

children who have been kidnapped by a parent and taken to Germany. The Post article details the latest event in the continuing international struggle that American Joseph Cooke has endured as he seeks the return of his children. As my colleagues may recall, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder recently promised President Clinton during the President's visit to Europe that Germany would help Mr. Cooke and grant him and his family visitation rights. Well, despite this promise at the highest levels government, the Kostanz Special Service for Foster Children now is limiting the access that Joseph Cooke's mother has to visiting her grandchildren—apparently as a punishment for all the recent media attention the case has received. This is outrageous, Mr. President. And it simply cannot be tolerated.

Let me take a moment to review the events that have led to where we are today on this issue. At the recent European conference on "Modern Governance in the 21st Century," President Clinton met with Chancellor Schroeder to discuss several pressing international concerns. One issue, in particular—one I had urged President Clinton to raise with the Chancellor—was the tragic situation of U.S. children being abducted by a parent and taken to Germany.

It was necessary to raise this issue with Chancellor Schroeder because parents—and not just American parents, either—have had a very difficult time getting their children back when they have been abducted and taken to Germany. Although Germany has signed the Hague Convention, our ally—yes, our ally—has not taken their obligations under the Convention seriously. In fact, from 1990 to 1998, only 22 percent of American children for whom Hague applications were filed were returned to the United States from Germany—and that percentage includes those who were voluntarily returned by the abducting parent.

Last month, I spoke on the floor about the Joseph Cooke case—a case that illustrates perfectly Germany's reluctance to return kidnapped children. In Mr. Cooke's case, his wife took their two children to Germany, and without his knowledge, turned them over to the German Youth Authority. Despite Mr. Cooke's desperate attempts to get his children back, a German court decided that they were better off with a German foster family than with their American father. Only after President Clinton's meeting with Chancellor Schroeder and only after Mr. Cooke's case received considerable publicity and media attention, did Germany agree to help Joseph Cooke.

The Germans promised to allow Mr. Cooke and his family visitation with his children. The Germans also promised to form a working group with the United States to examine pending abduction cases. Chancellor Schroeder agreed to "think about organizational and institutional consequences to be

taken" to speed up the German court process and make changes in German law to allow visitation rights for those parents previously prevented from seeing their children at all. Although the Chancellor acknowledged that it would be difficult to reverse German custody decisions, he assured President Clinton that this soon-to-be-created commission would work on providing the so-called left-behind parents access to their children.

But now, as the Washington Post reports, Germany is restricting visitation of the Cooke children's American grandmother from open, six-hour visits to supervised, two-hour visits in a psychologist's office. We must take a very tough stance against this, Mr. President. We must judge Germany by its recent actions—not its recent words—recent, empty words. We must hold Germany to its promises and see to it their government matches words with deeds and returns every single American child.

Given Germany's reversal on the visitation agreement, I am even more skeptical now about the sincerity of Germany's commitment to return kidnapped children. I say that partly because German officials have repeatedly blamed their non-compliance on the independence of their judiciary system. They say that they are reluctant to challenge court rulings because the courts are separate and independent from the parliament. Chancellor Schroeder even likened such interference to the days of Nazi Germany, when he told a German newspaper that: "We have always fought for the well-being of the children to be at the core of divorce and custody cases. That is the only standard. The times in which Germany would routinely change the decisions of the courts [during the Nazi era] are over, thank God" (Reuters, 6/1/00).

I find that argument very interesting since the United States has a very independent judiciary branch, yet we return children in 90% of all international abduction cases. And, our return rate of German children, specifically, is equally high. Even according to the German Justice Ministry's own figures, from 1995 to 1999, there were 116 cases of German parents demanding children back from the United States. Of those cases, the U.S. courts refused to return the children in only four cases. During those same five-years, there were 165 known cases in which a parent living in the United States wanted his or her children returned from Germany. Yet, in 33 of those cases, German courts declined to return the children (AP Worldstream, 6/2/00).

Mr. President, I am also concerned about Germany's offer to create a "working group" with the United States given the result of a similar promise Germany made to France. French President Jacques Chirac, who has characterized Germany as applying "the law of the jungle" in abduction

cases (The London Evening Standard, 6/1/00), repeatedly asked Germany to address the difficulty his country is having in getting French children returned. In response, Chancellor Schroeder agreed to create a "working group" between the two nations to reach some resolution. While this working group was created a year ago, results have yet to come in on its effectiveness. Given France's experience, it is crucial that we hold Chancellor Schroeder to his word and see to it that his words are not just empty promises made in an attempt to improve a tarnished image in the international community.

Assistant Secretary of State for consular affairs, Mary Ryan will be in Germany this weekend where, according to the Washington Post, "she will be raising this specific issue with every person she meets in the German government." I am encouraged to see that our State Department has indicated that it is outraged by Germany's action—perhaps now, they will take these kinds of cases seriously and take some type of significant action against Germany. Never-the-less, I urge her and our State Department and President Clinton to not take Germany's broken promises lightly. We must insist that the Germans reverse these restrictions on visitation, otherwise there is absolutely no reason to set up the commission.

Mr. President, we cannot tolerate lip service from our allies. We must hold the German government's feet to the fire. No excuses should be accepted by the parents of these children, nor by this Senate, nor by this Congress, nor by the American people. This must be a priority.

PREScription DRUG AMENDMENT OF SENATOR ROBB

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to express my disappointment with the outcome of the vote that occurred last evening here in the Senate. I am referring to the vote on Senator ROBB's amendment concerning a Medicare benefit for prescription drugs.

Last night, we had an opportunity to give millions of elderly and disabled Americans something they desperately require, a universal prescription drug benefit. Yet, this measure was defeated, mostly along party lines, by a vote of 44-53. Our nation's seniors deserve better.

The need for a prescription drug benefit under Medicare has grown each and every year. Advances in medical science have revolutionized the practice of medicine. And the proliferation of pharmaceuticals has radically altered the way acute illness and chronic disease are treated and managed.

These remarkable advances, however, have not come without a cost. Since 1980, prescription drug expenditures have grown at double digit rates and prescription drugs constitute the largest out-of-pocket cost for seniors. For millions of seniors, many of whom are living on a fixed income and do not

have a drug benefit as part of their health insurance coverage, access to these new medicines is beyond reach.

Even more alarming, it is estimated that 38 percent of seniors pay \$1,000 or more for prescription drugs annually, while 3 in 5 Medicare beneficiaries lack a dependable source of drug coverage. This lack of reliable drug coverage for today's seniors is reminiscent of the lack of hospital coverage for the elderly prior to the creation of Medicare. Back in 1963, an estimated 56 percent of seniors lacked hospital insurance coverage. Today, after all our investments in health care and prevention, 53 percent of seniors still lack a prescription drug benefit.

The need for a Medicare prescription drug benefit is a top concern for the elderly and disabled in my home state of Rhode Island. Many seniors continue to be squeezed by declines in retiree health insurance coverage, increasing Medigap premiums and the capitation of annual prescription drug benefits at \$500 or \$1000 under Medicare managed care plans. Mr. President, seniors in my state are frustrated and burdened both financially and emotionally by the lack of a reliable prescription drug benefit.

While the need for a prescription drug benefit is clear and the desire on the part of some members of Congress is there, action on Medicare prescription drug legislation has been slow. The Senate Finance Committee has held a series of hearings on the subject of Medicare prescription drugs, however, the committee to date has been unable to produce a bill.

In May, I joined Senator DASCHLE and several of my Democratic colleagues, in introducing S. 2541, the Medicare Expansion of Needed Drugs Act. This legislation seeks to provide millions of elderly and disabled Americans with an adequate, reliable and affordable source of prescription drug coverage.

The MEND Act embodies the principles that I believe are necessary for an adequate prescription drug benefit—it is voluntary, accessible to all seniors, affordable, provides a reliable benefit and is consistent with broader Medicare reform.

Last evening, the Senate had a real and possibly its only opportunity to enact a prescription drug benefit when Senator ROBB offered an amendment during the consideration of the fiscal year 2001 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill that would have provided a universal Medicare prescription drug benefit to our nation's seniors. While the proposal differs slightly from the MEND Act, it embraced the principles that I view as necessary for a good benefit. Regrettably, this crucial amendment was defeated.

I sincerely hope that the stated desire of many of my colleagues to create an adequate and affordable Medicare prescription drug benefit will become a reality this year. During this time of

strong economic prosperity, we should all feel compelled to seize this opportunity to strengthen and enhance Medicare for the new millennium.

HATE CRIMES AMENDMENT

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, as hate-crimes legislation was recently debated and voted on by the United States Senate, I would like to briefly explain my vote on this issue. I believe that all victims of crime, and most certainly victims of violent crime, are deserving of special status. After due process has been afforded and guilt determined, perpetrators of crimes should be punished speedily for the peace of the community and to bring some measure of resolution for the victim. However, creating different classifications of victims, and rendering punishment based upon such classifications threatens the notion of "Equal Justice Under Law," the principle that adorns the United States Supreme Court building and should suffice our entire legal system.

Violence itself, whether motivated by hate, revenge, greed, lust, envy, or some other evil motivation, threatens the peace of our communities and our citizens' sense of security. The Kennedy amendment would include minor crimes against property within the definition of hate crimes, but would not have included such heinous acts as the Oklahoma City federal building bombing, or the school shooting at Columbine High School, both of which left lasting, painful memories for the local communities in Oklahoma and Colorado, and even the Nation as a whole.

Rather than focusing on the particular motivation of the criminal, Congress and the states should provide law enforcement officials the resources necessary to fully prosecute all crimes. The diligent enforcement of existing laws will serve as an effective deterrent against criminal acts motivated by bigotry and hate, or any other distasteful compulsion. A more comprehensive strategy than what is embodied in the Kennedy amendment is warranted in light of the fact that in 1998 there were 16,914 murders committed in the United States (an average of 46 every day), and of the 16,914, only thirteen were deemed to be hate crimes.

I supported the Hatch amendment, which studies how extensive the hate crimes problem is and whether these heinous crimes are being fairly and aggressively prosecuted in the same manner as other similar crimes. I also welcome the Justice Department technical and financial assistance to states which need help in pursuing and identifying hate crimes. This is a far better role for the federal government than moving to federalize all state actions against hate crimes.

The Kennedy amendment also raised concerns by experts about constitutionality. Ultimately, it threatened to create more problems in the criminal justice system than it purported to

solve, and I consequently voted "no" on the amendment and yes on the more reasonable Hatch amendment. I pledge to my constituents that I will support aggressive state prosecution of hate crimes, and I will continue to work to maintain safe communities, including actively supporting legislation that furthers that end.

INTERNET TAX MORATORIUM AND EQUITY ACT

Mr. BREAUX. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague, Senator DORGAN, in introducing legislation designated to address the issue of Internet sales taxation.

As a consumer, I know first-hand how popular, simple and easy it is to buy items over the Internet. In fact, the Internet saved me at Christmas when I bought last-minute gifts for my wife, four children and our two little granddaughters.

But, as a member of both the Senate Finance and Commerce committees, I also know Congress has an obligation to examine how these same, tax-free Internet sales can financially harm businesses and state governments.

Senator DORGAN's bill balances the concerns of state and local governments with the importance of maintaining easy access to Internet services. It allows state and localities to enter into an interstate compact for the purpose of simplifying their sales tax systems for remote sales. Once 20 states have joined the compact, Congress can disapprove of their efforts. If Congress does not act, those states that have joined the compact and simplified their sales tax systems, will be authorized to collect sales tax on the purchases their citizens make over the Internet.

Our proposal, recognizing that collecting taxes must not be overly burdensome for online retailers, also provides a collection fee for all Internet retailers who collect these taxes. It ensures Internet purchases are not singled out for special tax treatment at the expense of neighborhood businesses, and state and local governments. This restores equality, a key aspect of any good tax system, without placing an unfair burden on anyone. I believe that this is a fair and equitable bill that takes reasonable steps to address the concerns of both online retailers and state and local governments.

We all agree Internet access should not be taxed, and that states and localities should not be allowed to impose discriminatory taxes on the Internet. In fact, Senator DORGAN's bill extends the moratorium on these types of sales for another four years.

But, I ask, is it fair to levy sales taxes on a person who buys a book from his local bookstore, but not his neighbor who buys that same book over the Internet?

I do not think it is fair. It isn't fair to residents who must pay the local