

scholars recognize the need for discretion in sentencing, Congress has continually tried to limit it, initially through the adoption of mandatory-minimum sentencing laws.

Congress's distrust of judicial discretion led to the adoption in 1984 of the Sentencing Reform Act, which created the United States Sentencing Commission. The commission was created on the premise, not unreasonable, that uniformity in sentencing nationwide could be promoted if judges and other criminal law experts provided guidelines for federal judges to follow in imposing sentences. However, Congress has tried to micromanage the work of the commission and has undermined its efforts to provide judges with some discretion in sentencing or to ameliorate excessively harsh terms.

For example, when an extensive study demonstrated that there was no justification for treating crack cocaine as 100 times more dangerous than powdered cocaine, the ratio adopted by Congress in fixing mandatory minimum sentences, the commission proposed reducing the guideline ratios. However, the proposal was withdrawn when Congressional leaders made it clear that Congress would overrule it.

Congress's most recent assault on judicial independence is found in amendments that were tacked onto the Amber Alert bill, which President Bush signed into law on April 30. These amendments are an effort to intimidate judges to follow sentencing guidelines.

From the outset, the sentencing commission recognized the need to avoid too rigid an application of the guideline system and provided that judges would have the power to adjust sentences when circumstances in an individual case warranted. The recent amendments require the commission to amend the guidelines to reduce such adjustments and require that every one be reported to Congress. They also require that departures by district judges be reviewed by the appellate courts with little deference to the sentencing judge.

Congress's disdain for the judiciary is further manifested in a provision that changes the requirement that "at least three" of the seven members of the sentencing commission be federal judges to a restriction that "no more than" three judges may serve on it. Apparently Congress believes America's sentencing system will be jeopardized if more than three members of the commission have actual experience in imposing sentences.

Every sentence imposed affects a human life and, in most cases, the lives of several innocent family members who suffer as a result of a defendant's incarceration. For a judge to be deprived of the ability to consider all of the factors that go into formulating a just sentence is completely at odds with the sentencing philosophy that has been a hallmark of the American system of justice.

When I took my oath of office 13 years ago I never thought that I would leave the federal bench. While I might have stayed on despite the inadequate pay, I no longer want to be part of our unjust criminal justice system.

VETERAN'S MEMORIAL

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of all Arkansans to recognize the veterans who have served in our Armed Forces. A beautiful memorial in Saline County, AK, has been built, and will be dedicated on July 10, to honor those who have protected and served our country. All service men

and women are being honored, including my father, who served in Korea. He taught me at a very early age to have tremendous respect for those who have fought to defend our freedom. Not only will this memorial honor our veterans, it will also remind future generations of the sacrifices that were made for this great country.

I also wish to recognize those who brought this day together for our Veterans. Judge Lanny Fite, State Representative Dwight Fite, the Saline County Veteran's Board, Jack McCray, Gary Ballard, and many others have given of themselves to make this memorial possible. I am grateful for their efforts to honor the men and women who serve our Nation in uniform. This memorial is a fitting tribute of which Saline County and our entire State can be proud.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

HONORING THE GENERAL MOTORS CORVETTE ASSEMBLY PLANT

• Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I have the privilege and honor of rising today to recognize the hard work of those at the Corvette assembly plant in Bowling Green, KY, on the 50th anniversary of the Corvette.

America's love for the Corvette began in 1953, when the first American sports car took over the highways. Since then, the automotive industry has never been the same. Kentucky became part of this American icon in 1981, when an old air-conditioner manufacturing plant, located in western Kentucky, was converted into an automobile assembly plant. The Bowling Green plant holds the proud honor of being the sole Corvette producer. Another state-of-the-art renovation in 1996 once again placed the Bowling Green plant on the road to excellence in preparation for production of the latest Corvettes.

Each year, milestone after milestone, and award on top of award, the Bowling Green plant consistently shines. For 2 years Corvettes produced in Kentucky have captured Motor Trend Magazine's highly respected "Car of the Year" designation. In 1992, the Bowling Green plant produced the one-millionth Corvette.

However, the secret of their success lies in the hard work and determination of the Bowling Green team. Without skillful minds and driven hands, innovative ideas and quality-built cars would never come to fruition.

It is not often we have the chance to honor such a milestone. Please join me in congratulating all those who have worked at the General Motors Bowling Green assembly plant. I am pleased they are continuing the Corvette tradition with a Kentucky touch.●

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S FISCAL YEAR 2004 BUDGET REQUEST ACT—PM 43

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with my constitutional authority and sections 202(c) and (e) of the District of Columbia Financial Management and Responsibility Assistance Act of 1995 and section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Governmental Reorganization Act as amended in 1989, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Request Act.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2004 Budget Request Act reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For Fiscal Year 2004, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of \$5.6 billion.

GEORGE W. BUSH,
THE WHITE HOUSE, July 9, 2003.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:06 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Niland, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1761. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9350 East Corporate Hill Drive in Wichita, Kansas, as the "Garner E. Shriver Post Office Building".

H.R. 2396. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1210 Highland Avenue in Durate, California, as the "Francisco A. Martinez Flores Post Office".

H.R. 2631. An act to provide that the actuarial value of the prescription drug benefits offered to Medicare eligible enrollees by a plan under the Federal employees health benefits program shall be at least equal to the actuarial value of the prescription drug benefits offered by such plan to its enrollees generally.

H.R. 2658. An act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1761. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 9350 East Corporate Hill Drive in Wichita, Kansas, as the "Garner E. Shriver Post Office Building"; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 2396. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1210 Highland Avenue in Durate, California, as the "Francisco A. Martinez Flores Post Office"; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 2631. An act to provide that the actuarial value of the prescription drug benefits