

methamphetamines cost. If you find a meth lab, to get that dismantled and all the chemicals disposed of costs thousands and thousands of dollars. So if we do not fund this, and right now it is not scheduled to be funded, this is a tremendous blow to our culture and particularly to our rural areas where most of these meth labs occur. We need to make sure that we are giving people the tools that they need.

H.R. 669, the Protect Children From Video Game Sex and Violence Act of 2003. I am its cosponsor. I think this is certainly one that can correct some of the problems of video games. H.R. 756, the Child Modeling Exploitation Prevention Act, addresses the issue of some people trying to get around the child pornography statutes by having children pose as models in provocative poses, and so this addresses that.

Above all, Mr. Speaker, we need a fundamental shift in the way that we address first amendment rights in the courts. This is a dangerous statement for somebody to make, that we have got to watch out for the first amendment. Everybody is in favor of free speech and the first amendment, and I certainly go along with that as well; but I would like to point out some things that have happened in the courts in recent years that I think have been very damaging to this culture.

In 1996, Congress passed the Communications Decency Act that made it illegal to send indecent material to children via the Internet. Listen to what happened to that, Mr. Speaker. In June of 1997, the Supreme Court overturned portions of the law and made this statement. They said, indecent material is protected by the first amendment. And so what we are saying is those who produce indecent material have protection, and yet those children who receive that material and are influenced by it have no protection.

In 1996, the Child Pornography Prevention Act outlawed child pornography, including visual depictions that appeared to be of a minor and so it may not actually be a minor involved; but it could be a computer-generated image, or it could be an adult posing as a minor and how do you know? The Supreme Court ruled that unconstitutional and overturned the law banning computer graphics showing child pornography.

In October 1998, the Children Online Protection Act was signed into law to prohibit the communication of harmful material to children on publicly accessible Web sites. It makes sense that you should not be able to on publicly accessible Web sites send pornography to children. Yet the Supreme Court refused to rule on the 1998 law. As a result, it was never enacted; and it still sits there today and is void.

The 106th Congress passed the Child Internet Protection Act to require schools and libraries that receive Federal funds to use Internet filtering to protect minors from harmful material on the Internet.

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In May of 2002, the Federal court declared the law unconstitutional. Free speech is protected, while women and children are attacked.

It is important to note that 80 to 90 percent of rapists and pedophiles reported using pornography usually right before they commit the act, and they will admit that this has shaped their behavior and made a difference. It seems to me our women and children ought to have rights and freedoms as well, and yet it seems the way we have phrased the argument that they are being victimized, whereas others who are perpetrators are being given freedoms to do so.

The Court has often ruled against school prayer. I would not do so necessarily, but some have traced some of the cultural decline I have mentioned tonight to the absence of school prayer, which began I believe in the 1960s. But there have been some decisions that really caused me to wonder. I will mention some of these.

In 1992, the Supreme Court declared an invocation and benediction at a graduation ceremony unconstitutional. On the floor of this House, every day we start with a prayer. In many public places, prayer is used. And yet at a school graduation it is not legitimate to have a minister, a priest, a rabbi, a cleric say a prayer. Again, this seems to fly in the face of the way our country was founded.

The Court also has held that a minute of silence in school is unconstitutional. Now, a child may spend a minute of silence and may say a prayer, may look out the window, may think about the upcoming test. He is not forced to believe in any doctrine. He is not forced to pray. Yet the Court said that a minute of silence is unconstitutional.

The Court also ruled not long ago that a student-led prayer at a football game was unconstitutional. The students voted in this particular student body to have a prayer. They wanted a student-led prayer before the game. The Court said this would really violate the rights of the football players who had to be there and also some of the cheerleaders required to be there. Yet this violated the rights I think of those who chose to have the prayer, the students themselves.

As most people understand, the words "under God" were struck from the Pledge of Allegiance by the Ninth Circuit court. Most of the framers of the Constitution obviously mentioned time and time again their dependence upon God, and yet we are trying to strip this away also from our Pledge of Allegiance.

I am not going to get into the abortion issue at any great length. It is very controversial. I realize there are many people on both sides of the issue. But I will mention one thing.

Just recently Congress and this House passed the partial-birth abortion ban. The reason I do not think this is

particularly controversial is that this particular ban I believe drew something like 84 votes in the affirmative on the Senate side, and we had a fairly large majority here, and we saw a great many people who are for abortion, who are pro-choice, in quotes, vote for this ban. They were beginning to get the idea of how barbaric it really is.

So this was something where there has been a real shift. Currently 70-some percent of Americans do not favor partial-birth abortion; and many of them, as I said earlier, are in favor of abortion. Yet this particular law, I am sure, will be challenged in the courts, and there is a fair chance it may be overturned as somehow being unconstitutional.

So we have seen a steady erosion of the culture by some decisions that have been made in the courts. The reason I think this is so important to bring up today is that some people cannot understand why there is so much controversy over in the other body regarding the appointment of judges and justices; and the reason is that what is at stake, I believe, is the future course in many of these issues, particularly in moral issues, that our country is going to take. So these are monumental issues, and the shape of the Supreme Court, the shape of our district courts, our courts of appeal, are going to go a long ways in deciding what this country abides by in upcoming years.

Mr. Speaker, this country was founded upon principles of dependence upon God, a recognition that life is sacred, the importance of sound character, and the fact that children are our most important assets. There is no question that we are involved in a cultural and spiritual struggle of Titanic proportions. This struggle may present the greatest crisis facing the United States today, as I have outlined I think fairly clearly.

As Congress addresses critical issues such as national defense, the economy and health care, which we certainly need to spend a lot of time on, it is critical that we not lose sight of the fact that our Nation's survival is directly linked to the character of our people, and particularly our young people. I say it again, our Nation's survival, long-term, will rest primarily upon the character of our people.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. TOOMEY (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of personal reasons.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

The following Members (at the request of Mr. RANGEL) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material: