

"6.4 For purposes of the Agreement, personnel shall be considered employees of each sending Member for the payment of compensation to injured employees and death benefits to the representatives of deceased employees injured or killed while rendering aid to another Member pursuant to this Agreement.

"6.5 The Members shall formulate procedures for claims and reimbursement under the provisions of this Article.

#### "Article VII

"7.1 When appropriations for support of this agreement, or for the support of common services in executing this agreement, are needed, costs will be allocated equally among the Members.

"7.2 As necessary, Members shall keep accurate books of account, showing in full, its receipts and disbursements, and the books of account shall be open at any reasonable time to the inspection of representatives of the Members.

"7.3 The Members may accept any and all donations, gifts, and grants of money, equipment, supplies, materials and services from the Federal or any local government, or any agency thereof and from any person, firm or corporation, for any of its purposes and functions under this Agreement, and may receive and use the same subject to the terms, conditions, and regulations governing such donations, gifts, and grants.

#### "Article VIII

"8.1 Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to limit or restrict the powers of any Member to provide for the prevention, control, and extinguishment of wildland fires or to prohibit the enactment of enforcement of State, Territorial, or Provincial laws, rules or regulations intended to aid in such prevention, control and extinguishment of wildland fires in such State, Territory, or Province.

"8.2 Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to affect any existing or future Cooperative Agreement between Members and/or their respective Federal agencies.

#### "Article IX

"9.1 The Members may request the United States Forest Service to act as the coordinating agency of the Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement in cooperation with the appropriate agencies for each Member.

"9.2 The Members will hold an annual meeting to review the terms of this Agreement, any applicable Operating Plans, and make necessary modifications.

"9.3 Amendments to this Agreement can be made by simple majority vote of the Members and will take effect immediately upon passage.

#### "Article X

"10.1 This Agreement shall continue in force on each Member until such Member takes action to withdraw therefrom. Such action shall not be effective until 60 days after notice thereof has been sent to all other Members.

#### "Article XI

"11.1 Nothing in this Agreement shall obligate the funds of any Member beyond those approved by appropriate legislative action."

#### SEC. 2. OTHER STATES.

Without further submission of the compact, the consent of Congress is given to any State to become a party to it in accordance with its terms.

#### SEC. 3. RIGHTS RESERVED.

The right to alter, amend, or repeal this Act is expressly reserved.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the Senate bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I could almost place ditto marks over the remarks that I made in the previous bill that we have considered, because this, too, is a compact of special arrangements between two States or more in matters of mutual interest which must be approved by the Congress, as we have stated.

On this one, too, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. DOC HASTINGS), our colleague, has been instrumental in driving it to this moment. This is the Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement, which will help the States in that region respond more quickly and more efficiently to the wildfire syndrome about which we read and learn too much, it appears. But nevertheless, this goes a long way to prevention and to quick resolution of the disastrous consequences of such wildfires.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to concur that this is almost a ditto of the previous bill. This bill would grant the consent of Congress to the compact between the Northwestern States and the Canadian provinces to coordinate the response to forest fires and other emergencies. As we have indicated, these compacts have already been ratified by the affected States and provinces, but it is required to give the consent of Congress for this legislation to take effect, under the Compacts clause of the Constitution.

As has been indicated, we have bipartisan support of the members of the other body and of the States that are participating. Therefore, I would ask that our colleagues pass the Senate bill, S. 1134.

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1134, a bill granting the consent and approval of Congress to an interstate forest fire protection compact entered into by the states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington, as well as the Provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, and the Yukon Territory.

Mr. Speaker, this bill fulfills the Constitutional requirement for Congressional consent to the compact negotiated by these eight states and provinces. Specifically, the compact enables the fire management agencies of the

participating states and provinces to cooperate in combating wildfires across state and national borders.

As the representative of a district that frequently experiences extensive and destructive wildfires, I am well aware of the need for regional cooperation in containing them. This compact will allow the region to mobilize all its available resources to combat wildfires and minimize their damage.

This locally driven legislation was passed unanimously by the other body on July 31 of this year, and has strong bi-partisan support from the northwest congressional delegation.

I urge my colleagues to support this cooperative effort to suppress wildfires in the northwest and pass this bi-partisan legislation.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1134.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof), the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SENSE OF THE HOUSE REGARDING MURDER OF MATTHEW SHEPARD

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 597) expressing the sense of the House with respect to the brutal killing of Mr. Matthew Shepard.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 597

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the House that—

(1) Mr. Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming in Laramie, Wyoming, was physically beaten and tortured, tied to a wooden fence and left for dead;

(2) Mr. Matthew Shepard died as a result of his injuries on October 12, 1998, in a Colorado hospital surrounded by his loving family and friends; and

(3) the House—

(A) condemns the actions which occurred in Laramie, Wyoming, as unacceptable and outrageous;

(B) urges each Member of Congress and every citizen of the United States, in his or her own way, through his or her church, synagogue, mosque, workplace, or social organization, to join in denouncing and encouraging others to denounce this outrageous murder of another human being;

(C) pledges to join in efforts to bring an end to such crimes, and to encourage all Americans to dedicate themselves to ending violence in the United States; and

(D) pledges to do everything in its power to fight the sort of prejudice and intolerance that leads to the murder of innocent people.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS) and the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GEKAS).

## GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN), and I ask unanimous consent that she be permitted to control the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) is recognized.

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is with sadness that I bring this to the floor of the House today, Mr. Speaker. In the wake of the tragic death of Matthew Shepard, my husband Fritz and I, along with our sons, Bill and Eric, who knew Matthew, join the people of Wyoming in offering our most heartfelt sympathy to Matthew's parents, his family, and his friends. Our thoughts and prayers are with all of them. There is no greater loss than that of a son or a daughter. However, we can take solace in knowing that Matthew's kind and gentle spirit will be a legacy that stays with those who were fortunate enough to know him.

The resolution the House is considering today condemns in the strongest possible way the brutal killing of Matthew Shepard. No attack of this kind can ever be forgotten.

□ 1100

No attack of this kind can ever be excused and no attack of this kind can ever go unpunished. It is my hope, and the hope of the caring people of Wyoming and the people throughout our country, that swift and judicious punishment will fall upon those who committed this heinous act.

Our country must come together to condemn these types of brutal, nonsensical acts of violence. We cannot lie down. We cannot bury our heads. And we cannot sit on our hands. Though our actions, we must be deliberative and our actions must also at the very same time send a strong and ardent message to those who are intolerant of others. We will not stand for the arbitrary killing of others due to any hateful act of intolerance.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to be joined today in offering this resolution by the gentleman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE).

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 4 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, those of us in the West believe that we have a special caring for individual liberties and individual

expressions and that we care about this more than anybody else. That is why the tragic murder of Matthew Shepard has shaken all of us in the West so to our core.

I want to thank and commend the distinguished gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) for swiftly acting to denounce the deplorable actions of Matthew Shepard's murderers. I know that all of our thoughts and prayers in the House of Representatives and in Washington in general go out to the Shepard family and to Matthew's friends during this very difficult time.

The United States has come a long way in combating the prejudice and discrimination that is such a tragic part of our history. But what happened last Friday night at a ranch in Wyoming shows we still have work to do before our country is truly the country of freedom and justice for all.

Something like this could occur anywhere. Gay men and lesbians all across the country live in fear that some tragic and brutal crime like this will happen to them. And when an appalling crime like this happens, it proves that this fear is not unjustified. Sometimes it takes a tragic and brutal crime like this to point out that every day in cities across our country, gay men and lesbians are being beaten and brutalized simply because of their sexual orientation.

I want to share an example of this that is even sadder. As Matthew Shepard lay dying in a Colorado hospital in Fort Collins, a nearby State university was holding its annual homecoming parade. And on one of the floats in that parade, someone actually stuck a scarecrow that was covered with anti-gay graffiti. Mr. Speaker, even if Matthew Shepard had not been left beaten and hanging on a fence the night before, this incident, and the countless incidents that happen throughout this country, are unacceptable.

There is still much education that needs to be done. Discrimination of any kind is abhorrent. And this horrible incident illustrates once again that prejudice is a terrible thing, no matter who the target is.

Everyone in this country deserves to pursue the American dream and that includes gay men and lesbians. Individual freedom and liberty are what makes this country like no other, and we owe it to ourselves and we owe it to our country to refuse to accept bias of any kind. For those who would stand in the way of an individual's right to live as they see fit, I say, and I hope my colleagues will join me, "There is no room in this country for your kind of bigotry."

Mr. Speaker, that is why we must act swiftly and strongly at the Federal level, at the State level, at the local level, and every level of government to pass strong hate crimes legislation saying this is not the way we operate in this country.

I urge people from all walks of life, all political parties, all genders,

straight and gay, to speak out against this horrible crime. Those of us who seek equality and justice far outnumber those who are gripped by fear and intolerance. We must make our voices drown out their voices.

Mr. Speaker, we will not be held hostage to individuals who act on the basest and most animal of instincts. We will continue the fight against hatred. We will continue to resist violence.

Last night at the vigil, Matthew's friend said that Matthew always wanted to make his life mean something, that he always wanted to have an impact on society. I pledge that we will do everything to see that happen. But Matthew's friend also said: The price here was too great.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE).

Mr. PAYNE of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mrs. DEGETTE) for bringing this resolution to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also express my condolences to the Shepard family, and to say that I commend my colleagues who last night participated in the vigil where Senator KENNEDY and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) and others spoke out about this tragic act.

I think that it is clear with an act like this, that no one is free until everyone is free. And in many instances when we have talked about hate crimes as African-Americans, we have talked about the fact that lynchings went on in this country; that even less than a year ago a black man walking home was tied to the back of a truck and drug for miles until his body was decapitated and he of course died with this brutal treatment. Many people said it was too bad, many did not comment, and it passed by.

But once again I repeat that no one is free until everyone is free. Who would have ever dreamed that in the middle of Wyoming, a place that is talked about with its tranquility and rugged individualism, would turn to one of the most heinous crimes that we have seen anywhere in this Nation.

So I think that we have to rededicate ourselves to taking a look at us and where we stand. The President this year had a commission on race to talk about and have a dialogue about where race stands in this country. I think that we need to have a dialogue about many issues. About immigrant bashing, about gay bashing, about anyone who seems different.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we have the first amendment. People who are different can speak up. The first amendment was not passed for everyone who thinks alike, because we would not need the amendment. I think we need to rededicate ourselves to wiping out hate crimes.

Even in my State of New Jersey there has been an increase in the number of hate crimes. So I commend my colleagues who brought this resolution and ask that it be passed unanimously.

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we should not turn Matthew into a martyr, and his family has asked that we do not turn Matthew into a martyr. He would not want that and his family does not want that.

Out of respect for Matthew, this resolution is not about advancing legislation. It is about advancing our tolerance in others, regardless of their gender, race, or sexual orientation.

At the end of his life, the defining element of Matthew's life should not be his sexuality. It should be the kind, gentle, intelligent, wonderful person that Matthew was. That is how Matthew should be remembered. That is what his family wants, and that certainly is what I wish for them today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to sadly offer my condolences to the family and the friends of Matthew Shepard. I deeply thank my colleagues, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) and the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) for introducing this resolution and giving us all an opportunity to voice our sorrow at this horrifying act of violence.

It is difficult for any of us to fathom the sort of hatred and prejudice that could lead a young person to carry out such a horrible attack on another young person. What leads to that sort of pent-up anger and hatred?

Accounts from family and friends tell us that Matthew was a kind, a gentle and a caring young man who was always ready to lend a helping hand, always ready to try to figure out what he could do to help others make their way.

So, it is a sad day, and I am sad that today as we are moving into a new century that we still see this kind of fear and this hatred directed toward people simply on the basis of who they are, based on their sexual orientation or based on the color of their skin or based on anything that anyone views as different from what they know.

It is wrong. We are truly a Nation of differences. We are built from people who came from so many different lands from so many different backgrounds and we need to learn to accept and to embrace these differences. Our diversity, in fact, is what makes us so strong as a Nation. It should never tear us apart and it should never do anything to inflict pain and suffering on others.

I hope that we learn a lesson from this tragedy, though it is hard to fathom that we could learn something from this awful act. But we do not want to have Matthew die in vain.

I hope that the Congress will stand together to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. I think we need to send a strong message that there is no place for hatred in this land of ours, and that these types of horrifying crimes cannot and will not be tolerated.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), my friend and classmate.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am here in support of this resolution because I, like so many others, am deeply outraged at the death of Matthew Shepard. It is a terrible, unspeakable and horrible crime, but words cannot express how horrible this action is.

I wish I could say to Matthew's family how much they are in my thoughts and prayers and emotions. As a new father of a 5½-month-old baby boy, I cannot possibly imagine the pain and suffering of the Shepard family. From all I have read and heard about Matthew Shepard, he was an incredible young man who had wonderful gifts to offer this world. We will never know now his potential, what his long life might have brought to us all.

So what do we do now? That is the question we must all ask ourselves. And it is my view that we should and we must pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act now, and we should do it before this Congress adjourns.

But that alone is not going to stop the kind of action that led to Matthew's death. This terrible tragedy highlights the need for us to teach our children in our homes, in our churches, and in our schools that every human being deserves our respect, our tolerance, and the right to live their lives secure from the threat of violence.

Whatever their race, their religion, their color, their sexual orientation, their beliefs, their creed, their gender, their language, their nationality, their age, all men and women are endowed with basic human dignity and the right to live their lives to their full potential.

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA).

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. Cubin) for yielding me this time. I also thank both the gentlewoman from Wyoming and the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) for introducing this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I was with a large group of people last evening at the vigil to commemorate the tragic death of Matthew Shepard, and I join my colleagues and I join all other Americans in offering my sympathy and my prayers for the family of Matthew Shepard.

We like to think in America that hate crimes are a phenomenon of the past. But the death of Matthew Shepard is a tragic reminder that this just is not so. We do have to recognize that many citizens of our country cannot take for granted the right to live life without fear of violence simply

based on their race, their ethnicity, religion, disability or sexual orientation.

James Byrd, the African-American man who was dragged to his death behind a truck in Texas in July, is an example of that. Indeed, Matthew Shepard who was beaten and left for dead outside Laramie, Wyoming, tells us that we need to do more to prevent hate crimes.

We in America pride ourselves on the fact that all people are entitled to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, as well as freedom from violence and from hate crimes. I hope that we will be resolved and that we will pledge that we will take this tragedy and translate it into action. Into action and pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act; into action in terms of changing our attitude in making sure that we educate people and making sure that each and every one of us has a responsibility for each other.

□ 1115

It was Thornton Wilder who once wrote, there is a land of the living and a land of the dead and the bridge is love, the only survival and the only meaning.

May Matthew Shepard live on in love and may we resolve to remedy this problem so there are no hate crimes in our country or in our world.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GEPHARDT), Democratic leader.

(Mr. GEPHARDT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEPHARDT. Mr. Speaker, first I want to express all of our deep feeling of sympathy for the family of Matthew Shepard and for the friends and all the people that knew Matthew Shepard personally.

He was taken from his family by a heinous act, an evil act, an outrageous act of violence. I join with my colleagues in offering our condolences and our prayers to his family and his friends.

This awful crime shocks an entire Nation, and it shocks our consciences. It reminds us that we have a long, long, long way to go before all Americans can feel safe from this kind of heinous attack.

Matthew was a promising young man who happened to be gay. He was killed because of a chance encounter with a random act of hatred and violence. But it is important to remember that no one in our society is safe from this kind of random act as long as the impulse of intolerance lives among our fellow Americans. Any one of our sons or daughters could have come in contact with the perpetrators on that grim night. Any of us could be in the place of Matthew's parents.

I have a son by the name of Matthew. He is about 27 years old now. I cannot imagine, if I put myself into the shoes of this young man's parents, I cannot

imagine the outrage, the desire for retribution that I would feel today. I cannot imagine their grief and their sorrow.

So we stand here today knowing that no gesture will return this young man to earth. Resolutions are no match for harsh punishment for these crimes. It is vitally important for Congress to speak with one voice on this issue as we do today, to condemn the manifestation of hatred in our society against any one of us and to say clearly that we reject prejudice and intolerance wherever and whenever it rears its ugly head.

All Americans join together today as one in sending our deep and prayerful feelings to these parents. May this never happen again and may the meaning of his life be that we pass a hate crimes act in this Congress before we leave so that we say to all, there is punishment for this kind of hatred.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RIGGS). The gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) has 8½ minutes remaining, and the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) has 14½ minutes remaining.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Colorado for yielding me the time and to the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) for putting forth this resolution today. I particularly want to thank the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. DEGETTE) for her courage in putting this forth, also in terms of pointing out the need for hate crimes legislation.

Let us focus on Matthew Shepard. Matthew Shepard was a lovely young man. He was willing to be open about who he was. That took courage. Clearly, it took a great deal of courage. I cannot help but think if Matthew would not still be alive had people not known that he was a gay person.

I think the tragedy of his death points out the need for hate crimes legislation. But as we consider this issue, I am going to submit my statement for the record, Mr. Speaker. I just want to speak as one who has the privilege of representing a district with a large number of gay and lesbian people. They are part of the success of our community. They help build our community.

When I hear people talk about tolerance for gay and lesbian people, it is interesting to me, because in our community tolerance is an issue of long ago. Certainly we tolerate. That is not even the issue. We respect our gay and lesbian community. More than that, we take great pride in them, in each and every one of them and collectively in the contribution that they make to our community in San Francisco, indeed, to our great country.

So it is such a tragedy when a young man has the courage to be open about who he is and his life is taken for it.

What more needs to happen? How many more deaths, how many assaults on the personal integrity of people physically and otherwise need to happen before this Congress will see the need for the hate crimes legislation? There are those who say that we should not be talking about that today. Of course, we should. If this young man had the courage to be open about who he is, cannot this Congress be courageous enough to honor his memory by passing the hate crimes legislation?

Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleagues in remembering the life of Matthew Shepard and deploring his tragic death. Matthew was willing to be open about who he was, and we should celebrate the courage and the dignity that he embodied during his too short life. I send my condolences to his family and loved ones.

Matthew's brutal murder was a tragedy, but, unfortunately, not an isolated incident. Harassment of gays, lesbians and bisexuals is not limited to one period in our history, or one region of the country. We read today in the paper yesterday that in a study of community college students in the San Francisco Bay Area, 32% of male respondents said they had verbally threatened gays, and 18% said they have physically threatened or assaulted them.

According to statistics kept by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence programs, at least 18 Americans were murdered in 1997 because they were gay or lesbian. Also last year, there were over 2400 reports of anti-gay or lesbian incidents in the United States.

Hate crimes take many forms and affect many different kinds of victims. The horrible murder of James Byrd, Jr., an African-American man in Texas, is still fresh in our memories. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, in 1996 there were over 8700 reported incidents of hate crimes because of race, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation. And reported incidents of hate crimes on college campuses are increasing at a disturbing rate.

It is because of these hard realities, and the circumstances of the murder of Matthew Shepard, that his eulogy should be accompanied by action. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act would not end all violence against people because they are gay, or African-American, or Jewish, or come from another country. But it would allow the federal government to investigate and punish crimes motivated by hate.

Matthew's murder is the manifestation of enduring bigotry still all too prevalent in our society. These attacks demand a national response that enables federal law enforcement officials to fight these crimes and punish their perpetrators.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act will provide needed tools to law enforcement, and it will serve as a lasting tribute to the life of Matthew Shepard. Before we take the final vote of the 105th Congress, I urge my colleagues to remember Matthew by passing the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. OLVER).

Mr. OLVER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Colorado for yielding me time.

Thousands gathered last night at the west steps of the Capitol to mourn the loss of Matthew Shepard. The vast ma-

majority of us did not know Matthew personally, but we were united in our belief that the hate that took Matthew's life is unacceptable in America. We were united in our belief that America still has a long way to go before our gays and lesbians can stop fearing for their lives because of who they are. We were united in our belief that Congress can help prevent and prosecute these terrible crimes by passing tough hate crimes legislation. We were united in our belief that we will never be silenced until gays and lesbians can live without fear. And we were united in our commitment to speak out with our voices and our votes against anti-gay rhetoric, against anti-gay newspaper ads, against anti-gay legislation and against the thuggery that took Matthew Shepard's life.

Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that this entire body can agree on, it is that the hate that took Matthew Shepard's life should be condemned. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. Gejdenson).

(Mr. GEJDENSON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Mr. MILLER).

(Mr. MILLER of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of California. I join my colleagues in support of this effort.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

(Ms. WOOLSEY asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support House Resolution 597 and to offer my sincere sympathies to the family of Matthew Shepard. I cannot imagine their pain. I offer my sympathies also to all families who have suffered needless losses due to discriminating hate and prejudice.

What happened to Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming is not an example of a breakaway faction, of an out-of-touch community in rural America. What happened to Matthew Shepard happens every day to citizens in our very own country whose only crime is to be honest, honest about who they are and what they believe.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Harassment and hate crimes against the gay community is commonplace. It is time to come together as a Nation to condemn such hate crimes.

Mr. Speaker, I am greatly disturbed that hate crimes like the murder of Matthew Shepard are on the rise. This is a type of crime that embodies intolerance, an act of violence against a

person based on a victim's race, color, gender, religion or sexual orientation. Hate crimes leave deep scars not only to the victim's family but also to the larger community. Unfortunately, every year thousands of Americans are victims of hate crimes, and we suspect that many, many hate crimes go unreported.

To honor Matthew Shepard, Mr. Speaker, we must as a Congress make sure that families like Matthew's know that there is not a person in this body that would make it easy or easier by making it OK for a hate crime to be carried out, for a person to have a prejudice against another person because of their sexual orientation.

Mr. Speaker, we must pass this resolution.

Ms. DEGETTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), who has been working on this issue for many years.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 3 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me the time, and I thank her and the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) for their initiative, timely and important these last days.

My sympathies are with Matthew Shepard's family and friends. At the same time I recognize that they deserve much more from this body.

Last night I welcomed thousands of people to the west steps of the Capitol on behalf of the jurisdiction that has the strongest human rights laws and the strongest hate crime laws in the United States of America. That was not the United States of America; it was the District of Columbia. I wish I could have said the same about the country that we in this body serve.

As I speak, indeed there are anti-gay measures on the D.C. appropriation. This body has to take responsibility for the fact that when people read that this body wants gays not to be able to adopt children, when this body wants clean needles not to be available even with the District's own money, this body has sent a homophobic message that is picked up by people like those who murdered Matthew Shepard.

Last night was a very moving memorial of its own. But the Members who came in large numbers surely thought, do we not have in our hands the ability, the capacity to come forward with the most meaningful memorial of all, the bill pending for years now in this House that would deter this crime and when it occurs, punish this crime?

So this afternoon while we all commiserate and grieve for this family, this should be a moment of introspection for this body, because the question for this body is what are we going to do about it and is it enough to grieve about it.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act is what is left to be done about it. Imag-

ine human rights legislation that left you out. If you are white, if you are black, if you are male, if you are female, you are included within the great American family of human rights laws, but not if you are gay. We must use what amounts to human sacrifice, the sacrifice of this young man, to include gay people in the family of American people.

We must also be very careful with our own talk. No one who speaks about their disagreement with the homosexual lifestyle means for somebody to go out and murder gays. But we must come to grips with the fact that is how that message is perceived and taken by many.

Pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act and, while you are at it, pass the Employment Nondiscrimination Act.

□ 1130

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. RIGGS).

Mr. RIGGS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Wyoming and the gentlewoman from Colorado for their important initiative here. I think it is important that the House go on record as supporting this resolution, expressing their condemnation of hatred and violence, especially obviously in this situation, and encouraging diversity and tolerance and compassion in American life.

As I was in the chair and listening to the minority leader's comments, I heard him mention that the Gephardt family has a son by the name of Matthew. The Riggs family has a son by the name of Matthew, so it is a pretty special name in our household. It is also a Biblical name. I guess what I find so shocking about this crime is its brutality, its callousness and the youthful age of the perpetrators. It suggests to me that these young people accused of this crime are typical of too many people in their generation who have not gotten the appropriate education, knowledge and adult supervision and guidance that they need to live lives as productive citizens, who embrace those American qualities of tolerance and compassion.

Again, I think the resolution is commendable and worthwhile. I do have misgivings about whether we need to create a new Federal crime category of hate crimes and would respectfully suggest to my colleagues that perhaps it is more important that we address the root causes of these kind of crimes in American society. I think we all have some idea as to the root causes. One certainly is a modern media culture that all too often passes as mainstream culture in American life that glamorizes and even glorifies violence and brutality, a lack of character, values and training in our schools, in our education system, and fundamentally a breakdown of the American family. I am really concerned about the last two categories and have worked hard on those two initiatives, fatherhood and

education, over the last 2 years in this Congress and understand that it is far less likely that a child will go astray if, again, they have proper adult role models, hopefully an intact nuclear family, a father and mother who care for that child in that household.

I think one of the other things we can do as we reflect on this tragic, horrific crime and send our hearts and our prayers to the family of Matthew Shepard is rededicate ourselves to addressing the root causes of these type of crimes in American life.

I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time and for her leadership on this initiative.

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, every crime that is committed is a hateful crime. Brutalizing another person is a reprehensible act regardless of the motivation of the criminal or the affiliation of the victim. If convicted of first-degree murder in Wyoming, the suspects could be sentenced to death. Hate crime laws are enacted to enhance punishment. No sentence could be stronger, even if hate crimes legislation was enacted.

The crime committed against Matthew Shepard is not only a crime against Matthew Shepard, but it is a crime against the dignity of all humanity. It is a crime against all of us. This cannot and will not be tolerated. This is not a time to divide our country over the differences that we have over certain legislation. Matthew's family has asked that that not happen. This is a time to unite in our common goal of ridding our country of intolerance, bigotry and prejudice and to offer comfort to Matthew's family and friends.

Matthew left this world as an example to each one of us. He would want us to work against violence and hatred and toward peace and tolerance. There will be a memorial service for Matthew Shepard held in Laramie, Wyoming, tomorrow at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a somber heart and a troubled soul.

I rise today to grieve the loss of a young man.

Matthew Shepard was a 21-year-old college student majoring in political science because he—like many Members of this body—wanted to fight for civil and human rights.

But Matthew will never join this fight because Matthew died on Monday.

Matthew's death was no accident.

It was a conscious act of hate and intolerance taken to such an extreme that a 21-year-old man was brutally and savagely beaten, strapped to a fence like an animal, and left to die.

Matthew was murdered for one reason: Hate.

Hate directed at Matthew because he was gay and he dared share that fact with others.

Mr. Speaker, this body must share in the responsibility and the guilt for Matthew's brutal murder.

We are fostering a culture of intolerance and hate in this body with words and even legislation that denies equal standing and protection under the law to others due solely to their sexual orientation.

Matthew's death at the butt of a .357 magnum is the result.

In 1962, on the acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said "Man must evolve for all human conflict a method which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of such a method is love."

Mr. Speaker, I make a plea that we in this body heed Dr. King's words and work for a culture of tolerance.

In the name of Matthew Shepard we must finally act on and pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, a bill which I have proudly co-sponsored.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 597.

The cruel and senseless torture and ultimate death of Matthew Shepard has lit a fire under the national discourse surrounding the prevention of hate crimes. It is a tragedy that such a horrible crime against humanity must serve as the rallying point for the passage of hate crimes prevention legislation. In fact, it is a tragedy that this country should even have the need for hate crimes prevention legislation. But sadly, we do.

The murder of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming too vividly brings to mind the vicious assault of an African-American man, James Bryd, who was dragged to his death from the back of a pickup truck this past June in Texas. These are two cases that have grabbed national headlines because of their atrociousness. But these are only two of the far too many instances where people are singled out and victimized because of their race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

No Federal law exists to address hate crimes. Ten states do not have any hate crime prevention laws. Of the 40 states that have passed hate crime legislation, 19 do not cover attacks motivated by sexual orientation. We need Federal legislation to provide a clear and consistent standard that outlines the offenses that comprise a hate crime.

My friend and colleague Representative CHARLES SCHUMER introduced a bill that would establish a national standard to deal with hate crimes, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1997, H.R. 3081. This bill would expand existing law to facilitate the assistance of federal authorities in crimes motivated by hate. Unfortunately, failure to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act is yet another failure to act by the 105th Congress. But this issue will not die with this Congress. I intend to continue fighting for justice for everyone—for Matthew Shepard, for James Byrd, and for every other American who is a victim of a hate crime.

Matthew Shepard's death was needless. Passing this legislation will not bring him back, nor will it erase the pain suffered by his family, his friends, and our nation as a whole. But with an explicit and consistent law outlining the offenses that constitute a hate crime, our Nation will be better armed to fight and prevent the prejudice and ignorance that result in tragic hate crimes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, the tragic and brutal murder of Matthew Shepard reminds us how far we still need to go to eliminate violence and bigotry in this country.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the Shepard family and Matt's friends in Wyoming.

It sickens me every time I hear news of violent attacks against gay, lesbian, bisexual, and

transgender men and women. Tragically, these types of incidents are not rare.

Today, we are here to condemn the savage, brutal, vicious attack against Matthew Shepard. It is entirely proper for us to do so. However, gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people need real protection, not just a sense of Congress that something must be done. We have a real plan, real legislation, that is before this House that must be enacted.

We owe it to our nation to take action immediately to reduce the number of these incidents and to punish those who attack others based on the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation.

There is no simple solution to this problem. We should support hate crime prevention programs, fund special training for law enforcement professionals, teach tolerance and support for diversity in our schools, and confront head-on the daily prejudice that we see in our communities. We must also address the fundamental bigotry that leads to these crimes. However, passing the Hate Crimes Prevention Act and the Bias Crimes Compensation Act are important first steps.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act, which would allow federal law enforcement authorities to investigate and prosecute violent hate crimes when the state and local authorities are either unable or unwilling to do so. This bill has more than 160 co-sponsors and has already had a lengthy hearing in the Judiciary Committee.

We should also pass a bill I introduced entitled "The Bias Crimes Compensation Act", which would provide a civil claim for individuals who are victims of hate crimes, so that they could sue their attackers for compensatory damages. These two simple proposals ought to be brought up on their own or included in the final appropriations measure. The country has demanded action and we ought to respond with meaningful legislation.

Hate crimes deserve special attention, since they can have such devastating and lasting effects on victims and the communities from which they come. They are not simply attacks against one individual, rather, they affect whole communities and are acts of ideological terrorism.

The time to act is now. The need is clear. We ought to pass hate crimes legislation today.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join the millions of Americans who are mourning the death of Matthew Shepard, who died Monday, at the age of 21 years old after being beaten, robbed, and left to die, tied to a fence near Laramie, Wyo. I wish to express my sadness to Matthew's family and send them my prayers as they grieve over his death.

It is a tragedy anytime a young person is a victim of violence, which we all know happens far too often. The murder rate for young people in this country is a national crisis and a national disgrace.

According to police reports, Matthew Shepard was targeted by his killers because of his sexual orientation. Thus his murder is particularly saddening and disturbing.

Matthew Shepard's death is, unfortunately, not an isolated incident. According to the FBI, more than a thousand gay and lesbian men and women were the victims of violent "hate crimes" last year.

In this way, Matthew Shepard's death reflects a much wider problem in our society. But the public reaction may also signal a turning point in efforts to prevent similar tragedies in the future.

It is my hope that something positive will be extracted from this senseless and despicable act by our working even harder against such hate crimes in our country. We need to send the message that these crimes will not be tolerated, and that those who commit them will be duly punished.

I would also hope that those who seek to demonize homosexuality, and who may in turn, intentionally or unintentionally, fuel hatred against gays and lesbians, reflect on the possible consequences of their actions. No single person or movement can be blamed for Matthew's death. But everyone should examine the way in which their words or actions may help contribute to an atmosphere of intolerance that makes such tragedies more likely.

Bigotry, prejudice, and hatred are not American values. Our diversity is our strength. If we are to thrive as a society, every institution—our families, schools, government, businesses, and places of worship—must work together to bridge our differences and to respect the rights and freedoms of every individual.

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, this has been a rough week for parents.

I think every mother and father in America trembled when we heard about Matthew Shepard's beating in Wyoming, and anxiously waited for word of his condition. And we all must have wept at the thought of a child tortured and left to die on a country road.

I hope every parent did what I wanted to do: hug your children, and hold them close. But along with the rest of the House and Senate, I am trapped in Washington while Congress debates our budget. And being 3,000 miles away meant, unfortunately, that I was not able to stand with my neighbors at the local events organized to remember Matt.

This was a crime beyond words, and I have not yet found a way to sufficiently express my grief and compassion for the Shepard family, just as our nation has not yet found a way to respond to this tragedy. As a legislator, my thoughts turn to the actions our nation can take through our lawmaking process.

It is a sad but bitter truth that no law can return this talented, kind-hearted young man to his family and friends. But we are a nation of laws, and our government cannot stand by without a response.

In a year when voices from our Capitol have likened homosexuality to kleptomania, in a year when our newspapers and magazines have been filled with the harmful words of groups urging gay men and lesbians to change who they are, we must respond. We must counter these dangerous, hateful words, because they send a message to our nation's youth that the Matt Shepherds of our nation are not entitled to love who they want, be who they are and live lives of dignity, security and liberty.

The cowardly thugs who left Matthew to die on that cold night used these words to take matters into their hands. I feel personally obligated as an elected official to make sure these criminals know their actions will not be tolerated.

I am proud to be a co-sponsor of H.R. 3081, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This bill was introduced to Congress last year, and would

classify crimes committed on the basis of sexual orientation—as well as race, religion, national origin, religion, gender or disability—hate crimes.

That is a very important distinction. Hate crimes are a federal matter, which means their victims are protected by our country when local agencies fail them. This bill would authorize the U.S. Department of Justice to treat hate crimes as a particularly dangerous matter, with research and prosecution funds to match.

That seems reasonable, you must be thinking. But the Republican leadership has refused to allow Congress to vote on this bill.

Our nation has paid the price for intolerance too many times. But we can turn this into a bittersweet blessing, if we open one mind or prevent one hateful act. I am reminded of San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk's words: "If a bullet should enter my brain, let that bullet destroy every closed door."

Nothing will reverse the fact that Matthew Shepard is dead. But we now find ourselves faced with two options. We can let this session of Congress end without responding, without taking the opportunity to prevent this kind of tragedy from happening again. Or we can vow to do whatever we can to make sure that never again will a person's life be cut short so cruelly because of hate.

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, public officials have to ensure that nothing we say could ever be interpreted to give comfort to people who would commit brutal acts such as what happened to Matthew Shepard. As elected leaders of our nation, we have a responsibility to remember that what we say and do is important, that if we are not careful with our words, they can be used by hateful individuals.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., once said: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." If this young man can be killed because of his sexual orientation, than all of our liberties are at risk. If a person can be killed for his sexual orientation, for his race, for his gender, than none of us are truly free.

My parents escaped Europe at a time when Hitler and Stalin were trying to exterminate entire peoples. I was born in a camp for refugees. After the war we promised to never forget the suffering of the Holocaust. I am proud that all of us are joining together today to condemn this brutality. We must always stand up against such acts of hatred.

After the war, Pastor Martin Niemoeller said in a letter: "In Germany they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time no one was left to speak up." We should all remember the Pastor's words, especially after events like this.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my strong support for House Resolution 597, and express my deep remorse and sorrow at the tragic murder of Matthew Shepard, an openly gay student at the University of Wyoming. He was brutally attacked last Thursday and left to die while tied to a wooden fence. He was found near death eighteen hours later, yet he continued to fight for his life

through the weekend until his tragic death Monday morning. I join my colleagues in sending my deepest condolences to Matthew's family and friends.

Mr. Speaker, I am appalled by this senseless crime, which reflects the cowardly prejudice of the thugs who committed this outrage. The House must honor Matthew's memory not only by adopting this resolution of respect that we are considering here today, but we must also pass legislation that upholds the right of all Americans to live free of bigoted violence, regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

As we remember Matthew Shepard, Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join in support of H.R. 3081, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. This important bill would perform two very vital legal functions. It would eliminate gaps in Federal authority that have restricted the Justice Department's ability to prosecute hate crimes in a significant number of cases. While this reform would greatly enhance Federal authority to fight hate crimes, its significance pales in comparison to the second major provision of H.R. 3081, which would extend the Justice Department's authority to combat such violence to include cases involving death or serious bodily injury resulting from crimes directed at individuals because of their sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Under existing law (Section 245 of Title 19 U.S.C., in effect since 1968) only those individuals whose rights are obstructed on the basis of their race, color, religion, or national origin merit this protection. It is time to expand the Federal Government's legal authority to cover all Americans who are victims of the coarsest and most malicious expressions of bigotry, and, regrettably, Mr. Speaker, this all too often includes gay Americans.

Mr. Speaker, the horrendous murder of Matthew Shepard underscores the importance of our moving quickly to adopt the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. As Elizabeth Birch, the Executive Director of the Human Rights Campaign, points out:

Federal law enforcement agencies have no jurisdiction over hate crimes motivated by a person's sexual orientation. Although the Albany County, Wyoming, authorities have made arrests in the case, if they were to request forensic resources or assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the FBI would not be able to provide assistance due to lack of jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, this loophole in our nation's hate crime laws must be closed and we can close it now. We cannot afford to wait for more tragedies to further sensitize us to the outrageousness of anti-gay violence.

I would also like to note, Mr. Speaker, that the crisis of violence against homosexual men and women extends across international boundaries. Two months ago, I chaired a forum of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus which drew attention to the global prevalence of violence and abuse based on sexual orientation. Our well-informed witnesses cited in nations ranging from Uganda to Lithuania, from Turkey to Peru, where governments have failed and continue to refuse to protect their own gay citizens from unspeakable crimes and violations of their human rights.

America rightly holds its elected leaders to a much higher standard, and it is time for us to justify this trust of decency and honor by passing the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. It is

long past time to send this vital legislation to President Clinton, who, along with Vice President AL GORE, has expressed firm support of this initiative. The memory of Matthew Shepard merits no lesser consideration.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for H. Res. 597, Expressing the Sense of the House regarding the death of Mr. Matthew Shepard. Last week, Matthew Shepard, a student at the University of Wyoming, was lured off campus by two young men, driven to a remote location, bludgeoned with the butt of a gun, burned, and strapped to a fence to die. There is strong evidence that his attackers were motivated because Matthew Shepard was gay.

Unfortunately, Matthew Shepard's death is not an isolated incident. It is the latest in a series of brutally violent crimes committed against people for no other reason than the color of their skin, their sexual orientation or their religion. In April 1994, two African-American men murdered a white man in Lubbock, Texas. The killers later admitted that they had set out to find a white victim. In 1997, an African-American man in Virginia was soaked in gasoline, burned alive, and then beheaded. It was later discovered that he was targeted because he was black. Earlier this year, James Byrd, a disabled black man in Texas, was lured into a pickup truck and driven to a remote location where he was beaten unconscious, chained to the truck, and dragged around until he was beheaded.

I look forward to the upcoming debate on expanding the Hate Crimes legislation to include acts of violence against people based upon their sexual orientation. Matthew Shepard's death should focus our attention on and spur us to complete a careful analysis of this issue. Today, Matthew Shepard is to be remembered. His friends and family are in our prayers.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 597 and commend my colleagues, Congresswoman DEGETTE and Congresswoman CUBIN, for introducing this resolution. At times like this we should come together as a Congress to focus on this tragedy and state our strong abhorrence to such crimes.

I would like to join with my colleagues and offer my sincere condolences to the family and friends of Matthew Shepard.

We are here today to condemn the horrific murder of Matthew Shepard. Through this resolution we are making a pledge to do everything in our power to fight the prejudice and intolerance that leads to the murders of innocent victim like Matthew Shepard. We should challenge ourselves to do just that.

Once again, our Nation awoke to another needless tragedy of an innocent victim. When a man is brutally murdered because he is gay, the damage has far surpassed the individual victim.

When a hate crime is committed, the entire community is wounded.

The tragic death of Matthew Shepard is a vivid and shocking reminder that even in a civilized society there are those motivated by vicious hate. We can no longer stand by and wait for another tragedy to happen before we pass legislation. The Hate Crimes Prevention Act is a powerful and essential law that not only says that crimes of hate are unacceptable, but that they will be punished severely.

We are standing here today to condemn this hateful crime and the men who committed it.

But we should also be urging the Republican Leadership to pass this essential legislation that would allow these criminals to be prosecuted with the full arm of the Federal law. Federal hate crime legislation is essential in the goal to eliminate crimes motivated by prejudice.

In June, the Nation was horrified by the tragic death of James Byrd. This event sparked concern and debate about hate crimes across our Nation. But sadly it wasn't enough. Now another tragedy has occurred. We cannot pass up the opportunity to make this crucial legislation a reality.

There are some who have said this bill will give special protection to certain groups. To that I say that this bill is in response to the hate that people have in our society towards gay men and women. The perpetrators in this crime did not choose their victim randomly, they chose him because he was gay.

If we stay silent, the bigots win.

I believe this legislation is a crucial part of our answer to hate crimes.

This is not about "special preferences," nor is this about some theoretical identity-politics agenda. This is about combating the very real threat of violence faced by too many Americans.

Every hate crime is an offense against the most basic values of American society. Sadly it takes tragedy to galvanize America's attention. We have to seize the moment and pass a tougher law, or else the brutal deaths of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd will have been in vain.

There are those who fail to believe that this legislation would be a deterrent to these horrific crimes. I am still hopeful that the Republican leadership will endorse our effort. We need to pledge to ourselves that we will pass this legislation. When we do pass it, and I do believe we will pass it, it must be before another horrible crime is committed. We must act now.

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. RIGGS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Wyoming (Mrs. CUBIN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, House Resolution 597.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### DENIAL OF FOOD STAMPS FOR DECEASED INDIVIDUALS

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1733) to amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977 to require food stamp State agencies to take certain actions to ensure that food stamp coupons are not issued for deceased individuals, to require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study of options for the design, development, implementation, and operation of a national database to track participation in Federal means-tested public assistance programs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1733

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. DENIAL OF FOOD STAMPS FOR DECEASED INDIVIDUALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 11 of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2020) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(r) DENIAL OF FOOD STAMPS FOR DECEASED INDIVIDUALS.—Each State agency shall—

“(1) enter into a cooperative arrangement with the Commissioner of Social Security, pursuant to the authority of the Commissioner under section 205(r)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(r)(3)), to obtain information on individuals who are deceased; and

“(2) use the information to verify and otherwise ensure that benefits are not issued to individuals who are deceased.”

(b) REPORT.—Not later than September 1, 2000, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit a report regarding the progress and effectiveness of the cooperative arrangements entered into by State agencies under section 11(r) of the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2020(r)) (as added by subsection (a)) to—

(1) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives;

(2) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

(3) the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives;

(4) the Committee on Finance of the Senate; and

(5) the Secretary of the Treasury.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section and the amendments made by this section take effect on June 1, 2000.

#### SEC. 2. STUDY OF NATIONAL DATABASE FOR FEDERAL MEANS-TESTED PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall conduct a study of options for the design, development, implementation, and operation of a national database to track participation in Federal means-tested public assistance programs.

(b) ADMINISTRATION.—In conducting the study, the Secretary shall—

(1) analyze available data to determine—

(A) whether the data have addressed the needs of the food stamp program established under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.);

(B) whether additional or unique data need to be developed to address the needs of the food stamp program; and

(C) the feasibility and cost-benefit ratio of each available option for a national database;

(2) survey the States to determine how the States are enforcing the prohibition on recipients receiving assistance in more than 1 State under Federal means-tested public assistance programs;

(3) determine the functional requirements of each available option for a national database; and

(4) ensure that all options provide safeguards to protect against the unauthorized use or disclosure of information in the national database.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the study conducted under this section.

(d) FUNDING.—Out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, the Secretary of the Treasury shall provide to the Secretary of Agriculture \$500,000 to carry out this section. The Secretary shall be entitled to receive the funds and shall accept the funds, without further appropriation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from

Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE).

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this legislation is to ensure that deceased people do not receive food stamp benefits. In February of this year, the General Accounting Office published an audit of four large States that account for 35 percent of the Nation's participants in the food stamp program. They found that nearly 26,000 deceased individuals were included in households receiving food stamps. These households improperly collected an estimated \$8.5 million in food stamp benefits. This outrageous waste, fraud and abuse cannot be tolerated. While there may be differences of opinion on how this money should be spent, I believe that we can all agree that the nutritional needs of deceased individuals are substantially less than the needs of the living, and this abuse must end.

Under food stamp rules, households must notify their welfare office of any change in the makeup of the household within 10 days. The GAO report titled "Food Stamp Overpayments: Thousands of Deceased Individuals are Being Counted as Household Members" shows that the names of the deceased individuals it found were counted in the food stamp households for an average of 4 months, and in a few instances the deceased persons were counted for the full 2 years of the review.

I introduced H.R. 4366, the Food Stamp Verification Act of 1998, in response to this report. This bill requires food stamp State agencies to enter into a cooperative agreement with the Commissioner of Social Security to obtain information on individuals who are deceased. The bill we consider today, S. 1733, is the Senate version of H.R. 4366. It allows the Social Security Administration to share all of its information on deceased individuals with State agencies administering food stamps. This would enable States to use the most comprehensive information available on deceased persons and cross-check it with their food stamp rolls.

S. 1733 also requires the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study of options for the design, development, implementation and operation of a national database to track participation in the food stamp program. This study should address the feasibility and cost-benefit ratio of every available option for a national database.

Mr. Speaker, this is simple, common-sense legislation. The CBO estimates that it will save American taxpayers \$17 million plus it allows States to administer their programs more efficiently. Welfare programs with lives of their own that continue into the after-life are not acceptable. This problem should have been corrected long ago