E946
CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — Extensions of Remarks

June 9, 2000

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2000

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to congratulate Our Lady of Lourdes Academy for winning first place at the National Finals of the “We the People . . . The Citizen and the Constitution.” The group was invited to Washington D.C. as the finalist representing all of Florida and went on to win the first place trophy. There were over 50 groups in the competition.

I want to congratulate Giannina Berrocal, Erika Bloch, Carolina Bolado, Gabriela Chamorro, Natalie Dela Maza, Elizabeth Herald, Stephanie Hew, Ana Mannara, Carmen Mannara, Jennifer McNally, Kellie Montoya, Alexandra Mora, Cristina Moreno, Carmen Ruiz-Castaneda, Jennifer Smith and Olga Uribeta for their hard work, and especially Ms. Rosalie Heffernon, their teacher, who helped give them direction in this important endeavor.

Congratulations to these Lourdes students for taking such an active interest in the history of our nation, and I am sure that this bright group of high school students will be the voices echoing in the national debate of the years to come.

HATE CRIMES

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS
OF FLORIDA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 8, 2000

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, sitting on a bench, riding on a bus, or even walking down the street, a hate crime can occur anytime or any place. Hate crimes are acts of pure unadulterated evil, wronging someone because they are different. People should not and cannot live in fear because of their race, color, religion or sexual orientation; it is time that we take the strongest course of action to prevent these crimes.

Over the past decade the number of hate crimes has risen rapidly, consummating with 1999’s “summer of hate.” If taking anything positive from this infamous period is possible it is, that we have not done enough to prevent such crimes. Committing a hate crime is the most serious of offenses. It is our duty to make the punishment severe enough to deter even the most prejudicial person from considering a crime of this size. We in Congress have the ability and the opportunity to prevent the possible consequences of bias from occurring.

Today, as we commemorate the second anniversary of James Byrd’s tragic death, we must pledge upon ourselves to do everything in our power to reduce the number of hate crimes. No one should ever fear for his or her safety, due to their race, color or any other crime for that matter, and we must renew and maintain our focus of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act (H.R. 1082), to ensure that crimes cease.