

RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF
CONRAD RAY BURNS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, Elaine and I were saddened by the passing of Conrad Burns last month. Senator Burns was a big personality from a big State. He will certainly be missed by those who had the opportunity to know him.

Our thoughts were with Phyllis and the Burns family then, and they remain with Phyllis and the Burns family today.

The Senate remembers this former colleague.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 457, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 457) relative to the death of Conrad Ray Burns, former United States Senator for the State of Montana.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 457) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

RELATIVE TO THE DEATH OF
ROBERT F. BENNETT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 458, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 458) relative to the death of Robert F. Bennett, former Senator of the State of Utah.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 458) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, MAY 10,
2016

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2:15 p.m., Tuesday, May 10; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate then resume consideration of H.R. 2028; further, that the filing deadline for first-degree amendments under rule XXII to the Alexander substitute amendment No. 3801 be at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow; finally, that the Senate adjourn today under the provisions of S. Res. 457 and S. Res. 458.

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

The Senator from Tennessee.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT
APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I would like to make brief comments concerning the status of the Energy and Water appropriations bill, following the actions of the majority leader. I said most of what I had to say earlier.

Here is my view of it. Tonight, and for the third time, the Senate voted not to end debate on the Energy and Water appropriations bill, even though we have virtually finished all of our work on it. We have one difference of opinion, and it is a big one. It is provocative. It is the Cotton amendment that would prohibit U.S. tax dollars being used next year to purchase heavy water from Iran.

The majority leader has filed cloture on the Cotton amendment, which means that after tomorrow—the intervening day—we will have a vote on the Cotton amendment on Wednesday. We will dispense with it the way we usually dispense with issues about which we have large differences of opinion: We vote on them. Sometimes we can work them out, sometimes we can withdraw them, and sometimes we can't. So we are going to vote on it. Senator COTTON has said that if he should not win the amendment, he will withdraw it. That will dispose of the Cotton amendment, and then we can move on and finish the Energy and Water appropriations bill.

I said earlier today, and I will reiterate, that while I have defended Senator COTTON's right to offer his amendment—it is germane and it is relevant—I will vote no on his amendment for two reasons. One reason is I believe it raises the possibility that if the United States is not allowed to buy heavy water from Iran, then it puts it on the international market and it could be purchased by other countries, such as North Korea, for use in making nuclear weapons.

This is not a vote for or against the Iran nuclear agreement. I am opposed to that agreement. This is a question about what to do about the heavy water that Iran has, which it has to get rid of, which can be used either for peaceful purposes, which we use it for in the United States when we have it—we use it for the neutron microscope at the Oak Ridge Laboratory, we use it for fiber optics, we use it for MRI imaging, we use it in a variety of ways—or it can be used to make plutonium and nuclear weapons. Now is not the time to be increasing the possibility that heavy water from Iran could be put on the international market and sold to a country such as North Korea, which might use it to make nuclear weapons. That is No. 1.

No. 2, while the amendment is relevant and germane, this is an amendment that ought to be considered first in the Foreign Relations Committee or the Armed Services Committee. I get a lot of lectures sometimes in our Republican lunches about appropriators making decisions that ought to be in the authorizing committee. Well, this is one of them. If there were an issue that raises more such complex national security issues, it would be hard to think of one. Might this heavy water be used by a country to make nuclear weapons or, on the other hand, if we purchase it, does it create a market or an incentive for Iran to produce more heavy water? What happens to India, which produces heavy water? What happens to Argentina? What happens to the need of the United States for heavy water, since we don't produce it at all, yet we need it? Iran produces it. We don't want them to have it. We don't produce it. We need it. We don't want North Korea to have it. These are complex national security issues that ought not to be decided on an amendment to this bill.

I will be voting no on the Cotton amendment because of the fear that it might create the possibility that putting it on the international market would put this distilled water, which could be used peacefully, in the hands of those who might make a bomb with it, and because I think an appropriate way to handle it is to first allow the Foreign Relations Committee or the Armed Services Committee to deal with it.

This is a sincere amendment. I have defended the right of the Senator from Arkansas to offer his amendment. My friends on the other side don't like the amendment. They see it as provocative. They see it as a poison pill. That is a difference we will just have to work out over time.

This is the U.S. Senate. The right way to work out differences we can't otherwise work out is simply to vote. The majority leader has made sure we will have a vote on the Cotton amendment by Wednesday.

My hope is that as important as this Energy and Water appropriations bill is, that Senator FEINSTEIN and I could work with the Democratic leader and

the Republican leader and others to see if we might not agree tomorrow on a way to vote on the Cotton amendment and finish the bill.

As I have said earlier, 80 different Senators have important provisions in the bill. I know that. I know they are important because many of my colleagues went home over the last week and took credit for passing them, even though we have a little more work to do.

So while we have one difference of opinion left—and it is a big one—I think the majority leader has put us on a path to come to resolution by Wednesday, and I hope by tomorrow.

Let me conclude by thanking Senator FEINSTEIN. She feels as passionately about this as Senator COTTON does. Maybe she feels more passionately about it. I respect and understand that, but I also respect the fact that she and I are bringing the first appropriations bill to the floor, and it is our basic constitutional duty to do so. We haven't had an Energy and Water appropriations bill make it all the way across the floor under regular order since 2009. That is not the way the railroad is supposed to run around here. We need to show the American people that we can resolve our differences and come to a result, so we will do that. We will have a vote, and then we will finish the bill. I hope we can do it tomorrow.

I look forward to continuing my discussions with the Senator from California and other interested Senators to get it resolved.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to thank the distinguished chairman of the subcommittee for his views and for his very instructive actions to move this bill to fruition. I know we both think it is an important bill. We know the subject that Senator COTTON has raised is also important.

I think there has been a good discussion on it and understanding of the pros and cons, so I think now we can wait until Wednesday, an hour after we come in, for the vote, and we will see what the will of the Senate is.

I want the chairman to know I am very grateful for the actions he has taken because this is enabling us to pass the bill and see it enacted into law, we hope.

So thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, during our break, last Thursday the New York Times ran a story that was as heartrending and gut-wrenching as I have read in a long time. The headline was: "One Week in April, Four Toddlers Shot and Killed Themselves."

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the New York Times, May 5, 2016]

ONE WEEK IN APRIL, FOUR TODDLERS SHOT AND KILLED THEMSELVES

(By Jack Healy, Julie Bosman, Alan Blinder, and Julie Turkewitz)

Kansas City, Mo.—Sha'Quille Kornegay, 2 years old, was buried in a pink coffin, her favorite doll by her side and a tiara strategically placed to hide the self-inflicted gunshot wound to her forehead.

She had been napping in bed with her father, Courtenay Block, late last month when she discovered the 9-millimeter handgun he often kept under his pillow in his Kansas City, Mo., home. It was equipped with a laser sight that lit up like the red lights on her cousins' sneakers. Mr. Block told the police he woke to see Sha'Quille by his bed, bleeding and crying, the gun at her feet. A bullet had pierced her skull.

In a country with more than 30,000 annual gun deaths, the smallest fingers on the trigger belong to children like Sha'Quille.

During a single week in April, four toddlers—Holston, Kiyon, Za'veon and Sha'Quille—shot and killed themselves, and a mother driving through Milwaukee was killed after her 2-year-old apparently picked up a gun that had slid out from under the driver's seat. It was a brutal stretch, even by the standards of researchers who track these shootings.

These are shooters who need help tying their shoelaces, too young sometimes to even say the word "gun," killed by their own curiosity.

They accidentally fire a parent's pistol while playing cops and robbers, while riding in a shopping cart, after finding it in the pocket of the coat their father forgot to wear to work. The gun that killed Sha'Quille last Thursday was pointing up, as if being inspected, when it fired.

They are the most maddening gun deaths in America. Last year, at least 30 people were killed in accidental shootings in which the shooter was 5 or younger, according to Everytown For Gun Safety, a gun control advocacy group that tracks these shootings, largely through news reports.

With shootings by preschoolers happening at a pace of about two per week, some of the victims were the youngsters' parents or siblings, but in many cases the children ended up taking their own lives.

"You can't call this a tragic accident," said Jean Peters Baker, the prosecutor of Jackson County, Mo., who is overseeing the criminal case in Sha'Quille's death. Her office charged Mr. Block, 24, with second-degree murder and child endangerment. "These are really preventable, and we're not willing to prevent them."

Gun control advocates say these deaths illustrate lethal gaps in gun safety laws. Some states require locked storage of guns or trigger locks to be sold with handguns. Others leave safety decisions largely to gun owners.

Twenty-seven states have laws that hold adults responsible for letting children have unsupervised access to guns, according to the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, though experts say such measures have, at best, a small effect on reducing gun deaths. Massachusetts is the only state that requires gun owners to store their guns in a locked place, though it has not stopped youngsters there from accidentally killing themselves or other children.

Gun rights groups have long opposed these kinds of laws. They argue that trigger locks

can fail, that mandatory storage can put a gun out of reach in an emergency, and that such measures infringe on Second Amendment rights.

"It's clearly a tragedy, but it's not something that's widespread," said Larry Pratt, a spokesman and former executive director of Gun Owners of America. "To base public policy on occasional mishaps would be a grave mistake."

In Kansas City, Sha'Quille's family is trying to come to grips with her death and the murder charge facing Mr. Block. In interviews, several relatives said they did not believe he deserved to be convicted of felony murder, but some questioned his judgment in leaving a loaded gun out while he slept as well as his actions after he discovered that his daughter was grievously wounded.

According to court records, Mr. Block told the police that immediately after the shooting, he went to the bathroom, wrapped the gun in a shirt and put it into a vent in the floor. He then ran outside carrying his dying daughter and yelled for a neighbor to call for help. He was also charged with evidence tampering.

Sha'Quille's mother, Montorre Kornegay, said that she had recently separated from Mr. Block after more than five years together, but that they remained close. She said he loved the girl, whose first word was "Daddy." When he called Ms. Kornegay from jail, he told her he was sorry and talked about how much he missed Sha'Quille.

The girl was just 2, but wanted to be older, telling people she was already 5. She would run through the house, playing her own private game of peekaboo, relatives said. In a cacophony of squeaky children at home, relatives could always distinguish Sha'Quille's low, raspier voice. One day, she'll be a singer, they told one another.

"What happened was wrong," Ms. Kornegay said. She said that she did not think Mr. Block deserved to face a murder charge, but that he had behaved irresponsibly. "Why didn't you stay up and watch her?"

Parents, police officers and neighbors from Georgia to California are asking similar painful questions this week. Here are some of their stories.

'STAY WITH ME'

In 2015, there were at least 278 unintentional shootings at the hands of young children and teenagers, according to Everytown's database. During the week in April when Sha'Quille and the other children died, there were at least five other accidental shootings by children and teenagers. Alysee Defee, 13, was shot in the armpit with a 20-gauge shotgun she had used for turkey hunting in Floyd County, Ind. Zai Deshields, 4, pulled a handgun out of a backpack at her grandmother's home in Arlington, Tex., and shot her uncle in the leg.

A child who accidentally pulls the trigger is most likely to be 3 years old, the statistics show.

Holston Cole was 3, a boy crackling with energy who would wake before dawn, his pastor said. He loved singing "Jesus Loves Me" and bouncing inside the inflatable castle in his family's front yard in Dallas, Ga.

About 7 a.m. on April 26, he found a .380-caliber semiautomatic pistol in his father's backpack, according to investigators. The gun fired, and Holston's panicked father, David, called 911. Even before a dispatcher could speak, Mr. Cole wailed "No, no!" into the phone, according to a redacted recording.

Mr. Cole pleaded for his 3-year-old son to hold on until the ambulance could arrive: "Stay with me, Holston," he can be heard saying on a 911 tape, his voice full of desperation. "Can you hear me? Daddy loves you. Holston. Holston, please. Please."