

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Chair and ask unanimous consent for 1 additional minute.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I will conclude by saying there are a host of reasons why we need not, ought not pass the DREAM Act itself. But that is a matter of debate that we have had several different times now. What we need to be doing now is providing support for the soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and guardsmen we sent in harm's way by passing the Defense authorization bill and the Defense appropriations bill. We don't need to be talking about the DREAM Act. We don't need to be talking about hate crimes. We don't need to be offering the first amendment out of the chute, an amendment that provides habeas benefits to unlawful combatants, legal rights that have never been given by the United States in the history of the Republic, nor any other nation in the history of the world.

We need to get serious and get some work done here that is important and not be distracted with amendments that are going to be politically controversial and can only make it more difficult for us to do our duty as a Congress.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

FIGHT TO END HATE CRIMES

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, only 2 weeks ago this Nation marked the 50th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1957. That landmark legislation, signed into law on September 9, 1957, was Congress' first civil rights bill since the end of Reconstruction.

It established the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department and empowered Federal prosecutors to obtain court injunctions against interference with the right to vote. It also established a Federal Commission on Civil Rights with authority to investigate discriminatory conditions and recommend corrective measures.

In the Judiciary Committee, under the leadership of my distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Vermont, we held a hearing to commemorate this milestone, to talk about our Nation's progress over the past half century and how we must move forward if we are to live up to the ideals enumerated in the Constitution. My former colleague from the House and an American hero, JOHN LEWIS, shared his recollections and his hopes for the future with us.

Today, however, it is with great sadness that I come to the Senate floor to talk about a rash of incidents that have occurred over the past month in this region of the country. These incidents are a painful reminder of just how far we have to go.

At the College Park Campus of the University of Maryland, fewer than 10

miles from here, students found a noose hanging in a tree near the University's African-American Cultural Center. It is believed that the noose had been hanging there for almost 2 weeks before the assistant editor of the school's African-American newspaper noticed it and notified the police.

University President C.D. Mote has denounced the incident, as have student leaders and faculty. It is under investigation as a possible hate crime and may be connected to the trial of six African-American teenagers in Jena, Louisiana. In that case, three nooses were placed in the so called "white-only" tree on campus after black students sat under it. The ensuing altercations led to charges of attempted murder against only the black teenagers, charges that have since been dismissed.

In Montgomery County, Maryland, three separate acts of vandalism were reported at Jewish centers in Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Silver Spring.

In two of those cases, vandals defaced banners declaring the synagogues' support for the State of Israel, scrawling anti-Semitic slurs on them. Police are investigating all three acts as possible hate crimes.

Then, in the hills of Big Creek, West Virginia, a 20-year-old African-American woman was held captive in a shed for more than a week. During her ordeal, she was beaten, choked, stabbed, sexually assaulted, and forced to perform inhumane acts. Throughout, she was called racist slurs and was told she was being victimized because of her skin color. She was rescued by police responding to an anonymous tip. A local Sheriff described this as "something that would have come out of a horror movie." Six people, all white, have been arrested in connection with the assault and kidnapping, and police are still searching for two more. The young woman is recovering in a hospital from her ordeal.

In Gaithersburg, Maryland, a Muslim family was again the victim of vandalism. Over the years, the family had been victimized multiple times, beginning in 1994 when they moved to the area. Their house and automobiles were broken into, garbage and dead animals were strewn in their yard, and racist notes were taped to their door.

This time, on September 11, tires on both of the family's vehicles were slashed. The mother has worked hard to counteract anti-Muslim and anti-Arab sentiment in America, speaking at schools and libraries about Islam and Arab-American culture and teaching a cultural sensitivity class. Police are continuing to investigate this incident as a possible hate crime.

In Manassas, Virginia, the Ku Klux Klan recently began distributing leaflets urging "white Christian America" to stand up for its rights. The neighborhood has recently begun a demographic shift as older residents moved out and younger Latino families moved in.

Finally, Mr. President, last Friday, it was reported that the Metropolitan Police Department here in Washington is investigating a series of hate crimes targeting gay and transgender people. The latest attack happened seven blocks from here near the Verizon Center, where reportedly a group of young men threw a 16-year-old male-to-female transgender person through a plate glass window. Police reports indicate that the suspect had been arrested twice before for similar attacks against gay men.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has reported that in 2005 there were approximately 7,100 incidents classified as hate crimes. The FBI uses voluntary reports from local law enforcement agencies across the country to determine the totals, but the actual number could be far higher.

The Southern Poverty Law Center has analyzed data compiled and reported by the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics. That November 2005 report, based on data from the biannual National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), found that fewer than half of hate crimes are reported to the police and others are not counted by the FBI. This is because they are not recorded as hate crimes, or because some police departments do not report statistics to their State offices. The NCVS estimates that the United States averages about 191,000 hate crimes each year.

The report also found that hate crimes involve violence far more than other crimes. The data showed that four out of five hate crimes were violent—involving a sexual attack, robbery, assault or murder, as compared to 23 percent of non-hate crimes.

Mr. President, the situation is even more dire than most Americans imagine. The Southern Poverty Law Center's Intelligence Project counted 844 active hate groups in the United States in 2006.

Hate crimes' tentacles reach far beyond the intended targets. They bring a chill to entire neighborhoods and create a sense of fear, vulnerability, and insecurity in our communities. They poison the well of our democracy and strike at the very heart of the American spirit.

Our local law enforcement agencies need help in investigating and prosecuting these crimes, and this help must come from the United States Attorney General and the Department of Justice.

I am a cosponsor of the Mathew Shepard Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act, S. 1105, to strengthen existing Federal hate crime laws. I want to thank Senator KENNEDY for his leadership on this issue.

While the responsibility for prosecuting hate crimes primarily rests with the individual States, this new measure will give local law enforcement additional tools to combat violent hate crimes. It also will provide Federal support through training and assistance to ensure that hate crimes