

The Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children Protection Act would do something to help those parents. It would authorize \$10 million a year for a period of 5 years for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Among other things, this money would help operate a 24-hour toll free telephone line to report those children and public and private programs to locate, recover and hopefully reunite them with their family. This is something that needs to be done, it should have wonderful bipartisan support in this Congress, and it is the least we can do for our children.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I would just point out a couple of things. One, we have spoken to various parts of this legislation, but I think we all in the House of Representatives need to understand the importance and the components of what we are dealing with here. It first authorizes, as I said in my opening, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and Missing Children's Assistance Act. It also provides an authorization, which we heard about very eloquently from several speakers for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; and it does, as we also heard from the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) and others, direct the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a study of the cultural influences on youth violence.

These things, in and of themselves, may not prevent all the problems of youth in this country, it will not; but it may in some small way start the mending process which we consider to be so important.

I would just like to thank all of those who took the time to come to the floor to speak to this today and all the Members of the House, who I believe will be supportive of what we consider to be very significant legislation to help with these problems.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, organizations like the Center for Missing and Exploited Children should be commended and supported for their work on this critical issue. However, I must oppose this legislation as it is outside the proper Constitutional role for the federal government to spend money in this way; such spending is more appropriate coming from the states and private donations. As always, I am amazed that Members of Congress are so willing to be generous with their constituent's tax dollars, yet do not seem willing to support such causes out of their own pockets.

This legislation would spend more than \$268 million on issues that are simply outside the constitutional jurisdiction of the federal government. In addition, legislation like this blurs the lines between public and private funds, and opens good organizations to needless regulatory control for Congress. The legislation even opens the door to public money being used to support sectarian organizations, in direct violation of the First Amendment.

The moral decay of our nation is a serious issue that must be addressed. However, after some forty years of federal meddling in education and other social issues, it is clear politi-

cians on Capitol Hill have made matters worse for our children, not better.

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Speaker, today is National Missing Children's Day. Fitting enough, today we will also be voting on legislation to help locate missing, exploited and runaway children in our society.

Congress first established Missing Children's Day in 1982 to increase public awareness regarding the thousands of children who disappear each year. Through the hard work of organizations such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, I am proud to say that within the past 13 years, more than 35,000 children have been located, many having been saved from child abductions, molestations and sexual exploitation.

Mr. Speaker, it is only fitting that today we will vote on S. 249, The Missing, Exploited and Runaway Children Protection Act. This legislation will provide funds for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to meet several of our nation's needs as they work to reunite missing and exploited children and their families.

For parents who have missing children, every day is a struggle. I urge my colleagues to help families stricken with this awful tragedy by supporting S. 249.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, this legislation is very important, and it is particularly significant to me due to the tragic murder of Polly Klaas that occurred in my home town of Petaluma in 1993.

Polly Klaas was taken from her home at knife point during a slumber party while her mother slept in the next room. Richard Allen Davis, the brutal kidnapper, was later stopped by police in a nearby community. The officers did not know that there was a suspect being sought at that moment, so unfortunately they let him go. Could Polly have been saved if a more sophisticated computer system had been in place allowing different police jurisdictions to communicate? We'll never know.

What I do know is that—thanks to a COPS grant recently awarded to the Sonoma County Police Consortium—such a computer system will soon be in place. This \$6.2 million grant will permit the agencies in my district to upgrade dispatch systems, connect mobile police units, and increase the efficiency in filing incident reports. This is just one important step in improving our safety net for children.

I am forever heartbroken that we were not able to save Polly, but I know that the best way we can honor Polly and other missing children is by doing our utmost to prevent such atrocities from happening to another child, another family, another community.

This bill today, the Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children Protection Act, will allow such vital assistance programs as the Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the national toll-free hotline to continue. Without such resources, it is nearly impossible to conduct a responsive, nationwide search that could be the key to the missing child's survival.

I am also proud to be a Member of the Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus in Congress, because it heightens awareness that we must continue to make progress in protecting our children. We cannot let our guard down. Saving the lives of the most vulnerable in our population should be our most important priority. Children are 25% of our population, but they are 100% of our future.

Mr. DEUTSCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to encourage all my colleagues to support the Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children Protection Act. Today I would like to focus on one specific facet of this Act, the authorization of Congressional support for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Since 1984, the Center has proven to be an invaluable resource for state and local governments who struggle each day to recover missing children and to prevent the exploitation of children.

Through its toll-free hotline, its training programs for state and local professionals, and its coordination of recovery programs, the Center is a focal point mobilizing citizens and communities in the pursuit of safety for all of America's children. The convergence of public and private resources in pursuit of this common goal has resulted in the recovery of more than 40,000 children—40,000 children who could have been lost without the contributions of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

The Center is particularly important to South Florida because one of its affiliated programs, the Jimmy Ryce Law Enforcement Training Center, was established by Congress in 1996 in memory of my constituent, Jimmy Ryce, the son of Don and Claudine Ryce. In 1995, at 9 years of age, Jimmy was abducted and brutally murdered while walking home from school. The Ryce Center, a joint project of the Center for Missing and Exploited Children and the Justice Department's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, trains Chiefs of Police and Sheriffs in the most up-to-date methods of searching for missing children. The Ryce Center promotes swift, effective investigative response to missing and exploited children cases, provides comprehensive training in case investigations, ensures the consistent and meaningful use of reporting systems, and promotes the use of important national resources to assist in these cases.

The Ryce Center is an invaluable resource to law enforcement officials throughout the country, and in just a few short years has made enormous strides in changing the way America deals with cases of missing and exploited children. In the face of a problem which none of us should have to face, Don and Claudine have turned their personal tragedy in to a positive effort to help ensure the safety of millions of American children just like Jimmy. I urge all of my colleagues to support the passage of this bill.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 249.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SUNUNU). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Delaware?

There was no objection.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Delaware (Mr. CASTLE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 249, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.