

NOBODY FAVORS HATE CRIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, yesterday and today in the full Judiciary Committee we have been taking up a bill called, by most people, the hate crimes act. It sounds like something that everybody would be for. You know, who favors hate? Nobody. Perhaps the only kind of hate we should be in favor of is the hatred with which we hate hate. But that's not what it's about. It is about creating new law, new crimes that are duplicates of what's in every State in the Union.

Now, there are 45 States that already have hate crimes bills, but even there, most are unnecessary. The case that you often hear that is a reason we need hate crimes is the James Byrd case, where this poor gentleman, African-American, was dragged to death.

Now, I would be in favor of allowing the victim's family to pick the terrain and the manner of dragging the defendants once they are convicted, but that's not allowed. The death penalty amendment was even voted down.

So there's no enhancements, nothing that would affect the poster cases that are constantly raised as a reason to have the hate crime laws. And, in fact, when we hear over and over there's these epidemics of hate crimes that we have to stop, actually, there were nearly a million assaults in America in 2007; 242 assaults included some kind of bodily injury in which there was some motive attributed to bias or hatred because of a selected group, 242.

Again, there was a killing of a poor young man named Nicholas West, killed because he was a homosexual. His perpetrators were not charged under a hate crimes law, they were charged under a capital murder law for kidnapping. And they have already got the death penalty, just like the worst two perpetrators in James Byrd's situation. So what is this about? Well, perhaps it's about trying to create a special class of protected people who maybe shouldn't have protection.

One of the last amendments we made today was going to—at least in this definition the term “sexual orientation” is included. We kept trying to confine it to things that were not just an aberration, and even the amendment to at least exclude pedophiles from the protected class was voted down on a strict party line.

Every Democrat there voted to protect pedophiles and every Republican voted to exclude them, at least, from the definition of sexual orientation. We were told, well, there is a definition in one of the other laws about sexual orientation, and it confined it to heterosexuality and homosexuality.

It's not in this law. It's not there. There is no reference to another law. So as a former appellate judge I would be left in reviewing the law to say well, what is the plain meaning? You can consider other definitions.

Well, some judge will do the right thing that a judge is supposed to do and say, hmm, sexual orientation, it means what it says. It's however you are oriented sexually. If that's towards child—and the diagnostics statistics manual has about 30 different types of sexual orientation. So that includes voyeurism, it includes the pedophilia, it includes things like exhibitionism. It includes necrophilia for corpses and all these horrible things.

But even under this law, since exhibitionists are not excluded—and I have had women tell me they have had people flash themselves, men flash themselves, and they immediately reacted and hit them with a purse.

Under that scenario, under this law, the exhibitionist committed a misdemeanor and the woman that hit him with her purse committed a new Federal felony under the hate crimes law.

That is absurd. We don't need this law. There is no reason for it. We even tried to include in here specifically the kinds of churches that were invaded and attacked for supporting the California marriage amendment, and that was voted down on a straight party line. There should be no special classes.

And the other thing here that would silence Christian ministers and eventually rabbis or imams from quoting the Bible, the Tanach or Koran where it condemns homosexuality, because under this bill if a minister, a rabbi, imam quotes from those scriptures and says homosexuality is an aberration—or whatever language they use, that it is wrong, it hurts society—and some nut hears them and goes out, commits a crime of violence, then under 18 U.S.C. (2)(a) they could be arrested, charged as a principal.

This was a bad bill, and it was a bad day for the law.

THE PROGRESSIVE MESSAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ELLISON. I am here with the Progressive Caucus, that caucus that brings to the people of the United States every week a progressive vision for America.

I am very honored to be joined by our Chair tonight, the only one who continues to fight week in week out every day for peace in our world who has the longest running record of 5-minute speeches for peace, LYNN WOOLSEY.

Let me yield to the gentlelady for a welcome this evening.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Thank you, Mr. ELLISON, for your great leadership on The Progressive Message, which is the message of average, normal American people, and we know it. And we are proud to speak it, because there is nothing like the issues that we stand for with the Progressive Caucus, our progressive promise, that hits home to

the American people like what we are promising to work on.

Tonight, we are going to talk about our Earth, I believe. Thank you for bringing that to us.

But also thank you for recognizing my, I believe, 309 5-minute speeches on the floor regarding Iraq and peace in general, and Afghanistan, now that we are looking like we don't know when we are going to get out of there.

We can talk about saving the Earth, but if we destroy it with war, then we won't have an Earth to save. So thank you for doing this tonight.

Mr. ELLISON. Thank you. Let me just say that you are right. And I do want to commend you, I don't know if anyone has a longer running number of 5-minute speeches on any issue than you do, so I am proud to know that the longest-running series of 5-minute speeches is on the subject of peace, is on the subject of Iraq, and is by a dedicated and progressive leader such as yourself.

Madam Speaker, we want to welcome folks to The Progressive Message and let people know that they can always plug into the Progressive Caucus. The e-mail address is cpc.grijalva.house.gov where people, I hope, will communicate. It's very important that we stay in touch and that this is The Progressive Message.

Tonight, you are right, the subject is clean energy jobs and our Earth. Let's start out with just a few basics.

The progressive energy policy, global climate change and green jobs, has to be made up of a few essential components. The fact is that U.S. energy policy is everyone's business.

U.S. energy policy touches nearly every aspect of American life, our homes, our natural environment and, most importantly, our economy and the Earth itself.

Last year Americans spent \$400 billion buying oil outside of the United States. This is a tremendous expenditure on our economy and sends dollars outside of our economy. And that means that last year American families spent about \$3,000 apiece on fossil fuels that contribute to the disastrous changes in our global climate.

I think it's important to point out that we are here now, we are approaching the first 100 days of the new administration. Haven't been here long, but we have been here strong. There is no doubt that energy policy will be a major component of the next 2 years, and it's critical to point out that the Democratic Caucus and the Progressive Caucus are here to lead the way on this discussion.

I would like to stay positive, but we have to make sure that we have a good record, and the record requires that we revisit some of the things that have been proposed over the last 8 years that have not been so good.

One, the Republican plan has not been a good plan. This plan, people contend, that efforts to curb greenhouse gas emissions are perilous and will