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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

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

Mr. HANSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

BACKLASH OF HATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLAKE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to draw attention to the backlash of hate that is occurring around the country and around the world as the result of September 11 and as a result of current actions in the Middle East. Mr. Speaker, this Congress must condemn these violent acts which are hurting families and communities around the world and here at home.

During the first week in April, two men dressed in Orthodox Jewish clothing were attacked and beaten in Berkeley, California, one of the most tolerant cities in the United States, and they were beaten because they were Jewish. In the same town, a Jewish student center located near the campus was broken into and anti-Israel slogans were spray-painted on the property. Also in California, a Los Altos Hills orthodox Christian church with a congregation of mostly Palestinians and Arab Americans was destroyed in a mysterious fire.

And it continues. In Los Angeles, three 17-year-old boys, all wearing yarmulkes were walking home from a friend's house at 12:30 a.m., when 2 skinheads attacked and beat them for no other reason than that they were Jewish. Across the country in Florida, a pickup truck was driven into the front of an Islamic center in Tallahassee. The driver, motivated by hatred of Muslims, bragged to the officers that he could have blown up the mosque if he had put propane tanks on the front of his truck. He also said that he tried to join the military in order to kill Muslims.

Mr. Speaker, all of these events happened over the past 3 weeks. However, since September 11, the increasing trend of hate has been abundantly clear. Immigrants from south Asia appear to have been the victims of attacks and other racially motivated incidents because they were perceived, often incorrectly, to be Arab or Muslim.

The National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium reported 250 inci-

dents against South Asian immigrants just in the last 3 months of the year 2001. This number compares to 400 to 500 incidents a year, bad enough, that were reported in the past. Complaints of discrimination received by Arab American Muslim and Sikh groups have soared.

Since September 11, the Council on American Islamic Relations has received more than 1,700 reports of workplace bias, Arab profiling, discrimination in schools, physical assaults and other incidents compared with 322 in all of the year 2000.

This backlash is not only a national problem, it is a global problem. France has seen a wave of attacks on Jewish schools, cemeteries and synagogues. According to an annual study by the Tel Aviv University, anti-Semitic acts rose sharply around the world after September 11 and following Israel's offensive into the West Bank. The study revealed some of the worst anti-Semitic days since the end of World War II.

Congress must make it clear that there is no room for personal attacks and bigotry in America or abroad. The first step we as a Congress can take is to pass H.R. 1343, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act introduced by Congressman JOHN CONYERS. Under current law, the government must prove both that the hate crime occurred because of a person's association with a designated group and because the victim was engaged in a Federal activity such as voting or serving on a jury. H.R. 1343 would eliminate these overly restrictive obstacles to Federal involvement, which have prevented government involvement in many cases in which individuals kill or injure others because of racial or religious bias.

In addition, H.R. 1343 would authorize the Department of Justice to assist local prosecutions and investigate and prosecute cases in which bias violence occurs because of the victim's sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Currently, Federal law does not provide authority for involvement in those cases.

Mr. Speaker, the people of the United States must set an example for the world by expressing our differences without resorting to violence against our neighbors. We must remember that disagreement can be expressed without physically attacking or demeaning those with whom we disagree. Our freedom of speech is a fundamental right that should be used for causes that citizens are passionate about, but not in a way that damages others' rights to their opinion.

Mr. Speaker, this Congress has the ability to combat unnecessary hatred and lead the charge. Let us take a first step by passing H.R. 1343.

CHALLENGES FACING RURAL AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the House this evening in regard to our responsibility as Members of this body to listen to our constituents. It is important that once we listen, that we bring that message back to Washington, to our colleagues here on the House Floor, and to the administration down the street.

Mr. Speaker, within the last few weeks I completed my 66th town hall meeting, one in each county of the First Congressional District of Kansas. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there are many challenges that rural America faces as we try to survive today, have a little prosperity, and move our people and our communities to the future.

The issues across my State and across rural America continue to be serious; issues related to agriculture. This is another year, Mr. Speaker, in which farm commodity prices remain low. In addition to that, we have, in many places in the country, and including most of Kansas, a very severe drought.

So on top of low commodity prices, our farmers face the prospect of poor production. Absent snow falls this winter, absent rainfalls this spring, our ability to put a product into the bin at any price has become very difficult.

Our circumstances in agriculture are bleak, remain bleak, and they are the backbone for the economy of places like Kansas, and it is important that we continue our efforts in regard to farm legislation. Our conferees, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. STENHOLM), the ranking member, and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. COMBEST), the chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture, continue in almost 24-hour-a-day sessions attempting to negotiate a farm bill. It is important that this work proceed. It is important that there be a return financially to the farmers and ranchers of this country.

Our farmers are concerned not only about farm policy, but about the desire for competition within the agribusiness world, the entities which they buy from and sell to, and certainly a desire for open markets, the ability to export their agriculture commodities around the world.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope to raise the awareness of my colleagues from places outside the farm belt of the importance of farm policy, the importance of agriculture and consumption, and the importance of having competition within the agricultural arena.

We look forward to meeting the country's energy needs with agriculture, and certainly the opportunities for biodiesel and ethanol remain an important opportunity for our farmers across the grain belt of our country. But in addition to agriculture, we