

adult prisons, it is time to seriously consider the strong evidence that this policy is not working.

We must do this with ample consideration for the fiscal constraints on States, particularly in these lean budget times, and with ample deference to the traditional role of States in setting their own criminal justice policy. We have done so here. But we also must work to ensure that unless strong and considered reasons dictate otherwise, the presumption must be that children will be kept with other children, particularly before they have been convicted of any wrongdoing.

As a former prosecutor, I know well the importance of holding criminals accountable for their crimes with strong sentences. But when we are talking about children, we must also think about how best to help them become responsible, contributing members of society as adults. That keeps us all safer.

I am disturbed that children from minority communities continue to be overrepresented in the juvenile justice system. This bill encourages States to take new steps to identify the reasons for this serious and continuing problem and to work together with the Federal Government and with local communities to find ways to start solving it.

I am also concerned that too many runaway and homeless young people are locked up for so-called status offenses, like truancy, without having committed any crime. In a Judiciary Committee hearing earlier this year on the reauthorization of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, I was amazed by the plight of this vulnerable population, even in the wealthiest country in the world, and inspired by the ability of so many children in this desperate situation to rise above that adversity.

This reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice Act takes strong and significant steps to move States away from detaining children from at-risk populations for status offenses and requires States to phase out the practice entirely in 3 years, but with a safety valve for those States that are unable to move quite so quickly due to limited resources.

As I have worked with experts on this legislation, it has become abundantly clear that mental health and drug treatment are fundamental to making real progress toward keeping juvenile offenders from reoffending. Mental disorders are two to three times more common among children in the juvenile justice system than in the general population, and fully 80 percent of young people in the juvenile justice system have been found by some studies to have a connection to substance abuse. This bill takes new and important steps to prioritize and fund mental health and drug treatment.

The bill tackles several other key facets of juvenile justice reform. It emphasizes effective training of personnel who work with young people in the ju-

venile justice system, both to encourage the use of approaches that have been proven effective and to eliminate cruel and unnecessary treatment of juveniles. The bill also creates incentives for the use of programs that research and testing have shown to work best.

Finally, the bill refocuses attention on prevention programs intended to keep children from ever entering the criminal justice system. I was struck when Chief Richard Miranda of Tucson, AZ, said in a December hearing on this bill that we cannot arrest our way out of the problem. I heard the same sentiment from Chief Anthony Bossi and others at the Judiciary Committee's field hearing earlier this year on young people and violent crime in Rutland, VT. When seasoned police officers from Rutland, VT, to Tucson, AZ, tell me that prevention programs are pivotal, I pay attention.

Just as this administration and recent Republican Congresses have gutted programs that support State and local law enforcement, so they have consistently cut and narrowed effective prevention programs, creating a dangerous vacuum. We need to reverse this trend and help our communities implement programs proven to help kids turn their lives around.

I have long supported a strong Federal commitment to preventing youth violence, and I have worked hard on past reauthorizations of this legislation, as have Senators SPECTER and KOHL and others on the Judiciary Committee. We have learned the importance of balancing strong law enforcement with effective prevention programs. This reauthorization pushes forward new ways to help children move out of the criminal justice system, return to school, and become responsible, hard-working members of our communities.

This legislation seeks to move the country in new directions to protect our communities and give our children the chance they need to grow up to be productive members of society. But we were careful to do so with full respect for the discretion due to law enforcement and judges, with deference to states, and with a regard for difficult fiscal realities.

It is unfortunate that, despite the bipartisan nature of the legislation and the careful consideration and consultation that went into drafting it, Republican objections have prevented this important bill from passing and helping to keep our children and our communities safe. I hope, while there is still time, that all Senators will decide to support and pass this vital reauthorization.

PUBLIC CORRUPTION PROSECUTION IMPROVEMENTS ACT

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, more than a year ago, I introduced a bill aimed at restoring Americans' faith in their elected officials. The bipartisan Public Corruption Prosecutions Im-

provements Act would complement the accomplishments this Congress has made in passing important ethics and lobbying reforms by giving law enforcement additional tools and resources to root out corrupt conduct. Although the Judiciary Committee reported the bill last November, it has been stalled on the Senate floor for nearly a year. In the waning days of this Congress, we should take the opportunity to take up and promptly pass this critical legislation.

Since the bill's introduction, we have seen repeated instances of rampant and corrosive corruption at all levels of government, including at key Federal agencies. Just this month, the Office of Inspector General for the Department of the Interior documented numerous instances where the "royalty-in-kind" program—a program that collects billions of dollars from private companies that tap key energy resources—was corrupted by Federal employees who accepted benefits from energy companies "with prodigious frequency." Investigators and prosecutors must have the resources and tools they need to go after this kind of corrupt conduct that compromises America's security. Too often, though, strained budgets and loopholes in existing corruption laws mean that corrupt conduct goes unchecked or simply cannot be prosecuted.

Make no mistake: the stain of corruption has spread to all levels of Government and has affected both major political parties. This is not a Democratic or Republican problem—it is an American problem that victimizes every single one of us by chipping away at the foundations of our democracy. Congress must send a strong signal that it will not tolerate public corruption by providing better tools for Federal investigators and prosecutors to combat it. This bill will do exactly that.

We are also just now learning the role of fraud and perhaps corruption in the catastrophic unraveling of the financial markets and the economy. Prosecutors must have every tool at their disposal to restore accountability. This bill will strengthen the tools prosecutors have to crack down on these insidious crimes.

The bill gives investigators and prosecutors more time and resources to effectively enforce existing anti-corruption laws. Specifically, it extends the statute of limitations from 5 to 6 years for the most serious public corruption offenses. Public corruption cases are among the most difficult and time-consuming cases to investigate and prosecute. Bank fraud, arson and passport fraud, among other offenses, all have 10-year statutes of limitations. Public corruption offenses cut to the heart of our democracy, and a more modest increase to the statute of limitations is a reasonable step to help our corruption investigators and prosecutors do their jobs.

The bill would also provide significant and much-needed additional funding for public corruption enforcement. Since September 11, 2001, Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI, resources have been shifted away from the pursuit of white collar crime to counterterrorism. FBI Director Mueller has said recently that public corruption is now among the FBI's top investigative priorities, but a September 2005 report by the Department of Justice inspector general found that, from 2000 to 2004, there was an overall reduction in public corruption matters handled by the FBI. More recently, a study by the research group Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse found that the prosecution of all kinds of white collar crimes is down 27 percent since 2000, and official corruption cases have dropped in the same period by 14 percent. The Wall Street Journal reported recently that the investigation of a Federal elected official stalled for 6 months because the investigating U.S. Attorney's Office could not afford to replace the prosecutor who had previously handled the case.

We must reverse this trend and make sure that law enforcement has the tools and the funding it needs to address serious and corrosive crimes occurring right here at home. Efforts to combat terrorism and official corruption are not mutually exclusive. A bribed customs official who allows a terrorist to smuggle a dirty bomb into our country, or a corrupt consular officer who illegally supplies U.S. entry visas to would-be terrorists, can cause grave harm to our national security.

This bill goes further by amending several key statutes to broaden their application in corruption and fraud contexts. This series of fixes will prevent corrupt public officials and their accomplices from evading or defeating prosecution based on existing legal ambiguities. For example, the bill includes a fix to the gratuities statute that makes clear that public officials may not accept anything of value, other than what is permitted by existing regulations, given to them because of their official position.

The bill also appropriately expands the definition of what it means for a public official to perform an "official act" for the purposes of the bribery statute and closes several other gaps in current law.

Finally, the bill raises the statutory maximum penalties for several laws dealing with official misconduct, including theft of government property and bribery. These increases reflect the serious and corrosive nature of these crimes, and would harmonize the punishment for these crimes with other similar statutes.

This bipartisan bill is supported by the Department of Justice and by a wide array of public interest groups that have long advocated for vigorous enforcement of our fraud and public corruption laws, including the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause,

Democracy 21, the League of Women Voters, Public Citizen, and U.S. PIRG.

If we are serious about addressing the kinds of egregious misconduct that we have recently witnessed in high-profile public corruption cases, Congress must enact meaningful legislation to give investigators and prosecutors the tools and resources they need to enforce our laws. Passing last year's ethics and lobbying reform bill was a step in the right direction. But we must finish the job by strengthening the criminal law to enable Federal investigators and prosecutors to bring those who undermine the public trust to justice. I am disappointed that Republican objections have prevented the full Senate from passing this critical bill. I ask those Republican Senators who are objecting to proceeding to this anticorruption legislation and to passing it to please reconsider before it is too late. Let us join together in taking bipartisan action.

ECONOMIC STIMULUS

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, these are very difficult times for the American economy and America's working families. For most of the past 2 weeks, the headlines have been dominated by news of Wall Street's financial meltdown. But our Nation's economic woes stretch far beyond financial institutions.

The American people are watching the fluctuations in the stock market; they see investment banks failing and the values of their own 401(k) accounts and money market funds decline. Gas is still hovering near \$4 a gallon, their grocery and heating bills continue to skyrocket, and yet their wages remain stagnant. Millions of families do not know how they will make ends meet this winter. While they believe that something must be done to fix the problems in the credit markets, they need and expect us to help them too.

It has been a week since the President sent to Capitol Hill a three-page bill asking for unprecedented authority to increase the American people's debt even further—to \$11.3 trillion—and to use that money solely to purchase troubled assets from failing financial institutions, while demanding no accountability from their executives. It is no surprise that the American people have solidly rejected that plan. Bewildered, they ask Congress, "Where is the help for my family, for my community?"

This week bipartisan efforts on the bailout continue in the Senate and House. We are working to craft a responsible plan to guarantee strong oversight of the system that created this disaster, limit exorbitant executive compensation and bonuses on Wall Street, and restore confidence in our markets. But we also recognize that much more must be done.

Senate Majority Leader REID and Appropriations Chairman BYRD have developed a thoughtful, comprehensive

package that will begin to help our entire Nation recover. Regrettably, yesterday 42 Republicans rejected efforts to provide help beyond Wall Street. By voting against the motion to proceed, they denied the Senate the opportunity to even debate a plan for Americans' personal economic recovery.

The most recent statistics on employment and inflation reveal why their choice was wrong and why an immediate and forceful response is needed.

The unemployment rate stands at 6.1 percent the highest rate since September 2003. This bill would have extended unemployment benefits by 7 weeks for all States and by an additional 13 weeks in high unemployment States, and it would have provided \$300 million for employment and training activities for dislocated workers. These funds would have helped more than 79,000 people receive training, and job search and career counseling.

Over the past 2 years, food costs have increased by nearly 15 percent. This bill would provide an additional \$50 million for food banks and \$60 million for senior meals program, increase food stamp benefits by 10 percent and add \$450 million for the WIC Program.

Energy prices are up by nearly 40 percent in the past 2 years. This bill would have added \$5.1 billion for low-income home energy assistance programs and \$500 million to help make low-income homes for energy efficient through weatherization.

The majority of State governments are in dire economic straits. My home State of Maryland faces a \$1 billion shortfall for the next fiscal year, and cuts in programs and services are already being planned. This bill would have boosted state coffers by providing a 4-percent increase in Federal help for State health care programs and \$1.2 billion extra for the National Institutes of Health, NIH, headquartered in Bethesda, MD. This bill would have allowed NIH to award 3,300 new research grants to help discover new treatments and cures for devastating diseases.

Foreclosure rates are at the highest in our country's history and home values are plummeting. This bill included \$37.5 million for the Legal Services Corporation to help families whose homes are in foreclosure, \$52 million for the FHA to bolster its staff and resources to ensure that its mortgage fund remains solvent, \$250 million to help public housing agencies rehabilitate vacant rental units, and \$200 million to help families in rental housing who are displaced by foreclosure find safe, affordable places to live.

The Wall Street meltdown has vastly reduced the availability of credit for our small businesses and endangered the survival of many businesses. This bill would have provided \$200 million to support reduced-fee loans to small businesses and \$5 million to support microloans.

The defeat of the cloture vote today truly represents a missed opportunity