

As these statistics show, gang violence is still a serious problem—and we in Congress have an obligation to respond. This bill is a good first-step, because it focuses on four key pillars of effective law enforcement policy: prevention; investigation and prosecution; firm and just penalties; and effective law enforcement training.

On prevention, the bill would authorize \$250 million for intervention programs focused on at-risk youth. These funds would be administered through a new High Intensity Interstate Gang Activity Area program, or HIGAA, which would be designed to facilitate cooperation between Federal, State, and local law enforcement in identifying, targeting, and eliminating violent gangs.

I have firsthand experience with the effectiveness of multijurisdictional law enforcement efforts: the Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program, and the various local multijurisdictional drug task forces in Colorado, have successfully leveraged Federal, State, and local resources to fight crime. I support applying this model to the fight against gangs.

On the investigation and prosecution front, I am pleased that the bill would increase funding for the Justice Department, Federal prosecutors, and FBI agents to coordinate Federal enforcement against violent gangs.

In regards to penalties for gang-related activity, this bill takes a sensible approach. It would replace the current sentencing enhancement for gang-related conduct with a new Federal antigang law that directly criminalizes gang crimes—and related conspiracies and attempts to commit crimes in furtherance of a criminal gang. The bill would also create new Federal offenses prohibiting the recruitment of minors into a criminal gang.

Finally, the bill would authorize \$3-\$5 million per year for the creation of a national gang violence prevention training center and clearinghouse, which would assist local law enforcement with training and the implementation of effective gang violence prevention models. Since my time as attorney general, I have been acutely aware of the importance of effective law enforcement training—and I am pleased that this bill contains provisions which would directly address this important issue.

This is a sensible, comprehensive bill. By focusing on prevention, investigation, prosecution, punishment, and training, I am hopeful that it will give our law enforcement agencies—Federal, State, and local—the resources they need to effectively fight the growth of gangs and gang activity.

PASSAGE OF FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT OF 2007

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this momentous achievement that helps so many millions of Americans would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our staff.

Of my own staff, I want to give a special thank you to Lauren McGarity for her strong commitment, her deep knowledge, and her hard work on this issue over many months. Lauren, you have really made a difference.

I thank Portia Wu for her help and leadership and especially her able work over the past 2 weeks in handling the many amendments to this legislation.

Thanks also to Missy Rohrbach for helping us manage the floor schedule and for all she does so well.

Thanks, too, to Jonathan McCracken, Jeff Teitz, Dave Ryan, Esther Olavarria, and Laura Capps.

As always, I am grateful also for the leadership of Michael Myers, who has been with me for many years as staff director of our HELP Committee.

But above all my special thanks go to Holly Fechner, my chief labor counsel. This momentous vote is a tribute to her—to her skill, professionalism, and deep dedication to those who are the backbone of this country. Working men and women in America could not have a better friend and champion. Holly is a true leader, and we all owe her a great debt today.

I commend Senator ENZI's staff, too. Katherine McGuire, Ilyse Schuman, Brian Hayes, Kyle Hicks, and Greg Dean. They are real professionals. It is a pleasure to work with them, and I thank them for their courtesies.

Thanks, too, to Senator BAUCUS' able staff for making this victory possible—Russ Sullivan, Pat Heck, and Bill Dauster.

And special thanks for the able leadership of Senator REID's staff, especially Darrel Thompson and Bob Greenawalt. And, of course, Marty Paone, Lula Davis, Tim Mitchell, and Trish Engle as well.

TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KENNEDY CENTER MILLENNIUM STAGE

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, this weekend marked the 10th anniversary of the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage, a remarkable milestone for the center and its special commitment to reach out to the community and expand opportunities for citizens and visitors to enjoy exceptional performances.

At 6 p.m. every evening, 7 days a week, the center presents a free concert with live performers on the Millennium Stage. Former chairman of the board Jim Johnson conceived the idea and guided the center through its early performances. Ever since, a remarkable series of talented musical artists and performing artists have been a part of this effort, from classical to rock and roll, from Sweet Honey in the Rock, KC and the Sunshine Band, to Norah Jones.

More than 3 million people have enjoyed these free performances at the center, and countless more have enjoyed them on the Web casts. It is a wonderful tradition in the Nation's

Capital, and I know that there will be many more brilliant performances in the years ahead.

I urge my colleagues to let their constituents know about these exciting performance opportunities. I ask unanimous consent that an editorial from today's Washington Post and an article from the Washington Post on February 2 about the Millennium Stage anniversary be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 5, 2007]
CONCERTED EFFORT—AN ANNIVERSARY AT THE
KENNEDY CENTER

Walk into the Kennedy Center around 6 on any given night, and, for only the price of your time, you might hear the National Symphony Orchestra interpreting Mussorgsky, the Joffrey Ballet executing a pas de deux or the Shakespeare Theatre Company soliloquizing from "Twelfth Night." If those offerings are too elevated for you, the Kennedy Center's programmers also attract a range of artists with alternative styles, from folk musician Pete Seeger to punk legend Patti Smith to vocalist and recent Grammy winner Norah Jones.

Tonight's performance will be especially memorable. Ten years ago today, the Kennedy Center held its first free performance on its Millennium Stage, and every night since, tourists and locals alike—more than 3 million so far, by the Kennedy Center's reckoning—have had the opportunity to enjoy world-class performing arts, no expensive tickets required. That's 41,000 artists from all 50 states and 50 countries to date. At a time when metropolitan performing arts centers around the country are coming up short on cash, it is refreshing to see Washington's center prioritize free, consistent and quality performances accessible to the general public. The Kennedy Center's administrators should be proud of this milestone.

Equally impressive is the Millennium Stage's nightly turnout, which programmers estimate at about 350 on average. And crowds at bigger shows range from 500 to several thousand, according to the Kennedy Center's Garth Ross, who credits extensive community outreach for the success of the Millennium Stage. It's what Kennedy Center President Michael Kaiser calls great art well-marketed.

Tonight's anniversary concert promises to be particularly memorable. The National Symphony Orchestra, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and rocker Sufjan Stevens will perform. Tickets for those capacity-filling acts are already gone. But you can watch them on video screens in the Grand Foyer, catch the webcast on the Kennedy Center's Web site or show up any other day of the year to experience more free, live art.

[From the Washington Post, Feb. 2, 2007]

THE KENNEDY CENTER'S OPEN INVITATION

(By Richard Harrington)

With apologies to Joni Mitchell, people have been playing real good for free for the past decade on the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage. And though nobody stopped to hear Mitchell's street clarinetist, that hasn't been a problem at the Millennium Stage since guitarist Charlie Byrd and pianist Billy Taylor christened it in March 1997 in front of a couple of thousand well-heeled Washingtonians.

Ten years and more than 3 million visitors later, the Millennium Stage remains without equal: the only cultural institution in the