LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. As the Ranking Minority Member of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

In March 2006, Gregory Pisarcik was sentenced to life in prison in Santa Ana, CA for the murder of Narciso Leggs, a gay man. During the attack, Pisarcik repeatedly hit Leggs over the head with a champagne bottle. When police later found his body one ear had been cut off and anti-gay slurs were written on his body. According to sources, police feel that sexual orientation was a motivation for the attack.

I believe that the 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.

GENOCIDE IN SUDAN

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, today is Holocaust Remembrance Day. Each year, our Nation commemorates this tragic event with a week-long period of remembrance, and this Thursday, I will join several of my colleagues in a ceremony honoring the victims of the Holocaust in the Capitol Rotunda. The theme for this year’s “Days of Remembrance Temples of Justice,” honors the courage and fortitude of those who testified during the trials of Nazi war criminals.

As many of my colleagues know, I have a personal connection to those trials. My father, Senator Thomas Dodd, then a young lawyer, was asked by the chief counsel for the United States at Nuremberg, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson, to join his prosecutorial team. My father served as Vice-Chairman of the Review Board and as executive trial counsel, and his experiences at those trials greatly influenced his thinking on human rights and the importance of international justice for the rest of his life.

One of the major accomplishments of the prosecutors and witnesses at Nuremberg was publicly exposing the scope of depravity of Nazi crimes. My father and his colleagues went to great lengths to meticulously record that evidence, and their efforts formed the basis of much of our current knowledge about the Holocaust. According to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, for example, it was during the Nuremberg trials that the world first heard the estimate of 6 million deaths.

I believe that my father and his colleagues placed so much emphasis on revealing the extent of Nazi crimes in large part because they understood that the Nuremberg proceedings had the potential to reach an audience that far exceeded the four members and four alternate members of the Tribunal sitting in judgment of the defendants. These trials would reveal to the world and to future generations that such unthinkable crimes were possible, and that the international community must, therefore, stand up to injustice and abuse wherever they occur.

The evidence uncovered by the Tribunal was truly horrific. Indeed, the crimes committed by the Nazis were so heinous that a new lexicon to describe them. These crimes were prosecuted under the legal terminology of “crimes against humanity,” but later, an entirely new word describing them was formalized: genocide.

As my colleagues have said, the trials of the defendants committed with the “intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethical, racial, or religious group.” Sadly, the crime of genocide is not unique to the Holocaust. In Bosnia, Cambodia, and, of course, Rwanda, too many innocents died while the world looked away. And today, in Darfur, Sudan, escalating violence is claiming thousands of additional lives in a conflict that the Congress unanimously declared genocide almost 2 years ago, in July 2004.

Secretary of State Colin Powell made that same declaration in September of that year. Several weeks ago, I received a DVD about the situation in Darfur made by a group of Danbury, CT, high school students. The DVD, entitled, “The Promise,” is truly a wake-up call. The title, of course, refers to the promise made by the world after the Holocaust—the promise of “Never Again.” Yet, as these students so vividly portray, the people of Darfur continue to suffer while the world takes too little notice. By some estimates, as many as 300,000 people, many of them civilians, may have lost their lives in Darfur since the start of the conflict. The Government of Sudan has refused to curtail, and in many instances has actively supported, the activities of Jangawel militias that have attacked and targeted tribal groups of African decent.

In a particularly moving segment of their DVD, the Danbury students display some of the artwork of children who have fled their homes in Darfur. As the students say, so much can be learned through the eyes of a child, and these images, provided by the children without any prompting, are of war, fire, and death. I think of my own children and shudder to imagine them suffering through the terror that afflicts the children of Darfur every day. Indeed, despite all that we have learned since Nuremberg, I am sad to say that the promise of “Never Again” remains a promise unfulfilled.

But while the story of Darfur is clearly one of tragedy, it is also one of hope. Since the start of the conflict, I have been impressed by the dedication and advocacy demonstrated by the people of Connecticut on this issue. If we are ever to fulfill “the promise,” it will be due to the extraordinary efforts of dedicated individuals such as these Danbury High School students. I am proud that these students, just like the brave individuals who stood up to testify at the Nuremberg Tribunals 60 years ago to demand justice, are standing up to demand action in Darfur today.

Darfur, their DVD, the Danbury High School students cite a famous statement by Ghandi: “Be the change you wish to see in the world.” I can think of no greater compliment to these students and the numerous individuals in Connecticut and throughout the country who have advocated for increased international action in Darfur, than to say that they have lived up to that admonition. I ask unanimous consent that the names of the Danbury students who made this DVD be included in the record following my remarks.

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

(See exhibit 1.)

Mr. DODD. Today is a day of remembrance, but in remembering, we are also called to action. This week, we are debating the President’s emergency supplemental request. To his credit, the President has included in that request substantial funds to support the African Union peacekeeping operation in Darfur and new humanitarian assistance.

Moreover, the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations is scheduled to brief the Security Council tomorrow, on potential U.N. missions in Darfur. It is my hope that they will advocate a strong United Nations Peacekeeping force, despite Sudanese objections. It is also my fervent hope that we in the Senate actively support an increased international role in Darfur. Because only with our support can any international force hope to meet the enormous challenge of protecting the civilian population and providing a safe environment to supply humanitarian relief.

Finally, just as at Nuremberg the international community enforced justice where justice had too long been blind, I call on the Bush administration to actively support the work of the International Criminal Court in prosecuting those individuals who have committed crimes against the people of Darfur and against all humanity. I know the ICC is not popular in some circles of the Bush administration, but...
Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, this month people around the world are joining together and honoring the men, women, and children who perished in the Armenian genocide. One and a half million Armenians were systematically massacred at the hands of the Ottoman Empire, and over 500,000 more were forced to flee their homeland of 3,000 years. It is important that we note this terrible tragedy.

When the Armenian genocide occurred, from 1915 to 1923, the international community lacked a name for such atrocities. In January 1951, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide entered into force to affirm the international commitment to prevent genocide and protect basic human decency. Today, we have the words to describe this evil, and we have an obligation to prevent it. But we must also have the will to act.

The Armenian genocide may have been the first instance of what Winston Churchill referred to as "the crime without a name," but it was certainly not the last. During the Holocaust, and later in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the world has seen the crimes of ethnic cleansing and genocide recur again and again. Too often, the international will to stop atrocities has been lacking, or far too late in coming. That was the genocide in Darfur, Sudan, continues to unfold, we have to muster the will and the sense of urgency required to save innocent lives.

The international community has made the first steps, but it has a long way to go in punishing and, particularly, preventing genocides from occurring is imperative. We owe the victims of the Armenian genocide this commitment.

This is why we must remember the Armenian genocide. To forget it is to enable more genocides and ethnic cleansing to occur. We must honor its victims by reaffirming our resolve to not let it happen again.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH
Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, 7 months ago, the world watched in horror and disbelief as Hurricane Katrina tore through the gulf coast and left massive devastation in its wake. We have seen the pictures of toppled buildings, collapsed houses, and communities covered in an endless blanket of debris. We have wondered—how will they ever recover?

With the help of volunteers, slowly they are making headways and selfless do-gooders have been putting on hard hats, wading through homes knee-deep in mud, clearing debris and literally doing the dirty work.

April is National Volunteers Month. I wish to recognize it by saying thank you to all the volunteers and service workers everywhere. And this year I especially want to honor those helping out with Hurricane Katrina recovery. They are taking time out of their lives to help their fellow Americans in their time of need—and they are doing it out of the goodness of their hearts.

AmeriCorps is the embodiment of this spirit of voluntarism and service to the country. Since 1989, I have been a leader in the creation of AmeriCorps. I introduced the National and Community Service Act to establish the Corporation for National and Community Service to oversee and coordinate our national volunteer efforts and to create a demonstration program that has evolved into what we know today as AmeriCorps. As one of the founders, I have been its chief advocate in the Senate. I fought to create AmeriCorps. I fought to strengthen AmeriCorps, and