

These, Mr. President, are just two examples of the way our criminal justice system often refuses to treat domestic violence as a serious crime. Yet the scope of the problem is enormous. Each year, using a very conservative estimate, 1,500 women die because of domestic abuse involving a gun. Many believe that the number is closer to several thousand. Neither of these numbers include children.

Mr. President, when women are killed in domestic disputes, the murderers are holding a gun about 65 percent of the time. It is not just beatings and other types of punishment. Put another way, two-thirds of domestic violence murders involve firearms. Many of these murders would never have happened but for the presence of a gun.

The New England Journal of Medicine reports that in households with a history of battering, a gun in the home increases the likelihood that a woman would be murdered by three times—threefold. In other words, when you combine wife beaters and guns, the result is death.

Mr. President, I focused thus far mainly on wifebeaters, but domestic violence also involves children. In at least one-half of wife-abusing families, the children are battered as well. Mr. President, 2,000 American children are killed each year from abuse inflicted by a parent or a caretaker. Yet, as I said before, many of these abusers and batterers are prosecuted only for misdemeanors, and under Federal law they are still free to possess firearms. This amendment closes this dangerous loophole and keeps guns away from violent individuals who threaten their own families, people who show they cannot control themselves and are prone to fits of violent rage, directed, unbelievably enough, against their own loved ones. The amendment says abuse your child and lose your gun. Beat your wife, and lose your gun. Assault your ex-wife, lose your gun, no ifs, ands or buts.

It is a tough policy, Mr. President. But when it comes to domestic violence, we have to get tough. There is no margin of error when it comes to domestic abuse and guns. A firearm in the hand of an abuser all too often means death.

If this bill had been law, maybe, just maybe, a person named Marilyn Garland of Barberton, OH, would be alive today. Her husband had previously been convicted of domestic violence offenses for physically abusing her. But even though he had shown himself to be violent and prone to wifebeating, no law prevented him from owning a gun. Eventually, as it often does, the cycle of violence spun out of control and Marilyn's husband used the gun to kill her. He then disposed of her body. It was a horrible, brutal act that was committed. It did not have to happen.

By their nature, acts of domestic violence are especially dangerous and require special attention. These crimes involve people who have a history together and perhaps share a home or a child. These are not violent acts between strangers, and they don't arise from a chance meeting. Even after a separation, the individuals involved, often by necessity, have a continuing relationship of some sort, either custody of children or common property ownership.

This amendment is based on legislation that I introduced earlier this year which has been endorsed by over 30 prominent national organizations, including the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the National Network to End Domestic Violence, the Family Violence Prevention Fund, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the YWCA of the U.S.A., just to name a few.

The people who commit these crimes often have a history of violent or threatening behavior. Yet, frequently, they are permitted to possess firearms with no legal restrictions. The statistics and the data are clear. Domestic violence, no matter how it is labeled, leads to more domestic violence. Guns in the hands of convicted wifebeaters leads to murder.

I made a change from the introduced version to respond to a suggestion from some of my colleagues. Like my original bill, which covered persons indicted for domestic violence offenses, this amendment applies only to those who have actually been convicted of domestic violence. This amendment would save the lives of many innocent Americans, but it would also send a message

about our Nation's commitment to ending domestic violence and about our determination to protect millions of women and children who suffer from this abuse.

To put it directly, Mr. President, there are over 2 million cases of household violence reported each and every year, and 150,000 of those show a gun present, a firearm present, during a violent rage or an argument. We ought not to expose those people who are abused by a spouse or a father to further violence by enabling them to have a gun, with the permission of our country.

So the amendment, which passed earlier, simply stands for the proposition that wifebeaters and child abusers should not have guns. I think the overwhelming majority of Americans would agree. I look forward to a prompt passage by the House and the signature of the President making this law.

Mr. President, the following Members were original cosponsors of the bill I introduced, S. 1632: Senators FEINSTEIN, BRADLEY, MURRAY, KENNEDY, KERRY, KOHL, AKAKA, INOUE, and SIMON.

I thank the Chair and I thank the staff who worked so late this evening to accommodate me.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In accordance with the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 11:18 p.m., adjourned until Friday, July 26, 1996, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate July 25, 1996:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

GLENN DALE CUNNINGHAM, OF NEW JERSEY, TO BE U.S. MARSHAL FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY FOR THE TERM OF 4 YEARS.

THE JUDICIARY

JOAN B. GOTTSCHALL, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS.

ROBERT L. HINKLE, OF FLORIDA, TO BE U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA.