

crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On January 11, 2005, a popular 21-year-old gay man from Tucson was found unconscious and bleeding from the head. Mark Fontes had been struck in the back of the head with what appeared to be a baseball bat. Although an investigation into the attack is still underway, the motivation for this vicious beating appears to be the victim's sexual orientation.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

#### RUSSIA

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, over the past several years, we have witnessed a disturbing erosion in Russia's democracy. Checks and balances, essential to the functioning of any democracy, have been undermined in Russia through the elimination of the independent media, the weakening of the judiciary, and the decline of a political opposition and citizen participation.

In his inauguration speech, President Bush spoke about the "force of human freedom" and stated that it is the policy of the United States "to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

But, the President has been unable to capitalize on his friendship with President Putin to prevent a backsliding in Russia's democracy. While President Putin speaks about his commitment to move down the path of democracy, his actions demonstrate otherwise.

From 2000 until the present day, President Putin has tightened his grip on Russia, increasing the authoritarian nature of the Russian state. While many Russian experts understand that President Putin inherited a state mired in corruption and political violence, and dominated by powerful, unaccountable oligarchs, they have called Putin's approach to establishing security "flawed and unfair." A Washington Post article in March 2004 described how fear was creeping back into Russia, reminiscent of the Soviet Union. A week before the Russian Presidential election in 2004, the article states:

Scholars, journalists, reformist politicians, human rights activists and even business moguls describe an atmosphere of anxiety that has left them wary of crossing the Kremlin.

The imprisonment of Mikhail Khodorkovsky, Russia's richest man

and an oil tycoon, the disappearances of critics of Putin, as well as the flawed parliamentary elections in 2003, have been disturbing signs for those who care about democracy in Russia.

The U.S. State Department in its Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2003 raise concerns over human rights abuses committed by the Government of Russia in Chechnya, as well as by Chechen rebels, the failure of the 2003 parliamentary elections to meet international standards, the impunity of law enforcement officials responsible for abuses, poor prison conditions, and a weakening of freedom of expression and the independence and freedom of some media. In the global survey, "Freedom in the World," published by Freedom House in December 2004, Russia was downgraded to "Not Free," the only country to register a negative category change in 2004.

On all fronts, Russia's democracy appears to be weakening. In January 2002, the last significant independent Moscow TV station was shut down, many believe due to government pressure. Furthermore, radio and print media have increasingly been restricted. It was widely reported that during the parliamentary elections of 2003, television coverage was heavily biased toward the pro-presidency party, largely ignoring or criticizing Putin's opponents. In May 2004, the nongovernmental organization, the Committee to Protect Journalists, CPJ, named Russia one of the 10 worst places to be a journalist. CPJ states:

A shift from blatant pressures to more subtle and covert tactics, such as politicized lawsuits and hostile corporate takeovers by businessmen with close ties to Putin, has allowed the Kremlin to stifle criticism of the president and reports on government corruption and human rights abuses committed by Russian forces in Chechnya.

Furthermore, they note that journalists in Russia's provinces are murdered with impunity.

As President Putin moves from "managed democracy" to soft authoritarianism, Freedom House, Human Rights Watch, and others argue that Putin appears to be cracking down on civil society, a vital element of any thriving democracy. In May 2004, Putin used his state-of-the-nation speech to attack nongovernmental organizations, NGOs, accusing them of "receiving financing from influential foreign foundations and serving dubious groups and commercial interests." The very real need to stop terrorist financing through charities or other organizations does not justify targeting legitimate civic groups and NGOs. Following Putin's state-of-the-nation speech, masked intruders ransacked the office of a major human rights organization in Tatarstan that provides legal support for victims of torture. In addition, the state-owned Center TV criticized NGOs, accusing them of being tied to anti-Russian interests. And, in June 2004, Russia's Foreign Minister met with several NGOs and urged them to

rebut criticisms of the Council of Europe regarding Russia's human rights policies.

Russia's judicial system is also believed to be far from independent, failing to serve as a counterweight to other branches of government. Human Rights Watch has expressed concern that the government under President Putin has conducted "selective criminal prosecutions against perceived opponents . . . and scientists working with foreigners on sensitive topics." President Putin has proposed establishing executive control over the nomination of members of a key supreme court body that supervises the hiring and dismissal of judges. Furthermore, despite progress in implementing trial by jury, the Putin government appears to have manipulated jury selection in several high-profile cases or otherwise tried to influence jury deliberations.

Chechnya continues to be an area of particular concern. While Russia has the right to combat terrorist threats on its territory, Russian and proxy forces regularly violate basic human rights of Chechen civilians. Disappearances, extrajudicial executions, rape, and torture of detainees all continue with disturbing frequency and with absolute impunity. Russian forces regularly conduct sweeps and cleansing operations, resulting in death, injury and abductions in what many call a disproportionate use of force. These human rights abuses must end and those responsible should be held accountable.

Since President Putin's reelection in March 2004, he has taken more steps to exert control over the state. In September 2004, following the tragic deaths of 330 people in Beslan, half of whom were children, President Putin undertook a set of political reforms that concentrated power in Moscow and decreased the power of Russia's regions. He proposed that regional governors no longer be popularly elected but instead be appointed by the President and ratified by regional legislatures. Legislation to this effect was introduced in October 2004 and signed into law by President Putin on December 12, 2004. Putin also decided that all Duma deputies be elected on the basis of national party lists, based on the proportion of votes each party gets nationwide. As Human Rights Watch states in its recent World Report 2005:

The proposals would give the president de facto power to appoint governors, even more sway over the parliament, or State Duma, and increase the executive's influence over the judiciary.

While it is clear that President Putin must act to confront a legitimate threat to security, a marginalization of different regions outside of Moscow may create an even greater political backlash.

President Putin faces a challenging political environment in Russia. However, human rights and political freedoms must not be ignored in an attempt to establish security; their neglect will only lead to greater political

turmoil. The United States must stand by its commitment to democracy in its relations with Russia. If Russia wants to be a member of the community of democracies, it must demonstrate a meaningful commitment to democratic principles.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### WARREN V. HILEMAN

• Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the life and service of Mr. Warren V. Hileman, who passed away recently at the Illinois Veterans Home in Anna.

Last week, the Southern Illinoisan reported that the State believes Mr. Hileman was the last World War I veteran to have lived in Illinois.

He joined the U.S. Army in 1919, and served with the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia from September of 1919 to March 1920. Traveling thousands of miles across Siberia in temperatures that often reached 30 below, Mr. Hileman and the 27th infantry served long after the Armistice was signed in Europe.

In Posolskaya, their unit was involved in a hostile encounter that later won Mr. Hileman the World War I Victory Medal, which he was awarded in January of 2004.

After the war, he came home to Illinois where he worked in a North Chicago veterans hospital. Later, he and his wife moved back down south to Union County, where they spent the rest of their lives.

Warren was only 17 years old when he first landed in Vladivostok, Russia. Perhaps he was anxious about the war ahead of him; perhaps he already missed the home that lay behind. But above all, he was ready and eager to serve this country. At just 17, he was ready to make the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of freedom.

Today, we honor his service and remember a man who returned from war to live over a century on this Earth. Through more wars and depression, through great advances for civil rights and great struggles for freedom, Mr. Hileman was there—a patriot who had proudly written his own page in the story of 20th century America.

It is said that whether a life is long or short, its completeness depends on what it was lived for. And so, while Warren Hileman left us at the age of 103, the true completeness of his life comes from what he lived it for—for his friends, for his family, and for the defense of the country he loved. May his memory serve as a reminder for all of us to keep faith with our Nation's veterans, and may Warren Hileman rest in eternal peace.●

##### FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS OF AMERICA—PHI BETA LAMBDA

• Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the national Future Business Leaders of

America—Phi Beta Lambda, FBLA—PBL, and the Florida FBLA—PBL chapter that works to bring business and education together. From its first charter in 1942, this organization has grown to over 250,000 members across the Nation to include students in middle school and young men and women in postsecondary education. The first Florida chapter was founded in 1948 and has become one of the largest and most active State chapters in the country.

The FBLA—PBL creed leads off with a quote that all of us can agree with, "I believe education is the right of every person." FBLA—PBL works to prepare students for careers in business and other business related fields and promotes character, leadership, and a desire to serve in one's community. During the second week of February, its members celebrate national Future Business Leaders of America—Phi Beta Lambda Week. I congratulate them on all they have achieved and wish them continued success.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Ms. Evans, one of his secretaries.

#### EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting nominations which were referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The nomination received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

#### BUDGET OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006—PM 3

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 jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975 as modified by the order of April 11, 1986; to the Committees on the Budget; and Appropriations:

##### THE BUDGET MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT

Over the previous four years, we have acted to restore economic growth, win the War on Terror, protect the homeland, improve our schools, rally the armies of compassion, and promote ownership. The 2006 Budget will help America continue to meet these goals. In order to sustain our economic expansion, we must continue pro-growth policies and enforce even greater spending restraint across the Federal Government. By holding Federal programs to a firm test of accountability and focusing our resources on top priorities, we are taking the steps necessary to achieve our deficit reduction goals.

Our Nation's most critical challenge since September 11, 2001, has been to protect the American people by fighting and winning the War on Terror. Overseas and at home, our troops and homeland security officials are receiving the funding needed to protect our homeland, bring terrorists to justice, eliminate terrorists safe havens and training camps, and shut down their financing.

In Afghanistan and Iraq, we are helping establish democratic institutions. Together with our coalition partners, we are helping the Afghan and Iraqi people build schools, establish the rule of law, create functioning economies, and protect basic human rights. And while the work is dangerous and difficult, America's efforts are helping promote societies that will serve as beacons of freedom in the Middle East. Free nations are peaceful nations and are far less likely to produce the kind of terrorism that reached our shores just over the three years ago.

To ensure our security at home, the 2006 Budget increases funding for anti-terrorism investigations; border security; airport and seaport security; nuclear and radiological detection systems and countermeasures; and improved security for our food supply and drinking water.

This Budget also promotes economic growth and opportunity. We must ensure that America remains the best place in the world to do business by keeping taxes low, promoting new trade agreements with other nations, and protecting American businesses from litigation abuse and overregulation. To make sure the entrepreneurial spirit remains strong, the Budget includes important initiatives to help American businesses and families cope with the rising cost of health care. This Budget funds important reforms in our schools, and promotes homeownership in our communities. In addition, the 2006 Budget supports the development of technology and innovation throughout our economy.

The 2006 Budget also affirms the values of our caring society. It promotes programs that are effectively providing assistance to the most vulnerable among us. We are launching innovative programs such as Cover the Kids, which will expand health insurance coverage for needy children. We are funding global initiatives with unprecedented resources to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic, respond to natural disasters, and provide humanitarian relief to those in need. The 2006 Budget continues to support domestic programs and policies that fight drug addiction and homelessness and promote strong families and lives of independence. And in all our efforts, we will continue to build working relationships with community organizations, including faith-based organizations, which are doing so much to bring hope to Americans.

In every program, and in every agency, we are measuring success not by