

police officers to be hired by local communities through the COPS program. In my district, uniformed public safety officers have proven to be an effective way of heading off trouble before it starts. Yet the Republican majority refused to allow the House the opportunity to debate that proposal.

My colleagues and I also proposed an amendment which would fund local after-school programs which would provide a safe haven for children in the hours when most juvenile crime takes place, between 3 and 6 p.m. The committee refused to make this amendment in order, an amendment which might prevent crime and which might keep kids out of trouble.

There is a huge demand for these kind of programs, programs which are cost effective and which can keep juveniles out of a jail cell and in a classroom. But the Republican majority refused to allow this amendment to be heard.

Finally, we offered an amendment that would direct the Department of Education and the Department of Justice to develop a model violence prevention program for the use of school districts around the country and to create an information clearinghouse within the Education Department.

Mr. Speaker, our amendments are just plain common sense. We have a national crisis in our schools, and when they reopen in the fall, all of us would feel better knowing that we have done something to make those schools centers of learning, not havens of fear. The programs that would be created by these four amendments would go a long way toward making that a reality.

There are many things wrong with this rule, Mr. Speaker, not the least of which is the failure to include these amendments.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS), an able member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I offered an amendment for the consideration of the Committee on Rules which was rejected. It would have made abundantly clear the important relationship between the Federal law enforcement agencies, in the person of the U.S. Attorney, and the local law enforcement, in the person of the district attorney, police chief, and other officers of the local law enforcement community.

It is not clear yet whether the current language of the bill that will be considered by the House makes that relationship one that is as strong as we would like to see it become. But it may be that in future hearings that will be conducted in our committee, the Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law of the Committee on the Judiciary, that that voice of the U.S. Attorney, consistent with the voice of the district attorney and local law enforcement, will be even stronger than it now is and must be.

What we are concerned about is that if there is an interpretation placed on

the current language that mandates the U.S. attorneys to handle all gun charges, without regard to whether or not law enforcement has a stake in the pursuit or investigation and prosecution of a gun-wielding criminal, it might damage that relationship. But, worse, it might damage a case that has been put together by a local law enforcement agency that the Federal involvement would only seek to, by its involvement, destroy.

So these relationships are so important that we intend to have further hearings on these questions, and suffice it to say that when this bill passes, if it should, we will reexamine it to see how the U.S. Attorney's Office may be adversely impacted, if at all; and, if so, we will then hone in on remedies that can be applied to this law.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would like to clarify its statement of a few moments ago about the amendment to the resolution, and would clarify that the order by unanimous consent that was entered into at that time was just that and not stated as itself an amendment to the resolution. It was a unanimous consent agreement.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. SLAUGHTER).

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the recent school tragedies in Colorado and Georgia were a cry for help, and my friends on the other side have answered with an NRA wish list and a near-to-far-Right agenda.

The bill is full of solutions in search of a problem, while the real challenges go unmet. I offered an amendment to reach out to those children who are living in the shadows, to give them a chance to learn that someone does care about them, by using the school facilities that we have all paid for in our communities that sit idle during after-school hours. We even had a way to pay for it from the juvenile justice budget, but I was not allowed to offer that amendment.

Instead, this rule says, put the Ten Commandments on the wall and hush.

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The people of America want to control gun violence, and the leadership on the other side offers us two amendments to put more guns on the streets of the national capital of Washington, D.C. Talk about offering a drowning man a glass of water.

We ask for more police in the schools. No, says today's amendment, just pray more in school. Well, I believe that God helps those that help themselves, Mr. Speaker, and we are obligated to do what only we in Congress can do.

Mr. Speaker, our children are praying. They are praying for relief from the terror of violence bursting through their school doors. Please defeat this rule and this bill and let them know

and their families know that we support their prayers.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am happy to yield 4 minutes to my good friend, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL).

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of the rule. I believe 2 days of debate on this very important issue is about as fair as we can get. I know a lot of people are not satisfied with the rule. But I think under the circumstances it is fair, and I will support the rule.

However, I am not optimistic that much good will come out of the next 2 days of debate. I think there is a lot of mischief going on here. I see that one-half of this Congress is quite capable and anxious to defend the First Amendment, and I think that is good. I see the other half of the Congress is quite anxious and capable of defending the second amendment, and I think that is good. But it seems strange because I see these two groups coming together in a coalition to pass a bill that will undermine the first amendment and undermine the second amendment.

That does not make a whole lot of sense to me because I think that we are obligated here in the Congress to defend both the first and the second amendment and were not here for the purpose of undermining both amendments.

We should be reminded, though, that traditionally, up until the middle part of this century, crime control was always considered a local issue. That is the way the Constitution designed it. That is the way it should be. But every day we write more laws here in the Congress building a national police force. We now have more than 80,000 bureaucrats in this country carrying guns. We are an armed society, but it is the Federal Government that is armed.

So I think we should think seriously before we pass more laws whether they undermine the first amendment or whether we pass more laws undermining the second amendment. We do not need more Federal laws.

Recently there was a bipartisan study put out and chaired by Ed Meese, and he is not considered a radical libertarian. He was quoted in an editorial in the Washington Post as to what we here in the Congress are doing with nationalizing our police force. The editorial states: "The basic contention of the report, which was produced by a bipartisan group headed by former Attorney General Edward Meese, is that Congress' tendency in recent decades to make Federal crimes out of offenses that have historically been State matters has dangerous implications both for the fair administration of justice and for the principle that States are something more than mere administrative districts of a national government."

Along with this, we have also heard Supreme Court Justice Rehnquist say the same thing. "The trend to federalize crimes that traditionally have been handled in State courts threatens to change entirely the nature of our Federal system."

We are unfortunately bound and determined to continue this trend. It looks like we are going to do so today. We are going to place a lot more rules and regulations restricting both the first and second amendment.

We are bound and determined to write more rules and regulations dealing with the first and the second amendment, and I do not see this as a good trend. It is said today that those who want to undermine the first amendment, that it is already established that pornography is not protected under the first amendment. And today the goal is to make sure that the depiction of violence is not protected under the first amendment. But do my colleagues know that the major cause of violence in the world throughout history have been abuse of religion and the abuse of philosophy?

So, therefore, the next step will be, if we can limit the depiction of pornography and then violence, be the limitation of the depiction of a philosophy that deals with religion or political systems such as Communism or other fascism.

I say, today we should move carefully and not undermine either the first or the second amendment.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Worcester, Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN).

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this rule.

Congratulations are in order to the National Rifle Association. They are attempting to destroy vital and sensible gun safety legislation with the help of a disorganized Republican leadership.

This is not a game, Mr. Speaker. We are talking about protecting the lives of our kids. This should not be an opportunity for Congress to bring up legislation that appeases the gun lobby but does very little to seriously address the problem of gun violence in this country. We need meaningful legislation. The rhetoric is not going to cut it. Walking away, this is not going to cut it. We owe it to our communities and to our country to do the right thing.

There is a lot about this rule that is offensive, from keeping out good amendments to allowing amendments designed to obliterate the first amendment. But regardless of where my colleagues stand on these issues or on the issue of gun control, the least we should be able to expect from the Republican leadership is fairness.

This rule is many things, but it is certainly not fair. We should reject this rule, go back to the drawing board, and start over, keeping our children's best interests in mind, not the gun lobby's best interests.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Yorkville, Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) the very distinguished and hard-working Speaker of the House.

(Mr. HASTERT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this rule; and I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support it.

When this rule came before the committee, there were well over 100, almost 150, amendments that were requested. There were 55 amendments, I believe, made in order from all points of belief and perspective. This rule gives the House the most open debate possible regarding the issues surrounding violence in our schools and violence with our children.

As a former public school teacher, I worked almost my whole career to make sure that there is good education both as a practitioner, then in the State legislature, and here in the Congress. What makes too many of our students do these things to their classmates, their teachers, and their friends? How can we stop it? Those are the questions.

Our colleague, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. WATTS) put it well when he said, we should explore not only these things and how they happen but also why these things happen.

Earlier this year, legislation authored by my colleague, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD), would start the process of answering the questions of why. This legislation assembles experts from around the country who will investigate the common reasons why so many children act so violently.

In this debate we attempt to provide some answers to both of these questions. But let us not kid ourselves. Congress cannot quickly and easily provide complete answers that will solve the complex problems of juvenile violence. So we can only try to highlight some of those issues that we as a society should work to solve. We will debate options regarding guns in our society.

I believe that there are common-sense steps that we can take to keep guns out of the hands of unsupervised children. This rule sets up a fair process that lets the House speak on gun legislation. We should look at the disparity between gun shops and gun shows. It makes no sense to put restrictions on the gun shops if a juvenile or a criminal can easily purchase a gun at a gun show.

The gun debate helps us to partially answer the "how" question. The juvenile justice debate will help us answer the "why" question. Why have our children lost sense of the value for human life? Why do they not know the difference between right and wrong? What in our culture promotes this kind

of reprehensible conduct from our very children?

This debate will help to address these questions. We will have a debate about our justice system and how it deals with young people. We will have a debate on prayer in the schools and how that might help children understand the difference between right and wrong. We will have a debate on obscenity in our culture. And if sexual obscenity is left unprotected by the Constitution, why should violent obscenity be protected when studies already show the damage it does to our young people?

This will be a long debate, but it will be a good debate that reflects the many opinions of this great Nation.

Many have asked why this rule allows for two different debates on two different bills. The answer is simple. This strategy allows the House to work its will on two separate issues joined by one common tragedy. The House will work its will on the issue of gun restrictions. We cannot and should not hide from this issue that occupies the attention of the American people. And the House will work its will on the wider issues surrounding our culture and our society and its impact on our children.

I urge my colleagues to support this rule and to join with me in starting the process of finding solutions to the problems surrounding the violence of youth in our schools.

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BLAGOJEVICH).

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, if one is a child in the United States, they are 12 times more likely to die from gun violence than a child in any other industrialized country in the world. Each day in America, Mr. Speaker, 14 children die because of gun violence. And every year in America, 38,000 Americans lose their lives because of gun violence.

The Committee on Rules has allowed 14 of 70 amendments offered by Democrats relating to gun control to see the light of day on the House floor. And the Committee on Rules has only allowed 4 hours to debate these very important issues.

Among those amendments on the cutting room floor is a bill that would increase the age of possession for handguns from 18 to 21. In the United States 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds are the most likely to commit murders with guns. Eighteen-year-olds rank first. Nineteen-year-olds rank second. Twenty-year-olds rank third among those who commit homicides with firearms in our society. Yet the Committee on Rules will not allow that amendment to see the light of day on this House floor for a full debate.

Mr. Speaker, we need a better rule. We need an open debate. And we should have a full and free debate on all the issues of amendments relating to this important issue.