

These are only illustrations of problems which, I believe, should yet be corrected in conference or in later legislation.

Mr. JOHNSON. I am very pleased that S. 149, the Export Administration Act of 2001, passed the U.S. Senate by such an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 85-14. This important law reforms our export controls of dual-use items to reflect the vast geopolitical, technological and commercial changes that have occurred since the old law was enacted back in 1979. While we must remain ever-vigilant to protect our nation from security threats, we must at the same time recognize that our security depends in large measure on a vibrant economy, and in particular on our ability to continue innovating in the high technology sector. Ensuring that American producers have the ability to participate in the global marketplace is critical to this effort.

The hard work that contributed to the overwhelming support for S. 149 cannot be overstated, and I was especially gratified by the spirit of cooperation that dominated the discussion. This bill, and the quality of its provisions, owe a great deal to the thoughtful participation of a variety of players on both sides of the aisle. In some cases, too many cooks spoil the broth. In this case, however, a variety of players made very thoughtful improvements to the bill. I extend my thanks and gratitude to the core group of sponsors, which included Senator MIKE ENZI, Republican of Wyoming, Chairman PAUL SARBANES from Maryland, Senator PHIL GRAMM from Texas, and also to so many others contributed to an improved final product.

In particular, I would be remiss in not mentioning the important and dedicated efforts of Senator MARK DAYTON, my Democratic colleague from Minnesota. Senator DAYTON and his staff worked tirelessly to ensure that S. 149 protects the interests of the agricultural community relative to export controls. While there are many legitimate reasons to restrict the export of certain items abroad, especially where the export of such items could pose a threat to America's national security, there is to my mind absolutely no acceptable logic for imposing restrictions on the export of food.

The export of food can never pose a national security threat to this Nation, and Senator DAYTON, along with his Republican colleague from Kansas Senator PAT ROBERTS, put together an amendment that eliminated the possibility that this government ever restrict the export of food for a purported national security threat. I look forward to continuing to work with Senator DAYTON on agricultural issues, and I know that the farm community is grateful to the Senator for his work in this area. I also wish to commend Senator DAYTON's staff, in particular Jack Danielson, Sarah Dahlin and Lani Kawamura.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, a consensus emerged during the 1990s with regard

to the national security of the United States. That consensus was and remains that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical and biological—and their means of delivery constitute the most important threat to our national security. There is also widespread acknowledgment that a number of rogue nations, and particularly China, represent the new national security challenge for the United States.

Yet, this body, the U.S. Senate, is about to pass with overwhelming support a major piece of legislation that stands in direct contradiction to the objectives of U.S. national security policy—to limit the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

This is not hyperbole; it is a simple statement of fact. I acknowledge that the administration has endorsed S. 149. A campaign pledge has been kept. But the long-term ramifications of the vote we are about to take should not be underestimated. S. 149 received the strong opposition of the former chairmen, now ranking members, of each committee and subcommittee with responsibility for national security. It can in no way be considered to represent a prudent balance between commerce and national security. It is, in fact, heavily weighted in favor of the former, with scant regard for the latter.

The list of exports with which we have traditionally been concerned, the Commerce Control List, has 2,400 items on it. It is important to note that exports of these items are licensed, not prohibited. Contrary to the rhetoric of some, it also is not the shopping list of someone making a Sunday trip to Radio Shack. It is, rather, a compilation of esoteric items that have military applications, including for the construction of nuclear weapons and ballistic and cruise missiles. The amount of commerce at issue is minuscule relative both to the amount of U.S. exports and to the size of the gross domestic product. Restrictions or limitations on the export of items on the Commerce Control List do not now, nor have they ever had a deleterious effect on the U.S. economy, or on U.S. competitiveness. They do, however, represent the regulatory manifestation of our national security requirements and the role our moral values should play in the conduct of foreign and trade policies.

Some of us who oppose this bill support permanent normal trade relations with China. And, yet, we oppose this bill. We oppose it because it will, by design, open the door to the export without government oversight of the very items and technologies that contribute to the threats to our security that justifies a defense budget of over \$300 billion per year. When we debate national missile defense over the months ahead, we should not hesitate to reflect on the connection between what we do here today, and what those of us who support missile defenses hope to do tomorrow.

NICS—KEEPING GUNS OUT OF CRIMINAL HANDS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Brady law mandated the establishment of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System to allow federally licensed gun sellers to establish whether a prospective gun buyer is disqualified from purchasing a firearm. The NICS system is working. In its first 25 months of operation, more than 156,000 felons, fugitives and others not eligible to purchase a gun have attempted to do so and have been denied by an FBI NICS check. At the same time, NICS has not placed unreasonable constraints on law abiding citizens' ability to buy a gun. In fact, the Department of Justice reports that more than 7 out of 10 NICS background checks are completed immediately and 95 percent are completed within 2 hours.

But I'm concerned that recent action by Attorney General Ashcroft could limit the effectiveness of NICS and hamper law enforcement efforts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. Regulations issued in January allowed the FBI to keep NICS data for 90 days following a check. The 90-day period is critical to law enforcement's ability to audit the NICS system for errors, search for patterns of illegal or false sales, such as purchasers using fake ID's, and screen for gun dealers who may abuse the system. But in June, the Attorney General announced plans to reduce the length of time that law enforcement agencies can retain NICS data to 24 hours. The 24-hour period is insufficient and would severely restrain law enforcement's ability to target illegal purchasers and corrupt gun sellers.

After reviewing Attorney General Ashcroft's action, I decided to cosponsor S. 1253, a bill introduced by Senators KENNEDY and SCHUMER to maintain the 90-day period for law enforcement to retain NICS data. The bill takes a common sense approach to keeping guns out of the hands of criminals without compromising the privacy rights of law-abiding citizens. It is a good bill and the right remedy to the Attorney General's regrettable action.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about hate crimes legislation I introduced with Senator KENNEDY in March of this year. The Local Law Enforcement Act of 2001 would add new categories to current hate crimes legislation sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred July 25, 1994 in Dana Point, CA. A man allegedly beat two gay men and threatened to kill them after yelling anti-gay slurs. Bradley Jason Brown, 22, was charged with assault with a deadly weapon and committing a hate crime.