

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for morning business for debate only, with Senators speaking for up to 10 minutes each.

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

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

#### GARRETT LEE SMITH MEMORIAL ACT

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Chair now lay before the Senate the House measure to accompany S. 2634, the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act.

There being no objection, the Presiding Officer (Mr. CHAMBLISS) laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

(The bill will be printed in a future edition of the RECORD.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask whether there be objection to proceeding to the measure at this time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The message is before the Senate.

Mr. SMITH. I ask, then, unanimous consent that the Senate concur in the House amendment, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, this is a much happier day for me than it was 1 year ago. A year ago yesterday, my son, Garrett Lee Smith, took his life. Today it is his birthday, and today my heart is not filled with sadness but with joy because the Congress of the United States has acted with near unanimity, an overwhelming vote in the House of Representatives, Republicans and Democrats alike, and for a second time now the Senate, without objection, 100 strong, Republican and Democrat alike, has acted not as partisans but as Americans on an issue that afflicts families all over our land, the issue of mental health, of depression among our youth that often, too often, even at epidemic levels, can lead to suicide.

This has been for me a very long and difficult year. I am grateful for the support of family and friends and, especially here now, my colleagues. I had many thoughts in mind when this occurred because I was raised to believe that no success can compensate for failure in one's home. And when my son took his life, I felt the ultimate failure. Yet I have come to learn from colleagues, some of them, like the leader, medical experts, others like MIKE DEWINE, who has suffered much in his family through the loss of a daughter; PETE DOMENICI, who has helped me to understand the lethal nature of mental illnesses, and so many more.

I have been buoyed up and strengthened sufficient to carry on my public responsibility and try to find from the loss of my son some new meaning in his life. Today the Congress has acted on his birthday. My wife Sharon and I are profoundly thankful to all of you. What we have done today is to pass a bill that will enable the States, encourage the States, incentivize the States to have youth suicide prevention programs to, with parental permission, give testing to identify, under the strictest of privacy, those children who may have a predisposition toward depression and suicide.

We have given the incentive to the States to set up college backstops, counseling, intervention measures, to help where this epidemic is most acutely felt, and that is on American college campuses. We are setting up a national repository of information through SAMSHA, where the best ideas from the 50 laboratories that are the 50 United States can be brought together and shared so intervention can be more effectively made to save more of America's sons and daughters.

When this bill left the Senate, I thought it was in perfect form. But I learned something about a bicameral legislature in working with my colleagues in the House. They made it better. They had many good suggestions. And I feel it appropriate to say that while some I am entirely in agreement with and others I would have preferred not be there, I support the bill as it has come from the House of Representatives.

I owe a great deal of thanks to some specific individuals. If you will bear with me, Mr. President, I would like to thank some of them and also note for those colleagues who may be concerned about parental notification precedence that the House was willing to put in there provisions that this tougher parental notification is applicable just to this bill and in no way affects No Child Left Behind legislation.

I need to say thank you to some very significant people without whom this bill would not have passed. First, I want to thank Chairman JOE BARTON, the Congressman from Texas, who chairs the House Commerce Committee. I say to all the world, and particularly his constituents, he is a man of his word. He had tremendous pres-

sure on him not to proceed with this, but he gave me his word. He is good for it. He worked with me. He demanded much of me. We gave much. But under considerable pressure he stood up against it and made this to pass.

To Speaker HASTERT and Leader DELAY, thank you for your permission, thank you for making this happen, allowing it to happen, and also being good to the commitments that were made to me and other colleagues and to the White House.

I thank my House sponsors, Congressman BART GORDON of Tennessee, Coach TOM OSBORNE of Nebraska. Coach OSBORNE knows something of young people and their struggles. He was wonderful to work with. DANNY DAVIS, of Illinois, spoke eloquently about this bill on the Senate floor last evening. My own Congressman, GREG WALDEN, who helped to shuttle this through the House, I am profoundly thankful to him. I also note EARL BLUMENAUER and PATRICK KENNEDY of Rhode Island were particularly helpful to me in passing this legislation. I am grateful to them.

Senator SANTORUM—they call him a Pope over there—is regarded in very exalted terms and a term of affection. He was unusually helpful in helping me to make my way through the House membership and to get this passed.

Leader FRIST, this would not happen without you. At every turn you have been there for me and helped me to get through this year. JUDD GREGG, the chairman of our committee, with jurisdiction, was wonderful to make this possible and happen in the Senate. MITCH MCCONNELL, your staff, Leader FRIST's staff, were very helpful. They went the extra mile back and forth from the House to Senate Chambers time and again for me. I thank the staffs of all of these people who worked so hard.

Senator DODD and Senator KENNEDY have been unusual champions of this issue, and issues of mental health. They have been wonderful guides. Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island helped to author a major provision.

HARRY REID, the Democratic whip, has been a stalwart and counseled me to take this and do that. I say to him, thank you, sir, for your help and your understanding of the issue of suicide.

I thank Leader DASCHLE as well because without his understanding that this was not partisan this would not have happened. I am grateful to Leader DASCHLE.

I mentioned MIKE DEWINE. MIKE is behind me and will speak to this issue. If you could package goodness in human form, it would look like MIKE DEWINE.

I think most significantly for me has been the woman who sits to my right, Catherine Finley, who is a person of talent, tenacity, and temperament sufficient to take a stand-alone bill, in a very short period of time, pass it through the Senate, the House, and back through the Senate again. I am

eternally in her debt. And my wife joins me in those sentiments.

Finally, I thank George W. Bush, the President of the United States, and his staff at the White House, who have been with me from the beginning and who have urged me on time and again to get this done and to get it to him. He has understood that this issue is part and parcel about being compassionate and being conservative. I thank the President of the United States.

In closing, Mr. President, I would like to read a letter that I think says more eloquently than I can why this legislation is so necessary and why it has the prospect of doing so much good. I received this letter from a student at George Washington University in Washington, DC. She urged passage of this bill. Her name is Miss Meredith Jessup of Sturgis, MI. She wrote this:

This past year I arrived in Washington, DC with a new educational landscape set before me, convinced that I was equipped with the essential skills I would need to survive college. But I was in no way prepared when my close friend and neighbor committed suicide by jumping to his death from his dorm window.

The story that unfolded was his personal narrative of his fight with depression and his constant feelings of worthlessness. He openly wrote about how he had planned his own suicide and about the frightened ideas of acting out his plans. This young, brilliant person, never seen without a smile on his face, had been secretly battling severe depression for a year. None of his friends had had a clue and he had never shared this with his family.

He was depressed and confused and I was scared and utterly unprepared to know how to keep my friend alive. I was never sure why he had chosen to confide in me, but he made me promise to keep his confidence. In the following days I convinced him to accompany me to the university counseling service.

Two weeks later I received another desperate call from him, he was contemplating death at the dorm. I convinced him to begin walking to meet me and we went to the hospital emergency room. As I sat in the hospital waiting room, tears streaming down my face, I prayed that the hospital would admit my shattered friend for emergency counseling and intervention. I was not a professional; friendship was the only tool I could use to try to help him and as I sat at his bedside I grabbed his hand and told him how I was proud of his courage.

On Sunday, April 18, 2004, a week after his discharge from the hospital, he called my cell phone once again. This time his voice was barely recognizable, laden with sadness. He called from his dorm room, four doors down from mine. "I don't want anyone to worry about me," he said. "When you wake up tomorrow, I want you to forget about anything that happened today." As he kept repeating these lines over and over again, it hit me like a load of bricks. He was going to commit suicide. "Good-bye . . ." rang in my ears as he hung up his phone.

I repeatedly tried to call his phone and pounded on his door. Then the sound of emergency sirens flooded in from open windows, and a harsh reality set in. He had jumped from the balcony of his fourth floor window. My friend was dead at 19 and I hadn't been able to save him.

Perhaps his condition was beyond anyone's help—friend, family or trained professional. Perhaps there was more that could have been done. In his case, however, we will never

know. The only thing for us to do after a tragedy like this is to work to ensure others who are struggling do not face the seemingly hopeless situation he had found.

On this, the three-month anniversary of my friend's death, I am writing to thank you for championing the issue of youth suicide prevention. I am writing to thank you for your courageous efforts to help people struggling like my friend. I applaud the courage it took for you to stand before your Senate colleagues and reopen the emotional wounds that are just below the surface from the suicide of your own son.

These wounds are all too familiar to me in the death of my friend. He was one of five students of The George Washington University to die this last school year in suicides or preventable acts. Perhaps the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act is a way that I can help others who are struggling on my campus. This piece of legislation and the opportunities it presents provide a way to create something good out of so many tragedies. What I could not do for my friend perhaps can be accomplished in an educational outreach and counseling protocol program I plan to propose for GW, seeking funding through your legislation.

I would like to personally thank you and other members of the United States Senate for taking up this initiative to help prevent suicide among America's youth. I would also like to encourage members of the House of Representatives to pass the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. By instituting the grant program for America's universities, I hope to be a part of alleviating the nation's third leading cause of death among young people. It's the least I can do to honor the memory of my friend. Our country cannot afford to lose to depression the character and the substantial talents of young people like him.

With that, I thank my colleagues for supporting this historic act.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, let me congratulate but mostly thank my friend and colleague from Oregon. We would not be here tonight without him. It is true many people worked on this bill, but he is the one who got us here. No one but my friend knows how many people he talked to and what he had to go through to get us to this point. I think everyone on this floor knows it could not have been done without our colleague. He did it. He did something that no one else could have done.

Our friend, my friend, suffered the worst tragedy—he and his wife Sharon—that any couple, any family can suffer; that is, to lose a child. They took that tragedy and resolved that they would do something so other families would not suffer as they have suffered.

I say to my friend that neither he nor anyone else in this Chamber will ever know what families will be spared because of the action taken by the House and Senate and because of his hard work.

But the one thing we do know is, there will be many families who will be spared what he and Sharon fought through. For that, we all should say thank you. There will be many children out there who will not lose their lives, many families who will not suffer.

This bill is a wonderful, living tribute to their son Garrett Smith. If we do our job, not only this year, not only this moment, but in the years ahead in properly funding this, it will remain year after year after year a wonderful living tribute to him. It will remain also a living tribute to all the young children who have lost their lives over the years.

I thank my colleague. On behalf of all the people and families who will be spared and all the children whose lives will be saved—and we will never know who they are—he has done something that is very wonderful. He has taken his sorrow and grief, taken the position God has given him and the people of his State have given him and has made something wonderful out of it. It is, in fact, a wonderful tribute to his son, a tribute to the love he has for his son.

I yield the floor.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I am proud to join my colleagues Senators GORDON SMITH, CHRIS DODD, MIKE DEWINE and JACK REED in support of the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act. I thank them all for their tireless efforts to see this legislation enacted.

I especially thank Senator SMITH for his courage in helping us understand this rising problem that for so long has been misunderstood. The legislation we are passing today is an important first step we must take—we know we must take—to help our troubled young people contemplating suicide.

Youth suicide affects us all. And while we also understand that no words can heal the deep pain or replace the great loss of an anguished child we love, we know we can do better. We can work to prevent the kind of debilitating despair that leads young person to end their lives and to let them know that there are other options. There are people out there who care. You are not alone.

Make no mistake, we are truly in the middle of an epidemic of teen suicide. Suicide is now the third leading cause of death among adolescents. And while the years of lost potential and productive living are never really captured in the statistics, we know the death of a young person has a devastating and long-lasting effect on family, friends, and the whole community.

To the youth of America this bill has a simple message—help is on the way. We have heard your pleas for help and we are acting. And it is particularly important at a time when cash-strapped States are cutting funds for many vital services.

This legislation will give grants to States to develop youth suicide prevention programs in settings ranging from schools to foster care homes to juvenile justice settings, to substance abuse and mental health treatment and prevention centers. It gives States the flexibility to target resources and set goals. It gives priority to funding entities with experience delivering these kinds of services and ensures that 85 percent of every dollar spent goes toward direct

prevention efforts—toward saving lives.

It is appropriate that we are passing this legislation just as millions of our young people are headed off to college for another semester. We know that college is a place where young people can expand their horizons and learn so much about themselves and the world around them. It is a time of great opportunity, but also a time of great challenge for many young people. Away from home for the first time, with new and enormous pressures to succeed, many struggle with feelings of depression, which in the most extreme cases lead to thoughts of suicide.

Thanks to the efforts of Senator DODD, this legislation will increase the presence of counseling programs on college campuses across the country. It will allow colleges to conduct education seminars, operate life-saving hotlines, train other students to recognize and counsel their struggling peers, and link colleges and universities that do not have mental health services with health care providers that can help.

The program authorized under this bill recognizes that colleges and universities have a role to play in funding prevention efforts, and so does the Federal Government. For every dollar a school contributes to the health and well-being of their students, we contribute the same. It is the right thing to do, and it will save lives at campuses across the country.

This legislation will also create a new national center to monitor, coordinate and assist our national suicide prevention efforts. This national coordinating mechanism is long overdue and it will make a world of difference.

This bill will not solve the issue of youth suicide, but it represents real progress. We still have so much more to do to see that no child falls through the cracks, and that mental illnesses receive the same insurance coverage and quality of care as physical illnesses.

But today we move forward with the Garrett Lee Smith Act, knowing that we will have made a brighter tomorrow for many of our young people.

Mrs. DODD. Mr. President, I believe that the legislation before us tonight—the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act—represents a positive step towards finding concrete, comprehensive and effective remedies to the epidemic of suicide in our Nation's young people. I intend to support this legislation, and I would like to thank my friend and colleague, GORDON SMITH, for all his tireless work and commitment in seeing this legislation through.

By authorizing \$82 million over 3 years, this bill seeks further to support the good work being done on the community level, the State level, and the Federal level with regards to youth suicide early intervention and prevention in four principal ways.

First, it establishes a new grant initiative for the further development and

expansion of youth suicide early intervention and prevention strategies and the community-based services they seek to coordinate in schools, mental health programs, substance abuse programs, foster care systems, juvenile justice systems, and other youth support organizations.

Second, it authorizes a dedicated technical assistance center to assist States, localities, tribes, and community service providers with the planning, implementation, and evaluation of these strategies and services.

Third, it establishes a new grant initiative to enhance and improve early intervention and prevention services specifically designed for college-aged students.

And fourth, it creates a new inter-agency collaboration to focus on policy development and the dissemination of data specifically pertaining to youth suicide.

In July, the Senate took up this important bill and showed its commitment to reduce the public and mental health tragedy of youth suicide by passing it unanimously. I hoped at that time that the House would see this strong example of bipartisanship and follow suit.

Regrettably, the House sent back the legislation containing a controversial provision authored by a small group of House Members with rather extreme views that has the potential actually to harm, rather than help, suicide prevention and suicide awareness efforts.

Simply put, this provision sets a new precedent by erecting and mandating broad and ambiguous parental consent measures across all "school-based programs" and non-medical services in our nation's schools—the very places where most children who are prone to suicidal tendencies first seek help. These measures are stigmatizing, untried, unproven, and arguably most importantly—undefined.

I am afraid that because of the ambiguity of this provision, we cannot know what "prior written, informed consent" really means, what "school-based programs" will require this consent, or what emotional state a child must be in to be considered for "emergency" care.

I am also afraid that because of this provision, we may not be able to guarantee that the services this bill funds will be made available to all children who need them. We may not be able to guarantee that a child who is being abused by parents or guardians—an unfortunate occurrence that's unacceptably common in our country—will be able to obtain the appropriate mental health services he or she might desperately need without the consent of that very same parent or guardian.

Nevertheless, the strengths of this bill outweigh its weaknesses. The Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act is an important first step towards recognizing the causes of this public and mental health tragedy and supporting innovative and effective public and mental

health initiatives that reach every child and young adult in this country—compassionate initiatives that given them encouragement, hope, and above all, life.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, in this body, occasionally we have such moments we share as colleagues, and they are probably more rare than any of us would like. The rarity is really centering around what we have heard, and that is a juxtaposition, a coming together of probably the deepest pain and sorrow and sadness with a real celebration, manifested in part by the birthday of Garrett Lee Smith, but also the celebration and accomplishment that can only be accomplished on the floor of the Senate, working with the House, working with the President of the United States, where a piece of legislation is passed and you know it is going to affect scores of lives, hundreds of lives, and directly and indirectly thousands of lives of people we will never see, faces we will never see, but who will be touched in a way that is most powerful, and that is allowing them to lead fulfilling lives and not be captured by tragedy which, without this legislation, unfortunately today, where we are, would occur.

It is that oneness of humanity, of the ups and the downs, but the goodness that comes out of it that this bill represents. The comments by both Senator SMITH and Senator DEWINE reflect it so well.

Senator SMITH thanked so many of the people. I think it is very useful to do because it allows them to be thanked, but more importantly for others to see how hard it is, even with legislation that we know will save lives and do good, to pass legislation in this body and in the House. It takes a lot of people working together, unselfishly, to produce a beautiful product such as has been passed minutes ago.

The act itself reaches out to a population we know is going through the most dynamic changes at any stage in life, as the population travels through adolescence, meeting changes and challenges, leaving certain securities and insecurities of their past and being struck day in and day out. And up until passage of this bill, there was simply not help there, or it was not there when somebody reached out. The wonderful thing this bill does, through referral networks, through programs to raise awareness of teen suicide and youth suicide, until we have a program that trains faculty and others to respond when a student does reach out, things will simply not change. That is what this bill does.

I want to in particular say thank you to our colleague Senator GORDON SMITH. This is painful. This is a real triumph, which is the celebratory part, but it is a difficult moment for him, for Sharon, for his family. As he mentioned, it has been a year and a day ago since the death of his son Garrett. But

since that time, working through the grief and the sorrow and the sadness and the loss that can't even be described in words, he and Sharon have consistently and eloquently and passionately spoken about not their own needs but the needs for others, others who they don't know but who they know exist, both today and tomorrow, those who suffer in some shape or form from some type of mental illness. No one can bring back a life that has been lost, but as those of us who have worked with our colleague Senator SMITH and who have watched and who have observed, he has helped teach us that through this process lives can be saved.

It touches home to many of us. This particular bill addresses this sort of youth suicide, teen suicide. And those of us who have kids that age—my three boys are 18, 19, and 21 years of age—as Senator SMITH mentioned, in that age group, suicide is the third leading cause of death. Thirty thousand people die each year as a result of suicide. That is one person every 17 minutes. Suicide has touched Senator SMITH and his family personally, other Members of this body. You don't realize how many people it touches, as we have discussed before, until something tragic like this happens. But it touches people throughout this body, indeed throughout the country.

This legislation helps turn those tragedies into direct assistance to the benefit of others. This bill addresses suicide when it occurs at the most tragic time of one's life. That is in those years where one is leaving, going through the teen years and adolescence and moving on to those years of the prime of their life. We know, though, that with help and response, prevention occurs and lives are saved. There are early detection, early prevention strategies, all of which this bill allows for the first time in legislation to come alive. That is what the legislation is all about. It is about helping those who are at risk, who may or may not show symptoms or signs, but it helps bring those to the surface with an appropriate response that will change the course that has been so tragic in so many people's lives.

In closing, the Garrett Lee Smith Memorial Act is a fitting tribute to Garrett Smith and the love his family has for him. Senator SMITH has fought for its passage not only as a Senator but as a caring father. It has passed this body unanimously, exactly as it should have.

I yield the floor, celebrating and in closing saying, happy birthday, Garrett Lee Smith.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I say to my friend and colleague from Oregon, congratulations on turning a tragedy into a triumph. Garrett would have been indeed proud of his father.

I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this is a kind of celebration. I congratulate

Senator SMITH for his devotion to a cause. I also want Senator SMITH to know how much Landra and I—and I say this without reservation—benefited from the funeral of their son. It is something Landra and I talked about because GORDON and Sharon, from the very beginning, didn't hide the fact their son had taken his own life. I have been to funerals where there have been suicides involved and that is something you don't talk about. They did it openly. Every speaker there talked about Garrett, what a fine young man he was, and what a shame it was he took his own life. Our going to that funeral has benefited us in so many different ways, because we grew spiritually as a result of going to that funeral. There is nothing else we could have done that day that was more important.

Let me say to my friend GORDON SMITH, this is a time for celebration. But I say that we have to continue to work on this issue. This is an authorization bill. We need the appropriators to feel as we do and put money into this project. As good as this is—and we could never appropriate money unless we authorize it—this will be relatively meaningless unless we can get the appropriators to put money into this program, so there can be grants and monies to work for this dread disease.

So, Mr. President, I ask that the Senate here assembled have a moment of silence, not only for Garrett Smith, which is the purpose of our being here tonight, but for the 31,000 people who during the last 12 months in America have taken their own lives. Garrett is the person who is a focal point of this calamity that is facing our country today. But because of the work of GORDON SMITH, we are going to be able to move beyond this. Hopefully, in the years to come, this will be a number that won't be increasing but decreasing.

I ask unanimous consent that the Senate take a moment of silence at this time on behalf of Garrett Smith and the thousands of people who have died as a result of the taking of their own lives.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will observe a moment of silence.

[Moment of silence.]

Mr. REID. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### RECOGNITION OF NEVADA "TOP COPS"

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to express my congratulations to Officers Gary Casper, Clint Malburg, and

Jim Mitchell and Sergeant Rick Servoss on their selection for the National Association of Police Organizations' Top Cops Awards.

The State of Nevada owes a great debt of gratitude to these brave police officers, and to all other law enforcement officers who keep our communities safe.

On August 19, 2003, a sudden storm caused dangerous flash flooding in the Las Vegas Valley. Sergeant Servoss and Officers Casper, Malburg and Mitchell, all members of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department Search and Rescue team, were deployed to help residents escape the flood waters.

Seven people were trapped in life-threatening situations, stranded on top of their vehicles. Battling 60 mph winds and power lines, Sergeant Servoss and Officer Casper maneuvered the team's helicopter only feet above the roaring water. Suspended by a cable and winch operated by Officer Mitchell, Officer Malburg retrieved the trapped individuals. The team even saved four Las Vegas firefighters when rushing waters overtook their fire engine.

I recently had the opportunity to meet with Officers Casper and Mitchell. That meeting reminded me how important it is to express our appreciation to police officers and other first responders. These people put their lives on the line every day to protect our homes and communities. They will tell you that they are just doing their—jobs but we must never forget that they are heroes.

When I attended law school, I worked as a U.S. Capitol Police officer to support my family. Today I still feel a bond with those who protect our communities. I am so grateful for the dedication and heroism of these brave men. Please join me in thanking them for their courageous efforts.

#### LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

On March 19, 1999 in San Francisco, CA, three men were charged with suspicion of aggravated assault after they allegedly yelled anti-gay epithets and assaulted a man.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.