

new commission. I had the chance earlier this month to meet with Stuart Bowen, who is that inspector general and in that position. We discussed this amendment, and he agreed it was a good proposal, one that deserved to be implemented to enhance the ability to uncover and prosecute gross abuses of the public trust.

No matter where one stands on the war in Iraq, I would hope we could agree on the need to eliminate all waste and fraud and prosecute those who facilitate such fraud and such waste. These actions bring dishonor to our Nation and, in a word, are unpatriotic. We should do everything we can to root out such abuses, and this amendment is an important first step to do that.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

SCHIP

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I came to the floor earlier today and spoke very favorably of my friend, CHARLES GRASSLEY from Iowa, and he deserved that attention that I gave him, those accolades that I extended to him.

I also want to extend my appreciation to Senator HATCH, who has worked on this. He is a member of the Finance Committee. He did an outstanding job and helped us get to the point where we are now. We are going to talk more about SCHIP tomorrow. I do not want those who worked so hard on this side to think that I have forgotten about them just because I said so many nice things about Senator GRASSLEY.

Senator BAUCUS, the chairman of the committee, has been a champion from the very beginning. He worked hard to try to explain to everyone that we could not do everything the House wanted to do, even though he and I wanted to do that.

The same applies to Senator ROCKEFELLER, who is the subcommittee chair who worked on this. He did a wonderful job. He attended meetings with the House when his presence was extremely important.

I want to make sure that everyone understands the great work done by Senators BAUCUS, GRASSLEY, HATCH, and ROCKEFELLER as members of the Finance Committee to get us to a point where tomorrow sometime we will finish our work on SCHIP.

HATE CRIMES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, Matthew Shepard was a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming when he was savagely beaten on October 6, 1998.

Why? Because he was a homosexual; he was gay. Two men who had offered him a ride home robbed and pistol whipped him, beat him so severely they smashed his skull. If that wasn't enough for these demons, they tied him to a fence with a rope in the cold of winter, lonely—you can appreciate it if you spent a few of them in Wyoming—and left him to die. And he did die. He died of severe head injuries less than a week after the beating that was given.

What happened to Matthew was a tragedy for this young man, of course for his family, for other gay men and women who were and have been terrorized by this awful crime. It was certainly a tragedy for our Nation. The men who murdered Matthew Shepard were not charged with committing a hate crime because crimes of violence committed on the basis of sexual orientation were not prosecutable as hate crimes under Wyoming or Federal law. This is still the case today. The Matthew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act would strengthen the ability of Federal, State, and local governments to investigate and prosecute hate crimes.

This amendment would remove the current limitation on Federal jurisdiction that allows Federal involvement only in cases in which the assailant intended to prevent the victim from being engaged in a "federally protected activity," such as voting. This amendment would expand the groups protected under current law to include all hate crimes, including those based on disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity—including race and ethnicity. This amendment would provide the Department of Justice the authority to assist State and local jurisdictions in prosecuting violent hate crimes or taking the lead in such prosecutions where local authorities are unwilling or unable to act.

Unfortunately, some of these crimes of hate-motivated violence have been directed to our men and women in uniform.

Just a few years ago, Alan Schindler, a sailor in the Navy, was stomped to death by a fellow serviceman because of his sexual orientation.

A short time after that, PFC Barry Winchell, an infantry soldier in the Army, was beaten to death with a baseball bat because his attackers believed he was gay. They didn't know—they believed he was gay. To them he acted gay, whatever that means.

In December of 1995, two paratroopers who were members of a group of neo-Nazi skinheads at Fort Bragg shot an African-American couple in a random, racially motivated double murder that led to a major investigation of extremism in our military. These killers and 19 other members of this division were dishonorably discharged for neo-Nazi gang activities.

According to a recent Southern Poverty Law Center report, the problem is only going to get worse as members of hate groups have been entering our

military, which is increasingly desperate for new recruits. In fact, it used to be if you had committed a crime, any type of crime, the military wouldn't take you. You had to have a high school education and you certainly couldn't be a member of a gang. They are so desperate for military members because of this war we are involved in in Iraq, they are taking just about anybody. There are no background checks with these new recruits.

We have to make it clear that crimes of hate in our military will not be tolerated, and this amendment does just that. It strengthens the Defense authorization bill by sending a clear message that such crimes will be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Is there a better place to have this amendment than on the Defense bill? I think not. We have had it on it before. If we have our military around the world fighting terror—and that is what they are doing—shouldn't we be able to protect our own troops from the terror? Shouldn't we be able to protect our own people in this country against being terrorized because of their sexual orientation? the color of their skin? their religion? The answer, of course, is we should be able to do that. They should be able to be protected.

We have to make it clear that crimes of hate in our military will not be tolerated. I repeat that. As we hold ourselves up as a model for the ideals of equality, tolerance, and mutual understanding abroad, we have a special responsibility to combat hate-motivated violence right here at home. Our troops are on the front lines of Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere fighting against evil and hate. We owe it to them to uphold these same principles at home.

The Matthew Shepherd Act was introduced this spring at a ceremony attended by his parents, Judy and Dennis. I hope that tomorrow we will honor the memory of this young man by passing this important legislation which is named after him.

We all remember the brutal killing of James Byrd a few years ago, in Texas. This young man, at nighttime, was walking down a street in his own hometown when he was seen by some white men. They beat him severely, tied him to the back of their car, and dragged him through the streets until he was dead.

We need only look to the recent events in Jena, LA, to see for all the progress, racial tensions continue across our country. This legislation honors the commitment to justice that is woven deep within the fabric of our Nation.

I certainly urge all of our colleagues to join me in voting for this matter in the morning. It is important. It is the least we can do for Matthew Shepard and his family.

THE DREAM ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I was disappointed earlier this year when the