

Together, Mr. Speaker, as Republicans and Democrats and liberals and conservatives, as those representing rural and urban areas, we will solve this problem, and we will send a signal that anyone who ever contemplates the act of arson, especially at a religious institution, is going to face the most severe consequences that this country can bring to bear.

We are going to mobilize the communities of this country in a way they have not been mobilized before to stop these despicable acts. I thank my colleagues, and I urge support of this resolution.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. WATT].

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from Oklahoma and my colleague from North Carolina for bringing this resolution forward.

I tell my colleagues that I worshiped on Sunday in the church that burned in Charlotte, NC, and I want to lift up two quick messages from the minister's speech that day. He said unequivocally to the people who are doing these burnings, "You can destroy the building, but you cannot destroy the church."

Second, he said to his members, "We have got to find a way to find the good in this and to rise above this and to maintain the values that we hold dear."

I hope all of us will keep those two things in mind as we condemn these church burnings and as we all vote, hopefully unanimously, in support of this resolution.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York [Mr. SOLOMON].

(Mr. SOLOMON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Oklahoma for bringing this resolution in a timely manner to this floor.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. WAMP].

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, of course we should all come together tonight and unanimously condemn these outrageous acts. But I want to come tonight from a little bit different perspective because, Mr. Speaker, long before I was a Member of this body, I was a member of a much greater body, and long after I am a Member of this body, I am going to continue to be a member of a much greater and everlasting body.

I hope that our gentleman from North Carolina is right that some good can come out of this, and I hope to my core that this serves as a wakeup call to the church, to all churches everywhere, that this could be an opportunity for the church to do its work, to build the kingdom of God; that our brothers and sisters in the predomi-

nantly white churches would come out of their churches between now and Sunday and between now and next Wednesday and offer to rebuild these churches; that this would be an opportunity for the kingdom of God to come alive here, that some good could come out, that our brothers and sisters all across the land would offer their support.

I hear today that the Southern Baptist Convention took a step, but many more need to be taken to have some good come from this, that the kingdom would be lifted up, that we would go out as churches and offer to rebuild these churches, and that good would actually rise out of these ashes.

The most important word in the world today, that is needed so desperately in this country, is reconciliation. This is an opportunity for reconciliation. This is an opportunity for white folks to say, "We love you, black brothers and sisters, and we want to help you, and we hurt for you." Please country, come together.

Mr. Speaker, I call on people of faith all across America to get out of your church, take your resources. If ever there was a mission project for churches and religious institutions all across the United States of America, this is the mission project that could heal our land. Let us reconcile as a Nation, Mr. Speaker, through this one action, and have some good rise from these horrific acts.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 187.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from North Carolina?

There was no objection.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Connecticut, [Mrs. DELAURO].

Mrs. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague, Mrs. CLAYTON, on this resolution. I rise in strong support of the resolution.

I stand with my colleagues tonight to voice my outrage and condemnation of these church arson. As towns and neighborhoods begin that process of healing and rebuilding, it is imperative that we send a loud and a clear and a firm message to the perpetrators of these sick crimes that Americans will not tolerate bigotry or hate crimes.

□ 2145

The perpetrators must and will be punished. History teaches us that we all have a stake in the battle against the forces of hatred. We cannot stand and be silent. We must speak louder than the voices of hate. Those voices encourage violence and have resulted in the destruction of churches, churches built on faith, on hope, and on love.

I am proud to join my colleagues today in support of this resolution and urge its adoption. Further, I urge my colleagues to call on others to go to their districts, to speak out against the voices and the actions of hatred in this country. It is only through such acts that we can prevent further violence and destruction.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maine [Mr. LONGLEY].

Mr. LONGLEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the gentleman from Oklahoma and the gentlewoman from North Carolina for bringing this resolution to the floor. As a Representative from the State of Maine, I want to add my voice to the national chorus that denounces these instances of religious and racial hatred. I ask unanimous support for this resolution that we offer tonight.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT].

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, I commend and thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] and all of those who have joined with her for her leadership in expressing our collective outrage at what has been occurring in communities across this country. Now is the time for people of good will regardless of religion or their political persuasion or their region of the country to join together to condemn the outrage that has occurred and the attempt at intimidation steeped in hate on which it is based.

It is not enough merely to condemn. For while we are all outraged by what has occurred, we know that simply expressing our fury through resolution is only a first step. It is time to match our actions with our words and resolutions. So it is extremely important that the Church Arsons Prevention Act introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. CONYERS], that would strengthen our ability to fight this kind of arson, be enacted at the earliest possible date in this Congress.

We should move forward on this legislation to halt attacks on our communities. Our communities are suffering, and they should look to our national leaders with confidence, for we have the responsibility to prove, as Barbara Jordan would say, that America is as good as its promise. In keeping this promise, we can be inspired by the congregations who refuse to be intimidated.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. LIGHTFOOT].

(Mr. LIGHTFOOT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LIGHTFOOT. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues here and rise in strong support of this resolution. Since we have a limited amount of time, I would like to briefly comment on one aspect of this resolution, and that is Congress' full support of Federal, State and local law enforcement investigations.

We are going to do more than offer just words. As chairman of the subcommittee in charge of ATF's appropriation, I will be introducing supplemental legislation next week as part of the fiscal year 1997 Treasury appropriations bill to provide \$12 million in additional resources right here and right now. In addition, we will continue our commitment to solving these church fires with an additional \$12 million for fiscal year 1997, a total of \$24 million. If that does not do it, we will come back for some more.

This money will go toward the basics of law enforcement, overtime, travel offices, phones, rewards, money, and equipment. This will allow the establishment of full-blown church fire task forces, not just the high level discussions that the administration has been hosting but real offices in the States where these churches are being burned, agents answering calls and gathering evidence.

I have every confidence that we will be able to solve these crimes. ATF investigators have a world class reputation in arson investigation. They have been called in on challenging cases all around the world. They solved the World Trade Center bombing. They found the evidence that led to the arrest of the people who perpetrated the bombing in Oklahoma City. They unraveled the pipe bombings and mail bombings in the Southeastern United States of the judges several years ago. Interestingly enough, Louis Freeh, who is now head of the FBI, was a prosecutor. They brought them to trial. If we look back at 1992, when we had a series of church bombings, all but one of those crimes has been solved.

So I would say tonight to whoever is the perpetrator of these crimes, whatever their motives might be, because they have to be less than human, we are setting on your trail. If you are watching out there tonight, the world's premier arson investigators, they are going to find you. They are going to collect the evidence. They are going to collect it correctly and they are going to take you to jail. Then hopefully through the trial process you will be prosecuted and punished to the full extent of the law.

I think that is one thing that we can do. I think it is an obligation that we have to everyone in this country. It does not make any difference whether we are black or white or brown or whatever the color of our skin, Republicans, Democrats or not, when you start to attack anyone's house of worship, that is an attack on God. I think all of us rise up as brothers and sisters and revile that kind of activity. I think we have an obligation and a duty to find that these people are found, prosecuted adequately punished. We make that commitment here tonight to do that.

I compliment my two friends for offering this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JONES). The Chair reminds Members to

please address their remarks to the Chair.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia [Mr. LEWIS].

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina and the gentleman from Oklahoma for bringing this resolution before us.

The church has long been the heartbeat, they very soul of the black community. In the 1960's, those who opposed the civil rights movement recognized that strength. Our churches were burned, looted and burned. Our holy places were no longer a place of sanctuary but a target of those who preached hate, division and intolerance. Today, despite the progress we made as a Nation and as a people, history is repeating itself. In the ashes, of these churches are the hopes and dreams of the African-American community, justice, equality and simple acceptance. The fires that destroyed these churches are fueled not only by gasoline and matches but also by hatred and intolerance and bigotry. There is a conspiracy, a conspiracy of intolerance.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues tonight to vote for this resolution and send a strong message to this Nation that we will build a sense of community. Let us use this occasion, let us use this resolution not to divide but to bring together. Bring us all together, not to tear down but to uplift. Let us speak tonight with one mighty voice. We must use our outrage to rededicate ourselves to building Dr. King's beloved community, a Nation in which we all are judged not by the color of our skin but by the content of our character.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Arizona [Mr. HAYWORTH].

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, I would commend my colleagues from North Carolina and from Oklahoma for drafting and presenting this resolution this evening.

Mr. Speaker, what type of person, what type of twisted, sick mind would choose to launch an attack on a house of worship, no matter its denomination, no matter the people who choose to worship there?

Tonight, as my colleague from Georgia who preceded me in the well noted, it is time to come together. We often have spirited and contentious debate in this Chamber. Indeed, we champion that right to freely express differences of opinion honestly held. But tonight, Mr. Speaker, the call for all Americans should be, let us unite against those who would seek to deprive us of our most fundamental freedom, the freedom to worship individually or corporately according to the dictates of our own conscience.

Questions of motives, indeed veiled references, if you will, to one political philosophy or another really have no place in this debate. Indeed, even as we

could attack or isolate one form of communication, we could also point to the growing secularization of America and hostility toward churches and people of faith.

Let us come together, Mr. Speaker, tonight, resolute in the knowledge that all these actions taken against any house of worship are blatantly wrong, and this Congress will work to stop it.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Alabama [Mr. HILLIARD].

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the gentlewoman from North Carolina for organizing this. It is very important.

I also would like to thank everyone who has been involved. I certainly hope that we will all vote in favor of the resolution so that we will have an opportunity to support the bill if it comes forth.

I would like to use just one-half of my minute to say that I had a very sad meeting on Monday of this week. I spoke to four ministers; each one of their churches had been set ablaze. There have been nine burnings in my district, more than any other congressional district. But one of the things that must be said here, not one of those ministers was satisfied with the efforts of the FBI and the ATF. In fact, it is a fact that the FBI and the ATF had mixed a voter fraud case with the church fire investigations causing conflict and intimidating members of those congregations. If they are sincere, if they wish to pursue the evidence on the fire, the fires that have been set, they must separate those cases.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas [Mr. STOCKMAN].

Mr. STOCKMAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment a little bit about this resolution. It is quite personal because in my district, they burned down a church, a little church on Galveston Island. Pastor Booth to this day has not been able to rebuild that church. He did not get much recognition, and he did not get much talked about because it was not fashionable at that point to talk about burning churches. But that church is still struggling to recoup from that terrible burning.

Right now Pastor Booth has got the foundation laid, and he is trying to put up the sides of the church. They burnt that church down, that beautiful town of Galveston where the breezes come across and you see the sandy beaches and everything. But right there in that town in which you would think that there would be no hatred, there was hatred. They burnt down the church. For what reason? I do not know. But I ask Members that the people of America as they are watching this debate to pray and hold out their heart towards their saviour and their Christ that they may put an end to this burning, because this is not something that our country

should have or should even have to be discussing.

□ 2200

In fact, if anything, it is disgusting that we have to talk about this, and I tell my colleagues as a member of First Bethel Church of Houston, I have a deep, abiding faith, and I believe that out of this there will be good that will come of it because I believe the American people, whether Democrat or Republican, they are honest and courageous and have basic faith in principles, in American principles which unite us in this tragedy, and once again I would like to offer up a prayer to Pastor Booth as he rebuilds his church down there in Galveston.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE].

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just a few short months ago I visited Bosnia, and Sarajevo as the city was one that stuck in my mind, stuck in my mind because in viewing that city what I saw most of all and what the people wanted to show me was the devastation and the destruction of their houses of worship. But one difference is: They were at war. It is tragic to now come home to America and see across this Nation symbols of war, people attacking churches, African-American churches, churches on the basis of hatred and dislike for someone else.

But, thank God, I recognize that churches are not just wood and stone, that we must give back the right of the people to worship in a constitutionally free society.

So it is important that I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina for her leadership, for bringing us together, along with the gentleman from Oklahoma, that although we can rise and begin to articulate all of the efforts that we are making, and I applaud those efforts, that we must do more, and that must be to call for a week of prayer that will allow us to insure that we do bring America together from June 16 to June 23. And I thank the gentlewoman and gentleman for allowing this language to go in:

A national week of prayer that we may bond together to tell Americans who may think to do these dastardly acts that we will stand up against it and provide a safe and free place for all of America to be free in their houses of worship.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. WELLER].

(Mr. WELLER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WELLER. Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend my friend from Oklahoma and my friend from North Carolina for their leadership and their bipartisan ship, the bipartisan spirit of this so very important resolution.

This past Sunday I joined with a multid denominational organization called Jacob in one of the largest cities in my district, the city of Joliet, and Jacob is an organization representing the churches, black and white, Hispanic, Mexican, multid denominational. We all joined together, and we marched across the city of Joliet. Republican elected officials were part of the march, Democrat elected officials were part of the march, church leaders were part of the march, and church members were part of the march. And this march, frankly, was a response to an outrage that occurred locally in the community of Joliet, IL, and that was where a newly established church which had located on the west side of Joliet, a newly established church which was majority African-American, had been vandalized.

Mr. Speaker, we made very clear in our statement that there is no room for racism, there is no room for bigotry, there is no room for anti-Semitism in our community.

That is the spirit of this resolution, and I ask for unanimous support.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Illinois [Mrs. COLLINS].

(Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. COLLINS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, let me, too, add my appreciation to the gentleman from Oklahoma and to the gentlewoman from North Carolina for bringing this issue up at this time, and I rise to speak of the shameful desecration of our Nation's African-American churches.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues know, these fires are burning our sacred edifices and fanning the flames of racial intolerance, but they are also burning the U.S. Constitution. All of us have a right to freely worship, something on which our very Constitution was built, and my colleagues know I am glad my colleague from Illinois happened to have mentioned that church burnings and desecration and vandalism are not just happening in the South, they are happening all across this land. As he pointed out so eloquently, right outside of Chicago, IL, there have been churches, one newly purchased by an African-American Baptist group, that had the side of its walls spray painted with the n word twice already, twice already in less time than a month.

It just seems to me that we ought to be very careful about these kinds of things because my colleagues know they hurt.

When I go to church on Sundays and put on my choir robe and sing praise to my God, I want to feel that my church is going to be there the next time I want to go there and worship. I certainly hope that will be the case in the future.

Mr. WATT of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Alabama [Mr. BROWDER].

Mr. BROWDER. Mr. Speaker, I commend our friend from North Carolina and our friend from Oklahoma for bringing this resolution to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, about a month ago I had the opportunity to visit that church on 16th in Birmingham, AL, where several young women lost their lives. It is a beautiful place, and my colleagues would not know the horror unless they open a closet or look in the basement and see the cracked foundations.

We are here tonight, the good people of Alabama and all across this country to say no, no, we will not go back to those days and we will not put up with anybody burning our churches.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Michigan [Ms. RIVERS].

Ms. RIVERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution and in the condemnation of the tidal wave of racism and hatred that is threatening America's African-American churches.

I was a child in the 1960's, and in front of our family's big television set I watched in wide-eyed silence as fire hoses were turned on young black men asking only to be treated as real citizens, as vicious dogs attacked African-American women and their children, as little African-American girls, barely older than I was at the time, were killed in a cowardly attack on the church where they worshipped.

Today I am no longer a child, and I will no longer watch in silence as the African-American community suffers under the last of bigotry. Today I join the chorus of voices from all across this country, people of conscience, people from all regions, and all religions, all races, who are speaking out against the cowardly forces of hate and for a nation where all are valued and protected.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Florida [Mr. GIBBONS], the ranking member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I commend the sponsors of this resolution, and I condemn the perpetrators of the crime of burning churches and promoting disharmony in our country. But, Mr. Speaker, some good is going to flow from all of this, as perverse as that might be. America will have better arson laws than we have now. America will have better law enforcement in the field of arson than we have now. And if the perpetrators of these crimes are trying to drive the races apart, they have made a terrible mistake because whites and blacks will join together in greater unity in this adversity.

There can be no more cowardly and, I think, ineffective crime than burning churches. The history of mankind is that you can never succeed in persecuting anybody based upon their belief.

I do not know what the motives of these people are, but they are bound to fail, and I believe that failure will bring America closer together.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Florida [Mrs. MEEK].

(Mrs. MEEK of Florida asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, first of all I want the Congress and the world to know that we are grateful to the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] and the gentleman from Oklahoma [Mr. WATTS], a sister and brother of mine who have brought this resolution in front of the Congress.

The church burnings are despicable acts, and they are very outrageous as well, perpetrated by these people who crawl on their bellies in our society. It is a very small segment of our society representing these burnings.

I also want to commend the President of the United States, who went to lend his sympathy to the people who were churchgoers from these churches.

We need leadership at all levels, I think, both the Republicans and the Democrats in the Congress, because the churches of this country, they do not lean on parties, they lean on God, and it is so important that we solve it in this resolution.

We cannot say with all confidence that these burnings will stop. We hope that they will. I think the people who have come out with fresh and adventuresome initiatives want to be sure that these things do not happen again. But we cannot say with all confidence because we know prior history shows us that it is not beyond them.

Peter, one of Christ's disciples, said: "Upon this rock I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Let us pass this resolution.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Ohio [Mr. SAWYER].

(Mr. SAWYER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAWYER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank our colleagues and join with all who have expressed the gratitude of Members of this body to the gentlewoman from North Carolina and the gentleman from Oklahoma for their initiative in bringing this before us and to join with so many others this evening in sharing our dismay at the events that have spread across this Nation in recent weeks.

I particularly want to thank those congregations that have opened their doors to those who have lost for now their places of worship and to call upon congregations everywhere across this country this weekend and in coming weeks to join together in sharing their diverse traditions of worship with other congregations in their community symbolically to join together with those who share these podiums tonight and to let the word go forth from every

pulpit and pew in this Nation, with voices joined together, to say that there is a message that binds us altogether:

That in the United States of America there is no tolerance of intimidation and no license for hatred.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Washington [Mr. McDERMOTT].

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleagues for bringing this resolution. The gentleman from Ohio [Mr. SAWYER] and I were in the car starting home, and he said to me, "Should we go and say something?" And I said yes, because I thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was a Lutheran minister in Nazi Germany, who, when they came, he said:

When they came for the trade unionists, I did not speak up; when they came for the Catholics, I did not speak up; when they came for the Jews, I did not speak up. When they came for me, there was nobody left.

If we do not speak up for each other, none of us are free in this country.

□ 2215

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BISHOP].

Mr. BISHOP. Mr. Speaker, I grew up in an America where young people were taught the love of God and country, values and character and integrity, to be trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, and reverent; an America where hats were removed when a funeral procession came down the street and all movement ceased; where a church ground was sacred and where the sanctuary was treated with reverence. My, how America has changed.

Almost 2,000 years ago Jesus said, upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Well, I am happy to say that that was true then and it is true now.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle here tonight to join in one voice, the voice of brotherhood, to say that in this House, in this country, people of goodwill all across this Nation are expressing today and tonight their outrage at what has happened, but more importantly, we are exerting our prayers all across this Nation for those poor souls who are responsible for this dastardly conduct.

I support my colleagues and this resolution, and God bless America.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from the great State of Oregon [Mr. BLUMENAUER] a new Member of Congress.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I am saddened that my first appearance before this body is on the occasion of such a hateful event. I think we all had hoped that this was behind us. But I

am heartened by the attitude and tone of love and reconciliation that one hears this evening.

I find I must join with the words of my colleague from Georgia. We pray that we are aware of this terror as we go about our business, remembering the power of words and the power of reconciliation, because I think if we remember this somber, yet hopeful moment, as we go about the rest of our business on behalf of the people, that this hateful act of racial intolerance and bigotry will help us do our job better for the American people.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. FOX].

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership and that of the gentleman from Oklahoma [Mr. WATTS] for their help and leadership on this very important presentation tonight, and I think the American people have come together in total horror about the recent church burnings. We are taking action here tonight to show the outrage of Congress that this has occurred and to take positive action.

This afternoon there was a presentation by our colleagues, in working with the insurance companies to make sure that we assist these churches with fire prevention programs and work with our fire caucus in making sure that this does not occur, and legislation that is going to increase the penalty for arson, and most of us, to bring about the inspirational setting of Republicans and Democrats working together, the African-American community and the white community and the Hispanic community in all parts of this country working together, brothers and sisters, to make sure that this kind of bigotry and hatred is ended. I thank again both of these Congress people for bringing this issue forward and to make sure that we take positive action.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Wyoming [Mrs. CUBIN].

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlewoman for yielding this time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be here this evening to speak on this issue. I think that every time that there is a problem in our country, we pull together as Americans. We have won two world wars, we have put a man on the Moon. We have the best health care system in the world. When we need a neighbor, when we need a friend, Americans are always there to pull together to help one another. I am grateful that we have the opportunity to speak on this issue tonight. We will not accept, in no way, this sort of behavior. I think we should use every effort and every resource we have to try to find the people that are responsible for this and bring them to justice.

Every cloud has a silver lining, and the conciliatory tone of this Congress this evening is heartwarming, and I

hope the people across the country can feel the sentiment that we feel here this evening.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida [Ms. BROWN].

Ms. BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, freedom of religion and freedom of speech are the two most precious rights in our American society. Implicit in our freedom to worship the God of our choice is the freedom to worship without fear. It is a very sad day when the right to worship without fear has been jeopardized by the unconscionable torching of houses of worship.

I am pleased to join my colleagues in strongly supporting H.R. 3525. However, as much as we try through legislation to stop the fires, the most important change must come in the hearts of those who hate. I just have a message for those out there: Remember what you plant will come back to you. I do believe that there is a God, and you are creating a fire here, but know that there is going to be a great day, and that fire will burn eternal.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, the recent rash of burnings of African-American churches has cut a swath of destruction across this Nation and has called into question America's will to resist racism.

The President has responded swiftly, outlining a four point plan of action and today, in a strong demonstration of will, travelling to South Carolina, one of the burning sites.

It is now time for Congress to stand up. It is now time for Congress to speak out. It is now time for Congress to act.

One of the most important things Congress can do is to let our voices be heard. Sometimes silence is viewed as acceptance.

Sometimes no position is regarded as a position.

Sometimes failure to act is tantamount to acting.

Indeed, many believe that the growing divisions and racial strife in America today is due, at least in some part, to the divisions and strife that have been evident among this Nation's leaders.

But, despite our differences on politics and policy and party and despite the fact that we have had deep disagreements during our deliberations and debate, I believe this Congress and my colleagues will stand together to resist racism.

The fact that those who have done these wicked deeds have chosen to do them to houses of worship—the very places we hold most dear and most precious, leaves no doubt in my mind that good will come from this evil.

Our churches, our synagogues, and our mosques have always been places of peace and sanctuary, a welcome retreat and shelter from the problems and difficulties outside.

But, for the past 6 years, African-American churches have been targets

for arson, places of anguish, unsuspecting victims of a pattern and practice of violence.

Assistant Attorney General Deval Patrick has referred to these acts as an "Epidemic of Terror."

And, while there is no evidence of conspiracy, it is strangely coincidental that more than 50 African-American churches have been burned during the 1990's, with 32 of those burnings occurring in 1995 alone.

On average, Mr. Speaker, two African-American church fires have taken place each month, over the past 18 months. Since late Friday, four churches have been victims of suspicious fires.

If this is not an "Epidemic of Terror," it is certainly a situation that is far too extensive to be ignored.

Prior to today's church burning in Oklahoma most of these fires have been concentrated in nine Southern States, including Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, North Carolina, Texas and Virginia.

The investigation of the fires has been difficult.

Nearly all of them have taken place in rural and remote areas, during late night or early morning hours.

There have been few if any witnesses, and the fires have generally not been discovered until the churches have burned to the ground, leaving little evidence for law enforcement.

The President's response has been strong and forceful.

He has outlined a four step plan that has been put in place in response to these acts.

The private sector has also stepped forward.

For example, NationsBank in my State of North Carolina has offered a half million dollar reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for the recent church fire in Charlotte.

It is now time for the Congress to step forward.

It is time now for Congress to be heard. First, we should all support the bipartisan legislation introduced by our colleagues, Mr. CONYERS and Mr. HYDE.

That legislation would make it easier to bring prosecutions and stiffen the penalties against those who target houses of worship.

I would urge support for House Concurrent Resolution 188, a resolution I have introduced that now has more than 100 bipartisan cosponsors, expressing the collective outrage of Congress and denouncing these acts of arson.

We condemn the burnings, pledge to assist law enforcement, support the Conyers and Hyde legislation and appeal for broad community preventive action.

And, finally we should all, work within our respective communities to help prevent future arson.

These acts of hate that have wounded our souls have inspired acts of love that have renewed our faith.

Across the country, volunteers have stepped forward to help rebuild the burned churches.

I was especially moved by the story of Rev. Terrence Mackey, who awakened one morning to a spot in a field where this church had stood and said to his daughter "They didn't burn down the church. They burned down the building in which we hold the church. The church is still inside all of us."

Fittingly, on June 15, Reverend Mackey, his daughter, the congregation and friends will undertake a symbolic march from the scorched earth site of the old church in Greeleyville, SC, to the pristine site of their new church.

House Concurrent Resolution 188 also recognizes June 15 as a day when all members can join with Reverend Mackey, his daughter, his congregation and others, in whatever gesture is deemed appropriate, to say to those who would promote evil, that you have burned our churches, but you can not burn our spirit.

Mr. Speaker, There is a time to be silent and a time to speak. With these burnings, this is a time to speak.

I urge every Member to speak out against these church burnings in their communities. And, I urge every citizen to resist this racism.

These acts do not represent America, and we must demonstrate to the world the true spirit of our great Nation.

□ 2230

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I came here this evening with the gentlewoman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] and the rest of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to introduce a House concurrent resolution addressing a serious crime called arson, and more specifically the recent horrifying crime of arson used to destroy more than 30 black churches around the country, over the last 16 or 18 months, including a church that burned last night in my home State of Oklahoma, where arson activity is suspected. My sympathies and condolences go out to those affected by these senseless and tragic deeds.

In Eufaula, OK, where I grew up, our church was the heart and soul of our small community. It was a symbol of hope and faith, of pride and serenity. The church is where we would all gather to rejoice in celebration and pray in times of sorrow. It was the cornerstone of our community and it is a special place that holds some of my dearest memories.

This atmosphere is not unique to me. American should be a country of faith and community. There are thousands of cities who see their church as the fabric of strength in their community. It is inconceivable to me that anyone would try to destroy this very fabric that provides the identity and life for a

community simply out of hate and ignorance.

By setting churches on fire, not only are these vandals attempting to destroy the house of a community, they are destroying the house of God. This is one of the most horrific crimes a person can commit.

As a man who has been brought up with faith in God and faith in justice, I call upon our judicial system to take action against these terrible violations of liberty. We cannot sit idle and tolerate these acts of hate. We cannot watch these criminals continue to torch any more sanctuaries of faith.

It is my hope that the proper authorities—the Justice Department, the Attorney General, and State and local officials—will move swiftly to investigate and stop these vicious crimes. I think Martin Luther King, Jr.'s words still hold true today when he said, "A threat to justice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." These burnings are a serious threat to justice and will lead to more perilous consequences if justice is not served. This country has worked too hard to heal the wounds of racial divide to allow ignorant individuals to once again divide us in our communities.

There is no excuse for the lack of commitment dedicated to serving justice and finding the individuals responsible for these arson activities. I commend groups like the Christian Coalition for efforts to help find the culprits, and I challenge other organizations, citizens as well as elected officials to help fight this battle.

Fire spreads fast and furious, and once it is out of control, we may not possess the means to contain it. It we do not insist that justice is served, the fire of hate and ignorance will continue to burn and spread, reducing all we have strived for to ashes of despair.

We need to extinguish these fires and reignite the fires of faith. These affected communities are not letting the fires burn down the foundation and fabric of their community. They will rebuild and show an unwavering strength of faith. The victims of these church burnings are not letting the vandals win, and we cannot allow them to win either. It is our obligation to do all that we can to see that justice is served and that the people responsible for these crimes are caught and punished.

Beginning with the times back in Eufaula, OK, and even more as a minister, when I have needed strength and guidance, I have turned to my church and to my God. I cannot imagine not having a church to turn to. These burnings represent more than arson activity. The burnings represent a violation of basic rights and basic freedoms. I have always enjoyed the freedom to practice my religion in a place I feel safe. That is a right the Constitution provides to me. It is my hope that we will not deny that right to anyone, and that justice will suffocate the fires of hate and continue to kindle the torch of liberty, as we provide justice for all.

Mr. ROEMER, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be a cosponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 187, a measure to condemn the sinister and hateful arson plaguing African-American churches in our Nation. This is a national shame that such activity could continue in this day and age, and deserves a national and immediate response.

That someone, anyone, could attack a House of God is unforgivable. Our churches, our synagogues, our temples, are not just houses of worship, but symbols of our commitment to understanding and tolerance. Understanding of our mission in this great Nation under God, and our tolerance of our wonderful diversity. These attacks on our present truly mar our past, where in recent times we have worked so hard to grow in acceptance and understanding. In so many ways, we have all come to know and understand and appreciate one another. Of course, we have a long way to go.

But we should not—and will not—tolerate the hateful acts of those who would pull us backward, destroy our hard-won progress, and elevate their own base and evil feelings into an otherwise enlightened progress. Yes, we have far to go, but we will never go back.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is a start. It is a step on the path to healing. But it also lays upon us a commitment. This commitment is to realize that the fight against racism, against bigotry, against hatred, is still very much needed and very much ours, because the world is far from perfect. When even our houses of worship are targets of those who would oppose peace and fairness in society, then we must truly be on our guard, physically and spiritually.

We can surely fight these heinous acts with the full weight of the law, and we surely should. But we must also fight them with the spirit, knowing that the love of God unites us all. And even as we celebrate the blessings that God gives us in this great Nation, we must always be diligent in fighting those who would rob us of those gifts.

Mr. Speaker, the evils of those whose hatred has conquered their spirit must not be allowed to conquer our spirit, and may this resolution be a beginning in our demonstration that love and brotherhood will conquer all. In the end, justice must and will reign, and those that tear down the House of God, no matter what the color of the person that worships within, will find that mercy will drown their hatred.

Mr. FRANKS of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I and a great number of my colleagues are understandably alarmed by the rash of intentionally-set church fires—many of those of African-American congregations—which have been occurring in the United States, particularly in the Southeast.

We have seen the lamentable pictures and images on the television news, Mr. Speaker. The parishioners wandering about the charred ruins of what used to be their church. Reverends and deacons wondering aloud where their flock will go to worship and how they will cope. Church patrons left wondering what sort of twisted individual could commit the heinous crime of burning down a house of worship.

We must take a good look at these sobering facts by this epidemic of hate. According to a recently-sent Dear Colleague by two of our most-distinguished Members, HENRY HYDE and JOHN CONYERS, since October of 1991,

there has been 110 incidents of church arson that have been reported to Federal authorities with thirty-three of these arsons committed this year. Messrs. HYDE and CONYERS also inform us that since the beginning of 1995, of the 51 church arsons committed, more than half of them involved African-American congregations.

Meanwhile, officials from the Department of Justice have stated in testimony that our current laws do not give our Federal law enforcement officials the needed tools to prosecute and punish those sick, evil individuals who desecrate or burn our places of worship. Mr. Speaker, we need to amend our laws so we can incarcerate those who perpetuate bigotry and hatred for the good and well-being of society.

Accordingly, I encourage my colleagues to join me in rising in strong support of H.R. 3525, the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996, which has been offered by Congressman HYDE and Congressman CONYERS.

H.R. 3525, of which I am a cosponsor, will make important changes to the laws which are present on the books so that we may send more of these fire-toting hatemongers to jail.

This bill, as noted in Messrs. HYDE and CONYERS' Dear Colleague, would broaden the scope of the statute which makes it a crime to damage religious property or to obstruct a person in the free exercise of religious beliefs by applying criminal penalties if the offense 'is in or affects interstate or foreign commerce.' According to Congressman HYDE and Congressman CONYERS, H.R. 3525 will thus provide the amendment to our Federal statutes that will grant Federal jurisdiction, and thus will augment the Attorney General's ability to prosecute these arson cases.

Also, this bill will reduce the current dollar value of destruction which must occur before these crimes of desecration may be prosecuted. At the present time, our laws state that the loss from the destruction of property must be more than \$10,000. However, H.R. 3525 will reduce the dollar threshold to \$5,000. As Congressman HYDE and Congressman CONYERS rightly point out, by reducing this threshold to a lower dollar number on destruction, it will make it easier for the Federal Government to prosecute more of these arson cases.

Mr. Speaker, this House should put its foot firmly down on those who would espouse terror and religious bigotry. To help do that, H.R. 3525 should be wholeheartedly supported by every Member of this Congress.

Mrs. KENNELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution to condemn the horrific outbreak of church fires in the South.

There is little doubt that those who are responsible for these church-burnings are trying to send this Nation a message, one that we had hoped faded away years ago, but which is still very much with us. It is a message of hate and exclusion, and it is a message of bigotry and intolerance.

Like many of my constituents, I have struggled over recent months to understand the thought process that would lead someone to set fire to a church. Few structures symbolize security and peace in a frightening world better than a place of worship. By destroying these buildings in such a violent and ruthless way, the perpetrators of these crimes are telling millions of Americans that they should not

feel at peace in their communities, that they are not secure.

At times like this, we can find some comfort in the fact that no amount of violence can destroy the progress we have made toward becoming a more tolerant society. Everyday, in communities across the country, men and women young and old are teaching the lessons of peace, love, and faith so central to American life. But even as we take comfort, we cannot become so comfortable that we do nothing. For if we do nothing, we are accepting bigotry as part of our social landscape—and we will never accept that.

Cowardly actions demand powerful responses. The President began today by saying, "They know not what they do." Some may not know, but the perpetrators of these acts know exactly what they do—and it cannot be tolerated.

When those who burn churches send their message of hate, good people across this Nation need to rally together. When bigots tell millions of Americans that they are less than equal, then we must tell the bigots that we are all brothers and sisters. And when arsonists slink in the dark of night trying to undermine our community, we must stand up in the light of day and proclaim that our community is far too strong to be damaged by their actions.

Those who burn churches want to mark the Earth with the ashes and rubble of their intolerance. Instead, let us rebuild these churches as a living memorial, made of stone and brick, to our commitment to human rights and human dignity.

By passing this resolution, we let the purveyors of hate know that the good people of this Nation will drown out the message of hate wherever it appears.

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. JONES). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House of today, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the concurrent resolution.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WHITE HOUSE FILE SCANDAL— THE AMERICAN PEOPLE DESERVE ANSWERS

(Mr. HAYWORTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mr. HAYWORTH. Mr. Speaker, there certainly is no deficit of delusion, distortion and desperation from these born-again budgeteers on the liberal side of the aisle, but, Mr. Speaker, I come here today to commend to everyone's attention the article that appears in this morning's Wall Street Journal headlined "Inside the White House File Scandal", which I submit for the RECORD:

[From the Wall Street Journal, Thursday,
June 13, 1996]

INSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE FILE SCANDAL
(By Gary W. Aldrich)

I loved my career with the FBI and treasure my years as a special agent. Of the many

assignments I was privileged to have over the course of a 26-year career, the highlight was the five years, just prior to my 1995 retirement, I spent assigned to the White House.

For more than three decades the FBI, the Secret Service and the White House Counsel's Office had worked as a team to clear the hundreds of new staff members who come with each new administration. This clearance process entailed a lengthy FBI background investigation to document the good character of every White House employee. It was a comprehensive and effective security system, perfected by six presidents to protect national security, the taxpayer and the White House itself.

DEEPLY DISTURBING

But the things I saw in the last 2½ years of my tenure deeply disturbed me. And the recent disclosures that the Clinton White House requested, and the FBI provided, more than 340 background investigations on previous administrations; employees raise questions that pierce the very heart of national security, and call into question the relationship between the White House and FBI.

Some presidents have made good use of the FBI background investigations, and some to their regret have not. Never before has any administration used background investigations of another president's political staff. FBI employees knew it would be wrong to give raw FBI files on political opponents to the other party. In fact, they knew it would be illegal, each disclosure a violation of the federal Privacy Act.

Why, then, did the Clinton administration request such files, and why did the FBI provide them? The White House's "explanation"—that it was "an honest bureaucratic snafu"—is really too much for this FBI veteran to believe. How does a unit at FBI headquarters copy and box for shipment to the White House Counsel's Office more than 340 highly confidential files, when the two FBI supervisors are both lawyers? Do the White House and the FBI really expect us to believe that the wholesale copying of hundreds of FBI files wouldn't raise an eye brow? That the two FBI supervisors didn't know who James Baker was? If the FBI supervisors didn't know that hundreds of confidential files were going out the door, they were so grossly negligent as to imperil not only the civil rights of more than 340 individuals, but also national security.

In truth, I know that FBI management had plenty of warning that elements of security and background investigations were drastically wrong at the Clinton White House. As early as May 1993, Special Agent James Bourke, supervisor of the FBI office responsible for background investigations, had come under fire when, at the behest of the White House, he started a criminal investigation of seven innocent men in the Travel Office.

Not publicly known until now were the constant warnings that Mr. Bourke and other FBI management received from me and from my partner, Dennis Sculimbrene (who would go on to testify against his own agency and the White House as a defense witness in the Billy Dale trial). Why are Mr. Bourke and the good folks at the FBI just now finding serious reasons to check on the legitimacy of the requests of this White House? Documents exist that prove they have known about these problems for years. Mr. Bourke declined to be interviewed for this article, so one can only speculate as to why he ignored the repeated warnings. It may be that, like any bureaucrat, Mr. Bourke was simply trying to win favor from those he thought could advance his career—in this case, officials at the White House.

These allegations are more serious than anything we have seen in decades. So how can the White House, through Attorney General Janet Reno, be allowed to order the FBI to investigate itself? No federal bureaucracy is good at conducting an internal probe that has this kind of potential for explosive political revelation.

Right up to the time I retired in June 1995, Mr. Bourke and other FBI supervisors responsible for background investigations continued to honor each and every outrageous request the Clinton White House Counsel's Office made. Mr. Bourke cannot claim he did not know these requests were improper. He was well aware the Clinton administration had relaxed the security system at the White House so that those loyal to the administration could evade background checks. Other agents and I had told him so, and scores of documents gong across his desk provided more evidence, just in case he did not believe his own agents. In fact, at the time the White House requested the files on previous administrations' appointees—one full year into the Clinton administration—more than 100 Clinton staffers, including then Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers, still had not been investigated by the FBI for passes or clearances.

Yet the Clinton's White House Counsel's office apparently was wasting no time looking deeply into the background of any one who was not lucky enough to have been hired by President Clinton. As Mr. Bourke also knew, permanent White House employees whose loyalty to the Clintons was in question were in for some "special" attention, Hillary Clinton style. For example, permanent employees in the White House residence who were suspected of being disloyal to the first lady were reinvestigated out of sequence, that is, early—in some cases four years before their periodic review was due.

Some of these staff members, appointed by Presidents Carter, Reagan or Bush, had just been cleared by the FBI. When I attempted to head off what appeared to be unnecessary and premature investigations by offering to obtain copies of the background investigations, my superiors at the FBI and Craig Livingstone, director of security for the White House Counsel's Office, effectively told me to mind my own business. What prompted the White House to investigate these staffers was a story, leaked to the press, that Mrs. Clinton had thrown a lamp at the president during a domestic argument. The Clintons had to know who the leader was. Result: Decent, loyal, law abiding citizens with spotless records were investigated by the FBI again, just to make sure. I believe that these permanent employees were being harassed and that if anything, anything at all, had turned up in a new FBI probe, they would have been summarily tossed out the door to "make slots" for the Clintons' people. And indeed, other employees besides Billy Dale were fired on the basis of these investigations.

At the same time, the White House was requesting copies of FBI investigations of hundreds of long-gone Reagan and Bush staffers. Why? Knowing that the Clintons casually used the FBI to weed out politically suspect employees, would it be so unreasonable to suspect them of also misusing the FBI to investigate political "enemies"? Statements by Clinton spokesmen that nobody looked at these FBI files are as plausible as saying that if 340 Playboy magazines were sent to a boys' high school, they would remain in their boxes, unmolested.

BEDROOM-SIZE SAFE

The safe where these secret records were allegedly kept was the size of a small bedroom. Maybe the files were taken out of the