

Council of Graduate Schools.
 Council of Independent Colleges.
 National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.
 National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges.

Ms. COLLINS. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mrs. MURRAY addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

HANFORD REACH OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this weekend the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee is going to hold a field hearing in Mattawa, WA. We will discuss S. 200, my legislation to designate the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River as a wild and scenic river.

The Hanford Reach is the last free-flowing stretch of this mighty river. Protecting it for future generations is a top priority for me.

In 1995, I convened a group of local citizens, and I asked them to help me find the best way to protect this portion of the Columbia River. They unanimously concluded an act of Congress designating the reach as a wild and scenic river, with a recreational classification, would be the best way to preserve this valuable resource.

In fact, a poll of registered voters in central Washington done last year indicated that 76 percent favored designation of the Hanford Reach as a wild and scenic river, while only 11 percent opposed it. So the will of the region is clear: The reach needs the best protection we can give it to make sure it remains accessible to everyone.

Protecting the Hanford Reach is not about local versus Federal control. It is about giving a natural treasure the best possible protection that we can. And it is also about promoting jobs in the long term and protecting our heritage.

What does the designation do? First, it puts central Washington on the map as a home to a resource found nowhere else on Earth—a river unique and important enough to become part of the U.S. national wild and scenic river system. Second, it protects the river in its current condition. It allows all of the existing uses to continue, but ensures the river stays forever the way we see it today. In fact, my bill specifically grandfathers in current uses protecting existing economic interests and enhancing the river's future economic value to our region.

There is much more at stake here than who manages the river. This issue is much bigger than that. We all know what problem we have with protecting salmon. ESA listings have been made for the Snake River and are being considered for the Columbia. If we ever want to get ahead of the salmon problem, we have to start by protecting the reach. My bill gives us a cheap and easy way to do just that. It simply

transfers Federal property from one agency to another; no private lands need to be acquired or jeopardized.

Let me reiterate, we simply can't afford to take chances with the one part of the river that works well—and inexpensively—for fish. Compared to drawdowns, dam removal and other suggestions that we have heard for saving salmon, permanent protection of the reach gives ratepayers, river users and irrigators a virtually cost-free way of accomplishing what could be a very expensive recovery effort.

We have done a lot of talking about the reach, and I am convinced that we are getting closer. It seems to me when you have a resource that is this important to the State, reasonable people ought to be able to find a way to agree on the best way to protect it. I am committed to bringing people together around that goal and keeping them together until we finish the job.

Mr. President, I look forward to hearing the testimony this weekend, and I thank my senior colleague, Senator GORTON, for helping me put this hearing together.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is my understanding that we are in the morning business hour.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

TREND TOWARD RACIAL, ETHNIC, AND RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about a disturbing trend in this country, a trend that to me was highlighted by a recent incident in South Carolina.

This incident took place several weeks ago. I was aware of it at the time it occurred. It has been something that has been troubling to me since then, and I felt it was appropriate and important that we spread on the RECORD of this Senate this particular incident, which occurred while the State Board of Education of the State of South Carolina was discussing whether it could display the Ten Commandments on the walls of public schools.

During this discussion, a member of this board provided a suggestion for groups which might oppose the placing of the Ten Commandments upon school walls. A direct quote: "Screw the Buddhists and kill the Muslims."

Mr. President, I find it contemptible that such an arcane, bigoted statement would come from someone who is tasked with the responsibility of educating our children, a member of the board of education.

I find it even more shocking that not only would someone think this, but that they would go so far as to articulate it at a meeting of a board of education. Can we imagine what would have been the reaction to such a comment had it been directed toward Christians or Jews, Mexican-Americans, African-Americans? I find this individual's behavior reprehensible, and while I find his behavior reprehensible, the larger issue is an increasing trend in this country toward racial, religious, and ethnic intolerance.

The Founders of this country fled persecution and intolerance in Europe and came to this country to be free from persecution, mostly religious persecution. Our country was founded on the principle of equality, and our Constitution, Mr. President—this document—which consists of just a few pages ensures freedom of religion and freedom from persecution.

In this country, we are very fortunate to have the freedoms that we have guaranteed by our Constitution. These freedoms make us the envy of the world and are the strength of our Nation.

I, however, think that, even though we have many protected rights in our Constitution, we have to speak out against individuals and especially people who are on a board of education who say, "Screw the Buddhists and kill the Muslims."

Because of the liberties we have in our country, this great country of the United States of America, immigrants from all over the world desire to come here and start a new life, just as our ancestors did. As a result, we are becoming a much more diverse Nation, increasingly diverse. The diversity within our Nation requires greater tolerance, patience, and a deeper level of understanding.

Mr. President, I am a member of a religion where, in the last century, significant persecution took place. People were killed as a result of their belief in the religion that I now profess. I feel that we all must speak out against religious intolerance. People who speak out about screwing the Buddhists and killing the Muslims—you know, Mr. President, in our country, sad as it might be, there are people who would follow the leadership of a person like this and proceed to do just that.

The remarks made by this school board member reflect a deep-seated racial and religious intolerance and ignorance that we should not allow to go unnoticed. This racial ignorance and lack of understanding are catalysts to intense racial intolerance.

I am concerned about the steady erosion of racial and religious tolerance in our society, and intolerance. Intolerance is often the basis for much of the crime committed in America, and it is the very essence of hate crimes. Hate crimes are those crimes committed against an individual or a group because of their convictions or their ethnicity.