

I also echo Senator LEAHY's remarks on our understanding of the Agriculture appropriations bill, which we have been assured will contain several additional critical provisions, particularly the assistance for our Nation's dairy farmers who have suffered terribly from low prices, and for apple farmers who have been hard hit by low yields and low quality after 2 years of unavoidable weather extremes, from hurricanes to drought.

I have visited regularly with dairy and apple farmers in my own State and can say they desperately need our help.

I thank, once again, the conferees for crafting a bill that for the first time truly takes into account the unique needs of Northeastern farmers. I voted for the package, and I am glad so many of my fellow Senators voted for it as well.

TRIBUTE TO PAT ROONEY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, today, I rise to pay tribute to a businessman who has witnessed the transformation of a company from a single plant operation into a multinational corporation. The businessman I am referring to is Pat Rooney, who is retiring on June 3rd after almost 45 years of service to Cooper Tire and Rubber Company. Mr. Rooney began his career with Cooper Tire in 1956 as a sales trainee. In 1994, Pat Rooney was elected CEO and Chairman of the Board of Cooper Tire. That hierarchical progression is astounding. In this day and time with the ever changing economy, it is almost hard to fathom someone working for one employer for four and a half decades. Pat Rooney saw Cooper Tire and Rubber grow from 1,000 total employees to now 25,000 worldwide. During his tenure at Cooper Tire, Mr. Rooney spent time working in Clarksdale, Mississippi at the rubber products operation in the Mississippi Delta. Cooper has built a significant presence in my state, employing numerous Mississippians at locations in Clarksdale and Tupelo. Pat Rooney lives in Findlay, Ohio and has been very active in the community. He is a Rotarian, active in the Findlay/Hancock County Chamber of Commerce, and the County Community Development Foundation and served on the advisory council of the Arts Partnership of Hancock County. Again, I want to commend Pat Rooney today for his service to his company and his community. Cooper Tire has been fortunate to have such a dedicated employee, leader, and visionary. Mr. Rooney I hope you will enjoy your well deserved retirement.

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, earlier this month, the Senate began consideration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a reauthorization bill that would determine our national education policy. We spent a few days on that bill, offering and debating amend-

ments, to reduce class size and reward teachers who improve student achievement, among other things.

On May 9, 2000, the Majority Leader withdrew the education bill from consideration, and the Senate moved on to other business. At the time, the Majority Leader indicated his intent to come back to the education bill, either later in that same week, or the week after.

It is now more than three weeks later and Congress is preparing to adjourn for the Memorial Day recess without addressing a critical component of our national education policy: school safety.

The education bill was likely withdrawn from the Senate because of the possibility of a school safety amendment aimed at curbing gun violence. Unfortunately, education and gun violence are now inseparable issues. The wave of school shootings—in Jonesboro, Arkansas, Littleton, Colorado, and recently, in Mt. Morris Township, Michigan—has changed America's perception of safety in school.

Over the last few years, we have made some gains. Over the four year period, from 1993 to 1997, the percentage of high school students who carried a weapon to school declined from 12% to 9%; the rate of crime against students ages 12 to 18 fell one-third; and 90 percent of schools reported no incidents of serious violent crime in 1996-1997.

Despite these gains, students feel less safe at school, and access to guns is a primary reason why. School violence, or even the threat of school violence, instills fear in our students, and limits their ability to learn. School violence also threatens and intimidates teachers—making instruction more difficult.

The learning environment is in jeopardy, and unless we address the vulnerabilities of our schools, many of our other efforts to improve the education system will be undermined.

I'm sure all of us agree that any act of violence—whether it's as common as a fist fight in the locker room or as extreme as a shoot out in the cafeteria—interferes with the educational process. Ron Astor, an assistant professor of social work and education at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, has said: "Violence in schools . . . interferes with children's physical well being, academic functioning, social relations, and emotional and cognitive development."

School violence has always posed a threat to students and teachers, but the advent of gun violence in schools has escalated the problem. Gun violence, not only affects students at a particular school, it has a rippling effect on students at schools in the same county, state, and in some cases, the entire country.

I have a letter from Professor Astor, who wrote to me earlier this month, when the Senate was debating education policy. Professor Astor has been researching the topic of school violence

for over 17 years, and has produced 23 publications on the topic. His research gives us a clear understanding of how gun violence, and the fear of gun violence, impacts schools in Michigan, and in the United States.

Professor Astor writes:

Dear Senator LEVIN,

I am pleased that the Senate is debating the topic of education in our nation. As a professor of education, I hope that you will include in your discussions the issue of school safety. As you know, the general public is seriously concerned with the safety of our schools. Polls taken over the past seven years indicated that the public considers school violence to be the top problem facing U.S. schools. Hopefully, the Senate's efforts will result in policy and legislation that make our schools safer for our children.

He continues:

Clearly, teachers, students, and school staff are most concerned about the presence of firearms and weapons in our schools. In the context of a discussion on guns and mass shootings, consider the fear described by this middle school teacher who participated in one of our studies: "A lot of us are afraid. You come in the morning and you're just afraid to even go to work. You're just so stressed out, because you're all tensed up, you can't feel happy and teach like you want to because you've got to spend all of your time trying to discipline. You're scared somebody's going to walk in. We keep our doors locked. We have to keep our doors locked." Middle school teacher. (Meyer, Astor & Behre, 2000).

Professor Astor goes on:

In our studies, students and school staff often mention fear from the threat of guns and other lethal weapons. Without a doubt, the knowledge or rumor of a gun in a school instills fear in the school community. Teachers and students are well aware that the shocking mass murders recently perpetrated in schools are exclusively associated with firearms. Our country has a long history of lethal acts in schools (see Kachur et al, 1996 in the Journal of the American Medical Association), however, the use of guns as a weapon of choice, has made multiple murders a more common occurrence. This, in turn, has promoted a high level of fear within schools. Obviously, the fear of death or potential catastrophe is not conducive with a positive learning environment. Consequently, I urge you and your colleagues to take a strong stance on the issue of firearms.

Professor Astor quotes a middle school teacher frightened by the thought of a school shooting, and she is not alone. Teachers and students across this nation fear what may happen to them in the classroom. Those of us who feel strongly about education and school safety must do something to ease their fears. Congress must curb young people's access to guns. We must pass legislation designed to reduce the level of gun violence, and the fear of such violence, in our communities.

Gun violence is certainly not the only cause of fear in school. Professor Astor explains, that in addition to concerns about firearms, teachers and students fear more common forms of violence, such as fist fights, sexual harassment, teasing and bullying. All violence in school is unacceptable and we should continue to work toward curbing any and all student harm. But gun

violence is a dominant cause of fear among teachers and students in our schools.

We have the opportunity to take the first step toward establishing a safer and more secure school environment, by among other things, passing the juvenile justice bill which would ban juvenile possession of assault weapons and close the gun show loophole. But if we can not pass the juvenile justice bill, we will use other means to prevent the gun violence that has plagued too many American schools and communities.

I hope this Senate will continue its debate on this country's long-term education needs and at the same time, work toward finding a long-term solution for reducing the shootings in American schools. Students around the country may be off for the summer, but Congress will have to keep working until we can make the grade on school safety.

I ask unanimous consent to submit the full text of Professor Astor's letter in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN,
Ann Arbor, MI, May 2, 2000.

Senator LEVIN,
Russell Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEVIN, I am pleased that the Senate is debating the topic of education in our nation. As a professor of education, I hope that you will include in your discussions the issue of school safety. As you know, the general public is seriously concerned with the safety of our schools. Polls taken over the past seven years indicated that the public considers school violence to be the top problem facing U.S. schools. Hopefully, the Senate's efforts will result in policy and legislation that make our schools safer for our children.

I have been researching school violence for over 17 years. I have 23 publications on the topic of school violence in the U.S.A. and abroad. In addition, I teach courses on school violence to teachers, psychologists and social workers who will be creating and administering school violence programs in U.S. schools. Consequently, I have a perspective on this issue that spans both research and practice.

Based on my research, I would like to encourage you and your colleagues to pass legislation that addresses children's perceptions of safety in school. Our research shows that both children and teachers (in elementary, middle, and high school) are reluctant to categorize their entire setting as unsafe. However, when students and their teachers are asked to identify specific locations in their school (e.g., the bathrooms, playgrounds, hallways, areas immediately surrounding the school), most identify dangerous areas that they fear or avoid. Therefore feelings of danger are far more common experiences for students than the data in federal studies suggest. For example, in recent studies (enclosed Astor, Meyer & Behre, 1999; Astor, Meyer & Pitner, in press), we mapped violence-prone school locations within schools and then conducted in-depth interviews with students, teachers, and principals in Michigan elementary, middle and high schools. In these studies we found students and teachers very reluctant to categorize their entire school as being unsafe even

though the vast majority of students identified areas that they avoid due to school safety issues. Furthermore, girls consistently identify more areas than boys that they feared or avoided. One study found that over a third of school territory was considered unsafe by girls.

The teachers are also aware of danger in their work-settings (e.g., enclosed Meyer, Astor, & Behre, 2000). For example, 75% of the teachers in our sample, identified at least one area in or around their school that they considered unsafe or dangerous. Female middle and high school teachers identified more areas than their male colleagues that they perceived to be unsafe (e.g., 58% vs. 87% of males and females respectively). Teachers are very brave. Although they sense danger in specific school locations the vast majority of teachers claimed they would intervene even though they may be placing themselves in harms way. Teachers continually mentioned the need for protection against physical harm, legal issues, and policies that support their actions to make school safer. Contrary, to the current trend in zero tolerance policies, most of the students and teachers in our studies advocate for a relationship oriented approach that focuses on building a caring school community. Neither students nor teachers feel that security oriented measures (video cameras, security guards, police officers, alarm systems, expulsions) are conducive to a healthy learning environment. Furthermore, the findings in our studies show that interventions designed to encourage teacher/student relationships are perceived to be the most effective and consistent with the educational goals of our nation's schools.

Clearly, teachers, students, and school staff are most concerned about the presence of firearms and weapons in our schools. In the context of a discussion on guns and mass shootings, consider the fear described by this middle school teacher who participated in one of our studies:

"But I'm telling you, there's so much violence and in different areas and in different districts and different states where teachers are being killed every day. And don't look to me as a teacher to solve the violence in the school. It was there before I got there. It is getting worse. I'm here to tell you. I will—a lot of us are afraid. You come in the morning and you're just afraid to even go to work. You're just so stressed out, because you're all tensed up, you can't feel happy and teach like you want to because you've got to spend all of your time trying to discipline. You're scared somebody's going to walk in. We keep our doors locked. We have to keep our doors locked." Middle school teacher. (Meyer, Astor & Behre, 2000).

In our studies, students and school staff often mention fear from the threat of guns and other lethal weapons. Without a doubt, the knowledge or rumor of a gun in a school instills fear in the school community. Teachers and students are well aware that the shocking mass murders recently perpetrated in schools are exclusively associated with firearms. Our country has a long history of lethal acts in schools (see Kachur et al, 1996 in the Journal of the American Medical Association), however, the use of guns as a weapon of choice, has made multiple murders a more common occurrence. This, in turn, has promoted a high level of fear within school. Obviously, the fear of death or potential catastrophe is no conducive with a positive learning environment. Consequently, I urge you and your colleagues to take a strong stance on the issue of firearms.

Our findings demonstrate that in addition a focus on weapons in schools, national legislation should be focusing on most common forms of student harm such as school beat-

ings, sexual harassment, relentless humiliation/teasing, bullying, and other forms of victimization. These kinds of events have a very large impact on students overall sense of school safety. We just conducted a large scale (16,000 students) international study that shows these more common forms of violence account for many students nonattendance of school due to fear/humiliation. Creating an overall climate of safety in the school is essential. Draconian security measures used in the name of school safety (expulsion, police, metal detectors), may actually increase students fear of school violence and interfere with their learning.

Finally, the Columbine shootings have qualitatively changed our countries perceptions of school violence. Based on my contacts with hundreds of teachers, school principals, and school district superintendents in Michigan and across the country, I can confidently say that school districts are now more punitive, frightened, and authoritarian, surrounding issues of school violence. Consequently, it appears that schools harsh responses (usually suspension and expulsions) are now extended to innuendo's, nasty stares, verbal threats, and rude behaviors. Rather than creating a safer school climate, students, teachers, and principals claim that these security measures are fostering an oppressive environment which may be equally detrimental to learning. From a public policy perspective, expelling our most aggressive children is a social disaster because it increases the likelihood that these children will commit serious violent acts in the community. Being banished from school at a young age increased the chances of a "dead end" life, prison, welfare, being at the periphery of our economy, and a life of crime. Positive relationships created in schools may actually serve as a protective factor for many of our most aggressive children. Therefore, I'd like to encourage you and your esteemed colleagues to carefully consider policies that mirror a democratic, caring, community-oriented, and relationship-oriented school environment. These empirically supported virtues would accomplish the dual goals of fostering academic excellence within the context of safe feeling environments. Students, teachers, principals and parents do not want their schools turned into prison-like environments. This would not benefit our children's education or our democracy. Finally, they do not increase children's sense of safety. The facts suggested that the opposite is true.

I have enclosed a series of articles published or in press (in scientific peer reviewed journals). Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

With respect,
Sincerely,

RON AVI ASTOR, Ph.D.,
Associate Professor of Education and Social
Work.

THE NECESSITY FOR THE NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BILL FOR FISCAL YEAR 2001

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to discuss the importance—the critical need—for early Senate consideration of the defense authorization bill for fiscal year 2001. This bill, which we reported out of the Senate Armed Services Committee on May 12th with bipartisan support, is a good bill which will have a positive impact on our nation's security, and on the welfare of the men and women of