

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 10, 2006 LB 454

eight-year-old girl named, say, Molly. Her two best friends, Amy and Imani, live nearby. Molly's parents know that Amy's parents keep a gun in their house, so they...absolutely they forbid Molly to play there. Instead, Molly spends a lot of time at Imani's house, which does have a swimming pool in the backyard. Molly's parents feel really good about having made such a smart choice to protect their daughter. But according to the data, their choice isn't smart at all. In a given year, there is one drowning of a child for every 11,000 residential pools in the United States. In a country with 6 million pools, this means that roughly 550 children under the age of ten drown each year. So I wanted to kind of compare the number 6 million pools to the number 6.5 million permitholders. So there we have an equal, rather equal, number of dangerous things out there that we're being afraid that are going to be harmful to our kids. Five hundred and fifty children under the age of ten drown each year. Meanwhile, there is one child killed by a gun for every 1 million-plus guns. And in a country with an estimated 200 million guns, this means that roughly 175 children under ten die each year from guns. The likelihood of death by a pool, 1 in 11,000, versus death by a gun, 1 in 1 million-plus, isn't even close. Molly is roughly 100 times more likely to die in a swimming accident at Imani's house than in gunplay at Amy's. But most of us are, like Molly's parents, terrible risk assessors. Peter Sandman, a self-described risk communications consultant in Princeton, New Jersey, made this point early in 2004, after a single case of mad cow disease in the United States prompted an anti-beef frenzy. The basic reality, Sandman told the New York Times, is that the risks that scare people and the risks that kill people are very different. Again, this is from Freakonomics, by Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner. And it's not anything put out by the NRA. This is put out...this is data that's been collected. So again,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR COMBS: ...briefly, I'd just like to make the point that, let's remember who we are crafting this law for. It is the law-abiding citizen. And it's nice that crime rates are low compared to other people. But when you are the person being stalked, when you are the person being raped, or you are the