

VACATING 5-MINUTE SPECIAL ORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the ordering of a 5-minute Special Order speech in favor of the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is hereby vacated.

There was no objection.

HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION ATTACHED TO THE DEFENSE APPROPRIATION BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for the remaining time until midnight.

Mr. GOHMERT. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I have listened to most of the last hour with great interest. I was owed the Army 4 years from a scholarship I had at Texas A&M. Most people my age can tell you exactly what their draft number was. I can't. I didn't care. I was going into the Army. I expected to go into Texas A&M and finish my 4 years, come out as a second lieutenant and end up in Vietnam, as many of my friends did. But Vietnam ended before I graduated. I spent 4 years in the Army. I asked on my dream sheet to be sent to Germany. So the Army sent me to Georgia, to Fort Benning. Pretty close. It begins with G-E.

We've heard many examples here of people saying, Well, gee, if gays are not allowed, they might not reenlist. If you listen to the current commanders of our U.S. military, you listen to the vast majority of the military, then they're concerned not about gays in the military but about openly gay individuals in the military. This isn't a debate. When we talk about Don't Ask, Don't Tell, it's not a debate about whether or not there will be people who practice homosexuality in the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard. That's not the issue at all. There are people who practice homosexuality who are in the service, as my friends have already indicated.

The issue is, will they be allowed to be very openly practicing such things. The current policy is, if it's not where it's openly offensive to people who think it's inappropriate, then certainly we welcome your service in the military. It's just amazing where we are right now in America. You know, going back to last September, early October, we crammed a bailout bill down America that most Members hadn't had a chance to read. I read it. Then we come through with these stimulus bills, land omnibus bills, all this stuff that's coming down. And you just go, where have we gotten to in America? The military is not a social experiment. It's not. I think my friends know that. I heard one of the gentlemen across the aisle mention, Anything that distracts from the goals of the military should not be in the military. Whether it is heterosexual open acts or homosexual open acts, indications are it's a distraction.

So this isn't an issue about whether there will be gays in the military. It's about whether or not there will be people who are openly gay in the military. And still the commanders in the field seem to fairly uniformly indicate that it will be a problem for them completing their missions at maximum efficiency. That is what needs to be known. For every example of any individual saying, Gee, if gays are not allowed to be open in the military, I may not reenlist or I won't reenlist or I didn't, you have no idea how many people apparently have indicated, If the Don't Ask, Don't Tell is eliminated, I'm not joining. I'm not reenlisting. I'm about done with the social experimentation in the military. It's no place for it.

But, actually, it seems like this hour tonight follows, interestingly, just as a hate crimes bill has been added to the Defense authorization bill. Here we've got soldiers in harm's way needing us to authorize the money that they need to have the equipment and all that they need to protect us and to protect themselves, and we're playing games with them, attaching a hate crimes bill on a Defense authorization. Most people would say, Defense authorization is a must-pass piece of legislation, and therefore, people will be afraid to vote against it, especially conservatives, moderates. So you add a hate crimes bill to the Defense authorization? Are there no bounds to which this Congress will not stoop?

We can't just say to our military members, Here is what you need. Oh, no. We're going to go beyond Don't Ask, Don't Tell. We're going to stick a hate crimes bill on this bill and hold our soldiers, who are in the field trying to protect us, hostage unless you are willing to pass this hate crimes bill with what the soldiers need. It's just mind-boggling that people in positions of authority in this Congress would be willing to do that. It's just unbelievable.

Now, we have fought over this hate crimes bill in committee and on the floor and over and over. We made amendments, offered amendments because we could see that the definition of sexual orientation is wide open to all kinds of interpretation. And someday some court somewhere will say, You know what, sexual orientation means exactly what those words mean. If you're oriented—I hope it doesn't offend. But this is part of the law. It's laws in most States or it has been certainly in many States. If you're oriented toward animals, bestiality, then that is not something that could be held against you or any bias could be held against you for that, which means you would have to strike any laws against bestiality. If you're oriented toward corpses, toward children, there are all kinds of perversions—what most of us would call perversions. Some would say it sounds like fun, but most would say were perversions, and there have been laws against them.

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This bill says whatever you are oriented towards sexually, that cannot be a source of bias against someone. Well, that's interesting.

Someone said, well, surely they didn't mean to include pedophiles or necrophiliacs or what most of us would say are perverse sexual orientations. But the trouble is we made amendments to eliminate pedophiles from being included in the definition. In fact, we made an amendment to use the definition in another part of Federal law that would have restricted sexual orientation to only talking about heterosexuality and homosexuality. We were willing to agree to that. But that also was voted down. The majority who is in control of Congress today made it very clear in committee, through rules, through the floor here, that they did not want any limits on sexual orientation on that definition.

"Gender identity," who knows what that will some day be interpreted to mean. There is no definition for that. It's whatever anybody wants to think it means. All of this stuff is just unbelievable.

We even went so far as to say, you know what? If you're going to try to protect transgender or homosexual individuals more than other people in society, then at least give the elderly that same protection. That amendment was voted down. We're not going to give the elderly the same heightened protection we would give transgender individuals, even though elderly are frequently picked out, targeted, because they're older and considered less able to protect themselves. If anybody deserved to be in that protected class, certainly the elderly would be. But this isn't about that. This is about forcing some type of sexual practices on those who are bothered by them on the country.

It's obviously not about run-away crime regarding hate crime that's just growing and growing. In the debate earlier today on this floor, the most we heard were statistics cited from 2007, and the reason for that is that the FBI statistics show that the numbers of hate crimes have been reduced over the last 20 and 10 years. They're going down. The laws in effect are carrying out their purpose.

Also, it should be noted that there is no act of violence that the Federal hate crimes bill covers that is not already a crime in every State in the Union. It makes no sense to hold our soldiers hostage to this hate crimes bill being added on there.

Now, when you look at the status of hate in America, there is hate in America. There is. And I don't know of anybody in this congressional body that likes the idea of hatred of one for another. It's not appropriate. Those of us who are Christians believe we are to love one another. In fact, when Jesus was asked what's the most important commandment, he said love God. The other is like it: Love each other. On