an updated version of this bill right now this week.

It is time we recognize the future is here, plastic guns are real. As we approach the 1-year anniversary of the most horrific school shooting this country has ever seen, it is time for us to do what we have many times before: reauthorize and update the Undetectable Firearms Act.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 1197, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1197) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

Reid (for Levin/Inhofe) amendment No. 2123, to increase to \$5,000,000,000 the ceiling on the general transfer authority of the Department of Defense.

Reid (for Levin/Inhofe) amendment No. 2124 (to amendment No. 2123), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to recommit the bill to the Committee on Armed Services, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 2305, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2306 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2305), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2307 (to amendment No. 2306), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, before we left for the Thanksgiving break, Senator INHOFE and I said we would come

to the Senate floor today to update Members on the status of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

Before the break we spent a week on the Senate floor trying to bring more amendments up and to have them debated and voted on, but we were unable to do so. We tried to reach agreement to limit consideration to defense-related amendments, but we were unable to do that. We tried to get consent to vote on two sexual assault amendments—the Gillibrand amendment and the McCaskill amendment—that had been fully debated, but we could not get that consent. We tried to get consent to lock in additional amendments for votes and to move a package of cleared amendments, but we were unable to do so.

At this point, the House of Representatives will be adjourning for the year at the end of this week, and there is simply no way we can debate and vote on those amendments to the pending bill, get cloture, pass the bill, go to conference with the House, get a conference report written, and have it adopted by the House of Representatives all before the House goes out of session this Friday. There simply is no way all of those events can take place to get a defense bill passed.

So Senator INHOFE and I believe it is our responsibility to the Armed Services Committee, to the Senate, to our men and women in uniform, and to the country to do everything we can to enact a defense authorization bill. For this reason, we are taking the same approach we took when we were unable to finish the bill and go to conference with the House in 2008 and 2010. What we did is we sat down with our counterparts on the House side—in this case, chairman BUCK McKEON and ranking member ADAM SMITH of the House Armed Services Committee—and we set our staffs to work to come up with a bill that would have a chance of getting passed by both Houses.

The four of us have reached agreement on a bill that we hope will be passed by the House before it recesses this Friday and, if it does, then be considered by the Senate next week.

We worked hard to blend the bill that was overwhelmingly voted out of the Senate Armed Services Committee with the bill that was overwhelmingly approved by the House of Representatives. We have worked, as we always do, on the SAS Committee on a bipartisan basis.

We took into consideration as many proposed Senate amendments as we could. We focused on amendments that had been cleared on the Senate side when the bill was being debated in the Senate. We approached these amendments and others in much the same manner as we did provisions that were in the bill, working to come up with language, wherever possible, that could be accepted on the Democratic and Republican sides in both the Senate and the House.

The bill we have come up with is not a Democratic bill or a Republican bill. It is a bipartisan defense bill, one that serves the interests of our men and women in uniform and preserves the important principle of congressional oversight over the Pentagon. Here are some examples of what will be in the bill that will be considered by the House later this week and then hopefully by the Senate next week.

The bill will extend the authority of the Department of Defense to pay combat pay and hardship duty pay for our troops. The bill, relative to Guantanamo, includes that part of the Senate language easing restrictions on overseas transfers of Gitmo detainees, but it retains the House prohibitions on transferring detainees to the United States.

Although we were unable to consider the Gillibrand and McCaskill amendments on the Senate floor or in the bill itself that will be forthcoming, the bill includes more than 20 other provisions to address the problem of sexual assault in the military that were in the Senate bill that came to the floor out of the committee and that were in the House of Representatives bill as well.

These provisions include the following: They provide a special victims' counsel for survivors of sexual assault, make retaliation for reporting a sexual assault a crime under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. The provisions require commanders to immediately refer all allegations of sexual assault to professional criminal investigators. They would end the commanders' ability to modify findings and convictions for sexual assaults, and would require higher level review of any decision not to prosecute allegations of sexual assault.

The bill will do the following that will be hopefully coming here next week: Make the Article 32 process more like a grand jury proceeding. Under the UCMJ, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, currently the proceeding that is taken under Article 32 is more like a discovery proceeding rather than a grand jury proceeding, and it has created all kinds of problems, including for victims of sexual assault who would have to appear and be subject to cross-examination by the defense.

This bill will extend supplemental impact aid to help local school districts educate military children. The bill will extend existing military land withdrawals in a number of places that would otherwise expire, leaving the military without critical testing and training capabilities. The bill includes a new land withdrawal to enable the Marine Corps to expand its training area at 29 Palms.

The bill provides needed funding authority for the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons stockpile and for efforts of the Jordanian Armed Forces to secure that country's border with Syria.

Earlier today GEN Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of