

majority have a great respect and admiration for the Bible and the Constitution.

Because of this, I very rarely like to single out any one person. However, I am recognizing a very special 10-year-old girl from Goldsboro, North Carolina. Rebecca Mason and her family attend Rosewood First Baptist Church in Goldsboro.

One day Rebecca learned some frightening statistics about the rate of crime and violence in our Nation's neighborhoods. I am proud of Rebecca, not simply out of her concern for a problem, but in our actions to address the problem.

Rebecca could not understand why more adults of faith were not fighting to combat these issues. So with the support of her family and her church, she developed a petition to alert us to the same statistics that prompted her to act. Her petition calls upon all Americans to stand up for the morals and values we learn from the Bible.

I could tell my colleagues about Rebecca's petition, but I think the words of a child are often more powerful than our own. Mr. Speaker, she wrote, "The people of America are crying out for a return to Christian values. Drug and alcohol abuse are plaguing our Nation. More people have died in alcohol-related crashes than have died in all the wars the United States has ever fought. America is leading the way to teen pregnancy, illiteracy and divorce. Since 1973, over 30 million children have been murdered in the name of convenience. Teenage runaways are on the rise, and America averages one teenage suicide every 1 hour and 45 minutes. Suicide is the third leading cause of death to those under the age of 25."

"With the restriction of prayer in school, our Nation has gone on a downhill slide. The only way to put our Nation on the right path is to turn toward God. We, as Christian Americans, would like to ensure the rights of our children to pray freely in schools. We would like to have increased regulations on drug- and alcohol-related crimes and the repeal of legal abortions in America. It is time we all make a stand for God and Christian values. By signing this petition, you will show your concern on these issues to our local, State, and national leaders."

Mr. Speaker, Rebecca's petition reminds me of one of my favorite Bible verses. It is from Isaiah, book 6, verse 8; and it reads, "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here I am; send me."

Mr. Speaker, Rebecca is serving as a messenger to remind my colleagues and I that this country was founded on Judeo-Christian principles.

I am proud of Rebecca and all the young people like her who work to remind us that, during difficult times, we need to draw strength from our faith and return to the values that make America strong.

In his farewell address, George Washington said, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

Even at 10 years of age, Rebecca Mason recognizes the importance of faith and morality. She represents the strength and character that promises a bright future for our Nation. I am thankful that Rebecca has allowed me to be part of her efforts. That is why I am here today to share with my colleagues what concerns our children have about the future of our Nation.

Whether it begins with Federal, State, or local leaders, the teachers in our schools, or the families in our communities, we must all take responsibility for the future and help our children learn the importance of morality and faith. But we need to act now. Our children are asking for our help.

I hope that concerned people of faith will join me in signing Rebecca's petition for Christian values. It is time that we show our children we care about the future and we work together to return to the values that strengthen this Nation and its citizens.

DRUG PROBLEMS OF THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I thank the leadership for allowing me time to address an issue which is very, very important. The Nation has certainly understood the gravity of the problem of drugs within our communities, within our States, and throughout the whole country. It is a problem that I certainly have recognized in my years of service to this Congress as well as in the local community.

But I think, like most citizens, I have more or less assumed that this was a problem that individuals like ourselves could not deal with in any effective way, that we had to rely upon our law enforcement agencies, our Federal Bureau of Investigation, our DEA agents, and the Justice Department, and, in some instances, the State Department to come to grips with this very, very critical and persuasive problem.

Not until this year at the beginning of the 106th Congress did I come face to face with the reality that I did indeed, as one Member of this Congress, have a great responsibility for the development of the policy and the course of action and the emphasis and the direction that we would take with regard to the drug problem within our United States.

I left the 6-year term, left service of the Committee on the Budget in the House of Representatives and returned back to my committee previously known as the Committee on Govern-

ment Operations, now known as the Committee on Government Reform, and found myself being named the ranking minority member of the Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, Drug Policy, and Human Resources.

Under that jurisdiction, it became my responsibility not only to formulate human resource policies and directions and oversight, but to take a very critical look with the rest of my subcommittee on the overall problems of drug usage within the United States.

First, an immediate responsibility came in being invited to join the chairman of the subcommittee on an extensive field trip through El Salvador, Panama, Peru, Bolivia, and on through Mexico in order to investigate the whole problem of the trafficking of these narcotic drugs into the United States.

It was a very interesting field trip, and I learned a great deal. I learned where the drugs were coming from, where they are being produced, how they were entering into the traffic, by sea and by air and over the land, and to some extent what the individual countries were doing with respect to this whole traffic issue.

Some countries I felt had done a great deal. Peru, in fact, was probably the outstanding example of where a changeover in national leadership made all the difference in the world in terms of their being able to handle the traffic that was flowing through their country into the United States.

Colombia was another place that we visited and met with the president of that country and learned from them the monumental steps that that country had taken. Of interest in Colombia is, in fact, that several years ago, Colombia had been decertified because the leadership of the Congress felt that their efforts to try to curb the traffic and to do something about the offenders and all of the drug lords was minimal at least, and so the decision, under the wishes of the Congress at that time, was to decertify that country in order to emphasize the fact that the United States felt they could do more.

In fact, the consequence was that that country did more and did a very aggressive job in arresting and curbing the traffic from Colombia to this country. So they have now come back into a cooperative venture with the United States in trying to help us deal with the problem.

The issue, therefore, that the Congress now faces is that every March 1, the President of the United States must make a recommendation to the Congress as to whether all of the countries with whom we have relationships should be certified in terms of their enactment, pursuit, administration, and enforcement of a drug policy which helps the United States to deal with the traffic coming from that particular country.

□ 1415

The big debate this year, as has been in the past, is whether Mexico should

be decertified or not. And we visited Mexico. We spent 3 days there discussing the matter with their leadership and trying to understand what, in fact, that nation was doing in terms of curbing not only production and the harvesting and the growing of these various drug producing plants but also what they were doing in the criminal enforcement area in picking up these narco-traffickers and putting them in prison and enforcing their own national laws, irrespective of our laws, which many of them had also violated and for whom outstanding arrest warrants had been issued without any particular results.

So we are now back here in the Congress and one of the major issues that we have to decide and debate is what to do about Mexico. And the question before the Congress is whether, in our opinion, the country of Mexico has done enough, has maintained a substantial pressure within all the criminal elements in their country that has created this enormous traffic of drugs flowing from Mexico to the United States.

It is a very difficult issue because, as we debate the issue of decertifying, we are questioning their sovereignty, we are in fact intervening in internal politics. But I think it is important to remember that this crisis situation within the United States is something of deep concern to the people of the United States. And while it attempts, it appears, to be invasive of another country's internal policies, what we must come to grips with is that these internal policies of our neighbors have a very, very deep repercussion on our own national well-being, the safety of our children and our families and of our own ability to deal with these criminal activities within the United States.

Having said that, I have come to the conclusion that the steps that Mexico has taken, the level of cooperation that they have exhibited, their leadership having been expressed in many ways, including funding and including collaborative efforts with the United States, indicated a deep, deep abiding will to help themselves in their country of Mexico, as well as the United States, to bring an end to this very, very terrible miserable, criminal element in their society.

They have some very profound problems of internal corruption, of a takeover of major portions of their country, and enormous instability in parts of their nation that contribute to their problem and exacerbate their difficulties. But I believe very strongly that, if we are to do anything about this supply coming in from Mexico, we need the continued cooperation of the Mexican government, and I believe that they have cooperated.

The problem still exists and in some ways perhaps they have become greater in some areas. But I do feel the cooperation, the will to help us, is there. We just need to maintain the connection and keep insisting on progress.

Looking at this whole drug problem within the United States, surveying it from the traffic element, it has certainly brought to my focus the element that it is not only the supply coming into the United States which is of crisis proportions, it is our own inability within the United States to come to grips with the criminal element which is within our own cities, within our own States, within our own borders.

We are told by high placed DEA officials that the connection between the supply in Mexico and those who are harvesting billions of dollars within our cities, plaguing upon our families and our children, are right in our midst operating within our cities and within our States. I feel, if we are going to make an exhausting demand and inquiry as to what the Mexican government is doing in their own country, it is equally important that we make that same sort of inquiry with respect to our own law enforcement agencies and to look to the people who are controlling the purse strings here in the Congress to make sure that the budgets that we are providing our law enforcement agencies is adequate.

The problem is very, very grave indeed. We have something like 14,000 drug-induced deaths every year in America, some half a million emergency visits to our hospitals and clinics, all derived from drug-related incidents. This is a very major problem, affecting at least one out of ten of our American families who have someone that we love dear to us involved in this particular problem. It is a problem that is not only disturbing but is something that we cannot ignore.

We have a report that is produced by the Office of National Drug Control Policy. There are volumes. I brought to the floor with me today the Executive Summary. This is the National Drug Control Strategy for 1999. It is in your libraries. I commend all of you interested in this issue to get a hold of the report and try to understand the enormity of the problem.

The major thrust of the National Office is to look to ways in which we can reduce the demand. That means education. That means working with the young people. This means treatment and all sorts of preventive measures, and I think that those are very, very important. And I know that there are many, many agencies, local, state and Federal, that are engaged in that effort.

The national budget is somewhere around \$17 billion to help us reduce the demand. If we did not have a demand within this country, no amount of trafficking would make this issue into a major problem. So they are right in talking about reduction of demand. We are right in talking about the necessity of reducing these huge supplies coming across our borders from other countries. Those two issues are important.

But equally important, as I see it, is the ability of our local enforcement officers, together with our Federal au-

thorities, to make a much bigger effort to arrest, locate through high-tech purposes, or whatever, these individuals who are trafficking these drugs in our cities throughout America. And I do not believe that enough effort is being made.

I was recently visited by a student from my district who said he reported to a local police officer that on a certain corner in his community he was sure that this individual was trafficking in drugs and the police officer or no one else has followed up on that. And I believe that that situation is indicative of fear, reluctance, inhibitions, intimidations, or whatever that exist in our societies that prevent us from being tough on the law enforcement area.

Let's take a look at the realities of our drug problem within the United States. Here is a chart that indicates that Americans spend \$57 billion on illegal drugs each year. It shows the amount that is spent on cocaine, which is the largest column on the right, and a much smaller expenditure wasted on heroin and a smaller amount on marijuana and others. This indicates the monies going down the drain on an entirely abusive, illegal, nonfunctioning, harmful activity within the United States.

We worry about where our resources are going. Here is where a lot of the monies are going, and we need to stop this waste. Look at the loss of human life. Drug-related deaths are increasing. Every year, almost 10,000 drug-related deaths. This is not including all of the nondirect what they call "other related" deaths, waste of human life as a result of drug consumption in our communities.

Our jails are being filled with people that have drug-related offenses. Something like 1.5 million total arrests either in the possession, sale, or manufacturing of illegal drugs. We have something like 1.8 million persons in our prisons today and those represent over a million in state prisons, at the cost of something like \$25 billion to our States. We have about 100,000 in Federal prisons, at the cost of \$3 billion, and another half a million in our local jails, at the cost of \$11 billion. And when you add up the prison expenditure, it is almost \$40 billion added to what I already showed in the chart of what is being spent on the purchase of these drugs.

The rate of incarceration is the second highest in the entire world per capita. Russia is the only other country that surpasses us in the number of persons that we have behind bars today. And of the 1.8 million, this report advises that 1.5 million are related in some way to a drug offense. Either they were drug users or they were drug offenders in particular.

So our prisons are bursting at their seams. We are arresting people who are using and selling these commodities on our streets. But what I officially believe is that we have not gone after the major traffickers in our cities, and this

is what we need to pursue. The DEA tells me that they know who these people are, that in many cases they have issued warrants for their arrests but they have fled and they are not able to be found. I believe that these individuals' names, pictures, identifications should be posted all over America so that everyone will know who these individuals are.

We talk about the Mexican traffickers and these drug lords that are running the traffic in Mexico itself, but the DEA tells us in their testimony before our committees that these people in Mexico are linked up to the distributors who operate within our cities.

So while we are very outraged at the fact that the warrants that we have issued for the arrest of people that are in Mexico have not ended up in their conviction and brought to trial within the United States because of various technicalities on how to extradite, how the appeal process is extremely slow, in point of fact, there are tens of thousands of these operatives linked up to the gangs that exist in Mexico who now operate within the United States.

So I believe what this should tell us, what this should instruct us is a stronger, much more determined commitment on the part of the United States to do something about these individuals that are already operating within the United States.

This is a statistic that I have already given you about the percentage of Federal prisoners who were sentenced because of drug offenses. There is no doubt that the problem within the United States is a major one insofar as our prison population is concerned, and that gives you an idea of the relationship of criminal activity to a drug-abuse situation.

The marijuana arrests within the United States is also an interesting statistic. In 1998, this report tells us that 12 percent of the eighth graders in all of our schools in this country were users of marijuana. In the 10th grade it rose to 21 percent. In the 12th grade it rose to 25.6 percent.

□ 1430

This is a very, very high proportion. A lot of people wink or blink or just look the other way when we talk about marijuana on the assumption that it is not a serious matter. It is an extremely serious matter, because the studies prove that there is a very high correlation between marijuana use and serious behavior problems in the schools, including cutting class, low scores in their academic studies, physical violence against teachers and their schoolmates, and outright theft and destruction of property. So there is an antisocial behavior problem with those of our youngsters who are using marijuana at such early ages.

And so we have to worry about this whole concept of marijuana use. Each year about 60,000 of our youngsters in our elementary and secondary schools are arrested on varying degrees of

marijuana offenses. We have a very, very disturbing problem there that is affecting many thousands of our young people and their families.

The report also tells us that overall, throughout the whole country, there are more than 4 million chronic users of one or more of the drugs that I had listed. This is a very, very serious problem. These are chronic users, 4 million. About 14 million are current users. They may not become chronic abusers, but they are current users of one of these various drugs. And so it is a dimension of a problem that cannot be dismissed in terms of our social and political agenda.

The National Office has listed five goals, as I said earlier: First to educate our young people; second, to reduce drug-related crimes; third, to reduce the social-economic costs of illegal drug use; fourth, to shield our frontiers, to close the borders so that the supply does not come forward; and, fifth, to do something about our domestic sources. This is an issue that I think we can do something about.

Let us take marijuana as an example. There are currently 11 million users of marijuana. Much of the marijuana that is being abused in this country is produced in this country. We cannot point a finger at another country and say they are the culprits, shut off their supply, and this problem will go away. It will not. Because a good deal of marijuana is raised within this country. California, my own State of Hawaii, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Tennessee are listed in this report as major growing States of marijuana. And while all attention is put on Mexico because of the decertification problem, the report also cautions us that another growing, major supplier of marijuana is Canada. And so maybe we should look to Canada, also, as a country that needs to have a drug policy that we could examine.

Heroin has about 800,000 chronic users. The purity of heroin is an issue, because as it becomes more and more pure, which is the phenomenon we are experiencing now, it allows it to be smoked or snorted rather than injected. As a consequence, the use of it is expanding rather than contracting. The increases are quite significant. In 1996, there were an estimated 200,000 heroin chronic users. Today there are 325,000 users. And so the numbers are increasing quite dramatically.

The other drug abuse in this country which is causing great alarm because of its highly addictive qualities is a drug known as methamphetamine, or in some cases with crystal methamphetamines, it is referred to as ice. Meth can be manufactured in a bathtub. We refer to them as laboratories. But really they are not complicated places where the drug is manufactured. It just could be in somebody's kitchen. A great deal of it is manufactured within the United States. This is a drug that is not dependent upon being trafficked across the borders

from somewhere. It is being produced and manufactured right within our own communities, predominantly in the West. It is highly toxic. So if you think that this is a problem only with the producers of meth and the consumers, think again, because when this stuff is put into the sewer and drains out of the bathtub, it goes into the environment and it is becoming a very, very serious, toxic, dangerous, highly polluting commodity. Communities are becoming quite alarmed because they have ways to detect its disposal in our sewage system. Meth is produced primarily in the West, consumed primarily in the West, and we have very, very large indications of its use. In one statistic that I saw, 52 percent of all persons arrested in San Jose were tested positive for having used methamphetamines.

Here is an issue that we have to come to grips with. The DEA seized over 4,140 methamphetamine laboratories in the last 4 years. In this 1998 period, over 2,000 were seized and destroyed. These meth operatives, people who go out and sell it and dispose of it, have connections with the Mexican drug traders. And so in that sense it is the same people that are selling the cocaine and the heroin and so forth are also dispersing the methamphetamines. This is a new aspect of a problem that is growing and causing tremendous concern.

We have many, many other issues in terms of our working relationship with Mexico. We have various bilateral agreements. It is indicative, to me at least as an observer in our discussions and in reading all the various materials that I have seen, that the leadership of Mexico, President Zedillo and others, his Attorney General and other individuals that we spoke with, have a very firm commitment and a will to do something about it. It is as though one could look at our own law enforcement considerations within the United States and ask the question, are we doing enough? I would have to answer no, I do not believe we are. That is the same question we put to the Mexican Government, are they doing enough, and my answer there would be also, no, I do not believe they are doing enough. But I certainly do not believe that Mexico should be decertified and cut off from any potential agreements or collaboration or cooperation or joint efforts to try to do something about the supply of these drugs coming across the border.

This is certainly a very, very critical problem. We have the opportunity to debate it and discuss it. I am not sure whether it will come up in a legislative matter. There have been bills that have been introduced calling for decertification. I hope the Congress does not take that step. But neither should the problem be dismissed as something that simply comes up once a year and that the country is asked to engage upon it only once in 12 months. This is an issue which is serious, it is pervasive, it is destroying tens of thousands of lives within the United States. It is making

it impossible for young people to develop as normal human beings because their lives have been interjected and contaminated and abused by drugs.

So I feel that while we are taking this issue of the international responsibilities that our neighbors have with respect to this issue and the complicity that their nonperformance or non-cooperation may have to the exacerbation of our own problem within the United States, we cannot any longer dismiss our responsibility to make sure that everything possible is being done. We certainly have the experts, we certainly have the science, we have the technology. We have all the means by which to detect the movement of individuals, money, and the drugs.

So I would like to see a much more heavily engaged, much more largely financed operation of people within the DEA and within the Justice Department helping us to interdict these criminals within our community. They have a long list. They tell me thousands of these traffickers have been arrested. But so many of them have not been brought to justice. So they are out there still, lurking around our communities, banking tens of billions of dollars in investments and creating this problem which we call money laundering, because this money is illegal, it is illicit, it was made from the benefit of selling illegal products within the United States. It has no business moving into the normal legal commerce of this nation or of any nation. And so we need to take greater steps to interdict this money, find out where it is, where it is being deposited, which banks, and making sure that no benefits, no profit, no advance, no monetary benefits are derived from this illegal traffic. That is another area which I feel we need to engage the financial interests of this country.

When you go to Mexico, immediately the big American businesses will come to you and say, "You can't decertify Mexico," because billions of dollars of our American interests are involved in the trade between Mexico and the United States. I certainly will agree to that. There are huge connections of involvement between American business and Mexican business. But I call upon the American businessmen here in this country as well as in Mexico to join forces with the United States in making sure that every effort that they can pursue to help us interdict and arrest these individuals and bring them to justice be done.

So I like to look upon this decertification process as an opportunity for us to examine our policies, to make sure that we are protecting our young people, in the schools we are teaching them about the tremendous hazards of drug consumption and how addictive it is and how they must stay away from it. We must do everything we can to prevent the adult population from engaging in this kind of activity. We have to arrest the people who are on the street selling this stuff. We have to also engage ourselves with the nearly 2 million people that are in our prisons,

to make sure that adequate treatment is available to them so that when they are released, and they all will be released eventually, can go back into society completely rid of any habits they might have had previously with regard to drug usage.

So we have an enormous problem. But the most important, it seems to me, for our American communities is to make our streets safe so that while we are teaching our young people and have all these treatment and prevention programs in place, it is not an easy thing to just walk to the street corner and pick up a gram or two of heroin or cocaine or buy marijuana or whatever. It should not be something which is that easy to do in our communities. I believe that law enforcement agencies need our support, they need our commitment to make sure that these laws are abided by. They need enough funds to make sure that enough people are in their agencies to make it possible for law enforcement activities to take place. They need a lot of intelligence. They need a lot of undercover agents to ferret out where these activities are taking place.

So we in the Congress have a dual responsibility. We have to make sure that adequate resources are being engaged to combat this problem within the United States, because demand is an issue. And if we can get our hands on an adequate control of the demand that comes from the United States to buy these terrible things, then, it seems to me, we have an evenhanded policy with other countries by insisting that they shut off the supply as well.

□ 1445

Mr. Speaker, I shall pursue with great vigor, and great enthusiasm and a great deal of interest my new responsibilities as the ranking member of this subcommittee. I know that I have a great deal more to learn about the hazards of this problem, but I am certainly prepared to engage myself and my staff on a full and complete examination of this issue.

Before I leave the special order this afternoon, I wanted to indicate that the President of the United States does not stand alone on his recommendation that Mexico ought to continue its work, and that we ought to join forces with them, and cooperate with them and encourage them to fulfill their commitment to us and to their own people because their own people are suffering just as tragically from what I have described as our own internal problem. The Mexican people are also suffering.

So I have here a letter that was recently sent to the President of the United States, Mr. Clinton, signed by the Governor of Texas, George W. Bush, the Governor of Arizona, Jane Dee Hull, and the Governor of New Mexico, Gary E. Johnson, urging the President on behalf of the States of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas that they convey their full support for the certification of Mexico as a responsible

ally in the international war against drugs. The letter states we believe that under President Zedillo's leadership Mexico's commitment to and cooperation in counter narcotics efforts has definitely improved, and they support full certification of Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I ask that this letter be incorporated at the end of my remarks.

Mr. Speaker, the Congress will be pursuing this matter of certification, our subcommittee will be pursuing the overall national policies of drug control within the United States, and I hope that the Congress and the people of the United States can be engaged in a fair and thorough examination of our own internal domestic crisis and come up with a determination and a will to do much better than we are currently doing.

STATE OF TEXAS,
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR,
February 22, 1999.

Hon. WILLIAM J. CLINTON,
President of the United States, The White House, Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT CLINTON: On behalf of the States of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, we are writing to urge your support for full certification of Mexico as a responsible ally in the international war against drugs. We believe that under President Ernesto Zedillo's leadership, Mexico's commitment to and cooperation in counter-narcotics efforts has definitely improved. For this reason, we support full certification of Mexico.

We maintain that the United States should not undermine Mexico in its effort to control the drug trade, but should demonstrate confidence in Mexico's ability to cooperate and actively participate in a long-term counter-narcotics strategy. Mexico has clearly demonstrated a renewed commitment in the battle against drug trafficking by announcing a \$400 million increase in funding for anti-drug operations and agreeing to improve cross-border undercover operations. In addition, Mexico's new three-year plan targeting early detection of drug flights and sea shipments and an increased counter-narcotics role for the Mexican Army should make a significant impact in the number of seizures and arrests.

It is our belief that de-certification could jeopardize existing and future anti-drug and law enforcement efforts, ultimately impairing the positive relationship between our two nations. Moreover, as Governors of border states, whose economies are interdependent with Mexico, we support full certification because potential economic sanctions against Mexico and decreased development aid resulting from de-certification would have a direct negative impact to our states.

We have confidence in President Zedillo's efforts and commitment to a zero tolerance policy for drugs. Mexico has been steadily on its way back to economic recovery, and de-certification would only hinder Mexico's efforts to implement political and economic reforms.

We thank you in advance for your consideration of our joint position and look forward to working with you to ensure that our congressional leaders support full certification of Mexico as an ally in the war against drugs.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH,
Governor of Texas.
JANE DEE HULL,
Governor of Arizona.
GARY E. JOHNSON,
Governor of New Mexico.