

Today the House Judiciary Committee will hold hearings on hate crimes. That is welcome news, but it must lead to the entire House's consideration and passage of strong, effective hate crimes legislation and ultimately to enactment of a hate crimes law.

Effective legislation must accomplish three objectives. First, it must remove serious jurisdictional limitations which require proof that victims were attacked because they were engaging in particular activities. Second, it must expand Federal coverage for violent hate crimes based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability. There is no question that innocent people have been targeted and attacked and in some cases even killed solely because of their sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Such hate crimes must be covered by any legislation passed by the Congress. Third, it must recognize that State and local authorities should continue to prosecute the great majority of hate crimes and that

Federal jurisdiction should be exercised only when it is necessary to achieve justice in a particular case. Any bill that does not include these three elements falls far short of what America needs in our battle against hate.

No American should have to suffer the violence of a hate crime. Unfortunately, many do, and therefore we must work together to ensure that all Americans receive greater protection. This should not be a partisan issue. It is a national concern requiring a national response in the form of strong hate crimes legislation. I call on the House of Representatives to meet its responsibility in combating violence that is fueled by hate and to complete what the Senate has begun. If we work together, we have it within our grasp to enact a bill that will take a very strong stand against those who perpetrate crimes based on prejudice and hate. We must not let this opportunity pass us by.

Statement on the Selection of the New NATO Secretary General

August 4, 1999

I am very pleased that our NATO Alliance has selected British Defense Secretary George Robertson to be NATO's next Secretary General.

George Robertson is an extremely talented and dedicated public servant. He has made a tremendous contribution to the United Kingdom's effort to modernize its military forces. He displayed extraordinary leadership during the Kosovo conflict and has continued to lead in the effort to restore stability there. I look forward

to working with him as he guides NATO into the new century.

Secretary General Solana has done a superb job, steering NATO through conflict in the Balkans, ushering in three new members of the Alliance, reaching out to our security partners across Europe, and meeting other vital challenges. I look forward to continuing to work with him in his new role at the European Union.

Memorandum on the Year 2000 Computer Problem

August 4, 1999

Memorandum for Members of the Cabinet

Subject: Year 2000 Computer Problem

The end of 1999 is less than 6 months away. Federal agencies have made significant progress

in meeting the challenges posed by the Year 2000 (Y2K) computer problem since the Vice President and I discussed this issue at the Cabinet meeting in January 1998. Virtually all of the major Federal agencies have completed, or