

out their important work as defenders of the rights of people with disabilities. Nothing in my amendment today is intended to undermine that important authority in any other federal laws affecting the protection and advocacy system.

I look forward to continuing in my role as a champion of the protection and advocacy system, and of the rights of people with disabilities.

FIGHTING HATE VIOLENCE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay homage to the legion of African-American leaders who have made extraordinary contributions to humanity by fighting to secure equality and justice for us all. As a consequence of their valiant efforts, people of color can now enjoy a quality of life, including unprecedented educational and professional opportunities, never before realized. Because of their courage, we all can experience the benefits that flow from building a nation that values the creativity and talent of all her citizens. I am, and we all should be, proud to be the beneficiaries of their heroic acts.

Despite the extraordinary accomplishments of the past century, however, we began this new millennium still burdened by the weight of racial prejudice and the hatred, and sometimes violence, that emanates from it. Based on improved data collection efforts, we now know that far too frequently individuals may be victimized or otherwise targeted for vicious acts, simply because of the color of their skin, or the content of their faith, or because of any number of distinguishing characteristics—differences that should form the basis of our best American values, but instead are used to injure certain individuals and tarnish the American spirit.

Simply stated, hate violence is a scourge on our national consciousness, and the incidents of it are embarrassingly high. Perhaps the best-known racially-motivated hate crime in recent years is the callous killing of James Byrd, who, for no other reason except the color of his skin, was chained to the back of a pickup truck and dragged to his death. Mr. Byrd's death was senseless and shocking, but by no means is it the only example of such a crime. Each year, thousands of Americans are subjected to hate crimes, in perhaps not so savage a manner as Mr. Byrd's murder, but no less cruel and no less harmful.

Consider these numbers: while the overall number of crimes reported to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 2000 declined slightly, by 0.2 percent, reported hate crimes increased 2.3 percent, from 7,876 in 1999 to 8,063. And by all indicators, those numbers likely underestimate the true magnitude of hate violence in our country. Studies by organizations like the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives have revealed that countless tar-

gets of hate violence, some of whom are immigrants who fear reprisals or deportation, decline to report these crimes to the police.

As disturbing as the quantity of hate crimes committed each year, however, is the record number of young people who are perpetrating these crimes. According to a special report by the Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics, from 1997 to 1999, 33 percent of all known hate crime offenders were under the age of 18 years. For that same time period, another 29 percent of all hate crime offenders were 18 to 24 years of age. In total, an alarming 62 percent of all offenders were under the age of 24. When they should be imagining their college years or their early career plans, some kids, sometimes suffering under great mental depression, are instead conjuring up awful acts of hatred.

The damage caused by these crimes cannot be measured solely in terms of the physical injury inflicted or the property costs incurred. The devastation they provoke is far greater and much more destructive. These crimes fragment our society and inspire distrust. They fuel fear and suspicion of groups and communities that are unfamiliar. And, perhaps most fatal, they threaten to stall the important growth and community-building that must transpire for this Nation to retain its standing as a world leader for centuries to come.

If we have learned anything from the tragic events of September 11, it is that we cannot tolerate acts of hatred. We must enable a swift and tough law enforcement response by refining Federal hate crime laws, as well as give our children the tools to confront violent bigotry by providing necessary education and programming.

We can undertake to do nothing more important, nor pay any greater tribute to the heroes we honor during Black History Month, than to fight hate violence in every form and in every way we know. The security and safety of all Americans depend on it.

TRIBUTE TO DAN NAATZ

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I rise today to say goodbye to a good friend of mine, someone who has worked by my side for the last 13 years.

Dan Naatz has been my chief of staff for the last 2 years, but his commitment to me and Wyoming has lasted much longer than that.

I first met Dan back in 1989 when he joined my office in the U.S. House of Representatives. He was one of the first staff members I hired after being elected that year in a special election to fill the seat left open by DICK CHENEY who was nominated to be our Secretary of Defense.

After several years, Dan made the decision to return to school and earn a master's degree from the University of Virginia.

I was disappointed to see him go then, but after he earned that degree I

was fortunate enough to convince him to come back and serve as my legislative director.

Dan was with me when I was honored to win a seat in the U.S. Senate in 1994 as well. Our history together goes way back.

It is never easy to lose someone like Dan, who has been with me since the beginning. He has held nearly every position in my office and did them all very well. None better than the job he did of leading my staff and our legislative agenda for Wyoming.

It was inevitable though that Dan would be recognized outside of this body though for his expertise in crafting successful legislation and public policy.

Over the years, he has been a key advisor and good friend.

Particularly, Dan played a significant role in our efforts to reform and strengthen the National Park System.

As Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks, he and I spent many hours together, first writing and developing changes that would improve the system for visitors and the valuable resources, and then, as the engine that helped see it through to public law.

I was proud of all the work he did, and he should be proud of the changes he helped make, because they will make a difference for future generations who will visit and experience our parks.

Dan has joined CHEP USA. I wish him and his wife Cindy and their family the best of luck, and I know the Senate body does as well.

PROSECUTING GUN-RELATED CRIMES

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the fight to reduce gun violence must be waged on two fronts. First, we need to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, prevent children from gaining access to firearms and give law enforcement the resources they need to thoroughly investigate gun-related crimes. At the same time, we have to vigorously prosecute criminals who commit gun-related crimes.

According to the 2000 National Crime Victimization Survey, 533,470 victims of rape and sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault faced a perpetrator with a firearm. The Community Gun Violence Prosecution Program can play a major role in improving prosecution of criminals who commit these gun-related violent crimes by providing funding to hire prosecutors solely to prosecute firearm-related violent crimes. Providing funds to improve prosecution will not only bring felons to justice, but will also act as a deterrent to future crimes.

On Monday, it was announced that the Dickinson County, MI, prosecutors office will receive \$119,117 from the U.S. Department of Justice through CGVPP. The grant will be used to hire an assistant prosecutor who will devote