

am glad a cloture petition turned out not to be necessitated by anonymous Republican opposition and delay but regret that it has taken so long and so much attention to follow through on this matter.

Last night, the Senate finally considered and confirmed the President's nomination of Beryl Howell to a second term on the U.S. Sentencing Commission. We also proceeded with the confirmation of the nomination of Dabney Friedrich, a former staffer of Senator HATCH and associate White House counsel.

Last month, the President finally sent these nominations to the Senate to fill preexisting vacancies on the U.S. Sentencing Commission. Both these nominees were serving on the Commission, having been recessed appointed by the President in the last month of the 109th Congress. Regrettably the White House had delayed for many months making the nominations last year. Had the President sent the Senate these nominations in a timely fashion, their recess appointments would not have been necessary and we could have confirmed both of these nominees in the last Congress.

The nonpartisan nature of the Sentencing Commission is preserved by making sure its membership is balanced and includes experienced Commissioners who stick to the merits and command the respect of both Congress and the Judiciary. I look forward to the President nominating such a person on the recommendation of the ranking Republican member of the Judiciary Committee so that the final vacancy may be appropriately filled.

Commissioner Howell graduated from Bryn Mawr College and Columbia University School of Law, clerked for Judge Dickinson R. Debevoise on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey. She served with distinction as a Federal prosecutor in the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of New York, earning a number of commendations for her work. She later served for almost 10 years as a member of the Senate Judiciary staff. She earned the respect of Senate and House Republicans and Democrats. Besides now serving as a member of the Sentencing Commission, she is also managing director and general counsel of the Washington, DC, office of Stroz Friedberg, LLC, one of the leading cybersecurity and forensic firms in the country.

Commissioner Friedrich assumes her post having served in the White House counsel's office and having previously served on Senator HATCH's Senate Judiciary Committee staff. I believe her husband is a political deputy in the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice. I wish her well in her new position.

The Sentencing Commission has important work to do. Federal judges are still wrestling with the Booker decision, which made the Federal Sentencing Guidelines advisory, rather

than mandatory, and the Commission is once again preparing a report to Congress on the unjust disparity of crack versus powder cocaine sentencing.

I congratulate the nominees and their families on their confirmations last night.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate 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 June 4, 2002, in Cortez, CO, 16-year-old Fred Martinez, described as a transsexual Navajo, was brutally beaten to death by Shaun Murphy. Murphy received a sentence of 40 years for his crime. According to affidavits filed in Montezuma County Court, Murphy bragged to friends in the days after Martinez's slaying that he had "beat up a fag."

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.

PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, early one October morning in 1960, Senator John F. Kennedy stood on the steps of the University of Michigan Union and challenged a group of students to serve their country by living and working abroad. Today I rise to commemorate the service of 187,000 Americans, young and old, who have met that challenge.

From Armenia to Zambia, Peace Corps volunteers have lived and worked in 139 countries around the world for the past 46 years. They act as ambassadors of our goodwill and promote a world of peace and friendship. Historically, more Peace Corps volunteers have come from California than any other State indeed, 25,467 Peace Corps volunteers have hailed from my State. Today, I am proud to represent 768 Peace Corps volunteers currently working abroad.

In their work as teachers, business advisors, information technology consultants, agriculture and environmental specialists, and health educators; Peace Corps volunteers have not only met the needs of the individuals and communities who are their hosts, but also promoted a better understanding of Americans.

After almost five decades, the mission and goals of the Peace Corps are

as vital and relevant as they were the day of its establishment. In an age when fear, misunderstanding, and blind prejudice can breed aggression and hate, more than 20 percent of Peace Corps volunteers are working in predominantly Muslim countries.

In the past 10 years, the Peace Corps has expanded to meet new humanitarian challenges, sending Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to serve in the Crisis Corps. These extraordinary men and women have been deployed to tsunami-ravaged regions in Sri Lanka and Thailand, to Guatemala after Hurricane Stan, and 272 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers joined in disaster relief efforts along the gulf coast following Hurricane Katrina.

Finally, I would like to recognize the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who have been participating in National Peace Corps Week. By sharing their experiences, these Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are fulfilling the third goal of the Peace Corps, to "strengthen Americans' understanding about the world and its peoples."

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, it is with great pride that I extend my congratulations to the Peace Corps on the occasion of its 46th anniversary this week. I know that in doing so I join a countless number of past and present Peace Corps volunteers in commemorating the fruitful history of the organization.

Since the establishment of the Peace Corps over four decades ago, its volunteers have served as unofficial U.S. Ambassadors, representing the best of what America has to offer abroad. Their mission could not be more important than it is right now, during a time when our nation is so misunderstood in many parts of the world. With its global presence and tangible impact, the Peace Corps has worked to combat misperceptions about what America stands for and reaffirm American values. I have no doubt that these good deeds on behalf of others have made a tremendously positive impact on the communities in which our Peace Corps volunteers serve.

I am a strong believer in investing in cross-border relationships through programs such as the Peace Corps, which places American volunteers in the heart of communities throughout all corners of the world. Who knows how the interaction and good works completed by Peace Corps volunteers will change the world as a result? Perhaps the example set by a Peace Corps volunteer will correct a distorted perception, or prevent someone from sliding into hatred and extremism. Perhaps an American volunteer will acquire a new understanding of the needs in other parts of the world which will lead to a critical humanitarian intervention. The Peace Corps, through the impact on the community and the volunteer, is a win-win investment in stability.

The Peace Corps has a daily direct impact by meeting the needs of foreign