

protect volunteers who are involved in misconduct in any way from legitimate lawsuits?

Mr. COVERDELL. First of all, I thank the leader for focusing on this important measure this morning. I think you have pointed out what to me has been a startling irony, that the administration is calling on thousands of Americans to step forward and then sends a team down here to trip them if they do.

The answer to the question is absolutely not. First of all, it is only 12 pages long and it is very precise. If you are involved with misconduct, reckless conduct, gross negligence, driving under the influence, a hate crime, a sex crime, a civil rights crime—this legislation offers you no protection. What it does is it deals with the volunteer who steps forward and makes a simple mistake or omission in the act of being that volunteer. It would grant protections, limited protections to a volunteer in that circumstance.

It was suggested yesterday that organizations who promote hate would somehow find a shield in this measure. That was disappointing. I did not think that had a real place in the debate. Nevertheless, it was brought up and it is absolutely incorrect. No organization—they specifically alluded to the Ku Klux Klan—given the definition of an organization here, there is not a jury or a judge in America that would find that definition to include the Ku Klux Klan.

Mr. LOTT. If the Senator from Georgia will yield, it is pretty clear and narrowly defined, as I read it. It would be applicable to volunteers or any category of volunteers in the performance of services for a nonprofit organization or governmental entity; and (2) nonprofit organizations or governmental entities. That is pretty narrow in its applicability.

But let me ask you, are you telling me that there are examples in America where individuals who get involved with the Salvation Army or get involved with Little League Baseball literally are being sued?

Mr. COVERDELL. Absolutely. It is not so much a case of the judgments. It is a case of the threat of the suit and what it can do to you. The best example is listed here where a man who is part of a rescue team rescued an individual who had fallen off a ledge and was paralyzed. The person who was rescued by that rescue team sued the rescuers for \$12 million.

It was ultimately thrown out of court. But it has had a chilling effect on people. You come forward, you want to volunteer, but you don't want to put your family's business or assets at risk for doing that.

Mr. LOTT. Who is opposed to this legislation? What is the reason for opposing it? I cannot understand it.

Mr. COVERDELL. Let us look at the lineup here. I read a letter yesterday I have from Little League Baseball. You have the United Way, the Red Cross,

the Navy League, the Air Force Association, the American Society of Association Executives. Who is on the other side here? What is the cast? It is those among the trial attorneys who simply cannot abide that there be any reform at all, including volunteers, from the protection of these kind of suits. That is never mentioned. But that is where the opposition is.

We had a case from Senator SANTORUM who, in the last Congress, finally got the Emerson bill passed, which protected people who were giving food to homeless and starving people. It took the entire session and it was finally passed by unanimous consent in the waning hours of the last Congress—the same opponents.

So here we are, trying to make it possible for Americans to respond to four Presidents: Clinton, Bush, Carter, and Ford; and here they are trying to block it.

Mr. LOTT. I thank you again for your effort. I am hoping we will begin to see a break in the stonewall against the motion to proceed to the bill today and that we will have some Democrats join in getting cloture so we can go on and finish our discussion of the bill and get to a final vote. I think that will happen because I think all of us really want to encourage voluntarism and I think this legislation will help that all across America.

Then we can go on, either later on this week or next week, to take up some nominations that are pending on the Executive Calendar and be prepared on Monday to go to the supplemental appropriations bill. It is our intent to move forward with that legislation. There is a lot of complaining now that there may be some amendments in committee or amendments offered on the floor. What's new? This is the U.S. Senate. Any Senator, he or she, can offer an amendment. We can debate it. And there are those who say, "If you offer certain amendments or if there are certain things in the bill, we are going to filibuster those items and hold up the bill," and then they say we are holding up the bill.

I am saying now the Appropriations Committee will do its job today or tomorrow and report out the supplemental appropriations bill, hopefully in a way that will pay for the cost of the bill, for the most part. And then we will be prepared to begin on Monday and I will be prepared to have the final vote Tuesday or Wednesday. If we have to, we will file cloture to try to cut off a filibuster on items that may or may not be in the bill. And we hope to be able to complete it Wednesday or Thursday of next week.

With that, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SMITH of Oregon). Under the previous order the leadership time is reserved.

VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ACT OF 1997—MOTION TO PROCEED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 543, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 543) to provide certain protections to volunteers, nonprofit organizations, and governmental entities in lawsuits based on the activities of volunteers.

The Senate resumed consideration of the motion to proceed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time between 10 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. shall be divided equally between the Senator from Georgia [Mr. COVERDELL] or his designee, and the Senator from Vermont [Mr. LEAHY] or his designee. The Chair recognizes the Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I did not expect the majority leader to invest the time, which I very much appreciate his having done, to frame the nature of the situation we have here. But, just to restate it for those who may be listening, in response to the summit on voluntarism, we have brought to the Senate floor a very specific proposal, legislation, to make it easier for Americans to volunteer. We have moved to bring it before the Senate and the other side is filibustering that motion in order to prevent our taking action on this Volunteer Protection Act.

As I said in response to the leader, this is legislation that has been before the Congress in one form or another for almost 12 years, and has been consistently rebutted by the hierarchy of the Trial Lawyers Association. It is 12 pages long and it gives modest protection to volunteers who step forward in the 600,000 organizations across our land who try to promote the interests of those in need, whether they are children, the elderly, the illiterate, the wounded, or those who have been affected by the very flood we are talking about in the Midwest.

We have appeal after appeal from organization after organization requesting the legislation. They are having volunteer members of their boards of directors resign, because while they want to help, they do not envision taking all their family business and all their family assets and putting them in a lottery, so they resign.

When the organization asks for a mother or father to step forward and coach Little League Baseball, they hesitate, because they have read about these illogical but, nevertheless, real lawsuits against volunteers. Often, the organization has no assets at all, but one of the volunteers does. And so the suit goes straight to the individual who has accumulated, for whatever reason, some resources, some wealth. They are at particular risk because they have what is called deep pockets. They are chilled from coming forward. Often these people are very talented, high capacity, but they are chilled away; they are cautioned away.

I told the story several times on the floor of Terry Orr of the Washington Redskins. When he came to play for the ball club, senior team members brought him immediately in to help with the inner-city problems, with the children, which he did. Then he matured, and he took on the responsibility and went to the rookies. What did he hear? "Well, wait a minute." First question, "What is the liability? How much at risk am I?" He found himself talking to attorneys, and he could not bring the same energy and resource that he had seen when he first came to the team.

This is a rather new phenomenon. This has not been a part of American life until recently; in fact, until the 1980's. Lawsuits directed at volunteers, you could not count them on a hand, but in the eighties, several celebrated cases suddenly made the volunteer a new target. Throughout the eighties, we saw the number of Americans who were willing to volunteer shrink. We have seen the financial resources that have to be invested in protecting the volunteers grow, at the expense of the programs for which they were designed. For example, the Washington, DC, Girl Scouts have to sell 87,000 boxes of cookies to pay the premium for the protection of the volunteers—not to help the Girl Scouts, but to pay the premium to protect the volunteers. And we have seen volunteers leave the scene, resignation after resignation.

This legislation, this very narrow and targeted piece of legislation, protects those volunteers, makes it easier for them to answer the call of the Presidents at the summit and will reduce the overall expenditure of the organizations trying to do good service and good work in our Nation.

I might add that voluntarism, as I said yesterday, is uniquely American. It is a quality that has been noted by every nation about the American people. It really is near the heart and soul of who we are. It does not happen this way in most countries in the world. As the President knows, I was Director of the U.S. Peace Corps, and I had a chance to see it right up close. It is an American miracle, and it ought to be protected and cherished and nourished in every way that it can. I find it the irony of ironies that after that summit, we introduce this legislation and we are caught in a filibuster from the other side to keep this from being acted on.

Mr. President, I see that I have been joined by my colleague from Wyoming, and I know that he has wanted to speak on this. I yield such time as he might need to speak on this proposal.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, thank you. I thank the Senator from Georgia for this important piece of legislation. I rise to join my colleagues and friends in supporting the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997. This bill aims to protect one of the bulwarks of our democratic

Government, and that is America's volunteers. That is the foundation of the United States. That is a principle that we have been working on for a long time. We seem to be losing a little of the momentum that our forefathers had in the area of voluntarism, and part of that has to come out of fear.

Earlier this week, I had the opportunity to preside over the Senate for several hours. During that time, I was amazed at the direction of this particular debate. While my Republican colleagues have been working to achieve meaningful legal protection for volunteers, one Democrat after another has paraded on to the Senate floor to discuss matters absolutely unrelated to protecting volunteers from frivolous litigation. I have heard speeches on the budget, on flood relief, on Medicare and on Alexis Herman, just to name a few. But I have not heard any meaningful discussion by my colleagues across the aisle on protecting America's volunteers.

It is time that we get serious about helping our Nation's volunteers, and this is not going to happen by wandering into these other various and sundry tangents.

I heard the debate on the budget. The budget is not this debate. The budget is still being negotiated, and I understand that is going well, but it is not possible for us to debate the budget on the floor right now. It is not being held up by this piece of legislation, which should only take a little while to debate and pass.

I heard them talk about the supplemental budget, and a portion of that, of course, is emergency relief, and it is important. It is important in my State as well as for the people who have debated this. But that is not before this body either. That is in committee, and the issues that have been raised on that are not ones that are being affected by this debate.

I have heard discussions on Medicare and Alexis Herman. Alexis Herman may be more at the center of this delay than anything else that has been brought up.

Right now, there is a hearing taking place on a bill that will solve the Executive order. Hopefully, that bill will get a quick hearing—it appears to be—and it will be brought over here and will undo any misconceptions that there might be on the Alexis Herman situation, which appears to be a basis of a major Presidential change since the hearings were held in committee.

Those hearings were held, but the President has changed the momentum of his policy with labor since the time of those hearings, but that is not a part of this debate either. We have not had any debate from the other side of the aisle about protecting our volunteers. Instead, we have had a filibuster on a motion to proceed. This is not even the bill itself, this is just the motion to proceed. I assume we will have another filibuster when we get to the bill itself.

This is a country of the people, by the people, and for the people. We are a

volunteer country, or we used to be. We are becoming a country of mercenaries. We are beginning to pay people to volunteer. Can they truly be called a volunteer if they are paid to do that? And if we begin to pay and pay constantly, will we ever have true volunteers?

We talk about the momentum of volunteers, and that has been a long and proud tradition in the United States. Volunteer organizations represent a distinctly American manner of living, living out the golden rule by strengthening our neighborhoods, our schools, and our churches.

When I was mayor of Gillette, we had tremendous growth, more than doubled in size, and we needed everything basic that a community could possibly have. That included mostly water and sewer and streets. We did not have money for parks that the people moving there wanted. We got an intern from the University of Wyoming to sit down with any group that wanted a park, and he would design a park for them. The catch was they had to build it, and they did. We built seven parks in one summer with volunteers. These were young people who were moving into a boom community. If they had known about liability, I do not know that they would have participated.

I spent 10 years as a soccer coach. I am not sure today I would be a soccer coach. I don't think I could take the liability. I have worked with Boy Scouts. It has become such a litigious society that the Boy Scouts now have requirements that any time there is a boy working on a project, there have to be two adults around, and that is to prevent lawsuits. The Boy Scouts used to have annual Christmas tree sales in Gillette. When I went to serve with my son selling Christmas trees, I had to have another adult along, because of our litigious society. That definitely discourages volunteers.

Volunteer organizations have strengthened and nourished the lives of our citizens and influenced every facet of our culture. A brief reflection on the myriad of volunteers and volunteer organizations that serve our fellow citizens should remind us of their tremendous value. The volunteers of the Salvation Army help feed and clothe the less fortunate and provide Christmas gifts for thousands of children every year. Meals on Wheels has for years provided more meals and conversation to many of our Nation's homebound. Habitat for Humanity has helped revitalize our inner cities by providing privately owned houses for the Nation's poor. Mother Theresa's Missionaries of Charity cares for thousands of dying AIDS patients and unwed mothers in the poorest neighborhoods across the country.

I could go on and on with the Jaycees, Lions Clubs, the Kiwanis, the Rotary and the Optimists. The Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts help instill in children the virtues of responsibility and enterprise, while Little League and youth soccer leagues teach children the

values of team cooperation and hard work.

Volunteers in these organizations, and countless others, have given generously of themselves in order to help their neighbors and better their communities. Unfortunately, even these volunteers have fallen prey to our suit-happy legal system. Lawsuits, in recent years, have resulted in enormous verdicts against volunteers and nonprofit organizations. Too often these suits are for what most of us would consider frivolous claims that penalize volunteers who are simply doing their jobs.

The threat of costly litigation and large verdicts have frightened many good citizens away from giving their time and energy to volunteer organizations. It is time to curb that trend. The Volunteer Protection Act would relieve a volunteer from liability if the volunteer is acting within the scope and responsibility and if the volunteer is properly licensed, certified and authorized by the State in which the harm occurred, if such authorization is required.

It also limits punitive damages that may be awarded against volunteers and nonprofit organizations for the actions of the volunteers. This bill does not protect volunteers from liability for actions which are willful or criminal or which involve gross negligence. As such, this bill strikes a healthy balance. It provides broad protection for volunteers who are performing their duties, while still allowing people to recover against volunteers who cause harm from acts that are willful, criminal or grossly negligent.

Mr. President, it is time to restore some sanity to our tort system. Let's begin by protecting our Nation's volunteers from the slings and arrows of outrageous litigation. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Volunteer Act.

As we were growing up, we were taught to do what is right, to do our best, to treat others as we wanted to be treated, to take the common courtesy of asking others what they need to have done, and in America, we not only ask what they need to have done, but people follow up on that, not to the degree that we could, not to the degree that we used to.

My mother always taught me that service is the price that you pay for the space that you take up on this Earth. The service concept in this Nation is a foundation that we have to continue to promote, and our system of litigation has taken that away from us. Let us restore service and voluntarism in this country and give some protection.

I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. BINGAMAN addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico is recognized.

Mr. BINGAMAN. How much time remains on the Democratic side?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Thirty-one minutes.

Mr. BINGAMAN. I yield myself such time as I will consume out of that 31 minutes.

Mr. President, when I hear the debate here on the floor, it strikes me that anyone who is watching or listening to this debate must think that we are talking past each other. It must appear that we do not seem to be able to engage on any one subject. One Senator comes to the floor and talks about voluntarism, the need to protect volunteers from liability; another Senator talks about Alexis Herman, the President's nominee for Secretary of Labor and the need to get that nomination confirmed. People cannot understand why we are not talking about the same thing.

Let me just give my perspective of where we are.

On the Democratic side, the position that many of us are taking is that we should not be going ahead with business as usual in the Senate on the last day of April unless we can get the majority to agree to allow a vote on the President's Cabinet nominee. We are getting fairly far into this year.

The President, several months ago, nominated Alexis Herman to be the Secretary of Labor. In the Labor and Human Resources Committee we voted unanimously to recommend to the full Senate that she be confirmed for that position. Just in the last couple of weeks we have been told that vote will not be taken on the Senate floor, we will not have a chance to vote for her confirmation because some on the Republican side disagree with the President's Executive order on another issue related to project labor agreements. He issued an Executive order on that subject which they did not agree with.

Mr. President, I strongly support the nomination of Alexis Herman to be our Secretary of Labor. Our committee, the Labor Committee, did report that nomination to the full Senate for consideration. We did so unanimously. This was not a Democratic vote and Republicans opposed. It was a unanimous vote. Unfortunately, we have not been able to go ahead and take that vote on the Senate floor.

When I tried to put this in some perspective—I have served here in the Senate with three different Presidents in the White House. President Reagan, when he was in the White House—of course, much of the time that he was there the Republicans controlled the Senate, so an issue like this never arose. But there were 2 years during which he was President when the Democrats controlled the Senate. I am not aware of any occasion where we refused to allow a vote on one of his nominations because we disagreed with one of the policies that President Reagan was pursuing. We certainly disagreed with many of his policies, but I cannot recall any occasion where we refused to go ahead and permit a vote on one of his nominees in order to gain leverage and force him to change a policy.

The same thing with President Bush. When President Bush was in office, of course the Democrats controlled the

Senate during that time, and he nominated his Cabinet members. I do not recall any effort on the Democratic side to refuse to allow a vote on those Cabinet Members. I think everyone agreed that the election was over, the President had the right to choose his own Cabinet, and that we in the Senate could object to some of those Cabinet individuals and we could vote no on their nomination, but we certainly would not deny the President the right to a vote on those Cabinet members.

So I see what is happening here with Alexis Herman's nomination as sort of unprecedented, clearly unprecedented in the time that I have been here in the Senate in the last 14 years.

I understand that some of my colleagues are opposed to the administration's plans to issue an Executive order on project labor agreements. I know that many of my colleagues may have fundamental disagreements about the appropriateness of that Executive order. This is, in my view, simply not adequate grounds for refusing to go ahead and have a vote on his Cabinet nominee.

I personally support the administration's proposal on project labor agreements for a variety of reasons. And we can have that debate when the issue comes up. As my friend from Wyoming, my colleague from Wyoming, indicates, there is a bill being considered. Fine. Let us get a piece of legislation out here. Let us have a vote on it. Let us do whatever and send it to the President, and perhaps we can persuade him to sign something if we can get agreement on something that seems reasonable.

But the Executive order on project labor agreements has nothing to do with whether or not the President should be able to appoint his own Cabinet. We should allow him to do that. We should certainly allow a vote on the Senate floor on those Cabinet nominees. If the majority wants to turn down a nomination in order to make some point, clearly that is a course they can pursue. But to deny a vote on the Senate floor in order to try to register a complaint about the President's policy, I think, is improper.

Ms. Herman presented herself extremely well to the Labor Committee. She honestly and fully answered all questions put to her. I think she won over several Senators who might have thought, going into that hearing, that they might not support her. She will be a strong advocate for working families. She will work hard, I am persuaded, to help our country prepare for the next century. Her record of public service, her record of caring about people on issues that come before the Department of Labor, which is unquestioned, her commitment to serving her country are the reasons why all of us, as I said on the Democratic and Republican side, in the committee joined to send her nomination to the floor.

I know that if we get a vote on the Senate floor, it will be an overwhelming vote of support for this nominee because all of the Senators I have talked to believe she would be a good Secretary of Labor.

The working families of this country deserve to have someone in that position which is a very important position at this time in our history. It is getting late in the legislative year. We need to go ahead and allow the President to put his own nominee in there so that he can proceed with his agenda.

I say there will be many opportunities over the course of this year and next year throughout the 105th Congress where we will debate issues such as project labor agreements here on the Senate floor. I think that is entirely as it should be. But I do not think it is appropriate for us to proceed with business as usual on the Senate floor while refusing to allow a vote on the President's nominee for Secretary of Labor.

So that is the basis for my objection to proceeding on this bill that is pending before the Senate today. I think it is a credible piece of legislation which should be debated and should be seriously considered by the Senate. But it should be seriously considered by the Senate in a circumstance where we are allowing the Executive branch and allowing the President to go ahead and name his Cabinet. It is too late in the year for us to be playing the kind of cynical game that is going on here in denying a vote for this Secretary of Labor.

So I urge my colleagues to join on a bipartisan basis to bring that nomination to the floor and have that vote and then proceed to consideration of this other legislation and then proceed to the consideration of a great deal of other legislation that we should be getting on with.

I think it is clear that the Senate is rudderless at this point. We have very little on the Senate agenda. We look ahead to the next 2 or 3 weeks, and I do not see a great deal of constructive activity going forward here unless there is much more in the planning than I am aware of. But I do think the least we can do is to go ahead and get one important nomination up and vote on it at the soonest date possible.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and reserve the remainder of our time.

Mr. COVERDELL addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. COVERDELL. How much time remains on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There are 14 minutes on the Republican side and 21 minutes on the Democratic side.

NATIONAL ERASE THE HATE AND ELIMINATE RACISM DAY

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of Senate Resolu-

tion 78 and the Senate proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 78) to designate April 30, 1997, as "National Erase the Hate and Eliminate Racism Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today in support of Senate Resolution 78, which would designate April 30, 1997 as "National Erase the Hate and Eliminate Racism Day." I am proud to be a cosponsor and am pleased we have acted today to pass this resolution.

While I believe it is important to set aside a day for special focus on fighting hatred and bigotry, this cannot be a 1 day event. That is why this resolution calls on every American to practice tolerance and to take a strong stand against hate crimes and violence in their communities each and every day.

I commend my colleagues, Senators BAUCUS and BURNS, for introducing this important legislation. This legislation will bring awareness to what is an unsettling trend in this country—the increasing incidents of hate crimes and the growing occurrences of discrimination.

I am greatly disturbed that hate crimes are on the rise. We saw evidence of that rise in the burning of African-American churches around the country, which apparently was motivated by racism. We saw it in the bombing of the Federal building in Oklahoma City, which was reportedly motivated by anti-government hatred.

We've read and seen reports in the media about hate crimes. We've witnessed the violent attacks against individuals because of their race, gender, sexual orientation or their beliefs. It's evident in the increasing number of individuals in this country who have joined fringe groups like militias and other hate groups. We've also seen it in the growing anti-immigrant sentiment in our country. As the granddaughter of immigrants, I find this particularly repugnant.

I recently met with a group of Asian-Pacific-American community leaders from my State of Maryland. They shared with me very compelling stories about discrimination that is faced each and every day by Asian-Pacific-Americans. Unfortunately, I hear this all too often when I meet with minority groups.

Asian-Pacific-Americans in Maryland are concerned about their right to participate in the democratic process. They shared with me their fears that their right to engage in campaign electoral activities is being questioned, simply because of a few cases of alleged campaign fundraising abuses purportedly committed by members of the Asian-Pacific-American community.

I have seen reports that indicate hate-motivated attacks on Asian-Pacific-Americans have grown more than

38 percent since 1993. I find that appalling. Violence against Asian-Pacific-Americans, as with other minority groups, is bred by stereotypes, discrimination, and tensions in communities.

I am concerned about what is happening in our country. It's inconceivable that more than 30 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, we are still grappling with racism in this country.

This plague of hatred has spread and reached our youth. A young African-American boy in Chicago was brutally attacked recently by a group of white teenagers. What happened in Chicago is one of the most brutal acts we have witnessed in recent years. It is even more appalling that the perpetrators were young teenagers.

We need to educate our youth on tolerance. We need to teach them not to hate and not to discriminate. We need to start this process early.

My State of Maryland is becoming more ethnically diverse. I meet with minority groups in my State often and they share the same concerns. They are concerned about the climate of hate in our society. They fear discrimination in schools and in the work force. And most importantly, they are concerned about their children and their children's future. If this plague of hate continues in our country, what kind of future are we ensuring for our most precious resource—our children?

We have to change the negative attitudes and perceptions in this country about minorities. We have to eliminate the persistence of violent hate crimes against racial, ethnic, and religious groups.

To succeed in making our society free of hate, racism, and discrimination, we have to take a stand that we will not tolerate random acts of hate, subtle and overt racism, and widespread discrimination. I am committed to doing my part. This is a commitment that has to be made by everyone.

I believe that this resolution will send the message that we will no longer tolerate hate and discrimination in this country. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to offer my support as a cosponsor to Senate Resolution 78. This resolution designates April 30, 1997, as National Erase the Hate Day." I support this resolution because it not only designates a day to focus on solutions to hate crimes, but also calls upon all nations, States, neighborhoods, and communities to take a stand against these hate crimes.

As I have stated many times, ours is a nation of immigrants consisting of people from various racial, ethnic, and religious ancestries. People came here from around the world to become part of a nation of independence, opportunity and freedom. There should be no tolerance or acceptance of any crimes—especially those crimes which target their victims simply because of