

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

their race, ethnicity, or religious background.

The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights has published the first comprehensive summary of hate crimes in America. Their publication, *Cause for Concern, Hate Crimes in America*, provides a number of examples of hate crimes that have resulted in injury or even death to innocent people solely on account of their racial and other make-up.

For example, on June 11, 1995, arsonists burned down the home of a Latino family in the Antelope Valley, CA, city of Palmdale. They spray painted "white power" and "your family dies" on the walls.

In August of 1992, a 19 year old Vietnamese American pre-med student in Coral Springs, FL, was beaten to death by a mob of white youths who called him "chink" and "Vietcong."

And, in Oklahoma City, following the bombing of the Federal office building, an Iraqi refugee in her mid-twenties miscarried her near-term baby after an April 20 attack on her home. Unknown assailants pounded on the door of her home, broke windows, and screamed anti-Islamic epithets.

Mr. President, there is no room in our country for these kinds of crimes. We must not allow them to continue. We currently have Federal laws against hate crimes. Further, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights reports that 47 States and the District of Columbia have passed their own hate crime laws. Among other things, these laws ban vandalism against religious institutions such as churches, synagogues, and mosques.

It is my sincere hope that this resolution will inspire more people to stand up against all hate crimes in all their forms.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution appear at this point in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 78) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, is as follows:

S. RES. 78

Whereas the term "hate crime" means an offense in which one or more individuals, commits an offense (such as an assault or battery (simple or aggravated), theft, criminal trespass, damage to property, mob action, disorderly conduct, or telephone harassment) by reason of the race, color, creed, religion, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, or national origin of another individual or group of individuals;

Whereas there are almost 8,000 hate crimes reported to the Department of Justice each year, and the number of hate crimes reported increases each year;

Whereas hate crimes have no place in a civilized society that is dedicated to freedom and independence, as is the United States;

Whereas the people of the United States must lead and set the example for the world in protecting the rights of all people;

Whereas the people of the United States should take personal responsibility for and action against hatred and hate crimes;

Whereas the Members of Congress, as representatives of the people of the United States, must take personal responsibility for and action against hatred and hate crimes;

Whereas the laws against hate crimes, which have been passed by Congress and signed by the President, must be supported and implemented by the people of the United States and by Federal, State, and local law enforcement officials and other public servants: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 30, 1997, as "National Erase the Hate and Eliminate Racism Day"; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States and throughout the world to recognize the importance of using each day as an opportunity to take a stand against hate crimes and violence in their nations, states, neighborhoods, and communities.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum and ask unanimous consent that the time be equally divided on both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ACT OF 1997—MOTION TO PROCEED

The Senate continued with the consideration of the bill.

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I yield up to 5 minutes to my good colleague from Iowa.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise in support of this legislation. There is—and the public knows this better than we do—a lot of legislation we debate on the floor of this body that might make sense in Washington, but does not make sense outside of Washington. We spend a lot of time debating legislation that does not make a difference in people's lives. This bill, S. 543, not only expresses American common sense—at least from my part of the country, Midwestern common sense—but it also says no to Washington nonsense.

This bill gives me an opportunity, at the same time, to compliment the Senator from Georgia for the outstanding work that he is doing in this area.

Debate of legislation that solidly promotes voluntarism is an example of Congress spending some of its time to get something done where there is a real reward. It is an example of the taxpayers' money well spent, to pay us to write legislation that will encourage Americans to do what we have a tradition of doing in this country—volunteering.

I am sure Alexis de Tocqueville has been quoted on the floor of the Senate often during the debate of this bill. One observation that the French nobleman made when he came to this country in the 1830's to study our new system of government, was the American tradition of voluntarism that he saw in our churches and in our volunteer societies—or as he termed them "societies of cooperation." He believed that one of the wonderful and unique aspects of our society was that neighbor helps neighbor. Yet, now our society has impediments to this tradition of voluntarism, to this neighbor helping neighbor.

Our good friend from Georgia has a solution that restores the voluntarism that de Tocqueville observed. This very important legislation will remove one impediment to voluntarism in America. This bill will lessen the threat of a lawsuit for volunteers and their organizations. So here we are today discussing some legislation that is common sense. We are wisely spending our time and energy debating legislation that would provide to the taxpayer, in volunteer hours, more return on the taxpayers' dollars than anything we do.

I come here to support the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 and to compliment Senator COVERDELL. This legislation has two important benefits. First, it promotes voluntarism. It promotes voluntarism at the time of the big volunteer crusade in Philadelphia. Praise the Lord for the people that were involved in that because that was a very worthwhile project and it was bipartisan. The Congress can do something through this legislation that will help that effort as well. So this legislation promotes voluntarism, and it also enacts much needed tort reform.

Volunteers are vital to the health and welfare of our communities, States, and our Nation. We all rely on the kindness of friends and strangers. Volunteers are often these people, whether we see them or not, who bring meals to the homebound; who clean up trash along our highways; who respond to natural disasters. I will point out just a few recent examples.

The United Way of Central Iowa rallied 2,500 volunteers—nearly twice as many as in 1995—to complete 97 projects. Among these volunteers was a troop of Brownies who baked brownies for the children and families at the local Ronald McDonald House.

At the American Red Cross homeless shelter in Rockford, VT, 47 volunteers, including 15 shelter residents, painted and cleaned the shelter, dug a new pathway in its yard, and picked up litter in the neighborhood.

The George Washington High School swim team in Danville, VA, gave an hour of free swimming lessons to 60 nonswimmers in grades 2 through 4.

In Detroit, MI, kids from University CAMP and Detroit Country Day School painted, cleaned, and removed graffiti and boarded up vacant homes.