

issue last fall. Since that time hearings have been held, and we have worked with the Oregon delegation to address the concerns expressed earlier about this situation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the excellent work of Mr. GEKAS, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law—together with Mr. NADLER, the ranking minority member of the subcommittee—in introducing H.R. 1953. Following hearings on this issue in April of this year, Mr. GEKAS prepared a bill which addresses double-taxed workers in Washington, Tennessee, and South Dakota, while preserving the right of States to collect taxes within their borders. This is an excellent bill, and deserving of all of our support.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan, commonsense measure which protects working people and their families from unfair taxation.

□ 1615

Mr. GEKAS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLATTE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GEKAS] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1953.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PRIVATE SECURITY OFFICER QUALITY ASSURANCE ACT OF 1997

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 103) to expedite State reviews of criminal records of applicants for private security officer employment, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 103

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Private Security Officer Quality Assurance Act of 1997".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) employment of private security officers in the United States is growing rapidly;

(2) the private security industry provides numerous opportunities for entry-level job applicants, including individuals suffering from unemployment due to economic conditions or dislocations;

(3) sworn law enforcement officers provide significant services to the citizens of the United States in its public areas, and are only supplemented by private security officers who provide prevention and reporting service in support of, but not in place of, regular sworn police;

(4) given the growth of large private shopping malls, and the consequent reduction in the number of public shopping streets, the American public is more likely to have contact with private security personnel in the course of a day than with sworn law enforcement officers;

(5) regardless of the differences in their duties, skill, and responsibilities, the public has difficulty in discerning the difference between sworn law enforcement officers and private security personnel; and

(6) the American public demands the employment of qualified, well-trained private security personnel as an adjunct, but not a replacement for sworn law enforcement officers.

SEC. 3. BACKGROUND CHECKS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—An association of employers of private security officers, designated for the purpose of this section by the Attorney General, may submit fingerprints or other methods of positive identification approved by the Attorney General, to the Attorney General on behalf of any applicant for a State license or certificate of registration as a private security officer or employer of private security officers. In response to such a submission, the Attorney General may, to the extent provided by State law conforming to the requirements of the second paragraph under the heading "Federal Bureau of Investigation" and the subheading "Salaries and Expenses" in title II of Public Law 92-544 (86 Stat. 1115), exchange, for licensing and employment purposes, identification and criminal history records with the State governmental agencies to which such applicant has applied.

(b) REGULATIONS.—The Attorney General may prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this section, including measures relating to the security, confidentiality, accuracy, use, and dissemination of information and audits and record-keeping and the imposition of fees necessary for the recovery of costs.

(c) REPORT.—The Attorney General shall report to the Senate and House Committees on the Judiciary 2 years after the date of enactment of this bill on the number of inquiries made by the association of employers under this section and their disposition.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that States should participate in the background check system established under section 3.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

As used in this Act—

(1) the term "employee" includes an applicant for employment;

(2) the term "employer" means any person that—

(A) employs one or more private security officers; or

(B) provides, as an independent contractor, for consideration, the services of one or more private security officers (possibly including oneself);

(3) the term "private security officer"—

(A) means—

(i) an individual who performs security services, full or part time, for consideration as an independent contractor or an employee, whether armed or unarmed and in uniform or plain clothes whose primary duty is to perform security services, or

(ii) an individual who is an employee of an electronic security system company who is engaged in one or more of the following activities in the State: burglar alarm technician, fire alarm technician, closed circuit television technician, access control technician, or security system monitor; but

(B) does not include—

(i) sworn police officers who have law enforcement powers in the State,

(ii) attorneys, accountants, and other professionals who are otherwise licensed in the State,

(iii) employees whose duties are primarily internal audit or credit functions,

(iv) persons whose duties may incidentally include the reporting or apprehension of shoplifters or trespassers, or

(v) an individual on active duty in the military service;

(4) the term "certificate of registration" means a license, permit, certificate, registration card, or other formal written permission from the State for the person to engage in providing security services;

(5) the term "security services" means the performance of one or more of the following:

(A) the observation or reporting of intrusion, larceny, vandalism, fire or trespass;

(B) the deterrence of theft or misappropriation of any goods, money, or other item of value;

(C) the observation or reporting of any unlawful activity;

(D) the protection of individuals or property, including proprietary information, from harm or misappropriation;

(E) the control of access to premises being protected;

(F) the secure movement of prisoners;

(G) the maintenance of order and safety at athletic, entertainment, or other public activities;

(H) the provision of canine services for protecting premises or for the detection of any unlawful device or substance; and

(I) the transportation of money or other valuables by armored vehicle; and

(6) the term "State" means any of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BARR] and the gentleman from California [Ms. LOFGREN] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BARR].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in this great body in support of passage of the Private Security Officer Quality Assurance Act. I introduced this legislation along with the gentleman from California [Mr. MARTINEZ] at the beginning of this Congress. The gentleman from California has championed this bill not only in this Congress but in the previous Congresses as well.

This bill, Mr. Speaker, is identical to the bill that passed this House last Congress by a vote of 415 to 6. This bill will help ensure that private security officers undergo thorough and timely criminal background checks. It is straightforward and simple. It proposes an expedited procedure similar to those in use by the financial and parimutuel industries today to match the fingerprints of job applicants against records maintained by the FBI's Criminal Justice Services Division.

Mr. Speaker, there are more than 1.5 million private security officers in the United States. The security industry is

dynamic and there is great pressure to meet the ongoing need to hire qualified personnel as vacancies occur. Thorough reviews of job applicants' backgrounds are critical to employers, both to protect assets and to ensure protection for the public. Employers must depend on State and Federal agencies for criminal history information. They need this information promptly, but under existing law this process can take from 3 to 18 months.

Thirty-nine States now require security contractors to conduct background checks of their personnel, usually requiring fingerprint matches. To obtain a review of the FBI records, a cumbersome, unwieldy process is used, leading to lengthy delays.

Today an employer must submit prints to the State police agency which in turn forward them to the Bureau where they are processed. This so-called rap sheet is then sent back to the police agency, which then sends these results to the State's agency charged with regulating the industry. That agency then must judge the fitness of the applicant for employment and a decision might then be made. At that point, if a permit is issued, it is sent to the applicant.

The existing system for private security employers to learn whether an applicant's criminal history disqualifies that person is often cumbersome and almost always time consuming. The typical transaction provides many opportunities for the process to bog down. With State agencies commonly stretched thin by tight budgets, the time required for staff to forward an applicant's fingerprints to the FBI sometimes consumes months.

Still further delays can and do occur after the FBI completes the check and returns the results to the State. As I stated earlier, in many States the results of the background check review then go to a law enforcement agency, then to a separate regulatory agency responsible for security officers, thereby lengthening the process even further. The bottom line is that in some instances an employer may wait more than a year, sometimes well over a year, before learning whether an applicant has a serious criminal record.

Financial institutions, Mr. Speaker, were authorized by Congress under Public Law 92-544 to obtain criminal records directly from the FBI. Under this system, the American Banking Association has indicated the process is reduced to about 20 business days.

Congress created another so-called express lane for obtaining criminal record information in the enactment of Public Law 100-413, the Parimutuel Licensing Simplification Act of 1988. This is a similar process to the one used by the American Bankers Association [ABA], but the rap sheet is sent back to the State regulatory agency, not the employer. The system approximates that proposed in H.R. 103.

This bill will authorize the Attorney General to name an association to ag-

gregate, or collect, fingerprint cards, screen them for legibility, and then forward them to the FBI. The results of the records search will then be forwarded back to the appropriate State officials. By sending the records to State officials rather than to employers, we avoid, Mr. Speaker, potential concerns about privacy rights of job applicants. By eliminating several steps from the process, this system should result in a far more efficient system of background checks.

This system has been endorsed by the National Association of State Security and Investigative Regulators. As under current law, fees will be assessed to compensate the FBI for their costs, and there will be no net cost to the Government for this expedited procedure. We have made that clear in the language of the bill, Mr. Speaker.

Moreover, the bill contains absolutely no mandates for the States. The States are not required to participate in any part of a proposed bill if they elect not to. I strongly urge this Congress to join in support of H.R. 103, the Private Security Officer Quality Assurance Act.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the bill. This bill would permit associations representing private security firms to request FBI criminal history background checks on prospective security employees. This is a worthwhile bill because private security officers are entrusted with safety matters and it makes sense, good sense, to take advantage of the available resources to ensure that security firms do not unknowingly hire someone with a criminal background.

I do, however, want to sound two notes of caution about the bill and potentially unintended outcomes. First, I want to be absolutely clear that I do not believe private security officers are a substitute for sworn law enforcement officers. Private officers are generally less well trained, they are not sworn to protect the public, and constitutional protections do not operate with respect to them to the same degree as with police officers. There has been a trend toward private companies and even residential communities hiring more private officers as local governments are forced by budget constraints to scale back on their police forces. If this legislation were to encourage that trend, I believe we would come to regret it and would need to review and take action in the future should that unintended and unexpected outcome be the result.

Second, I do want to note that the FBI is concerned about the possible burden of dealing with hundreds of different private security firms requesting background checks. I share that concern and would urge the security firms if this bill is enacted to coordinate their background check requests through one or two trade associations

that can provide a point of contact for the FBI. Again, if the firms fail to operate in a way that works best for the FBI, Congress would have to step back in and review this situation. And so I think it would be very wise for the private security firms to take every possible step to avoid adversely impacting the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

With those two caveats about potential concerns, I would like to note that I do and Democrats on the committee did support this bill. The gentleman from California [Mr. MARTINEZ], as the gentleman from Georgia noted, has introduced this bill for several Congresses and it is good to see a bipartisan team coming together in support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM], distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

Mr. MCCOLLUM. I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to simply congratulate the gentleman from Georgia for this bill. I think it is a very important piece of legislation in terms of trying to make sure that when we have security officers in private concerns, and we do all over the country, that they get their backgrounds checked. It really does not make sense to open the door for criminal behavior and conduct even in private concerns when people are supposed to be involved with highly sensitive matters and they have some kind of background that would say to the people who are hiring that we would not do that if we had known that was there.

Mr. Speaker, I think the gentleman has made an enormously valuable contribution to safety and security in this country by this bill and I strongly support it and urge its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 103, the Private Security Officer Quality Assurance Act, represents a legislative effort to expedite and improve background checks for private security guards. Congressman BARR brought this issue to Congress' attention last year, and his bill passed overwhelmingly in the House. Unfortunately, it was not taken up by the Senate before final adjournment, and I commend him for his continuing dedication to this issue.

Mr. Speaker, the private security industry is large and continually growing. It is estimated that, by the year 2000, private security officers will outnumber sworn law enforcement officers nearly 3 to 1.

Private security guards wear uniforms much like law enforcement uniforms. Some carry guns or other weapons. They give every appearance of authority, and many citizens trust them implicitly. The public deserves some assurances that the security guards they see at the malls, or in the parking lots, or at the office buildings are all qualified individuals who do not have criminal records.

H.R. 103 directs the Attorney General to designate an association of employers of private security officers who would submit fingerprints to the Attorney General on behalf of any applicant for a private security officer position. The Federal Bureau of Investigation will then conduct the background checks on those applicants. The legislation gives the Attorney General authority to prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to implement this process, including regulations relating to confidentiality of information and the imposition of fees necessary for the recovery of costs.

This legislation does not supplant any current State background investigation process for private security officers, it simply creates a new avenue for more efficient investigations of national criminal history files. H.R. 103 will make it much more difficult for persons with criminal histories to cloak themselves with the legitimacy of a security uniform, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is also important to keep in mind that just a few days ago we celebrated, if that is the proper word, or at least recognized the first anniversary of the tragic bombing at Olympic Park in Atlanta. With the fact that there was a great deal of private security at those events and with the events surrounding Mr. Jewel, I cannot help but think that this is a very appropriate time to bring this bill forward to the floor because it will, I think, Mr. Speaker, go a great distance toward improving the caliber of private security officers in our community.

I would like to commend the gentleman from California for noting very appropriately and to remind all of our colleagues that the bill itself recognizes in its terms that despite the important role as an assistance or an adjunct to law enforcement, the role played by private security officers, they are not viewed in any way, shape or form by this legislation nor by myself or my cosponsor the gentleman from California [Mr. MARTINEZ] as usurping the authorities and duties of law enforcement officers. But that is a very important concern and one which we addressed specifically in the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. FAWELL].

Mr. FAWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 103, the Private Security Officer Quality Assurance Act. I believe this legislation will help ensure that only qualified individuals are hired as private security officers, thereby improving the important public service these individuals provide.

H.R. 103 is not broad in scope. It seeks modest changes that would simply expedite the process by which States and employers can check the backgrounds of individuals applying for private security jobs.

The bill would accomplish this in two basic ways. First, it would allow the Attorney General to establish an association of private security guard em-

ployers. This association would in turn serve as an industry clearinghouse that would submit applicant information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for purposes of doing individual background checks. This would help ensure that both the States and the employers would quickly receive important background information concerning individuals seeking to become private security officers.

Second, the bill includes provisions expressing the sense of Congress that the States should participate in the background check system.

The Private Security Officer Quality Assurance Act passed the House on September 26, 1996 by a vote of 415 to 6. The Senate, however, did not act upon the measure before the 104th Congress adjourned. Thus the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BARR] reintroduced the identical bill this year as H.R. 103.

I would note that H.R. 103 was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce and, in addition, to the Committee on the Judiciary. While the Committee on Education and the Workforce has not reported H.R. 103, the Committee on the Judiciary did in fact order the bill favorably reported by a voice vote on June 18, 1997.

In light of the fact that H.R. 103 is identical to legislation passed overwhelmingly by the House last September, I agree with the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. GOODLING], my committee chairman, that there is no reason to slow the legislative process. However, I also share his view that these actions should hold no precedence regarding the interest that the Committee on Education and the Workforce has regarding our jurisdiction with respect to issues raised in the bill. The committee retains its jurisdiction with respect to issues raised in the bill should its provisions be considered in a conference with the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge passage of this legislation that will help ensure the quality of the individuals who work as private security officers and help improve public safety.

Mr. GOODLING. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 103, the Private Security Officer Quality Assurance Act. Modest though it may be, I believe this legislation can provide a valuable first step toward assuring that only qualified individuals are hired as private security officers.

H.R. 103 would accomplish two basic goals. First, it would allow the Attorney General to establish an association of private security guard employers that would, in turn, serve as a clearinghouse for submitting applicant information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for purposes of doing individual background checks. This would help ensure that both the States and employers would more quickly receive important background information concerning individuals seeking to become private security officers. Second, the bill includes a sense of the Congress that simply says that the States should participate in this background check system.

I am pleased to note that H.R. 103 reflects the changes that were made to the bill in the

104th Congress at the suggestion of Members of my committee. H.R. 103 is a vast improvement over the version introduced in the 104th Congress, which included lengthy provisions declaring the sense of the Congress that States should enact statutes imposing numerous certification and training requirements on employers of private security officers. While I strongly support the notion of thoroughly checking the background of all applicants for private security officer positions, the bill's focus on achieving these improvements through proscriptive and cumbersome mandates—imposed on either the States or employers—was troubling to me as well as to other members of my committee. For that reason, I am pleased that the bill before us today does not include those provisions.

The Private Security Officer Assurance Act passed the House on September 26, 1996 by a vote of 415 to 6. The Senate, however, did not act upon the measure before the 104th Congress adjourned. Thus, Representative BARR of Georgia reintroduced the identical bill this year as H.R. 103.

Finally, I would note that H.R. 103 was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, and in addition, to the Committee on the Judiciary. While the Committee on Education and the Workforce has not reported H.R. 103, the Judiciary Committee did, in fact, order the bill favorably reported by a voice vote on June 18, 1997. In light of the fact that H.R. 103 is identical to legislation passed overwhelmingly by the House last September, we saw no reason to slow the legislative process. However, these actions should hold no precedence regarding the interest that the Committee on Education and the Workforce has regarding our jurisdiction with respect to issue raised in the bill. The committee retains its jurisdiction with respect to issues raised in the bill should its provisions be considered in a conference with the Senate.

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am once again delighted to join the gentleman from Georgia in support of the Private Security Officer Quality Assurance Act, a bill we jointly introduced earlier this year. Representative BOB BARR deserves enormous credit for his diligence, skill, and hard work in bringing this important, bipartisan measure to the floor.

I would like to take a moment to give special thanks to Chairman GOODLING and Representative CLAY for waiving committee jurisdiction over H.R. 103, and allowing this measure to be considered today.

In the waning days of the 104th Congress, the same bill that we are considering this afternoon was overwhelmingly passed by the House. The Senate simply ran out of time and adjourned before they could act on this bipartisan bill. So here we are again.

Mr. Speaker, the public deserves the assurance that the security guard they meet in the mall, the bank, or at school is not a felon or a person who has a history of violent behavior. Virtually every year the press reports on tragedies which occur when inadequate background checks are made—tragedies that involve security guards who commit murder, rape, and theft.

There are now thousands of security companies employing close to 1.8 million guards. The vast majority of these security guards are professionals, many acting heroically in performing their duties. However, right now, we cannot be sure that the security officers that

we meet in virtually every facet of our lives are not armed and dangerous.

H.R. 103 will provide an expedited procedure for State officials to check the backgrounds of applicants for guard licenses. A similar procedure is in place for the banking and parimutuel industries. By establishing an expedited procedure for State regulators of security guards to receive FBI background checks, H.R. 103 will greatly improve the safety of the public.

In some States it can take up to 18 months to complete background checks for security guards. This bill can reduce that time to the approximately 3 weeks it takes for banks to get results under their expedited procedure.

H.R. 103 contains no mandates of any kind. No State or individual is compelled to use it. Fees will be paid by the applicants or their employers. There is no cost to the FBI.

H.R. 103 has broad support, most notably from the National Association of Security and Investigative Regulators and representatives of the guard, alarm, and armored car industries.

Security should not be a partisan issue. I am therefore delighted by the bipartisan support for this bill, which was so soundly reflected last September by the House vote for the Private Security Officer Quality Assurance Act.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this straightforward, modest, and reasonable bill that will greatly improve public safety.

Vote for common sense. Vote for public safety. Vote for H.R. 103.

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BARR of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia [Mr. BARR] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 103.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT STATES SHOULD WORK MORE AGGRESSIVELY TO ATTACK PROBLEM OF REPEAT CRIMINALS

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 75) expressing the sense of the Congress that States should work more aggressively to attack the problem of violent crimes committed by repeat offenders and criminals serving abbreviated sentences.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 75

Whereas a disturbing number of law-abiding citizens believe they are prisoners in their own homes because of increasing violence in our society;

Whereas law-abiding citizens have the right to be fearful knowing that violence of

fenders only serve on average 48 percent of the sentence they received

Whereas more than 2/3 of persons under correctional supervision are currently on parole and not incarcerated;

Whereas 1 in 3 offenders admitted to State prisons were on probation or parole violators;

Whereas the Federal Government eliminated parole in 1984 and prisoners convicted of Federal crimes now serve at least 85 percent of their sentences;

Whereas under current Federal law, States are eligible for prison construction funds if they keep felons in prison for at least 85 percent of their sentence;

Whereas in 1996, at least 25 States, among them Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and Washington, have laws that meet the 85 percent of sentence served requirements set forth in the 1994 crime bill; and

Whereas the National Association of Police Organizations, the International Chiefs of Police, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Association of Chiefs of Police, the National District Attorney's Association, and the Safe Streets Coalition support the concept of an 85 percent minimum length of service for violent criminals: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring). That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) Congress commends Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, and Washington for their existing efforts with respect to prison time served by criminal offenders;

(2) Congress encourages all remaining States to adopt as quickly as possible legislation to increase the time served by violent felons; and

(3) with respect to Federal crimes, Congress reemphasizes its support for the requirement that individuals who commit violent crimes should serve at least 85 percent of their sentence.

□ 1630

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOODLATTE). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM] and the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. CONYERS] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida [Mr. MCCOLLUM].

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCOLLUM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 75, introduced by the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. BARCIA], expresses the sense of Congress that States should work more aggressively to at-

tack the problem of violent crimes committed by repeat offenders. It re-emphasizes Congress' support for the principle that individuals who commit violent crimes should serve at least 85 percent of their sentences. It also commends the States which have enacted truth-in-sentencing legislation and encourages the remaining States to adopt such legislation.

Let us remember why we passed truth-in-sentencing legislation in the first place. Members were tired of continually hearing from frustrated and angry American citizens who knew, or were themselves, the victims of violent crimes of criminals who already had violent criminal history records. Congress recognized 2 years ago that the revolving door of justice must be stopped. Truth-in-sentencing legislation was a response to the small but deadly group of criminals who get arrested, convicted and released back into the community before they have served even half their sentences.

In fact, one of the most astonishing cases I have ever heard about: Four Milwaukee men were arrested last year for a crime spree which included two murders. Between them they had 92 prior arrests. The charges ranged from armed robbery and arson to theft and battery. In the group one 24-year-old man had 51 arrests alone. The police chief of Milwaukee was frustrated by the fact that his department was, as he told reporters, "arresting the same individuals over and over again."

In fiscal year 1996, 25 States met the requirements for a truth in sentencing grant award under legislation that we passed in Congress. According to the Department of Justice, several more States are attempting to pass such laws during the current legislative session. The fact that so many States have enacted truth-in-sentencing legislation since Congress took action in 1995 demonstrates clearly that incentive grants in that legislation has worked.

Mr. Speaker, let us consider the actual use of these funds. A large number of States have indicated in their fiscal year 1997 applications that they are planning to use some of the grant funds to build or expand juvenile facilities for violent juvenile offenders. In fact, four States have indicated that their entire grant award will be used for juvenile facilities. Additionally, at least 13 States plan to make a portion of the 1997 grant funds available for local jail projects. Four other States are exploring the use of grant funds for privatization of correctional facilities. This was Congress' clear intention, to allow the States some flexibility in determining where and how to spend the money necessary to fight violent crime.

States have responded positively to Congress' leadership on this issue and every citizen has benefited because more violent criminals remain where they belong, behind bars. The incentives grants are effective, and Congress must use every means possible to give