

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to call attention to the dramatic rise of hate crimes and voice my support of H.R. 1343, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

Last Congress, we came closer to enacting legislation that would have reaffirmed our commitment to prosecuting those who commit hate crimes. The Senate passed the hate crimes amendment on the defense appropriations act. The House subsequently passed a motion, which the majority of us supported, to instruct the conferees to retain the language contained in the Senate version of the defense authorization bill. Unfortunately, the conference committee ignored the will of the House and the Senate and chose not to retain the hate crime provisions in the final conference report.

Opponents of the hate crime measure have charged that it grants preferential treatment to certain groups. This is totally a false presumption. Heinous crimes that target victims solely on the basis of their race, their color, religion, national origin or sexual orientation deserve enhanced punishment. Because hate crimes are as diverse as the persons who commit them, we are all vulnerable to becoming victims. Hate crime legislation is a reaffirmation, not a denouncement of our Nation's commitment to civil rights and equal protection under the law for all Americans.

Furthermore, I reject the notion that a hate crimes bill would undermine one of the most important constitutional tenets, the freedom of speech. This could not be further from the truth. Racist groups and other extremists would have the constitutional right to preach and spread their propaganda. However, if those views translate into premeditated violence against a person or persons because of their ethnicity, their religion, or their sexual orientation, then those perpetrators should be held justly accountable for their acts.

The Texas legislature passed a hate crimes bill earlier this year after failing to do so during the previous legislative session. The bill was named to commemorate James Byrd, Junior, an African American man who was dragged to his death in Jasper, Texas, in 1998 by three white men solely because of the fact that he was black.

During the 1999 legislative session, the Texas House also passed a hate crimes bill. Unfortunately, opponents blocked consideration of the measure in the Texas Senate. Even more disappointing was that then-Governor George Bush was silent on the issue and refused to pledge his support for the bill. I am pleased that this year the legislature in Texas was able to remove the previous roadblocks and secure passage of the bill.

However, now that Texas has committed itself to hate crimes prevention, it needs the tools to facilitate the enforcement. For this reason, I am proud to be a cosponsor of H.R. 1343, the Local Law Enforcement Hate

Crimes Prevention Act, which has been introduced by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS). H.R. 1343 provides the technical, forensic, as well as prosecutorial tools local law enforcement needs to combat this type of violence.

H.R. 1343 has garnered the support of over 202 co-sponsors. Now more than ever we need the Federal hate crimes bill. Since September 11, hate crimes, especially those targeting Arab Americans and Muslim Americans have dramatically increased. This is unfortunate, and we need to make sure that this does not occur. While I am sure that we are all angry and frustrated, and have a great deal of anxiety as a result of what has transpired and what a lot of Americans are feeling, such feelings cannot ever, and I repeat, such feelings cannot ever justify senseless acts of violence against innocent people.

I ask my colleagues and the Republican leadership to speak out against these hate crimes and secure passage of H.R. 1343 as immediately as possible.

CONGRESS MUST PASS HATE CRIMES PREVENTION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, now is the time to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. Congress must stand up and pass this legislation to send an important message to the American people and the world, that hate crimes will not be tolerated.

From the Justice Department demanding interviews from thousand of Arab-American men simply because of their heritage, to secretly detaining hundreds more, this country is sending the wrong message to its people and the world. Since September 11, we have seen a tendency in our citizens to strike out against those who they believe to be responsible. We continue to hear reports of harassment and discrimination against Arab Americans and Muslims. There has been a rise in all types of hate crimes. Congress must act now to send the right message. It must pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act before we adjourn.

America is Christian, Jewish, Muslim, black, white, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American. We are gay and we are straight. We are one Nation. We are one people. We all must continue to live and work together to create one house, one family: the American house, the American family.

The President has preached a message of tolerance and respect and has urged all Americans to be sensitive in this difficult time. This country, as a whole, must heal and move forward together as one Nation. We can do that by embracing the idea, the concept of the beloved community, a community based on hope, compassion, and justice, a community at peace with itself. We

must renounce racism, we must renounce hate, we must renounce violence and embrace diversity. We must teach not just tolerance; we must teach acceptance and love. Only then can we achieve the concept of the beloved community, a community that is free of hate based on race, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Passing the Hate Crimes Prevention Act is a step, a major step in the right direction, a step down a long road. It sends an important message. We must show the world the great Nation that we are, a Nation where all men and women are created equal. It is time to pass the Hate Crimes Prevention Act. So, Mr. Speaker, I call on all of my colleagues to lead by example and pass this bill before we leave.

IN OPPOSITION TO FAST TRACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. BACA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I stand in opposition to the Fast Track legislation that is being proposed. Our country is at war. We must prioritize safety and security of the American people. There are lingering concerns of biological contamination. The American people continue to worry about anthrax, about new reports from the administration to be on high alert. Now is not the time to move forward on the Thomas Fast Track legislation.

The U.S. has officially entered an economic recession. Millions of workers are suffering: unemployed, no health coverage, and jobs lost. Terrorists have struck the American people in their pocketbooks. The holidays are approaching. Hundreds are fearful of imminent layoff. Do you know what it is like to be laid off, not being able to make your payments, not being able to put food on the table, feed your children, stand up with pride? It is very difficult for many Americans who are being laid off, who are now trying to figure out a way to pay their bills. Now is not the time to move forward with this Fast Track legislation. Expediting a trade negotiation is the last priority for the American people, the last priority for the American people in these trying times.

International trade directly affects the lives and the livelihood of increasing numbers of Americans. Congress cannot be confined to the back bench. We in Congress must be active and participate in all international trade negotiations. The Thomas bill would have us serve merely as consultants. That is not what we were elected to do. We were elected to voice and protect the interests not only of my district but of the American people in general. The Thomas Fast Track bill is an unfortunate manipulation of trade policy.

Since September 11, broad bipartisanship has been a top priority.

□ 1730

This bill serves in dividing the line. This bill is driving a wedge between the

Democrats, the Republicans, between the Democrats and the high-tech community. The partisan tactics of the proponents of the Thomas Fast Track bill stands in stark contrast to the President's statement last week that the passage of Trade Promotion Authority would send a signal that Congress and the administration are united on trade. Congress is not united on trade. Now is not the time to move forward with the Thomas Fast Track legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I would support legislation granting President Bush Fast Track negotiation powers provided it addressed effectively the key issues of labor and the environment and the role of Congress. I am not against free trade. Unfortunately, this bill we will vote on tomorrow fails to address the new realities of trade in an effective and realistic manner.

The Thomas bill endangers a rare opportunity to build a bipartisan consensus in support of tearing down trade barriers in a way that would create jobs and raise living standards around the world. Labor and environmental considerations are not merely social considerations. The truth is that inclusion of labor and the environmental issues has real commercial significance for the terms of trade.

A growing number of people around the world, having experienced the negative effects of free trade agreements, we can look back at NAFTA, are opposing accords such as the proposed free trade agreements because we know what we have experienced from many of the jobs lost in the auto industry, the manufacturing industries, and many other areas where people lost their jobs.

We need a different kind of trade agreement, one that would benefit working people and the environment in every country. We can no longer give free reign to the over-exploitation of the workers who abuse not only workers but children and the environment. We must protect the interests of hard-working Americans and the hard-working individuals in our global community.

PASS HATES CRIMES LEGISLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMONS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), H.R. 1433. I think there is nothing more important that we are doing here in this session than this Hate Crimes Prevention Act. We are wasting our time passing junk resolutions, in many cases, and we do not address an important piece of legislation like this. More than 200 Members have signed on as cosponsors of this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I think that every legal or legislative step that can be taken to combat hate should be taken. Hate is a strong force in the world. It is a monster expressing itself in many ways. The hate monster has us by the neck all over the world, but terrorists that we are fighting in Afghanistan, bin Laden, the al Qaeda network throughout the world, is motivated by hate. Hate seems to generate more fervor than love. People who are pushing love and want to do things differently do not seem to have the same kind of motivation or energy. The people who want to destroy our democracy, they hate us because we will not cover our women in public, they hate us for a thousand different reasons, and we need to meet that with tactics and with strategies that are as strong as the hatemongers.

We need to have in every way blanket condemnations of hatred, intolerance, and we need to be very detailed in this country. In this country we can get into the details of what is wrong. We need to condemn intolerance, and we need to specifically condemn intolerance that relates to sexism or intolerance that relates to race or disability. There are some people who, some men in particular, who are very adamant in terms of the workplace, and they cannot stand intolerance or oppression by the boss or management, but they will exploit and oppress women.

There are some people in certain races who certainly will speak out against racial intolerances, and they will also oppress women. There are some women who will certainly defend the rights of women to be equal, but they will oppress or be intolerant of people of other races. All of these things add up to a situation that is very complex. We cannot stop it by legislation, but legislation plays a key role. We are the catalytic agent in the process of helping people to deal with hate, making our society as a whole deal with hate.

Nationality or ethnic origin is certainly unacceptable for hatemongers, also; and, unfortunately, in our agencies of government, bureaucracies sometimes express a bit of intolerance and sometimes get into hate. Under the President's pressures of terrorism, as we mount our campaign against terrorism, I have seen in my own district Pakistanis rounded up because they are Muslim, and those Pakistanis when they were interrogated, they may have some immigration problems, they have been put in holding pens and jails in New Jersey outside of New York City. About 200 people in a 2-month period have been rounded up and held for 2 or 3 weeks merely because they have an infraction related to immigration but not a serious crime. They asked to go home, and, instead of being immediately processed out and sent home, they were held. One man even died there because there is an intolerance in the FBI bureaucracy under the pres-

sure of the present situation to combat terrorism.

We should not let our guard down and become intolerant of any particular group. Immigrants in general are being put on the spot. I have a large number of people in my district from the Caribbean. Through World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, they never found a single Caribbean espionage agent from Haiti or any other Caribbean nation. Why are they penalizing and putting those people on the spot and profiling them in the situation that presently exists?

It is intolerant, unreasonable and from our own agencies we should not tolerate it. Let us take every step possible. H.R. 1433 is an important step. We do not need more hate in the world. We need in our official conduct as well as our personal conduct to do everything possible to combat hate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. NAPOLITANO addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extension of Remarks.)

POSTAL WORKERS PROVE DETERMINATION TO GET JOB DONE IS SECOND TO NONE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. HILL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds."

These words ring truer now than ever before. In recent weeks, our country's postal workers have once again proven that their determination to get the job done is second to none.

Thankfully, the anthrax scare that recently gripped the Nation has subsided. This does not mean that we should be less diligent when it comes to looking for lessons to draw from these acts of terrorism. Even now, it is clear that commerce in this country is inextricably linked to confidence in our mail system. Maintaining confidence in the system requires that we do whatever is necessary to ensure the mail's safety.

I was reminded of this a few weeks ago as I toured postal facilities in southern Indiana. Simply, I got an earful. Foremost in the minds of these dedicated Hoosiers was the question of when would the mail facilities receive the help needed to purchase and install anti-biological irradiation equipment.

I hope the answer to that particular question is sooner rather than later. The Postal Service needs our help. In the meantime, I have no doubt that Postal Service employees will continue to brave the elements and the unknown and deliver the mail.