

REMARKS DELIVERED BY MRS. SHARON ROCHA, MOTHER OF LACI PETERSON

February 26, 2004

On Passage of "Laci and Conner's Law" by U.S. House of Representatives

Hello. I am Sharon Rocha. I am the mother of Laci Peterson and the grandmother of Conner Peterson. I want to thank the House of Representatives for bringing Laci and Conner's law to a vote today, and for giving me this opportunity to speak about an issue that's very important to me and my family.

As you know, Laci and Conner were cruelly murdered. In this difficult time, my family is grateful that under California law, the murders of Laci and Conner can both be prosecuted. But for the families of many other murder victims across the country, there can be no such comfort. Federal law does not recognize that these crimes have two victims.

When I became aware that Congresswoman Melissa Hart was working on a bill to correct this problem, I contacted her to express my support. I asked her to name it "Laci and Conner's Law" in memory of my daughter and grandson. I am grateful to Congresswoman Hart, the House leadership, and the many congressmen, both Republicans and Democrats, who have agreed to support this common-sense legislation. I thank President Bush for his willingness to sign it into law.

The House of Representatives has shown their support for this law by approving it twice thus far, but the senate has consistently failed to act. I call on every senator to vote for this bill, so that the law will do justice for families of murder victims-families like mine. It is time for the Senate to stand up for innocent victims like Conner.

In the summer of 2003, I wrote Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle a letter urging him to support the bill. Shortly after that, Senator Daschle said publicly that the Senate should consider this issue quickly. Since then, members of his party have been holding up a vote. I ask Senator Daschle, as their leader, to urge them to enact Laci and Conner's Law as soon as possible.

I am dismayed that my own senators from California, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, are standing in the way. Senator Feinstein has a bill that says that crimes like the murder of Laci and Conner have only one victim. But Laci knew that Conner was her son, and I know it too. Two people, Laci and Conner, would be here with us today if they had not been murdered. There were two victims in this crime, not one. I call upon Senators Feinstein and Boxer to recognize that reality, and support Laci and Conner's law.

I fear that some senators have opposed Laci and Conner's law because of misunderstandings. Laci and Conner's Law has nothing to do with abortion. So I also call on Senator John Kerry and Senator John Edwards, and every other senator who has refused to support it to reconsider. I call on them to look at how the laws in California and many other states have worked, and to vote yes.

I believe the vast majority of Americans are in agreement that when a pregnant woman and her unborn child are murdered a double homicide has been committed. It is time for those who make the law to listen to us.

Before politicians say that Conner was not really a victim of a crime, they need to think long and hard about whether they really want to say that. If Laci and Conner's law is not enacted this year, I will keep fighting for it. I will not hesitate to explain this issue to their voters. To vote against Laci and Conner's Law, or to obstruct it, is indefensible.

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