

are—whether because of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability—they hurt more. These crimes affect entire communities and strike at the heart of our American system of values. This important legislation sends a message that everyone is protected under the law.

This legislation also recognizes that State and local law enforcement still have primary responsibility for investigating and prosecuting hate crimes. It provides much needed assistance for State and local law enforcement agencies. It provides financial assistance through grants and help with investigations and prosecutions so that Federal, State, and local law enforcement can work together to ensure that perpetrators of hate crimes are brought to justice. In addition, the legislation ensures that Federal law enforcement officers confer with State and local law enforcement before bringing a case in Federal court.

Today a majority of the Senate has spoken. We must all work together to ensure that this amendment is not removed during conference. I urge all Members of Congress to send me this legislation to sign into law.

Statement on the Death of Former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita of Japan

June 20, 2000

I was saddened to learn of the death of former Prime Minister Noboru Takeshita and wish to extend my condolences to his wife, Naoko, his daughters, and the Japanese people. Mr. Takeshita was a strong supporter of close U.S.-Japan relations and a good friend of the United States.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Tobacco Legislation

June 20, 2000

I am very pleased that the House of Representatives reversed its position in favor of tobacco companies and today passed an amendment to advance public health by siding with American veterans and taxpayers.

The House decision today to reconsider its support of tobacco companies clears the path for the Veterans Administration to help support tobacco litigation, which could mean billions of dollars to improve veterans medical care. I applaud the perseverance of a bipartisan group, led by Representative Henry Waxman, Representative Lane Evans, Representative Jim Hansen, Representative Martin Meehan, Representative Debbie Stabenow, Representative David Obey, and Representative Lloyd Doggett, whose efforts in past days have resulted in this significant victory.

In the coming days and weeks, there will be other attempts by Congress to block the Federal Government's tobacco litigation with riders supported by tobacco companies. This bipartisan victory should be a model for Congress. The legal responsibility of the tobacco companies should be decided in the courts by the judicial process. I call upon Congress to reject the interests of big tobacco and permit justice to run its course.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring King Mohamed VI of Morocco

June 20, 2000

Ladies and gentlemen, Your Majesty, members of the Moroccan delegation, welcome all of you to the White House this evening. No foreign guest is more deserving of a warm welcome here than King Mohamed.

Your Majesty, as I said this morning, it is well known that when the 13 separate States of America declared themselves the United States, your ancestor, Sultan Sidi Mohamed, was the very first sovereign to recognize our new Nation.

The greatest heroes of our early history were the strongest proponents of friendship with Morocco. The treaty of friendship between our Nations was urged on Congress by Benjamin Franklin, drafted by Thomas Jefferson, signed by John Adams, and affirmed by George Washington in a letter to the Sultan. Our treaty of friendship is the oldest American treaty of its kind still enforced today.