

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT—S. 625

Mr. REID. Mr. President, earlier this month, Attorney General Ashcroft announced that the defendant in the case where two women were killed in the Shenandoah National Park will be tried using the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act. This is the first time in the history of our country that a Federal murder prosecution will use this provision of the law.

At his press conference announcing the indictments, Attorney General Ashcroft said:

Criminal acts of hate run counter to what is best in America—our belief in equality and freedom.

He was absolutely right. Americans know that hate crimes injure the victim, the community, and the entire Nation. No one should be attacked simply because of his or her race, religion, gender, physical abilities, or sexual orientation.

As Senator EDWARD KENNEDY has said, until we pass the hate crimes legislation pending before Congress, the promise to aggressively prosecute hate crimes is really an empty promise.

For many years now, we have attempted to pass the hate crimes legislation that Senator KENNEDY and others have introduced. In the fall of 2000, this same bill passed the Senate as an amendment on the Department of Defense authorizations bill. However, despite strong bicameral, bipartisan support, it was stripped out of the conference report, as happens a lot of times.

The need is clear. The support is there. It is time to finish the job we started 2 years ago and pass the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, and pass it quickly.

Therefore, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, may turn to the consideration of S. 625, the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, and that it be considered under the following limitations: There be 4 hours for debate on the bill, equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee; that each leader, or their designee, be permitted to offer two relevant first-degree amendments; that there be a time limitation of 1 hour for debate on each first-degree amendment; that no second-degree amendments be in order prior to a failed motion to table; that if a second-degree amendment is offered, it be relevant to the first degree and be limited to 30 minutes for debate; that upon the disposition of the amendments, and the use or yielding back of the time on the bill, the bill be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill, without any intervening action or debate.

Prior to putting this to the Senate, I simply say, we are going to continually

offer this unanimous consent request. This unanimous consent request tonight is not going to be approved tonight, and that is too bad. I wish it could be. We need to move this legislation. It is priority legislation for the Senate and, therefore, for this country.

Now, Mr. President, on behalf of the minority, the Republicans, I object. I explained to them I was going to move this forward. As you know, we have worked very long and hard on a number of different matters, and I indicated that it would not be necessary for a Senator to remain to simply object, as I have. But I do say that I am tremendously disappointed that I have to object on behalf of the minority. It is too bad. But we will revisit this in the near future.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

TERRORISM REINSURANCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would like to read into the RECORD a letter that is written to the Honorable TOM DASCHLE, majority leader of the Senate; the Honorable TRENT LOTT, Republican leader of the Senate; the Honorable DENNIS HASTERT, Speaker of the House of Representatives; and the Honorable RICHARD GEPHARDT, House Democratic leader. The letter is dated April 15 of this year.

DEAR CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS: As a result of the event of September 11th, the nation's property and casualty insurance companies have or will pay out losses that will exceed \$35 billion dollars. Since the first of January, many insurance companies, self-insurers and states have been faced with a situation where they are unable to spread the risk that they insure because of the unavailability of reinsurance protection. In the event of another major attack, some companies or perhaps a segment of the industry would face insolvency. While most states have approved a limited exclusion for terrorism with a \$25 million deductible, exclusions for workers' compensation coverage are not permitted by statute in any state. The present situation poses a grave risk to the solvency of the insurance industry, state insurance facilities, economic development initiatives, and the ability of our states to recover from impacts of the September 11th attacks.

In the months after the attack on our nation, legislation passed in the House and was introduced in the Senate to create a backstop for the insurance industry so they could continue to provide protection to their customers. The Administration has also supported this concept. Currently, there is broad bi-partisan agreement for providing an insurance backstop. Governors believe this is an important goal that should not be inhibited by other issues.

Since late December, the lack of a financial backstop has started to ripple through the economy and will continue to do so. This will further impact the ability of the economy to recover from the current recession.

As Governors, we are facing many critical issues resulting from the September 11th crisis. The emerging problem in insurance coverage only serves to exacerbate our recovery efforts. In view of this, we the undersigned Governors, respectfully urge the Congress to quickly complete its work on the terrorism

reinsurance legislation in order to return stability to U.S. insurance markets.

Sincerely,

The letter is signed by Governor Hodges of the State of South Carolina; Governor Johanns of the State of Nebraska; Governor Patton of the State of Kentucky; Governor Martz of the State of Montana; Governor Siegelman of the State of Alabama; Governor Holden of the State of Missouri; Governor Warner of the State of Virginia; Governor McCallum of the State of Wisconsin; Governor Owens of the State of Colorado; Governor Ryan of the State of Illinois; Governor Geringer of the State of Wyoming; Governor Huckabee of the State of Arkansas; Governor King of the State of Maine; Governor Rowland of the State of Connecticut; Governor Bush of the State of Florida; Governor O'Bannon of the State of Indiana; Governor Taft of the State of Ohio; Governor Swift of the State of Massachusetts.

I have been advised that there are many other Governors who would have signed this letter. But as with all things, sometimes it is difficult to get the signatures from all of those Governors.

I personally have had many conversations regarding this issue. I have had conversations with people in the insurance industry. I have had conversations in my office right across the hall with people in the real estate business. I have had many conversations with people in the financial markets across the country, and people from home, people who want to continue one of the largest construction projects we have had in Nevada. It would be a huge mall. It is already half completed. It is a huge facility that they said they will have to stop construction by the first of June if that is not taken care of.

Senator DODD has worked incredibly hard to put together a bill that resolves this serious problem. The White House wants this bill to get to conference with the House, we are told. As I have indicated, these Governors, Democratic and Republican, have called for this action. I have personally spent a lot of time with the Presiding Officer, junior Senator from Florida, who, prior to coming here, was insurance commissioner of one of the largest States in the Union, and who has a very personal knowledge of the insurance industry. The leader has spoken to the Senator from Florida many times more than I have because we have looked to him for leadership on this issue.

I am prepared to move forward with a unanimous consent request relating to this issue. I will do so. The only question at this time is whether the Republican leader is in the building. I wouldn't want him to come from his residence. If he is not here in a reasonable period of time, I will be notified by staff. I will at that time make the consent request.