

Finally, the law required that minor-age mothers having children while on welfare must live with a parent or guardian and stay in school, more commonly referred to as "Learnfare".

These reforms resulted in a 60 percent decrease in welfare rolls, and saved more than \$357 million in taxpayer funds in Virginia which were used for other priorities in education and law enforcement. Ultimately, I measure our success not by how many people are receiving welfare checks, but rather by how many people are leading independent, self-reliant lives.

Virginia's trailblazing welfare reform has been extremely successful in setting the stage for Federal welfare overhaul, significant declines in welfare roles nationwide, and increasing the number of former welfare recipients getting back to work. Virginia's waiver from Federal law has enabled much of the success in requiring able-bodied men and women to work for their benefits.

With the passage of the Federal welfare reform in the fall of 1996, Congress intended to give the States flexibility with the law. Flexibility through these waivers has allowed States the ability to develop innovative programs that best serve their citizens. Fifteen other States opted for waivers. Indeed, Virginia has far exceeded the goal of the Federal welfare legislation offering Virginians the best tools to provide for themselves and their families.

As of June 2003, Virginia's welfare waiver expired. It is imperative that the PRIDE Act, a continuation of welfare reform started in 1996, include waivers for States that have taken the initiative to make comprehensive welfare reforms. We need to ensure that States can continue to encourage independence through work, promote families and marriage and guarantee child-support enforcement.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment so that States can maintain these positive results and successful welfare reforms.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the extension of the temporary extended unemployment compensation program, which expires today. I support this effort because, in my view, we still face an extremely serious problem of unemployment in the United States, specifically as it relates to the number of workers who have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits and are still unable to find work.

The Democrats have tried to extend this program through unanimous consent at least a dozen times this winter and the effort has been rejected by Republican leadership every time. We tried in February of this year. We tried in January of this year. And we tried a number of times in November 2003. Each time the other side of the aisle said the program was no longer needed. Even worse, they said that extension of the program would only give incentives

to workers to stay home instead of look for work. This is a very different view of American workers than I have.

According to the latest data from the Department of Labor, between December and February there will be at least 781,000 workers that will have exhausted their regular State benefits and will go without additional Federal unemployment assistance. Based on extrapolations from that analysis, the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities argues that with each week that goes by, another 80,000 workers will be added to this list. In no other comparable data on record has there been this many "exhaustees."

In my State of New Mexico, it is estimated that 4,300 workers have exhausted their benefits from December 2003 through March 2004. Through September 2004, it is estimated that 7,200 workers will have exhausted their benefits. In a State where the most recent unemployment rate is 5.7 percent and jobs are very difficult to come by, this is hardly an encouraging figure.

The Bush administration has argued that extension of the TEUC program is not necessary because the unemployment rate is low and the economy is growing. They suggested again and again that we are on the verge of an economic recovery and jobs are being created. I respectfully disagree.

In 2001, the Bush administration claimed that their tax cuts would create at least 800,000 jobs by 2002. That did not happen. In 2002, the Bush administration claimed that 3 million jobs would be created in 2003. That did not happen. In February, the Bush administration claimed in their economic report that 2.6 million jobs will be created in 2004, but everyone in the administration quickly backed away from that number. No one truly believes that this will happen.

Given the lack of coherent or comprehensive policy proposals by the administration, I say it is time we in Congress act to address job creation and help the victims of their failed policies. Extending the temporary emergency unemployment compensation program is, in my view, the least we can do for Americans that have been attempting to find work but cannot do so. As a practical matter, this means workers can continue to get unemployment insurance benefits while they continue to search for work.

So I want to add my voice to the others today and say that we must pass this legislation before it expires. American workers deserve to be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner, especially in this time of need. They need a lifeline, and it is up to us to provide it.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

On July 4, 2000, an 18-year-old Brooklyn man was charged with allegedly slashing three men and threatening the life of another because he believed the men to be gay.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

DECRYING THE ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to condemn in the strongest possible terms the violence 2 weeks ago in Kosovo, which claimed the lives of 20 persons, injured more than 600 others, displaced more than 4,000 individuals, destroyed more than 500 homes, and destroyed or damaged more than 30 churches and monasteries.

In a reversal of the brutal murders and ethnic cleansing carried out in 1998 and 1999 against Kosovar Albanians by the forces of former Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic, the perpetrators of this violence were the former victims—the ethnic Albanians. Their principal targets were Kosovo Serbs, although Ashkali and other minorities in the province also suffered.

There is no way to gloss over or disguise these events: They are a disaster of the first magnitude. Five years ago last week, I submitted the resolution that was adopted by this body, authorizing military action against the Milosevic government in order to rescue the persecuted Kosovar Albanians. Over the subsequent eleven weeks the United States and its allies successfully waged an air war, which resulted in the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo. A United Nations Security Council Resolution created a protectorate administered by the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo—known popularly by its acronym UNMIK—under the military protection of NATO's Kosovo Force or KFOR.

Since the summer of 1999 the international community, working through these civilian and military structures, has attempted to pacify and stabilize the situation, rebuild the shattered infrastructure, and help guide the embittered and traumatized population toward eventual democratic self-rule. Resolution of Kosovo's final status was