

□ 1800

Mr. Speaker, it is not fair to the families of America. It is not fair to the families who have lost a loved one as a result of hate. It is not fair for these families to have to wait for Congress to recognize their need and honor the lives of the loved ones they lost. It is not fair for Congress to remain silent while these programs loudly demand action.

Hate can occur in any community. In Jasper, Texas, three white men dragged a 49-year-old black man for two miles while he was chained to the back of a pickup truck. In Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, a 21-year-old Private First Class was brutally beaten with a baseball bat in his barracks because he was gay.

In my district over the Fourth of July weekend, hate erupted with a vengeance. A madman full of rage and with a gun took the life of two men and forever changed the lives of many families.

This madman left us grieving for Ricky Byrdsong and his family and Woo-Joon Yoon, an Asian student from Bloomington, Indiana, and angry for the assault on Jewish men peacefully observing the Sabbath.

Ricky Byrdsong lived in Skokie, Illinois, in my district. He was a loving husband, a father, a leader in the community, a former basketball coach at Northwestern University, a man of deep religious faith, and a constituent. He was murdered in cold blood. His only crime was the color of his skin. He was African-American.

Many skeptics say we do not need this bill. But tell that to the family of Ricky Byrdsong or Matthew Shepard.

I urge my House colleagues on the Commerce-State-Justice Conference Committee to agree to include the hate crimes prevention act in the final bill. We must expand and improve the Federal hate crimes law and punish those who choose their victims based on race or gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or physical disability.

It would also make it easier for Federal law enforcement officials to investigate and prosecute cases of racial and religious violence.

State and local authorities currently prosecute the majority of hate crimes and will continue to do so under this legislation. Keeping the Hate Crimes Prevention Act in the appropriations bill will increase Federal jurisdiction to allow Federal officials to assist State and local authorities to investigate and prosecute hate crimes. It will also provide State and local programs with grants designed to combat hate crimes committed by juveniles.

While serving in the Illinois State House, my colleagues and I were successful in strengthening State laws dealing with hate crimes. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues here in the Congress to translate successes on the State level to the national stage.

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act is such an opportunity to send a clear and powerful message that the safety of all people is a priority and anyone who threatens that safety will face the consequences.

As a Member of Congress who represents one of the most diverse districts in the Nation, I strongly believe that we must ensure the passage of this act. Hate crimes if left unchecked not only victimize our citizens but debase and shame us all.

#### SENATE MESSAGE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate agrees to the report of the Committee of Conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1906) "An Act making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes."

#### HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1082, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

In August, the House Committee on the Judiciary, on which I sit, held a hearing on hate crimes. We heard testimony from Carole Carrington. I am sure my colleagues are familiar with her story.

Her daughter, granddaughter, and a dear family friend were murdered in Yosemite National Park last February. The murderer was finally captured a few months later after brutally murdering another woman near Yosemite.

Why did this man kill these four women? Because they were women. He claims to have fantasized about killing women for the last 30 years. He did not know any of his victims. He targeted them simply because they were women.

Mr. Speaker, this great Nation was founded on the desire for freedom, freedom from oppression, freedom from religious persecution, freedom to participate as full citizens.

Our Nation's founding principles revolve around the concept of individual liberties and the freedom to live our lives in a free and open society. We have long recognized that personal safety and security are essential for a person to exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship.

Governments are created by men and women in part to protect and defend citizens from violence to ensure that they are able to exercise their personal liberties.

Hate crimes are intended to intimidate the victim and to limit those free-

doms. Hate crimes are designed by the perpetrators to create fear in the victim. The woman who was attacked on a dark street lives in fear of another attack. The African-American family that has a cross burned on their lawn remembers that threat far after the scorch marks on the grass have been washed away. The gay teenager who is beaten by classmates may never feel safe in school again.

Hate crimes are meant to instill fear. And the fear that hate crimes instill is not simply targeted at the immediate victim. The fear is aimed at members of the group. Hate crimes are different than any other violent crime because they seek to terrorize an entire community, be it burning a cross in someone's yard, the burning of a synagogue, or a rash of gay bashings.

This sort of domestic terrorism demands a strong Federal response because this country was founded on the premise that a person should be free to be who they are without fear of violence.

A member of the other body, the Republican chairman of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, said, "A crime committed not just to harm an individual but out of a motive of sending a message of hatred to an entire community is appropriately punished more harshly, or in a different manner, than other crimes."

I do not know for sure what causes hate. I am sure the expert have some ideas. But fear of the unknown combined with stereotyping of groups that reinforces that fear probably has something to do with it.

I know that hate crime legislation cannot cure the hate that still resides among some in our country, but this legislation can provide more protections for groups who are targeted and send an important message that Congress believes that hate crimes against any group are a serious national problem that deserves to be addressed.

One year ago, a young University of Wyoming student, Matthew Shepard, was brutally murdered because he was gay. We all know the story. But Matthew's murder had a profound personal impact on me. It reminded me that I could be targeted simply because of who I am.

It was at the height of my campaign when they found Matthew's body. The word spread quickly among my many university student volunteers, and I could see the hurt and fear in their eyes as they talked about what happened to this young university student, a person their age.

A number of my volunteers were gay or lesbian and they were in shock. It affected so many of us profoundly and personally.

Hate crimes are an attack on society, an attack on tolerance, an attack on freedom. This Congress ought to act swiftly to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY).

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I would like to associate myself with the words of the gentlewoman from Wisconsin for her leadership on this issue.

Let me say directly to the American public, this is desperately needed legislation. We have in our climate today too much anti-Semitism, too much racial hatred, too much homophobia, and people who are singled out based on those parameters are targeted by those that hate others because of who they are, because of their gender or orientation or color of skin.

This should not be permissive in this society of ours as we enter the 21st century, and we have to deal with this and we have to confront it and we have to educate our children because these crimes are devastating.

We had a boy killed in our community recently in West Palm for the same motivation, because he was gay. We have heard crime after crime similar to these Matthew Shepard cases that are wrenching the heart and soul out of our country.

So I applaud the gentlewoman for her leadership. I join my colleague in urging the Congress to adopt hate crime legislation to federalize these crimes. Because, again, these are not singular acts. These are acts by despicable people who seek out people based on race, gender, sexual orientation. They are mean-spirited and they must be dealt with with the full effect of the law so, hopefully, we can turn the tide on these crimes and get people to recognize that the punishment will be severe, it will be swift, and maybe they will think twice before they inflict their hatred on others.

#### HATE CRIMES—OTHER NOT-SO-WELL-KNOWN CASES

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

Mr. WEINER. Mr. Speaker, I do not know where Sylacauga, Alabama, is. But in February of 1999, Billy Jack Gaither, a gay man, was abducted and beaten to death with an ax handle and set afire among burning tires in a remote area.

And frankly, Mr. Speaker, I do not know where Texas City, Texas, is either. But that is a place where two black gay men, Laaron Morris and Kevin Tryals, were shot to death and one of the men was left inside a burning car.

And very frankly, Mr. Speaker, I do not know where Kenosha, Wisconsin, is, although I have heard of it. But that is a place where, in May of 1999, a 27-year-old man intentionally swerved his car onto a sidewalk to run over two African-American teens. After hitting the

two cyclists, he left the scene and kept driving until stopped by police. Eight years earlier, the same man ran his car twice into a stopped van carrying five African-American men and drove away.

I do not know where those places are. But very frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think many Americans do not know where Laramie, Wyoming, was until about a year ago Matthew Shepard, an openly gay 21-year-old university student, was savagely beaten, burned, tied to a wooden fence in a remote area, and left to die in subfreezing temperatures.

There is nothing about these cases that reflects poorly on those individual towns across America. In fact, hate crimes like these, unfortunately, are happening in towns big and small, major metropolises, small neighborhoods all across this country.

Since 1991, when the Department of Justice started keeping hate crime statistics, they found after surveying hundreds of police department law enforcement agencies around this country that about 4,600 hate crimes had been committed. When they did a similar survey in 1997, they found that that number had nearly doubled to over 8,000.

This is an epidemic, Mr. Speaker. Matthew Shepard made us all gasp in horror. But now we in Congress have an opportunity to act.

Not so long ago, in 1990 and 1994, this House did act in passing the Hate Crime Statistics Act and Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act. But we have seen again and again that that law needs to be strengthened. We learned frankly from cases all across this country that there are problems with the current law that we are obligated to fix.

The Federal prosecution of hate crimes can only happen if the crime is motivated by race, religion, national origin, color, and the assailant intended to prevent the victim from exercising a very narrowly defined protected right, like voting or attending school.

The law is so narrowly written that we are seeing problems with prosecutions all around this country. In 1994, a Federal jury in Fort Worth, Texas, acquitted three white supremacists of Federal civil rights charges arising from unprovoked assaults on African-Americans, including one incident where the defendant knocked the man unconscious as he stood near a bus stop.

□ 1815

Some of the jurors revealed after the acquittal that although they were absolutely convinced that the crime was racially motivated, they could not find that it fit into one of these narrow racially protected activities. The same happened in 1992 when two white men chased a man of Asian descent from a nightclub in Detroit and beat him to

death. The Department of Justice, with a great deal of help from the State and locality, tried to prosecute it using the current hate crimes law and failed because the law was too narrowly crafted.

We have an opportunity with the bill that is currently before the House Committee on the Judiciary to deal with this problem, to broaden the crimes which the Federal Government, with the help of the States and localities, can prosecute. We have seen over and over again that if the Federal Government brings its forces to bear, that we can make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes this House is criticized for acting only in the face of abject crisis. I believe that that crisis has been shown to us by the horror of Matthew Shepard. Now is the opportunity for us to act in this time of crisis, to pass the Hate Crimes Enhancement Act, to finally begin to do something to stop that increasing trend of hate crimes. I cannot promise anyone in this Chamber that if we were to pass this act, there will not be people with hate in their hearts, there will not be people who do horrific things in small towns and big cities all across this country. But I do know we have an obligation to act, because what happened to Matthew Shepard was not just a blow to that small town, it was not just a blow to gay rights, it was not just a blow to that person's family, it was a blow to our national family. It was a horror that all of us must address.

#### IN SUPPORT OF THE HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, we are faced with an historic opportunity once again this year to pass legislation to combat violent hate crimes that continue to plague our country.

Last year, despite the brutal killing of Matthew Shepard simply because he was gay, we failed to incorporate the Hate Crimes Prevention Act into a bill to fund the Justice Department. We must not make the same mistake again this year.

In the year that followed Matthew Shepard's death, thousands of hate crimes were committed and Congress failed to protect gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgender individuals and others from these heinous crimes.

Tragically, we are all far too familiar with the violent acts of terrorism that are sweeping our country. The August 10 shooting of a Filipino-American letter carrier, shooting to death, three young children who were shot and two adults at the Los Angeles Jewish community center is one of a series of brutal hate crimes that continue to plague