

Rep. Mike Quigley: "Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You know, Mr. Speaker, the number one fear of Chicago elementary school children is not braces or book reports or the dentist—it is "getting shot."

"More than 500 Chicago students were involved in gun violence in the last two years and 34 were killed by guns last year. In a single week in June, there were 60 shootings in Chicago.

"Chicago Police trace many of the guns used in these type of shootings to gun shows in neighboring states. You can go to a gun show in a neighboring state, Indiana, and buy any weapon you want without a single background check. You can be a convicted felon, or a domestic abuser under a restraining order, or a suspected terrorist, and walk right into a gun show and walk out with an assault weapon.

"A member of Hezbollah purchased weapons at an American gun show the day before 9/11. Is this what the American people want? The American people approve of a situation where a terrorist can buy guns without even the level of tracking we use for airplane tickets or cold medicine? The American people want our law enforcement officers to have the tools they need to catch the bad guys.

"Eighty-one percent of gun owners support requiring a background check on all firearm purchases. Ninety percent of all Americans favor strengthening databases to prevent the mentally ill from buying guns. Sixty-nine percent of NRA members – that's NRA members - support closing the gun show loophole.

"So why aren't we acting on these areas, where there is such overwhelming public support? Well, the majority has its rally to base, and the NRA has to send more urgent appeals for support based on imagined threats.

"So this week we're courageously protecting bullets from harmful regulation by the EPA. Because a little lead in the water never hurt anyone, right?"

"The bill also gives sportsmen the right to stand their ground against polar bears. Anyone who opposes vigilante justice against this arctic menace is clearly a gun-grabbing communist. All of this would be funny, if the same mentality wasn't being used by the NRA against our nation's youth.

"Twenty-five states have passed Stand Your Ground laws, declaring open season on anyone considered threatening to anyone, at any time. These laws were not passed because of public demand for them; they were passed because the NRA teamed up with some of the largest soft-drink manufacturing and retail corporations to push for these laws. Why soda companies would support the efforts to pass these laws is beyond me, but the impact is that a 17-year-old buying one of their sodas is now under much greater threat. Let's have a reality check. Let's take action in one of these areas where there is clear, overwhelming support.

"I sat in this chamber and listened to Mexican President Felipe Calderón plead with Congress to close this loophole that fuels violence between the cartels in his country. But as the NRA president himself pointed out, Congress has done nothing.

"We hold hearings to point out that the ATF lacks leadership, but continue to block the appointment of a director. We talk about the need to enforce the laws on the books, but look the other way as those laws are ignored at gun shows. We stop suspected terrorists from boarding airplanes – but not from buying 30 round clips.

"All of this based on the fantasy that denying terrorists assault rifles is the first step to national gun confiscation. The Supreme Court answered that in the DC and Chicago handgun cases. The court found that there is an individual right to bear arms. It is a limited right, subject to local control, but it is a right.

"That is now settled law.

"So the people who make their living scaring gun owners have to resort to conspiracy theories to keep the donations coming. Now is the time to move past the beltway extremists and listen to the American people.

"Are these tough votes? Maybe; but that's what we were sent here to do.

"I want to mention Blair Holt, a Chicago high-school student, son of two life-long public servants. Blair was riding a bus on his way home from school, when a gun was pulled on his friend. He stepped in front of the gun and was shot to death, protecting his friend. I ask my colleagues to think of that, next time they want to claim they can't do anything about gun violence.

"Blair Holt was willing to take a bullet for a friend. Shouldn't we be willing to take a tough vote for our children?

"Thank you, and I yield back."

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