

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

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent on behalf of the Governmental Affairs Committee to meet on Thursday, June 27 at 10 a.m. for a hearing on "Improving Management and Organization in Federal Natural Resources and Environmental Functions."

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, June 27, 1996, at 9:30 a.m., to hold an executive business meeting.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, June 27, 1996, at 10 a.m. to hold a hearing on "Church Burnings."

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING OPPORTUNITY AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Housing Opportunity and Community Development of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, June 27, 1996, to conduct a hearing on restructuring the Federal Housing Administration's Insured and Assisted Multifamily Housing Portfolio.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEAR EASTERN AND SOUTH ASIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 27, at 2 pm to hold hearing.

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

**ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS**

**CHURCH BURNINGS**

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, the attacks on the churches, predominantly in the Southeast, are far more than attacks on these institutions—they are attacks on the very foundation of the United States. This country was formed to protect people's religious liberty. Burning a place of worship assaults this principle. The American people, who cherish religious freedom, do not look kindly on the destruction of houses of worship.

I think the American people are particularly concerned—I know I am—that a disproportionate number of these attacks have occurred at African-American churches. Of the 56 church burnings in the past 18 months, approximately 40 were predominantly African-American houses of worship. Many of these institutions are more than places of prayer—they are the center of the community.

According to the Justice Department, racial hatred is behind at least some of the burnings. Authorities will need to continue to investigate whether the fires prove to be part of a conspiracy or the work of individual miscreants.

It is important to note that church burnings have occurred outside of the Southeast, including in Arizona. This February, the 65-year-old First Southern Baptist Church in Tucson was badly damaged by a fire that is now under Federal investigation. The Pastor, Ron Hart, said words with universal appeal: "The First Southern Baptist Church did not burn down—just the building. The church is scattered all over Tucson. People are the church. We can rebuild."

While it took too long for the church burnings to bother America's conscience, now that the issue is in the open, there is action on many fronts to put an end to the fires, capture those responsible, and help rebuild destroyed institutions.

Federal and State law-enforcement agencies are working together to solve these crimes against the people of America. Over 200 Federal law-enforcement agents are on the case, and many more State and local officials are investigating the fires.

A laudable example of Federal-State cooperation will soon occur in my State of Arizona. Next week, in Phoenix, the FBI and the Phoenix Police Department will host a forum on the church burnings with African-American pastors.

In responding to the burnings, the Congress has acted in a most appropriate bipartisan fashion to get to the bottom of these terrorist incidents. Hearings have already been held in the House. And today the Senate Judiciary Committee learned the latest on the criminal investigation.

Senators FAIRCLOTH and KENNEDY and Representatives HYDE and CONYERS have drafted church arson legislation that will soon reach the President. Both chambers have passed it unanimously. The measure will sharpen federal penalties for the burning of churches and enhance the resources available to law enforcement to investigate and prevent such acts of arson in the future.

Another key element of the legislation provides Federal loan guarantees to help rebuild the razed churches. Senator KENNEDY describes this section as an "important provision granting the Department of Housing and Urban Development the authority to make loan

guarantees to lenders who provide loans to places of worship that have been victimized by arson." This section is important for the comfort it will provide to churches that lack the resources to rebuild, assuming that it does not violate the wall of separation between church and State.

Private efforts are at least equally impressive. Organizations both religious and nonreligious have pledged millions in grants and loans to help rebuild the churches.

The reaction of the religious community is particularly commendable and welcome. During the civil rights struggle, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. lamented the religious community's lack of support for those engaged in efforts to end segregation and promote equality:

Called to be the moral guardian of the community, the Church at times has preserved that which is immoral and unethical. Called to combat social evils, it has remained silent behind stained-glass windows.

I think Dr. King would be very happy to learn that America has grown, and this indifference is no longer the case. Before the church burnings received national attention, the Christian Coalition posted a \$25,000 award for information leading to the conviction of any church arsonist, and recently, the group announced a major fundraising drive to repair and reconstruct the houses of worship. The Southern Baptist Convention, at its annual meeting this month, passed a resolution condemning the arsons, and initiated an offering to help rebuild the churches. Other notable organizations have offered assistance, including the National Council of Churches and the Anti-Defamation League.

I applaud all those who have undertaken these efforts. We must all continue to work together as one people—the American people—to douse the flames, punish those responsible, and rebuild what pernicious bigotry and hatred have sought to destroy.

HEDGESVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate Hedgesville High School on their outstanding achievement in We the People \* \* \* the Citizen and the Constitution national finals. This competition promotes an understanding of the key objectives and significance of American constitutional democracy.

The 17 students from Hedgesville, WV, who competed in the national finals in Washington, DC, April 27-29, were Erin Ambrester, Kelly Buck, Robert Deters, Dwain Donaldson, Alisha Harper, Jessica Hedrick, Jennifer Huftless, Janice Kelly, Travis Kline, Rebecca Maslauskas, Aaron Moats, Janelle Myers, Jennifer Powers, Heidi Silver, Christopher Twigg, Stephanie Whitford, and Melissa Zombro. This group competed against 49 other classes from around the country.

I would also like to recognize their teacher, Harriett Kopp, who deserves