the U.S. Government a strong Patent Office and an efficient Patent Office to protect us and to make sure that our people are serviced well, which is a function, a proper function of Government.

This is an attempt to harmonize our law, and those who support H.R. 400 will tell us that we need to harmonize our law with the rest of the world. No, we need to strengthen the protections of the American people.

I ask for the support of my colleagues for H.R. 811 and 812 in opposition to H.R. 400.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. ENGEL] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce the introduction of legislation by Representatives NITA LOWEY, CAROLYN MCCARTHY, and myself which would prevent the purchase or possession of a firearm by a nonpermanent resident alien. Unfortunately, this legislation comes too late to prevent the tragedy which occurred at the Empire State Building last month, when a man who had been in the United States for just 3 weeks shot seven tourists, killing one, and then killed himself. Such a violent crime under any circumstances is shocking but the fact that the gunman had been in this country for such a short time and had established residence at a Florida hotel was unbelievable. My colleagues and I have introduced this legislation in the hopes that we can prevent future crimes committed by individuals who are, essentially, tourists.

Current Federal law requires that legal aliens live in a State for a least 90 days before purchasing a firearm. I applaud the President's recent directive which strengthens the law by mandating that legal aliens must produce a photo ID and documentation to prove they have been in country for at least 3 months before purchasing a weapon. However, I fail to understand why a nonpermanent resident alien should be allowed to own a gun under any circumstances.

The Lowey-Engel-McCarthy legislation is very simple. If you are not a permanent resident of our Nation you quite simply should not be allowed to buy a gun. We must have strong comprehensive Federal legislation which prevents tourists from visiting our country to hunt down our citizens. The Empire State Building gunman was able to slip through the cracks of a system which does not adequately address the problem of violent criminal aliens. It now falls to us to ensure that our citizens are protected from violent predators who seek to abuse the laws of our Nation in order to harm law-abiding citizens.

DEFINING DEVIANCY, UP AND DOWN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. SCARBOROUGH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCARBOROUGH. Mr. Speaker, we just took a vote on the Ten Commandments and a controversy that is occurring in Alabama. I heard ridicule from a lot of Members saying, gee, is this the only thing that the House of Representatives can do? This is a trivial little matter. It is something that just does not really make a big difference.

But I am here to tell the Members that I think it is an extremely important thing we just voted on. If nothing else, it shows there are a group of us that are ready to say enough is enough to the radicalism of the past 30 years. It has created a valueless void that I believe has torn down our civilization.

To reject the radicalism of the past 30 years, the first thing we have to do is recognize what has happened. We have had what has been called by many, defining deviancy down and defining deviancy up. To define deviancy up, what you do is try to make conventional behavior seem radical and radical behavior seem conventional, so just putting the Ten Commandments of God up on the wall in a courtroom in the United States of America is suddenly a radical, dangerous concept.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would say to these ACLU members and to other Americans that would call that a radical notion, I would say to them, read the writings of James Madison. He, after all, is the father of the Constitution that these radicals claim to be protecting.

As he was drafting the Constitution, James Madison, the father of the Constitution, wrote:

> We have staked the entire future of the American civilization not upon the power of government, but upon the capacity of Americans to govern themselves, control themselves, and sustain themselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.

How can they claim that the Ten Commandments are a radical part of our heritage, and how can they claim that they must strip the Ten Commandments from public life to protect the Constitution, when the father of the Constitution and the fourth President of the United States of America said that American civilization's future is based upon this, as we are drafting the Constitution?

How could they say that when the father of our country, George Washington, in his farewell address, speaking to a young America, said: It is impossible to govern this country or any country in the world rightly without a belief in God and the Ten Commandments. How could they say it?

How could they say that a judge in the State of Alabama or in California or in Massachusetts has absolutely no right to decide whether the Ten Commandments goes on the wall, when our Framers said it was an issue that States could address?

We had Justice Joseph Story, who wrote one of the first commentaries on the Constitution for a sitting justice of the Supreme Court. He wrote that:

> The whole power over the subject of religion is left exclusively to the State governments, to be acted upon according to their own sense of justice and the State Constitutions.

Thomas Jefferson wrote the same, saying that the 1st amendment and the 10th amendment combined left matters regarding religion to the States. Jefferson wrote, ''Certainly no power to prescribe any religious exercise or to assume the authority in any religious discipline has been delegated to the general government.'' It must, then, rest with the States.

I am sure many people, including some on the school board in my hometown, would consider radical the words of Abraham Lincoln if he said these words in our school system, where in my hometown a political set of guidelines has driven any mention of faith from the schools.

What would these radicals say to Abraham Lincoln's 1863 proclamation, while President:

> We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other Nation has ever grown, but we have forgotten God. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.

Is that radical? Were the words of Madison, the father of our Constitution, radical? Were the words of Washington radical? If so, Mr. Speaker, I admit, maybe some of us today are considered radical. We have to reverse what happened in 1947 with Everson, and rewrite what has happened.

ECONOMIC EQUITY FOR WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentlewoman from Connecticut [Mrs. JOHNSON] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to introduce a special order that my colleague, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON and I are cohosting for the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues. We are the cochairs of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, a bipartisan organization of the women Members of Congress, and in recognition of Women's History Month, we are holding a series of four special orders on four different subjects of great concern for women.

Today we turn to the issue of economic equity. I am going to start by talking about the contributions of women during Women's History Month in the area of our economy in today's world.

Women today are making an extraordinarily valuable contribution to all sectors of our economy, and in particular, to the dynamic growth of small businesses. Women are opening new businesses at twice the rate of men.

Over one-third of all U.S. firms are women-owned businesses. These firms employ one of every four U.S. workers, and between 1987 and 1996, the growth of women-owned firms outpaced overall growth of U.S. firms by nearly two to one.

Women at all economic levels benefit from this dynamic growth. Women-owned entrepreneurial companies are providing women with more leadership and management experience than they have had access to in larger corporations. These companies are leading the way in providing new benefits to employees, like more flexible work arrangements, tuition reimbursement, and profit-sharing. The likelihood of enjoying those benefits is far greater if you work for a woman-owned business.

What is driving this explosion of entrepreneurial enterprise by women? Not the need to integrate work and child care, but the desire and determination to control their destiny. Most do not work out of their homes to care for their children. In fact, it will surprise the Members to know that women with home-based businesses are no more likely to have children at home than are other women entrepreneurs. Most establish their business because they want to control their lives and control that balance between work and family responsibilities that is at the heart of satisfaction.

Current estimates put the number of woman-owned firms at 8 million businesses, contributing more than $2.38 trillion in annual revenues to our economy. In Connecticut, over 80,000 women-owned business firms account for 30 percent of all firms in the State. Employment growth in women-owned businesses exceeds the national average in nearly every region of the country and nearly every major industry. Employment in women-owned firms rose by more than 100 percent from 1987 to 1992, compared to 38 percent for all firms. Women-owned firms employ a total of 18.5 million workers. The number of women-owned businesses is increasing in every State.

The top growth industries for women-owned businesses are diverse: construction, wholesale trade, transportation, communications, agri-business, and manufacturing.

In addition to their dynamic growth, women have proven to be good business managers and are more likely to remain in business than the average U.S. firm. Nearly three-fourths of women-owned businesses operating in 1991 were still in business 3 years later, compared to two-thirds of all U.S. firms in the same period.

Women-owned businesses are also contributing to our global economy. As of 1992, and these are rather old figures, they are far better now, but these are the most recent we can count on, 13 percent of U.S. women-owned firms were involved in international trade. Globally, women-owned firms typically comprise one-fourth to one-third of the business population.

To what do we attribute this success? Of course, to women's creativity, determination, and willingness to work hard, but we as the Nation's leaders are also a reason for these phenomenal statistics. Government-developed programs, along with a growing base of successful women business leaders to serve as mentors and role models are making a difference. As an example, the Small Business Administration Loans Program made loans to women in fiscal 1995 that accounted for 24 percent of the total loans made and 18 percent of the loan dollars loaned.

In particular, the SBA Microloan Demonstration Program awarded 43 percent of their loans to women. These loans averaged $10,000 and are critical to budding businesses. One program in the SBA's Office of Women Business Ownership provides business skills training, counseling, mentoring, education, and outreach to America's women entrepreneurs. Since its inception in 1988, more than 60,000 women have benefited from this program through 54 nonprofit business centers in 28 States Nationwide.

Using Federal funds as seed money, business centers, after a 3-year period, must become self-sufficient. More than 35 centers are now entirely self-sufficient, and they are examples of true economic development, job-producing organizations that increase earning potential and are developing a large pool of skilled entrepreneurs.

Last year I introduced the Women's Business Training Centers Act of 1996 that would authorize this SBA Program to become permanent and increase its funding. I will be introducing that same legislation this year.

Other contributors to the growth of women-owned businesses include the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act of 1994 which establishes a 5-percent government-wide procurement goal for women-owned businesses, and the Women's Requalification Loan Program which enables the SBA to prequalify a loan guarantee for a woman business owner before she goes to the bank.

□ 1430

Through these programs we have nurtured a dynamic resource for national economic growth. We need to continue that effort. There is more work to be done. Because despite their positive achievement, there are still areas of concern for women in business. These include the need for expanded access to capital, increased participation in Federal and private procurement markets, better access to training and technical support, greater access to affordable health care plans, a broader knowledge base about women-owned businesses. Women-owned businesses have become a key component of our national economic growth. And I know this body is going to be interested in and willing to support growth initiatives that the caucus will bring to our attention in the months ahead.

It is now my great privilege and pleasure to yield to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia [Ms. NORTON], a woman of great leadership, enormous determination, passion, and intelligence.

Ms. NORTON. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me, for her kind words, for her very hard work on behalf of women, for her bipartisanship and for her great intelligence and energy in this body. It is a great pleasure to commemorate Women's History Month, as a partner with my co-chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus.

This is the 20th year of the Congressional Women's Caucus, so Women's History Month this year means something very special to the 53 Members, who are women in the House of Representatives. It is a special enough occasion so that tomorrow the women Members will be going to the White House at 5:00 p.m. in order to commemorate its 20th anniversary with the President of the United States.

I want to indicate before I begin, Mr. Speaker, that my co-chair and I are only beginning this series. The second week of this series for Women's History Month will concern women in the military. That is an issue of great importance to the Women's Caucus this year, particularly considering the sexual harassment and sexual assault charges that have arisen at Aberdeen and other places.

The third week of March, the subject will be women's health. That is a very special matter for this caucus, since, I believe it is fair to say, the caucus can take much of the credit for advances that have come from this body on the issue of women's health. The gentlewoman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA] and the gentlewoman from New York [Ms. SLAUGHTER] will lead us the third week of March on women's health. But where the gentlewoman from Connecticut and I begin is perhaps the place to begin this year discussing women and economic equity. The emergence of women in the workplace puts a burden on this body and on the American people to absorb this very large group with fairness and equity and equality.

The new woman is a woman who works. She is often a woman with children working part time. She is often a woman who works only after her children are in school. But it will be a rare woman of the coming generation that has not spent some time in the work force.

Last year, April 11, the President declared National Pay Inequality Awareness Day. That was the day on which a number of bills to encourage greater fairness toward women in the workplace were introduced. The reason April 11 was chosen last year is that was the day on which American women's wages for 1996, when added to their entire 1995 earnings, finally equaled what men earned in 1995 alone. This year I will be introducing the Fair Pay Act on that day. That is a bill I have introduced before and will introduce

until there is more substantial progress for women in the workplace.

I also support a bill that has been introduced in the Senate entitled the Paycheck Fairness Act. The Paycheck Fairness Act will be introduced here in the House, and I intend to be a cosponsor. It is a far milder bill than the bill that I have written, the Fair Pay Act, and, therefore, it is a bill that I would hope most Members could embrace.

It will require greater penalties for violators of the Equal Pay Act. It will require the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to maintain payroll records by race, sex, and national origin even as it now maintains these records with respect to other terms and conditions of employment. And it will require the EEOC to train its employees in wage discrimination.

This bill is necessary because the notion of equal pay for equal work, embraced by virtually everyone in this body, is not getting the attention by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission it should get today, and there has been a decline in the number of cases. We think that the Paycheck Fairness Act and what it would encourage will increase vigilance under the Equal Pay Act.

Mr. Speaker, I was the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission during the Carter administration. As such, I enforced the Equal Pay Act and the other discrimination laws, including those that relate to pay. Out of that experience, it has become clear to me that we need the Equal Pay Act to be amended to do for women in the 1990's what the Equal Pay Act did for women in the 1960's.

The Equal Pay Act has been one of the most successful bills or one of the most successful pieces of legislation designed to offer equal opportunity ever passed by the Congress. It has in fact helped to narrow the gap between men and women in pay. But no one would stand in the well of the House and say, it has done its work or that it is as effective as this statute, the Equal Pay Act, could in fact be. Progress has been made but a great deal of that progress is sadly illusory.

Women's wages have now gone from 62 cents on a man's dollar, as was the case in 1982, to 71 cents on a man's dollar today. The problem with that progress is that it does not reflect straightaway progress for the average woman in the work force. The new presence of highly educated women in entry level positions accounts for part of that progress. But sadly, part of that progress simply shows up because men's wages have fallen so precipitously.

Why then is there a wage gap today? The wage gap persists largely because most women are still segregated in a few low paying women's occupations, pure and simple. If you got the opportunity to go to law school or business school or medical school, you are not among those women. But the fact is that the average woman makes about $14,000 a year, and that is because she works below her skill level in a women's occupation.

These occupations have stereotyped wages. They do not in fact pay in equivalency what a man would get in a job of equal skill effort, responsibility and working conditions.

The jobs may be dissimilar, but why should the pay be different if the skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions are the same?

For example, would anyone like to indicate to me why an emergency services operator, a female, dominated-occupation, should be paid less than a fire dispatcher, a male, dominated-occupation? There is no defensible reason for the disparity in their wages, but there is an easily ascertainable reason. And that is clearly that the wage scales have built in the fact of gender in the occupation. That is a problem that pervades the work force and pay levels.

My bill, the Fair Pay Act, would simply require that in the same workplace an employer pay men and women who are doing jobs of equivalent skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions the same, even if the jobs are not exactly the same.

This bill poses no threat to the way in which employers do business or the way in which our economy operates. The burden would be on the woman to show that her wage, the difference in her wage, for example, between the fire dispatcher and the emergency services operator, is not because of market conditions and supply and demand, but the burden would be on her to show that the reason for the disparity is discrimination based on sex. I am the first to indicate that not all women will be able to show that they earn less money than men in a comparable occupation because of gender discrimination. All my bill does is to allow those women who do the opportunity to show that they in fact are paid less than men because of their gender.

By now it is a truism that the decline in men's wages and the decline in the standard of living over a couple of decades as well have made work a necessity for the average husband-wife family. The growth in female heads of household, the return now or the entry now of welfare clients into the work force means that we must redouble our effort to make sure that women are paid what they are worth in the workplace.

The Fair Pay Act takes up where the Equal Pay Act leaves off. We have already seen in at least a half dozen States, from the State of Washington to the State of Connecticut, that one can enforce comparable pay discrimination without upsetting the economy of a State, for the State employment systems in those States have done exactly that.

To illustrate the currency of the issue of equal pay and comparable pay, let me finally cite the case of Marianne Stanley. Marianne Stanley is now coaching at Stanford. The sports aficionados will, of course, recognize who Marianne Stanley is. She was known especially for her work as head coach at Old Dominion, where she had a winning percentage of 351 to 146 during her stay there. The school won the AIAW titles in 1979 and 1990 and added an NCAA title in 1985 to her credits.

Until this season, by the way, when Tennessee's Pat Summit won her fourth national title, Stanley and Summit were tied for the most national women's basketball titles. Marianne Stanley has now brought an Equal Pay Act suit.

□ 1445

She brought that suit when she left Old Dominion, and she became head coach at USC, and she was there from 1990 to 1993. She was considered a national treasure, and led USC to the final eight of the NCAA tournament in 1992. Her teams, her Trojan teams, reached the NCAA tournament in each of her final 3 years there. This woman is a winner.

But she was fired following the 1992 season, reportedly because of a dispute with her athletic director over not receiving a salary equal to the salary that men's coaches were paid. She brought a lawsuit. That lawsuit is now on appeal.

Here is a woman who has broken through as coach in a sport where women got scant attention until recently, but as everyone knows, women's basketball is the coming sport, and here we have a champion in her own right who goes on to be a champion coach.

All I can say, without knowing the outcome of the suit that is on appeal, is that she was not paid the same as men's coaches. I do not think that one who won games the way she did should be subject to less pay than men's coaches who, by the way, had not, so far as I understand, won or had the championships as she had.

Equal pay and comparable pay issues abound in the workplace. This is the month to remind Americans of that. Too often we use commemorations like Women's History Month to congratulate ourselves for commemorating the fact of such a month. We must use these occasions to remind ourselves that there is work to do, and to then put that work forward.

My cochair has indicated that she will be using this month to introduce her bills. I will be using this month to introduce bills designed to help women. I hope that women in the caucus and our many colleagues throughout the Congress will use Women's History Month to focus on doing something for women that will have an effect on increasing their opportunities in the work force.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, and we have next the gentlewoman from Texas, KAY GRANGER. This is Congresswoman GRANGER's first term as a Member of the House of Representatives.

She was the distinguished and successful mayor of Fort Worth, TX.

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues today in discussing the need for this Congress to help America's working women. It is particularly appropriate that the Women's Caucus is launching our weekly special orders by focusing on jobs and the workplace.

Today more than ever working women are no longer the exception, they are the rule. America's working women are redefining the workplace as we know it. Today women own nearly 6.5 million companies. That is one-third of all the businesses in America. By the year 2000 women will own 40 percent of America's businesses.

So it is vitally important that this Congress address the issues and the interests of this very growing segment of our economy. It is becoming increasingly clear that women's issues are economic issues. Jobs, taxes, and economic growth are the concerns of today's women.

Female entrepreneurs are here to stay. And while Washington cannot create wealth, we must at least ask our government to follow the first principle of the Hippocratic oath: Do no harm.

Government taxation and regulation and litigation hold back our working women. Government taxes prevent female employers and employees from keeping more of their hard-earned money, money needed for furthering their education, expanding their businesses and caring for their families. Today's taxes consume more family income than they spend on food, education, or shelter.

We need to make our tax system flatter and fairer so that our women do not have to work almost half the year to foot Government cost. Likewise, Government rules on litigation subject our small businesswomen to needless time and expense. Let us let our working women spend more time in the boardroom and less time in the courtroom through legal reform.

Mr. Speaker, today's working women are the pioneers of tomorrow. As they struggle to create new jobs, growth, and opportunity, let us make our Government work for our working women.

I would like to point out that many women work full time not only at the office but also in the home. In our efforts to enhance and encourage the careers of our women, I am afraid we have sometimes lost sight of the fact that many of our working women are also working mothers. These working mothers need the opportunity to balance their schedules between work and home. After all, meetings with our children are just as important as meetings with our staff.

As a working mother of three, I understand there is no price tag on time with our loved ones. As a former mayor, I learned that comp time works in the public sector. Let us help our working women by giving workers in the private sector the same choice.

Mr. Speaker, the working women of America are essential to ensuring that our Nation continues on a path of economic growth and personal responsibility. I urge my colleagues to support measures which promote and protect the dual role of America's women as leaders at the office and leaders in the home.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent for the right to have written statements included in this special order from the gentlewoman from Indiana, JULIA CARSON, the gentlewoman from New York, SUE KELLY, and the gentlewoman from Maryland, CONSTANCE MORELLA, who have asked to submit such statements, as well as all Members.

I would also like to recognize the intention of a number of other women to participate in this special order; and while they have been detained, the gentlewoman from Florida, CORRINE BROWN, the gentlewoman from Texas, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, the gentlewoman from California, ZOE LOFGREN, and the gentlewoman from New York, CAROLYN MALONEY, had intended to participate, thinking that this would be earlier.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Connecticut?

There was no objection.

Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I yield once again to my colleague, Congresswoman NORTON.

Ms. NORTON. Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for reading off names of Members who may want to now place matters into the RECORD. I believe she also read JULIA CARSON and KAY GRANGER. If not, I want to be sure their names were included. I am certain that there are perhaps even more Members who will want to add statements to the RECORD.

I thank the gentlewoman for acquiring this time and for sharing it with me.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Women's History Month and would like to call special attention to the progress U.S. women have made in the workforce.

Women have made inroads into spheres formerly dominated by men. For example, the number of female managers jumped from 19 percent in the 1970's to 43 percent by the middle of the 1990's. By 1993, women earned a majority of all college degrees. Black women far exceeded their male counterparts, earning 63 percent of bachelor's degrees.

Unfortunately, these significant gains in the public arenas of school and workplace are matched by some sobering trends. Women and children are more likely to be living in poverty than men. Among the elderly, women's likelihood of being poor is twice that of men of the same age.

Under the new welfare reform law, poor and minority women will disproportionately suffer the impact of this legislation. For example, under the new law, unmarried women who have children while on welfare can be denied additional benefits for those children. With out-of-wedlock birth rates highest among blacks and Hispanics, this restriction will disproportionately affect poor minority children. In addition, the new law will exclude many immigrant mothers and their children from receiving food stamps.

In spite of these grim facts, I believe that women will achieve greater economic equity in the future. The movement toward greater equality in work and family roles can only be achieved over the long run by the succession of generations. Each generation must become more committed to equality than the last.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in celebration of Women's History Month and in tribute to the many women who, through the ages, dared to challenge injustice and discrimination in the workplace. It is the tireless work of those leaders who came before us that allow women to enjoy the benefits of the nineties. However, as we all know, those long distance runners for equality and social justice have not completed their course. During Women's History Month, we pause to reflect what we have accomplished in the past, and the work we must do for the future.

Women have made great strides in education and in the workforce. The majority of undergraduate and master's degrees are awarded to women, and 40 percent of all doctorates are earned by women. More than 7.7 million businesses in the United States are owned and operated by women. These businesses employ 15.5 million people, about 35 percent more than the Fortune 500 companies worldwide. And women are running for elected offices in record numbers. When I first came to the House in 1987, there were 26 women in the House and 2 in the Senate. In 1997, there are 53 women serving in the House, and 9 in the Senate.

While many doors to employment and educational opportunity have opened for women, they still get paid less than men for the same work. Full-time, year-round working women earned only 72 cents for each dollar a man earned in 1994. College-educated women earned $11,000 less per year than college-educated men. College-educated women earned only $2,000 more per year than white men who hold a high school diploma.

Although women are and continue to be the majority of new entrants into the workplace, they continue to be clustered in low-skilled, low-paying jobs. Part-time and temporary workers, the majority of whom are women, are among the most vulnerable of all workers. They receive lower pay, fewer or no benefits, and little if any job security.

Last year's Economic Equity Act, which I introduced along with my colleagues on the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, placed new emphasis on the economic impact of domestic violence. We are only beginning to understand the impact of domestic violence on American businesses. Domestic violence follows many women to work—13,000 attacks each year—threatening their lives and the lives of coworkers and resulting in lost productivity for their companies.

The economic problems of the elderly affect women in disproportionate numbers because women tend to have lower pensions and Social Security benefits than men. Pension policies have not accommodated women in their traditional role as family caregivers. Women move in and out of the workforce more frequently when family needs arise making it

more difficult for them to accrue pension credit. Many must rely on inadequate Social Security earnings during their retirement years.

Last Congress, however, we passed the Homemaker IRA, which is a milestone in the struggle to achieve pension equity for women. Before the Homemaker IRA, women, and men, who worked at home as family caregivers could only contribute $250 to an Individual Retirement Account [IRA]. This legislation ended the discrimination that many women face when they choose to stay at home and take care of their children. Allowing nonworking spouses to make full IRA contributions of $2,000, just as their working spouses do, will help homemakers save for their retirement years.

Mr. Speaker, celebrating Women's History Month highlights the accomplishments of women and the need to open new doors in the future. But this special month would be meaningless if women's needs are forgotten during the rest of the year. We must continue to increase the workplace opportunities for women, which will benefit all Americans as we face the economic challenges of the 21st century.

CHILDREN'S ONLY HEALTH CARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I am here today to once again talk about the need for Congress to pass a children's only health care bill and the Republicans' continued refusal to let this Democratic plan move forward.

Again we are here in the middle of another week, in the third month of the 105th Congress, and the Republicans basically have nothing to do. Ten million American children have no health insurance, yet day after day after day the Republican leadership schedules no real business for the House of Representatives to consider.

Yesterday was a perfect example of just how little the Republicans have to do. Even though Democrats have legislative plans to provide health care to the Nation's 10 million uninsured children ready for consideration, the Republican leadership decided it was more important to debate a symbolic measure about the Ten Commandments.

Let me repeat that, Mr. Speaker, because it is really kind of unbelievable when one thinks about it. Instead of allowing legislative plans to ensure that all American children have health insurance to be considered, the House Republican leadership felt it was more important to consider a symbolic measure on how Congress feels about the display of the Ten Commandments in Government offices and courthouses.

The point is that children's health care, pure and simple, is something that needs to be addressed. The problem of uninsured children continues to grow as Congress watches from the sidelines. Indeed, last week I was joined by colleagues, some from New York, to discuss a report released by the New York City public advocate, Mark Green, that found a disturbing rise in the number of uninsured children in New York City.

As congressional Republicans continue to prevent the Federal Government from taking action to confront this problem, what is happening, essentially, is that various States around the country are trying to make some progress on the issue. An excellent example of such action was just published in an article about the action the State of Massachusetts has taken to implement a children's only health plan. This was in the New York Times on Friday.

I am pleased today to talk a little bit about that, because I think that the Massachusetts children's medical security plan, which is the name that is given to this proposal, is basically a good plan, designed to insure children whose parents earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid coverage but still cannot afford to purchase health care for their kids.

We have been through this before. If the family is eligible for Medicaid, then they have health insurance coverage. But we have a lot of people, working people, people that are on the job, in many cases both parents working at separate jobs, who do not get health insurance through their employer. They are not eligible for Medicaid because their income is not low enough, and so they simply go without health insurance for their children because they cannot afford to pay a premium that they would have to obtain privately or through some other means.

So basically what Massachusetts did was to try to come up with a plan to deal with those individuals who were above the income level for the Medicaid threshold but still do not get health insurance on the job for their children or who cannot afford to pay for health insurance privately.

The article in the New York Times details some individuals. For example, Mark Leary, of Lawrence, MA, was able to take his 3-year-old daughter to doctors to receive treatment for an ear infection even though the supermarket he works for does not offer health insurance.

It also talks about another individual, Paula Lincoln of Rockland, MA, who was able to still bring her children in to the doctor for checkups after she lost her teaching job.

It mentions another self-employed person, Elaine Choquette of Blackstone, MA, who uses the program to pay to bring her two sons to the doctors as well. Miss Choquette was quoted as saying, ''I pay my taxes, and I never thought of it being anything compared to welfare.''

This is not a welfare program. This is a program in the State of Massachusetts for working people. The program in Massachusetts is very much like many of the proposals that Democrats here in Congress have developed. Most of the programs awaiting consideration are like the Massachusetts program. They are designed to help hard working parents who make too much money to qualify for Medicaid yet still cannot afford health insurance for their kids.

The really big difference between the Massachusetts program and the various Federal programs awaiting consideration is that theirs has been enacted. In other words, the Massachusetts Legislature actually considers and passes legislation in response to societal challenges, and the Republican-controlled 105th Congress clearly does not.

The New York Times article on the Massachusetts plan reports that Representative BILL THOMAS, the California Republican who heads the Subcommittee on Health of the Committee on Ways and Means, said in early February that he would soon hold hearings to get a sense of the scope of the problem of kids not having health insurance. But it is now March, and although we have debated the merits of hanging the Ten Commandments on the wall of Government buildings, I have yet to see a hearing on the issue held or a legislative plan examined.

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Again, every day the Republicans waste is another day that parents have to endure the reality of being unable to take their children to the doctor. This is no small price to pay.

I have to say that the Massachusetts State Health notes that while uninsured children had always had access to emergency treatment, the State's health plan now allows parents to bring their children in for routine medical visits, check on immunizations, and tests for lead poisoning.

One of the points that we have been trying to make during this debate on kids' health insurance is that it may very well be that in some cases, perhaps even in most cases when an uninsured child gets really sick, that they end up going to the emergency room and they get some type of care. But that is not the way the health system should operate. They need preventative care. They need vaccinations. They need to go to the doctor for routine checkups. We do not want a situation where the only time children get any kind of medical treatment is if they really get ill and they have to go to the emergency room.

It is my hope that the Republicans will recognize that while we seek to enable children to receive treatment, the matter itself is not routine. This is an urgent matter. Any kind of obstructionism on the issue of kids' health insurance I believe is really callous, and the Democrats, of course, continue to articulate and move forward with various plans that both the President and other of my Democratic colleagues have put forward.

I just wanted to talk a little about some of the things that Massachusetts