Irish community. Savannah has a historically large Irish community that is integral to the fabric of the city, and the St. Patrick's Day parade is the direct result of this impact.

Unfortunately, the parade and election of the grand marshal was canceled this year due to the pandemic. However, it is important that we continue to celebrate and honor the heritage and culture of the Irish. I look forward to continuing this special tradition and celebrating St. Patrick's Day in Savannah with everyone once the pandemic ends.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, today, we will vote to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, one of the most important bills in history to protect women and girls.

This photograph is of then-Senator Joe Biden, myself, and other women leaders when we introduced this important bill in 1994. It is still important. We need to reauthorize it. There is no doubt he will sign it into law.

We live in a world where 1 in 4 women have experienced sexual violence. Reauthorizing VAWA is about creating a future where all those experiencing dating and gender-based violence feel supported to seek help, and where survivors are given the tools they need to heal. It is about ensuring a better, safer future for the next generation. I urge a ''yes'' vote by all of my colleagues.

EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

(Ms. JACOBS of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACOBS of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of the equal rights amendment.

From the beginning, gender equality was left out of the Constitution. Generations of women and LGBTQ-plus Americans lived and died without ever having the equal rights and dignity that they deserve under the law.

We know that the ERA is necessary by the words of its opponents, including the late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, who argued that the Constitution does not prohibit discrimination based on sex. We can change that.

Madam Speaker, 38 States have ratified the ERA. The only hurdle that remains is the arbitrary deadline set by Congress, a deadline that passed before I was born, but a deadline that never stopped the pursuit of justice. With every vote we take in this Chamber, we have the chance to correct past mistakes and repeal past wrongs. That is what we will do again today.

Madam Speaker, our march for equal rights is not done. It will not stop, and it does not expire.

REMOVING THE DEADLINE FOR THE RATIFICATION OF THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 233, I call up the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 17) removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the joint resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BEATTY). Pursuant to House Resolution 233, the joint resolution is considered read.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.J. RES. 17

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That notwithstanding any time limit contained in House Joint Resolution 208, 92d Congress, as agreed to in the Senate on March 22, 1972, the article of amendment proposed to the States in that joint resolution shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the United States Constitution whenever ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The joint resolution shall be debatable for one hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary or their respective designees.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) and the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Mrs. FISCHBACH) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.J. Res. 17.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Madam Speaker, H.J. Res. 17 is long-overdue legislation to ensure that the equal rights amendment can finally become the 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution. The House passed identical legislation last Congress on a bipartisan basis, and I hope it will do so again today.

Madam Speaker, in 1923, Alice Paul first introduced an amendment to the Constitution to guarantee full equal protection for women. The text of the amendment is simple and clear: ''Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.''

That amendment passed with overwhelming bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate in 1972.

Unfortunately, it fell just short of being ratified by the requisite number of States before the arbitrary deadline imposed by Congress ran out in 1982. In the 40 years since, we have made great strides in this country to ensure equality. Women have secured the right to vote, protection against workplace discrimination, and through case law decided under the 14th Amendment, many other critical protections denied them for too long on the basis of sex.

Without the ERA, millions of women have still had to march in support of their rights, their healthcare, their reproductive freedom and abortion access, and their dignity as equal citizens. Through the Me Too movement, we have had long-overdue, and sometimes painful, conversations about the violence and harassment that women and others experience—whether in the workplace, at homes, or in schools and universities.

But still, to this day, the Constitution does not explicitly recognize and guarantee that no one can be denied equal protection of the laws on the basis of sex. The ERA would enshrine those principles and take the final, critical step of ensuring that laws disadvantaging women and gender minorities are subject to the most rigorous form of scrutiny.

Last year, Virginia became the 38th and last necessary State to ratify the ERA, and, today, in passing H.J. Res. 17, we will be one step closer to enshrining it into law. This resolution removes a previous deadline Congress set in the amendment's proposing clause for ratifying the ERA, and will, therefore, ensure that recent ratifications by Nevada, Illinois, and Virginia are given full effect.

We are on the brink of making history, and no deadline should stand in the way. The Constitution itself places no deadlines on the process for ratifying amendments. Congress, just as clearly, has the authority to extend or remove any deadlines that it previously chose to set in the first place.

The recent ruling by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia refusing to recognize the recent State ratifications makes it even more imperative that Congress act now in removing this deadline. We must make it absolutely clear that Congress does not want language put in the proposing clause of a resolution 40 years ago to stand in the way of full equality now.

Madam Speaker, I thank Representative SPEIER for introducing this resolution, which takes that important step. This resolution will ensure, at long last, that the equal rights amendment can take its rightful place as part of our Nation's Constitution.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to support it, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding.

H.J. Res. 17 is not a resolution to revive the equal rights amendment; it is

a messaging vehicle. That is why Democrats bypassed the Committee on the Judiciary and brought this resolution directly to the floor, a common theme for this majority. There was no process for this resolution, a resolution that Democrats claim is a priority. We are here today for a headline so the Democrats can say they supported the ERA when it was in the House.

But the fact is, Madam Speaker, that men and women in the United States are already equal under law. The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution require as much, guaranteeing equal protection for all under the laws of this country. To me, the ERA is unnecessary, redundant, and divisive. The only thing it will do is empower the far-left special interest groups and lead to activist litigation.

Just last year, the head of Planned Parenthood declared: ''There is no equal rights for women without access to abortion, plain and simple.''

Or according to NARAL Pro-Choice America: ''With its ratification, the ERA would reinforce the constitutional right to abortion.''

Madam Speaker, we should take them at their word.

For years, groups like Planned Parenthood and others have advocated for adoption of the ERA so they can use it to pursue their pro-abortion agendas. If the ERA became law, it would allow these organizations to advance the radical policies through the courts without being in full view of the American people. These groups have hijacked the ERA and are seeking to use it as a tool to challenge States' pro-life laws.

But the reality is that this resolution is unconstitutional. Article V of the Constitution empowers Congress to propose amendments to the Constitution by a two-thirds vote of both the House and the Senate. After Congress proposes an amendment, the amendment is sent to the States for ratification. Three-fourths of the States must ratify the amendment in order for it to become effective.

The equal rights amendment was proposed in 1972. The amendment set an explicit deadline. It gave the States 7 years, until 1979, for ratification. Setting a deadline for ratification is part of Congress' authority to determine the mode of ratification under Article V.

In 1920, the Supreme Court held in Dillon v. Gloss that there was no doubt that Congress can set a date for ratifying an amendment. The deadline to ratify the ERA has long since passed, and the amendment fell short of the required number of States. When proposing a constitutional amendment, the deadline for ratification is just as important as the substance.

The District Court for D.C., less than 2 weeks ago, denied an effort by Virginia, Nevada, and Illinois to force the adoption of the ERA, despite the 1979 deadline. In denying the effort of those States, the courts said that a deadline for ratification still receives the assent of two-thirds of both Houses of Congress, and putting it in the resolving clause does not evade Article V's procedural requirements in any way.

Because setting a deadline takes a two-thirds vote of Congress, it would be absurd to say that changing that deadline requires anything less. If a simple majority of Congress could alter a proposed amendment after it has been sent to the States, the two-thirds requirement of Article V would be meaningless.

A partisan majority cannot rewrite a proposed amendment at will after there has been an agreement in Congress. However, that is just what H.J. Res. 17 and the Democrats propose to do.

The ERA expired in 1979, and this joint resolution is a legal fiction advanced for political purposes.

Madam Speaker, I urge all Members to oppose this resolution.

□ 1030

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, the gentlewoman errs, the deadline for ratification is not part of the amendment, it is part of the resolution proposing the amendment. And if Congress can propose a deadline, it can revoke that proposal since it is not part of the amendment at all.

Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER).

Ms. SPEIER. Madam Speaker, this is a glorious day for women in America. With the passage of the ERA and the Violence Against Women Act, we are making great strides forward.

This particular resolution does one thing. We want in the Constitution, plain and simple.

Antonin Scalia, the great jurist, said once: Does the Constitution require discrimination based on sex? The answer is no.

But if the question is: Does the Constitution prohibit discrimination based on sex?

The answer is also no.

That should send a chilling feeling in each of us that in the Constitution of the United States women are not protected.

In fact, we are the only country with a written Constitution that does not prohibit discrimination based on sex. Shame on us.

There can be no expiration date on equality. This is a bipartisan bill. We are proud to bring it to the floor.

My colleagues across the aisle may say we don't need the ERA, women are already equal under the law, that it is redundant.

Well, tell that to Christy Brzonkala, who was raped by two football players at Virginia Tech. She sought justice under VAWA, but the Supreme Court struck down the civil suit provision, claiming Congress lacked the power to pass it.

Or Tracy Rexroat, whose starting salary at the Arizona Department of Education was $17,000 less than her colleague. They based the salaries on what their prior salary was from whatever job they came, so she receives $17,000 less than her colleague. She too filed an action under the Equal Pay Act, and the courts held that there was some reasonable expectation.

Well, there is nothing reasonable about that. And until we have the ERA in the Constitution that provides the same level of scrutiny as race discrimination, this will continue to be a problem.

Or ask Jessica Gonzales if she thinks it is redundant. Jessica's estranged husband kidnapped and murdered their three young daughters after the police refused to enforce a restraining order.

If we had the ERA, these cases would have had different outcomes. The ERA will create stronger legal recourse against sex discrimination, it will empower Congress to better enforce and enact laws protecting women, and it will confirm the rightful place of gender equality in the Constitution where it belongs.

I believe most of us recognize that this is the right thing to do. The ERA is about building an America that we want. It is about forming a more perfect union, it is about equality, survival, dignity, and respect.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, some lawmakers continue to ignore, trivialize, or deny the fact that abortion activists plan to aggressively use the Federal ERA—as they have used State ERAs—in a litigation strategy designed to overturn pro-life laws and policies, including restrictions supported by huge majorities of Americans.

As the Marist Poll found recently in January: Seven in 10 Americans, including nearly half who identify as pro-choice, want significant restrictions on abortions. While I fundamentally disagree with abortion activists who refuse to recognize an unborn child's inherent dignity, worth and value, many on both sides now agree that how the ERA is written will be used in court to massively promote abortion.

NARAL Pro-Choice America said the ERA would ''reinforce the constitutional right to abortion'' and ''require judges to strike down anti-abortion laws.''

The National Organization for Women said: ''An ERA—properly interpreted—could negate the hundreds of laws that have been passed restricting access to abortion. . . .''

Those laws include the Hyde amendment, waiting periods, parental involvement statutes, women's right-to-know laws, conscience rights, and late term abortion ban, like the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act.

By now, my colleagues know that the Supreme Court of New Mexico ruled that the State was required—required to fund abortion, based solely on the State ERA.

In like manner, the Supreme Court of Connecticut invalidated its State ban on abortion funding based on its ERA.

Ensuring equal rights for women and serious protections against violence and exploitation requires laws, policies, and spending priorities to achieve those noble and necessary goals, without—I say again, without putting unborn baby girls and boys at risk of death.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I am glad the gentleman recognizes that equality includes the right of each woman and man to make their own decision about their reproductive choices. There can be no equality of the sexes when one class of people is denied the ability to control their own bodies.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH).

Mrs. MCBATH. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, I celebrate this Women's History Month by reflecting on the achievement of so many women who have blazed a trail for the generations that followed them; women who didn't listen when they were told that they couldn't, they shouldn't, or that they didn't belong.

American women have fought for the right to vote, the right to equal education, the right to reproductive healthcare, and the right to financially provide for our families and be compensated the same as men. And we will continue these fights until our Constitution declares that women are equal in the eyes of the law.

It is time for full constitutional equality. The American people overwhelmingly support this bipartisan legislation. I am proud to vote for it again today in honor of the generations of women that have made strides toward equality. I know that we will soon achieve it.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. SPARTZ).

Mrs. SPARTZ. Madam Speaker, I think it is a good discussion to have, but I would suggest to my colleagues from the other side, if they do believe this issue is still valid and necessary, to actually restart this process from the beginning, because we are wasting our time right here. A 1972 amendment cannot be ratified, it doesn't exist. It has expired. It is unconstitutional. A lot of things have changed.

We can debate if it is necessary or not, but if we want to have a real debate, we need to restart this from the beginning and not waste time debating something that doesn't exist. So I would ask not to support this amendment, and it is unconstitutional.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN).

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I want to thank the chairman for his time, and I want to thank Mrs. MALONEY and Ms. SPEIER for their long work on this, and the many women before them who have worked hard on this effort.

Congress created the limitation on years on the passage of the ERA, and Congress can change it, and Congress should change it.

I am the product of the work of a woman, my mother, and her mother produced her. We should not forget women and their commitment and invaluable contributions at our birth.

Every woman should have the same rights as a man. They don't get paid the same, they are discriminated in the workplace, they are harassed, they are abused. They should have equal rights. That has not occurred in America, and it won't happen until we pass this bill.

I favor the passage and I appreciate the spirit in which it is offered.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Arizona (Mrs. LESKO).

Mrs. LESKO. Madam Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill. This push to remove the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment is an unnecessary and unconstitutional powergrab.

This bill is unconstitutional. Congress set a deadline for the ERA; it was 1979. With only 35 of the 38 States needed for ratification at the time, Congress extended the deadline to 1982, but no other States joined in, ending the ratification process for the equal rights amendment.

Even the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said that the deadline for the ERA ratification had long passed. She said: ''I would like to see a new beginning. I'd like it to start over. There's too much controversy about latecomers—Virginia, long after the deadline passed. Plus, a number of States have withdrawn their ratification. So, if you count a latecomer on the plus side, how can you disregard States that said, ''We've changed our minds?''' If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to ratify the ERA, they have to start over.

Women also already have equal rights under the law. In decision after decision, the United States Supreme Court has underscored that the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution gives women equal rights and prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, rendering, I believe, the ERA unnecessary.

Finally, if ratified, the ERA would be used to codify the right to abortion, undoing pro-life protections, and forcing taxpayers to fund abortions.

The New Mexico Supreme Court ruled that their State's ERA provision required the State to fund abortions. Numerous pro-abortion groups have already made the case for ratifying the ERA on the basis of expanding their abortion agenda. Just listen to the words of the organizations pushing this legislation themselves.

The National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, NARAL, has claimed that, ''With its ratification, the ERA would reinforce the constitutional right to abortion.''

Planned Parenthood and the Women's Law Project has said that State bans and government funding of elective abortions are ''contrary to a modern understanding of the ERA.''

The National Organization for Women has said, ''An ERA—properly interpreted—could negate the hundreds of laws that have been passed restricting access to abortion care and contraception.''

With this unconstitutional bill, my colleagues across the aisle are hiding behind the rhetoric of equality for women to eliminate any and all protections for unborn babies, half of which would be girls, then women, if given the chance to live.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this bill.

□ 1045

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) that he may control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Tennessee will control the time.

Mr. COHEN. Unlike Alexander Haig, I am only here temporarily.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY), who is from the East Side and who, as chairperson, brought us the great hearing last year on the ERA.

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, there is no time limit on equality. The equal rights amendment passed the needed 38 States, including the great State of New York. Enough is enough. It is long past time for women to be in the Constitution.

We may not always be able to control, nor should women's rights be dependent upon who controls State governments, who is in the White House or Congress, or who sits on the Supreme Court.

Our rights shouldn't be determined by these types of things. It should be in the document, the document they interpret and that they are bound by.

It is long past time to spell out equality in our Constitution with the ERA.

Unfortunately, we are seeing the effects of gender inequality acutely during this pandemic. An estimated 1 million more women than men have lost their jobs, and a disproportionate number of those suffering are Black women and Latinas.

We need to pass it. It is urgently needed. Let's just imagine if the ERA had been ratified in the 1970s, as it should have been.

Would we have needed today a dramatic Me Too, Time's Up movement with hundreds of thousands of women having to tell their often painful personal stories in order to get justice?

Or would the Violence Against Women Act and other legislation addressing sexual assault have been passed, if it had been passed much sooner, without the risk of a Supreme Court ruling limiting a woman's right to sue? Women could sue directly if they were in the Constitution.

We have the opportunity to make equal rights under the law a reality for our mothers, our daughters, our granddaughters, and ourselves. We must recognize that there is no time limit on equality and vote to pass today's resolution now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Would the gentlewoman please pull her mask up.

Mr. COHEN. Madam Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), who is the chairman of the committee, that he may control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman will control the balance of the time.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. CHU).

Ms. CHU. Madam Speaker, discrimination against women is a part of America's history, but it should not be our future. That is why we need the equal rights amendment.

It was not an accident that women were left out of the Constitution. The Founders very much believed us to be unequal and, as such, we could not own property, vote, hold certain jobs, or even serve on a jury.

The impacts of that discrimination are still felt today. Women are paid less than men and still face discrimination for being pregnant.

The Founders were wrong, and this is our chance to fix it by doing what they refused to do: assert in the Constitution that women, too, have rights.

The ERA will not end discrimination, but it will empower us to fight it in court. Already, 38 States have ratified this amendment, which satisfies the requirements in the Constitution. The vast majority of Americans support it.

Congress set a deadline for ratification, which means we can repeal it. It is time to affirm that there is no expiration date on equality.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. GREENE).

Mrs. GREENE of Georgia. Madam Speaker, the language of the equal rights amendment is simple, but don't be deceived by its simple language.

The reviving of the deadline and ratifying of this amendment would destroy all distinctions between men and women, enshrine abortion, and empower the woke feminist mob.

The equal rights amendment is dead and should remain dead. The States and Congress missed the deadline to have the amendment passed in 1979. The Trump Department of Justice issued a legal opinion in January that the deadline for the ERA has already passed, by any legal measure.

The ERA would be a new constitutional right guaranteeing abortion on demand. Have we not murdered enough people in the womb in this country, over 62 million?

Guaranteeing abortion on demand is completely wrong. It is not a constitutional right. As a matter of fact, the person in the womb should have the constitutional right. It is not a ''my body, my choice'' issue because the person in the womb is not the same body as the woman.

Also, NARAL Pro-Choice America claims: ''With its ratification, the ERA would reinforce the constitutional right to abortion.''

If anything, we should be guaranteeing a constitutional right to people in the womb. They should have the constitutional right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Let's carry on. VAWA, Violence Against Women Act. Democrats have hijacked a program designed to help marginalized women and have turned it into a political weapon that erases gender and destroys all religious freedom.

On the wall right here, it says: In God We Trust. God states that He created male and female, not a plethora of genders that anyone can choose from.

They want to let men calling themselves women sleep with women in domestic abuse shelters. The Democrats will not be satisfied until every battered woman is endangered so long as their sexual orientation and gender identity ideology advances.

That is not science. Science says that there are only two genders, male and female, according to the chromosomes.

Make no mistake about it, Democrats want to destroy our country. They want to close every church and nonprofit that doesn't capitulate to their oppressive agenda. Democrats want to put domestic violence abusers in the same room as their victims. Democrats want to dissolve all sex-based protection for women and girls through the relentless onslaught of gender identity.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, every amendment since the 22nd, except for the 27th, has had a deadline for ratification inserted in the resolution. But if you look at the Constitution, Madam Speaker, you won't find the deadline. That is because the deadline is part of the congressional resolution proposing the amendment, not part of the amendment itself.

What Congress can propose, Congress can alter, which is all we are proposing to do today.

Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding. It is wonderful to see Members of Congress wearing white today to observe the fact that we are making history by passing legislation about equality in our country.

I thank Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER for her relentless championing of this equal rights amendment in terms of the date that the distinguished chair of the Judiciary Committee referenced. I also thank CAROLYN MALONEY for her long-term advocacy of the equal rights amendment. I thank Chairman NADLER for enabling us to have this legislation on the floor today and for his leadership on this issue over time.

Madam Speaker, 100 years ago, in 1921, a solemn promise was made to the women of our country, one honoring our most fundamental truth as a nation, as the equal rights amendment was first introduced. When it was first introduced, it said: ''Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction.''

Simple, clear, fair, and just. Yet, a century later, that promise remains unfulfilled. The equal rights amendment still has not been enshrined in the Constitution, and American women still face inequality under the law and, therefore, in their lives.

In recent years, American women have renewed the legal fight for the equal rights amendment. Women of all backgrounds—students, mothers, seniors, communities of color, indigenous women, et cetera—have taken up the mantle of the suffragists before them, standing on suffragists' shoulders as they marched, mobilized, protested, and picketed for their rights. Because of their courage and commitment, 38 States have now ratified the equal rights amendment.

But one final barrier remains: removing the artificial, arbitrary time limit for ratification. As the distinguished chairman pointed out, that deadline timetable is not in the Constitution. Until we remove that arbitrary time limit, the ERA cannot become part of our Constitution.

Last year, the House passed legislation to remove this arbitrary time limit, but unfortunately, the Senate failed to do so. So, today, the House will, once again, pass this legislation and send it to the Senate for a vote. We are proud to be doing it in Women's History Month.

We salute again Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER, our champion on the legislation on the floor today, and Congresswoman CAROLYN MALONEY, who has been our lead sponsor of the ERA for 25 years now.

Madam Speaker, I thank Members from both sides of the aisle, including cosponsor Representative TOM REED from New York, for their bipartisan support in the Congress, which reflects the overwhelming bipartisan support in the country. A full 94 percent of the public supports the equal rights amendment, including 99 percent, nearly unanimous support, among millennials and Generation Z.

Let us not forget that, in 1972, the equal rights amendment was passed with bipartisan supermajorities in both Chambers of Congress, and it enjoyed the strong support of President Nixon, who wrote in 1968 that ''the task of achieving constitutional equality between the sexes is still not completed'' and pointed out that all Republican National Conventions since 1940 have

supported the longtime movement for equality.

There is no reason why today, after 80 years of Republican support, the ERA should not have full bipartisan support in the Congress. The resolution on the floor today will pave the way to passage of the equal rights amendment, which is one of the most important steps that we can take to affirm and ensure women's equality in America.

The text of the equal rights amendment states: ''Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.''

''On account of sex'' recalls to mind the beautiful documentary about Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

Passing the equal rights amendment will create essential avenues for legal recourse for people who face discrimination under the laws on the basis of sex. It will ensure that the Supreme Court applies the same standard of review for sex discrimination cases as it applies to cases of discrimination based on race and national origin. It will help Congress pass laws for better legal protections against injustice, including those related to sexual assault, domestic violence, and paycheck unfairness. It will confirm the rightful place of gender equality in all aspects of life.

There are some who say that the equal rights amendment is not needed. To them, I quote the late Justice Antonin Scalia, who said: ''Certainly the Constitution does not require discrimination on the basis of sex. The only issue is whether it prohibits it. It does not.''

These are not just words. This is the daily reality for America's women who face inequality and injustice in so many arenas of life, from a massive wage gap, to pregnancy discrimination, to sexual harassment in the workplace, to economic disparities that have worsened during coronavirus.

□ 1100

Passing this resolution, and then the ERA, will not only help women, but by unleashing the full economic potential of women, it will help families and boost our economy, all while advancing justice and equality in America for everyone.

Madam Speaker, I urge a strong bipartisan vote on this strong step toward equality for women, progress for families, and a stronger America—affirming the truth, Madam Speaker, that you have espoused that when women succeed, America succeeds.

I commend the leadership on this issue, the distinguished chairman, and the sponsors of the resolution, JACKIE SPEIER and CAROLYN MALONEY.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH) to control the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from Georgia will control the time.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER).

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the achievements women have made and reaffirm that we are already equal under current law.

Women represent 51 percent of the population, comprise over half of college students, make up the majority of medical and law school students, and run 12.3 million women-owned businesses while generating $1.8 trillion each year.

Little girls can be whatever they want to be, whether that is an astronaut, a doctor, a full-time mom working at home, or a Member of Congress.

The ERA would not add to the rights already guaranteed by the 14th Amendment's Equal Protection Clause, but it could jeopardize them.

How? Two ways.

First, by making it discriminatory to offer benefits to women not offered to men; women's scholarships, women's colleges, job protection for pregnant women, and safe spaces may all be on the chopping block.

When the equal rights amendment was first proposed a century ago, many women's rights advocates recognized the negative ramifications it would bring. In fact, future First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt expressed concerns that legislation protecting women in the workplace could be eliminated should the ERA become part of the U.S. Constitution.

Secondly, because the 1972 definition of sex as male and female is no longer accepted by many today and, instead, will require new protections for sexual orientation and gender identity. This is a path that has already proven to be a threat to women's privacy, safety, and equality. Don't take it from me. Talk to the nine women in California who were sexually harassed in a women's shelter by a biological male identifying as a woman.

The equal rights amendment would not only codify inequality for women, but also destroy the rights of the unborn. The ERA advocates have been unequivocal about their support for abortion and for using the ERA to overturn pro-life laws.

Courts have already used State versions of the ERA to force taxpayers to fund abortions. A Federal ERA would threaten State pro-life laws, Federal protections like the Hyde amendment, and conscience protections for American medical professionals who may otherwise be forced to perform an abortion.

Fortunately, the time limit to pass the ERA expired decades ago, and there is agreement that Congress cannot go back and remove a deadline from a previous constitutional amendment initiative. For example, the Supreme Court has already recognized that the 1972 ERA expired, and the Department of Justice issued a ruling saying: ''Congress may not revive a proposed amendment after a deadline, for its ratification has expired.''

Just over a week ago, a Federal district court ruled that the deadline to ratify the ERA ''expired long ago.'' And the recent ratifications of the amendment arrived ''too late to count.''

Pretending we can remove the deadline for passage is both futile and deceptive. The ERA is a threat to the historical strides women have made. It will eradicate State and Federal pro-life laws and policies, and the process is blatantly unconstitutional.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' on this resolution and to, instead, uphold the Constitution, promote life, and protect women's rights.

Mrs. MCBATH. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), our esteemed leader of the House.

Mr. HOYER. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Madam Speaker, as we celebrate Women's History Month, we do so with an awareness that so much work in the fight for equality remains. Much has been accomplished, but much remains to be done. This is one of those.

That is what the House is focusing on this week, women's equality, women's safety and justice, and women's opportunity. I am proud that we are taking action to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act within the first 3 months of the new Congress.

I was a cosponsor—and proud of it—of the original 1994 Violence Against Women Act. We passed the original VAWA on a bipartisan basis and reauthorized it with bipartisan support in 2000 and again in 2005. Those were overwhelming votes of 371–1 and 415–4.

Now we are talking about the equal rights amendment, I understand.

In 2013, we did it again on VAWA, 87 Republicans joining all 199 Democrats in the House vote. Every time we reauthorized the law, we made it stronger, ensuring protections for more women who were victimized by domestic abuse, stalking, and other crimes.

Last Congress, our House Democratic majority passed a VAWA reauthorization that included these expanded protections, but Senate Republicans blocked it from consideration. Not that they offered an alternative, not that they said: This is a problem and we need to solve it. It has been bipartisan, so here is our view and we will go to conference on it.

They simply blocked it.

It is essential, Madam Speaker, that Congress take action with a long-term reauthorization of VAWA, made all the more critical by the rise in domestic violence we have seen during the COVID–19 pandemic and more people having to stay home; an epidemic of domestic violence. Let's send a message to the women and men of America that Congress will continue to do its part to root out domestic violence and abuse.

I was just with Congresswoman JACKSON LEE, the sponsor and the chair of the Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security Subcommittee. Chairman

NADLER is now speaking. I said then, as I say now: It is critical that we pass this legislation.

I agree with President Biden, the author of the original 1994 Violence Against Women Act, that strengthening and renewing VAWA is long past due. Once we pass it in the House, I hope the Senate will send it quickly to President Biden to sign it into law.

Madam Speaker, I am speaking on both VAWA, obviously, and the ERA, two very critically important pieces of legislation.

Last year, Virginia became the 38th State to ratify the equal rights amendment. When I hear the opposition to the equal rights amendment, you would think that we were organizing to defeat women's rights. I think some of these speeches were written by Lewis Carroll.

After Virginia passed and became the 38th State, the House passed a resolution to affirm that, with Virginia's action, the equal rights amendment had been duly added to our Constitution as the 28th Amendment. However, the Republican-led Senate refused to do the same.

Now, with the Democratic-led Senate, I am hopeful that Congress can affirm the adoption of that amendment and provide strong, legal backing to those seeking to have it recognized by our courts as a full part of our Constitution.

What little faith we demonstrate in the courts of the United States of America when it is going to be interpreted, according to some, as not affirming equal rights for women, but somehow undermining equal rights. That is why I say that I think these speeches were written by Lewis Carroll.

The amendment simply states, as I am sure has been said: ''Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.''

How can that be misinterpreted to say somehow we are enunciating a proposition that would undermine rather than protect and lift up the rights of women?

It is long overdue that we, as a Nation, affirm this truth: that all men and women are created equal. Not the same, quite obviously, but equal, endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Madam Speaker, I have two granddaughters and I have three great-granddaughters. The late Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg—the famous or, as she would say from time to time, the infamous RGB—said this: ''I would like to see my granddaughters, when they pick up the Constitution, to see that notion—that women and men are persons of equal stature—I'd like them to see that it is a basic principle of our society.''

Madam Speaker, that is what this amendment is about. It should have been passed two centuries ago, but it is never too late to do the right thing. And we can take a major step forward this week to make that happen by passing the bipartisan resolution offered by Representatives JACKIE SPEIER and TOM REED.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting both H.J. Res. 17 and the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. Both will articulate our concern for women, for mothers, for daughters, for sisters, for neighbors, for friends.

We have a chance this week to send a message that Congress will not tolerate violence or discrimination against women, and we have an opportunity to mark this Women's History Month, not just with words, but with actions that mean something by making history in a very positive way, benefiting not only women, but our Nation as a whole.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support these two very important pieces of legislation.

Mrs. MCBATH. Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) to control the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York will control the time.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. Madam Speaker, every person, regardless of sex, must be treated equally under the law. H.J. Res. 17 reaffirms this core American value. It makes clear that the arbitrary deadline in the equal rights amendment may not stand in the way of achieving full equality for women.

With women losing their jobs at disproportionately high rates, the COVID–19 pandemic has only further revealed the need for this amendment.

In 2020, American women lost more than 5 million jobs. A vote for this resolution is a vote for equal access to healthcare. It is a vote for equal pay for the same work. It is a vote for equal opportunity and basic human rights in all other aspects of life for women in this country.

Congress must act now to remove this arbitrary deadline. There must be no time limit on guaranteeing equal rights under the law.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.J. Res. 17.

□ 1115

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCLINTOCK).

Mr. MCCLINTOCK. Madam Speaker, nearly a half century ago, Congress passed the equal rights amendment and sent it to the States with a 7-year deadline for ratification. When that deadline expired in 1979, it was three States short of passage.

Many States rejected it because it was duplicative of the Fifth and 14th Amendments to the Constitution. Our Constitution already guarantees that all Americans receive equal protection under the law, and indeed these provisions have driven our progress as a society.

More importantly, many felt that the ERA would unleash a crippling avalanche of activist litigation that could have unforeseen and unintended implications to issues ranging from abortion to freedom of conscience and freedom of speech.

Today, 50 years after its adoption, the Democrats propose to retroactively amend the ERA to remove its deadline. They argue that Congress can alter amendments it has sent to the States, even a half century later, and yet still count their ratification votes from a half century ago.

This would allow them to add three States that voted to ratify long after the deadline was passed for the very amendment that established that deadline.

Of course, they don't explain how to deal with the five States that have since rescinded their ratification votes.

The courts have already ruled against this approach as brazenly unconstitutional.

As Ruth Bader Ginsburg, an ardent supporter of the ERA, pointed out a few years ago: ''So, if you count a latecomer on the plus side, how can you disregard States that said, 'We've changed our minds?'''

If the majority were serious, it would reintroduce the ERA and debate it openly and constitutionally, as Justice Ginsburg suggested. They won't, because they know that in the nearly half century that has passed since the ERA was proposed, the world itself has passed them by.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA).

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Madam Speaker, as a young woman in Texas, I marched with hundreds of other women in support of the equal rights amendment. Today, I stand with all my colleagues here to affirm our support for women's equality.

Women are behind some of the Nation's greatest achievements. We flew across the Atlantic, fought for civil rights, set athletic records, sent men to space, and then went there ourselves. We have forged our own paths and put many cracks in the glass ceiling, but there is still much more to do.

''Women deserve equality.'' ''Las mujeres merecemos igualdad.''

I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on H.J. Res. 17.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Mrs. TRAHAN).

Mrs. TRAHAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in full support of the equal rights amendment and to debunk some of the nonsense being spouted by my colleagues across the aisle.

This legislation is not about special rights, it is not about preferential treatment, and it is not about erasing sex differences. It is about finally guaranteeing equal rights, plain and simple.

Critics of the ERA know that, or at least they would if they actually read the legislation. It is right there for all of us to see. ''Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex,'' period.

Everyone in this Capitol has a mother, and some of us are blessed to have daughters. This amendment is about them. It is about completing the work of generations of women before us who marched for full equality, and it is about finishing that journey so that the next generation will experience nothing other than full and fair rights under the law.

I urge my colleagues to give our daughters that chance. Join us and pass this resolution.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of removing this arbitrary time limit for ratifying the equal rights amendment.

I ask all my colleagues: Are we going to tell our mothers, our sisters, daughters, nieces, and granddaughters that there is an expiration date on equality? I hope that answer is no.

This pandemic has only worsened the inequality that women are facing, especially women of color. Making the equal rights amendment a part of our Constitution guarantees that men and women are truly treated equal under the law.

Today, the House can send a clear message that we will not tolerate sexual discrimination, that gender equality should be the law of the land.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ).

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Madam Speaker, today, we confront one of America's lingering legacies of discrimination.

At America's founding, women were intentionally left out of the Constitution and, as second-class citizens, we did not have the right to vote or own property.

Today, we still receive less pay for the same work, and we face actual or imminent threats of violence and harassment daily.

But the equal rights amendment rejects that.

After over a century, the ERA is on the cusp of ratification, and we finally have a President who will make this long overdue provision of our Constitution a reality.

Women's rights should not depend on which party is in power. These basic fundamental rights must be guaranteed. We must secure equality for women under the law, in the Constitution, and in our daily lives.

If we want to hand a more perfect union over to our daughters—and I have two—this Women's History Month, let's seize the moment and end sex discrimination once and for all.

I urge a ''yes'' vote on this resolution to remove the arbitrary and outdated deadline for ratifying the ERA.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, for nearly 50 years, our country has strived to make equal rights for women a foundational value in the United States Constitution through the equal rights amendment. Women deserve nothing less than equal treatment, whether it be equal pay for equal work, freedom from discrimination, freedom from sexual assault, or freedom from domestic violence. The equal rights amendment will help to fill those gaps.

We now have enough States for that to become the law of the land. This resolution will help clear the path for this much-needed change, and I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution so that every woman and every girl can have equal justice under the law.

I ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: What are you afraid of? Why? Why can you not affirm equal rights for women in the United States of America? It is not a hard mountain to climb. But it says every woman and every girl can have equal justice under the law.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, we are prepared to close.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, I oppose H.J. Res. 17. I believe that the speakers we have had here today on our side have agreed with that and made very, very effective points on why to oppose this resolution.

Men and women are already equal under the Constitution. This legislation would make us no more equal. It is merely a vehicle for the far-left's special interest groups to use to enact their pro-abortion agenda. It is unconstitutional. It is unnecessary. And it should not become law.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, Alice Paul's equal rights amendment was introduced in both Houses of Congress way back in 1923. But 96 years later, the United States Constitution still does not explicitly declare that women have equal rights under the law.

We are the only western democracy without such a clause in its Constitution. Today, we have an opportunity to rectify that glaring omission.

The arbitrary deadline for ratification that Congress imposed, and later extended, can be just as easily removed, and that is all this legislation does. It can be just as easily removed, because it is not part of the amendment, as some of our Republican friends said.

Every amendment since the 22nd Amendment, except for the 27th, has had such a clause. And if you look at the text of the Constitution, it is not there. That is because the deadline is part of the resolution proposing the constitutional amendment, not part of the constitutional amendment. If Congress can establish a deadline by resolution, it can certainly, by resolution, extend or change the deadline. That is all this resolution does.

Adopting the ERA would bring our country closer to truly fulfilling values of inclusion and equal opportunity for all people. Adopting this legislation would help make this a reality.

I urge all Members to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, we have just been engaged in presenting to the public the Violence Against Women Act. But all of it stands on the shoulders of the equal rights amendment, which has been long overdue.

What an amazing journey that this legislation has taken, and how sad it is to acknowledge that we are one of only a few nations that does not have an equal rights amendment in its constitution.

I remember going to Afghanistan and working with the women of Afghanistan to include the rights of women in their Constitution. I want to say that again: To include the rights of women in their Constitution.

So let me speak clearly to vital points of this resolution. This is not an abortion bill. However, we realize that the right to choose is embedded in the Constitution in the Ninth Amendment. But this is not that.

It is a bill that says that women have a right, as Alice Paul said so many years ago, to be able to have rights of equality under this flag, under this Constitution. Are we suggesting that that should not be?

In addition, let it be very clear that any court decision that was issued, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, that is, the Commonwealth of Virginia v. Ferriero, we can explain that case, because the Court said the only authority to extend the deadline was Congress, and here we are. Congress is now intending to extend that deadline.

Nothing in the Constitution prohibits that. It is not embedded in the amendment. And by Article V, we are able to deal with deadlines. Deadlines are a simple process of statutory authority, and that is what we are doing today.

I don't think my friends on the other side of the aisle want to leave without recognizing the fact that women make 80 cents for every $1 a man earns, and that they are treated unfairly in the workplace.

If you want equal dignity, if you want the rights of women to be promoted, vote for the ERA.

Madam Speaker, I strongly support H.J. Res. 17. H.J. Res. 17, introduced by Representative JACKIE SPEIER with 209 co-sponsors, would take a critical step towards ensuring that the Equal Rights Amendment, or "ERA", becomes part of the Constitution.

The resolution provides that notwithstanding the ratification deadline of 1979 that Congress set for the ERA and later extended to 1982, the ERA "shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution whenever ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States."

The purpose of the ERA is simple and fundamental: It ensures that everyone is treated equally under the law, regardless of sex or gender. Almost one hundred years ago, Alice Paul, who helped lead the campaign to secure women's right to vote, proposed the first version of the ERA.

She and her fellow suffragists knew that if women were to achieve true equality, our Nation's founding document needed to be amended to reflect that core principle. Nearly a century later, it is long past time to make that dream a reality.

In 1971 and 1972, the House and Senate, respectively, passed the ERA by well more than the constitutionally-mandated two-thirds majority in each chamber.

It contained these simple words: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." In the years that quickly followed, dozens of States ratified the ERA through their legislatures.

By the end of the 1970s, the ERA was just a few States short of full ratification. But then progress slowed, and the deadline Congress had set for ratification passed. A well-organized counter-movement scared the American people into thinking that a guarantee of equality would somehow harm women who stay at home to raise their children or would erode American families. What had started as a matter of broad consensus became another divisive wedge in the culture wars.

Today we know better. We know that in the year 2021, it is unacceptable that women still make only 80 cents for every dollar men earn. We know that when women are treated with equal dignity and respect in the workplace, in the home, by our institutions of government, and in our society at large, all of the American people stand to benefit. And we know that a simple but fundamental guarantee of equality should be welcomed rather than feared.

Thankfully, the momentum for ERA ratification has picked back up. Nevada ratified the ERA in 2017, and Illinois followed suit the next year. Then, in January 2020, Virginia made history and became the 38th State to pass a resolution ratifying the ERA. So long as these last three ratifications are valid, the ERA will become law.

Unfortunately, a federal district court ruled two weeks ago that these states were too late because the ratification deadline that Congress set had expired already in 1982.

Importantly, that court affirmed that Congress has the power to set ratifications deadlines, as Article V of the Constitution, which governs the constitutional amendment process, does not itself provide for ratification deadlines of any kind. Of course, the power to set deadlines necessarily includes the power to remove those deadlines.

By removing the ratification deadline that Congress set previously, H.J. Res. 17 ensures that the recent ratifications by Nevada, Illinois, and Virginia are counted and that the ERA becomes part of our Constitution.

We are on the verge of a breakthrough for equality in this country, despite all the obstacles in our current political and social climate. This resolution will ensure that no deadline stands in the way. Therefore, I strongly support H.J. Res. 17 and urge its passage by the House.

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today to offer my strong support for H.J. Res. 17, a resolution removing the time limit for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Women in the United States make extraordinary contributions to our workforce and communities—and even more so in the face of the COVID–19 pandemic. Yet, unfortunately, we remain unprotected under the law from discrimination. This long-overdue legislation will enshrine in our Constitution the principle of women's equality and explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sex.

The Equal Rights Amendment states simply: "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." And in this simple text is guaranteed the following:

Avenues of legal recourse for people who face sex-based discrimination,

Prompting of Supreme Court to consider cases of sex discrimination with rigorous standards, and

The power for Congress to enact laws that ensure sex equality in all aspects of life.

It is for these reasons, and many others not listed, that we must act to remove the arbitrary time limit for ratification and codify this Amendment.

As a member of the Democratic Women's Caucus, I am steadfast in my commitment to advancing women's rights both in my district and across the nation. My tenure in Congress has been in part defined by my advocacy on behalf of women and their successes—but I stand on the shoulders of generations of heroines fighting for equality. It is in their honor that I support this legislation today.

I urge my colleagues to support H.J. Res. 17.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I include the following letters of endorsement for H.R. 1620, the Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) into the RECORD.

Letters are from: The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community, YWCA, End Sexual Violence, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, National Congress of American Indians, LegalMomentum: The Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund, JWI, and Casa de Esperanza.

MARCH 8, 2021.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Hon. BRIAN FITZPATRICK,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.
Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN JACKSON LEE, REPRESENTATIVE FITZPATRICK, AND CHAIRMAN NADLER: The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, (NCADV) applauds you for introducing the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is one of the three pillars of the Federal response to domestic violence. First passed in 1994 under the leadership of then-Senator Biden, VAWA has been reauthorized three times since then, most recently in 2013. VAWA's authorization lapsed in 2018.

Every reauthorization included critical updates to enhance America's response to domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. These enhancements reflect the evolution of our understanding of the dynamics of violence and the needs of impacted communities. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 is the successor bill to these previous reauthorizations and is a slightly updated version of the H.R. 1585/S. 2843, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019, which passed the House of Representatives with strong bipartisan support before dying in the Senate.

Like its predecessor, the updated 2021 bill invests in prevention; keeps guns out of the hands of adjudicated dating abusers and stalkers; promotes survivors' economic stability; ends impunity for non Natives who commit gender-based violence on Tribal lands by expanding special tribal criminal jurisdiction beyond domestic violence; and increases survivors' access to safe housing. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 also recognizes the disparate impact of gender-based violence on communities of color due to systemic racism and increases funding for culturally specific organizations serving these communities. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 expands VAWA's life-saving provisions to increase access to safety and justice for all survivors.

It is particularly critical to reauthorize and improve VAWA as we continue to battle the COVID–19 pandemic. In a recent survey of domestic violence programs, 84% reported that intimate partner violence has increased in their community during the pandemic. Fifty percent reported the use of firearms. against intimate partners has increased, and one-third reported intimate partner homicides have increased in their communities. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 responds to the needs of survivors and supports the programs that serve them.

We thank you, again, for your leadership, and we urge the House to pass the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 as a matter of upmost urgency.

Sincerely,

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE,
Harrisburg, PA, March 8, 2021.

Hon. JERRY NADLER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. BRIAN FITZPATRICK,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES NADLER, JACKSON LEE AND FITZPATRICK: On behalf of the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence, which has worked since 1993 to strengthen and transform efforts to end domestic violence, I am writing to express our support for the Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 2021 and our gratitude for your leadership in ensuring that survivors are able to access lifesaving programs and services.

With each reauthorization of VAWA, Congress has made important steps forward to better address the needs of survivors and communities. Based on extensive conversations with and feedback from local programs and advocates about current strengths and disparities in VAWA, we—along with our partners in the domestic and sexual violence movements—recommended several key enhancements to the current statute. We are very pleased that your legislation includes the targeted improvements that programs across the country need to do their jobs and support survivors.

According to the Centers for Disease Control's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS), 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men are the victim of physical violence, contact sexual violence and/or stalking by an intimate partner and experience negative impacts such as injury, fear, concern for safety, or a need for services. In just one day in 2019, 77,226 domestic violence victims and their children received services at a local program in their community, including emergency shelter, transitional housing, counseling, legal advocacy, and children's support groups. However, on that same day, 11,336 requests for services went unmet because programs lacked the resources to meet victims' needs. Of those unmet requests for services, 68% were for housing. Indeed, safe housing is among the most pressing concerns for survivors who have left or are planning to leave an abusive relationship. Thirty-eight (38) percent of all domestic violence victims become homeless at some point in their lives. And among mothers with children experiencing homelessness, more than 80 percent had previously experienced domestic violence. We are particularly grateful that your legislation would strengthen protections for survivors in public housing, including by ensuring that survivors can transfer units when necessary for safety reasons, as well as other housing protections that are critical for survivors seeking safety and stability.

We are also supportive of other key proposals in your legislation, including:

Supporting Communities of Color;

Investing in prevention;

Ending impunity for non-Native perpetrators of sexual assault, child abuse co-occurring with domestic violence, stalking, sex trafficking, and assaults on tribal law enforcement officers on tribal lands;

Improving enforcement of court orders that require adjudicated domestic abusers to relinquish their firearms;

Improving access to housing for victims and survivors;

Protecting victims of dating violence from firearm homicide;

Helping survivors gain and maintain economic independence;

Updating the federal definition of domestic violence for the purposes of VAWA grants only to acknowledge the full range of abuse victims suffer (does not impact the criminal definition of domestic violence);

Maintaining existing protections for all survivors; and

Improving the healthcare system's response to domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

Again, thank you for championing the needs of victims and survivors and for supporting the work of domestic and sexual violence programs across the country. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues in Congress to ensure bipartisan support for VAWA 2021 and to pass legislation that will provide needed services and supports to survivors and their families and communities.

Sincerely,

FARZANA Q. SAFIULLAH,
Chief Executive Officer.

THE NATIONAL CENTER ON VLOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY,
Washington, DC, March 10, 2021.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
US. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. BRIAN FITZPATRICK,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES JACKSON LEE, FITZPATRICK, AND NADLER: Ujima Inc., The National Center on Violence Against Women in the Black Community (Ujima, Inc.) is pleased to support H.R. 1620, the bipartisan Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021. Ujima, Inc. is a national Culturally Specific Services Issue Resource Center that mobilizes the Black community and allies through its education and outreach; training and technical assistance; resource development; research; and public policy efforts. We work with local, state, and national partners to promote strategies to improve responses to Black survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and community violence. We appreciated the opportunity to give voice to the needs of Black survivors during the collaborative process of H.R. 1585 and we are encouraged to see the enhancements in H.R. 1620 as COVID–19, racial justice movements, and economic strife have presented complex challenges for those we serve since the passage of H.R. 1585 in 2019.

Since 1994, the Violence Against Women Act has made significant shifts in the cultural and legal landscape for prevention and intervention strategies to address gender-based violence. Specialized courts, prosecution units, law enforcement departments, community-based programs, coordinated community responses, and discretionary grant funding for innovate solutions have been the central tenets of ground-breaking legislation to save lives. However, Black women still experience the highest rates of homicide related to intimate partner violence compared to other racial and ethnic populations. In 2018, Black females were murdered by males at a rate nearlv three times higher than white females. Despite the prevalence of domestic violence, Black survivors are less likely to seek help from systems-based stakeholders because institutional bias coupled with racial loyalty/collectivism directly impact how she perceives, reacts to, and reports violence in her life. Institutionalized and internalized oppression at the intersections of race and gender have created the foundation for unrecognized, unaddressed trauma and violence in the lives of Black women and they have been denied adequate resources and access to legal systems, funding, crisis services, and other programs.

Thank you for not only hearing the needs of Black survivors, but also addressing them in H.R. 1620 which provides measured enhancements for the bipartisan support and passage of such critical provisions as strengthening and enforcing public housing protections, improving access to healthcare options, expanding civil legal representation, promoting firearm surrender protocols, reducing bench warrants for victims who fear to appear in court, creating restorative practices that are solutions-based, expanding tribal sovereignty over specific crimes committed by non-Native perpetrators, and prioritizing sexual assault prevention to ameliorate intervention.

Additionally, the following provisions will greatly improve services for Black survivors and we deeply appreciate the inclusion of: a $40 million authorization for the Culturally Specific Services Program; economic justice programs that include access to unemployment insurance; and protections for all survivors accessing services thereby preventing discrimination.

Thank you for your unyielding and tireless efforts and bringing the margins to the center to ensure that VAWA, after twenty-seven years, continues to prioritize the safety of survivors and hold perpetrators accountable in a way that is survivor-centered, honors self-determination, and reduces re-victimization by systems. We are deeply moved by your commitment to social change that promotes access to services and justice for all people, and we embrace the opportunity to stand with you.

We are available to assist you at any time to facilitate the passage of this landmark bipartisan bill that is the hallmark of our work.

Respectfully,

KARMA COTTMAN,
Executive Director.

YWCA,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2021.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS: On behalf of YWCA USA, a network of over 200 local associations in 45 states and the District of Columbia, I write today to urge you to pass the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2021 (H.R. 1620). As identified in YWCA's Legislative Priorities for the 117th Congress, YWCA is committed to the swift passage of VAWA in the first 100 days of the new legislative session. We urge you to vote yes and support strengthening services for survivors and their children.

For over 160 years, YWCA has been on a mission to eliminate racism, empower women, and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. Today, we serve over 2 million women, girls and family members of all ages and backgrounds in more than 1,200 communities. As the largest network of domestic and sexual violence service providers, over 150 YWCAs across 44 states remain on the front lines providing gender-based violence services. We are proud of our staff and volunteers in providing these life-saving services. YWCAs get up and do the work of providing safe and secure housing, crisis hotlines, counseling, court assistance, and other community and safety programs to more than 535,000 women, children, and families each year.

Informed by our extensive history, the expertise of our nationwide network, and our collective commitment to meeting the needs of survivors and their families, we have seen first-hand the importance of maintaining protections for all survivors in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). This bill works

to maintain the safety, resources, and protections critical to all survivors, particularly women of color and other marginalized communities. Of particular importance, VAWA includes the following YWCA supported provisions critical to survlvors:

Improves services for victims by reauthoring programs administered by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and U.S. Health and Human Services to prevent and address domestic violence, sexual violence, dating violence, and stalking while preserving and expanding housing protections for survivors;

Increases authorization levels for response and wrap-around services especially important following a year of increased strain on existing providers due to the COVID–19 pandemic;

Invests in prevention through increased funding for programs such as the Consolidated Youth grants which support engaging men and boys as allies and addressing children exposed to violence and trauma with specialized services. This bill also provides support to State-level health programs to partner with domestic and sexual violence organizations to improve healthcare providers' ability to work with advocates, help victims, and strengthen prevention programs;

Closes loopholes by improving enforcement of current federal domestic violence-related firearms laws and close loopholes to reduce firearm-involved abuse and intimate partner homicide, which has received bipartisan support;

Increases funding for culturally-specific service providers and increases authorization levels to hold current providers harmless;

Improves the economic security of survivors by expanding eligibility for unemployment insurance, strengthening protections against discrimination in employment based on survivor status, and increasing education on economic abuse and economic security related to survivors.

Immediate action by Congress is needed as the COVID–19 pandemic continues to put a strain on resources and the demand for assistance continues to rise with this silent epidemic. Survivors cannot wait another day for the critical protections identified in the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2021. We urge you to vote yes on this critical bill.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please contact Pam Yuen, YWCA USA Director of Government Relations if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

CATHERINE V. BEANE,
Vice President of Public Policy & Advocacy.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO
END SEXUAL VIOLENCE,
March 4, 2021.

Hon SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. BRIAN FITZPATRICK,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES JACKSON LEE AND FITZPATRICK: On behalf of the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence (NAESV) representing 56 state and territorial sexual assault coalitions and more than 1500 local rape crisis centers, I am writing to convey our wholehearted support for the Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2021 reauthorizing and improving the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and our gratitude for your willingness to move forward to ensure we renew VAWA as swiftly as possible.

With each iteration of VAWA, Congress goes the next step to address the needs of survivors and communities. Based on extensive conversations with local programs and advocates, we brought forward several key enhancements, and we are very pleased that your legislation includes many of these. From an increased investment in sexual violence services and prevention programs and culturally specific organizations that serve communities of color to provisions to hold offenders accountable on tribal lands to efforts to make our criminal justice system more responsive to the needs of victims, this legislation includes the realistic policies our programs need to do their jobs.

According to the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, one in five women has been the victim of rape or attempted rape. Nearly one in two women has experienced some form of sexual violence and one in five men has experienced a form of sexual violence other than rape in their lifetime. The study confirmed that the impacts on society are enormous. Over 80% of women who were victimized experienced significant short and long-term impacts related to the violence such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), injury (42%) and missed time at work or school (28%). The CDC report shows that most rape and partner violence is experienced before the age of 24, highlighting the importance of preventing this violence before it occurs.

High profile cases of sexual assault on campuses, our military bases, military academies, and professional sports have resulted in unprecedented media attention. This has also resulted in a tremendous increase in sexual assault survivors seeking assistance from local rape crisis centers and educators as well as community organizations requesting prevention and training services. The media attention also points to the need for comprehensive community responses to sexual violence. According to data from a 2020 survey conducted by NAESV, 62% of local sexual assault programs have a waiting list, sometimes months long, for counseling services and 35% lack a full time sexual assault therapist on staff.

For these reasons, we are incredibly grateful that your legislation increases the authorizations for the Sexual Assault Services Program and the Rape Prevention and Education Program. The local programs in our network see every day the widespread and devastating consequences of sexual violence, and this additional funding will help them respond to community requests for services and prevention education.

Of deep concern to NAESV, tribal governments are currently unable to prosecute crimes of sexual assault, trafficking, child abuse, and stalking by non-native offenders on their lands. A 2016 study from the National Institute for Justice (NIJ), found that approximately 56% of Native women experience sexual violence within their lifetime, with 1 in 7 experiencing it in the past year. Nearly 1 in 2 report being stalked. Contrary to the general population where rape, sexual assault, and intimate partner violence are usually intra-racial, Native women are more likely to be raped or assaulted by someone of a different race. 96% of Native women and 89% of male victims in the NIJ study reported being victimized by a non-Indian. Native victims of sexual violence are three times as likely to have experienced sexual violence by an interracial perpetrator as non-Hispanic White victims. Similarly, Native stalking victims are nearly 4 times as. likely to be stalked by someone of a different race, with 89% of female stalking victims and 90% of male stalking victims reporting inter-racial victimization. The higher rate of inter-racial violence would not necessarily be significant if It were not for the jurisdictional complexities unique to Indian Country and the limitations imposed by federal law on tribal authority to hold non-Indians accountable for crimes they commit on tribal lands.

We stand with you in affirming tribes' sovereignty to prosecute non-native offenders of sexual assault, child abuse, trafficking and stalking. VAWA 2013 restored the authority of Tribes to arrest and prosecute offenders, regardless of their race, for acts of domestic violence committed within the boundaries of their jurisdiction. Since enactment, at least 16 Tribes have undertaken the steps to exercise the special domestic violence criminal jurisdiction {SDVCJ) restored by VAWA 2013—leading to over 120 arrests. Tribal victims deserve justice, and we fully support these provisions.

Many survivors of sexual assault, abuse, and harassment have housing needs. For some survivors, home may not be a safe place and they may need to leave due to sexual violence they are experiencing in their home that is perpetrated by a household member, landlord, or neighbor. Other survivors may need to find safe housing to heal and lessen the effects of sexual violence they have experienced either in their home or they may need to find new housing if the perpetrator knows where they live to stay safe. VAWA includes important protections for survivors of sexual assault in public housing, and these provisions are a critical part of the safety net for survivors.

We are very pleased to support your vital legislation that moves us forward in our work to end sexual violence. Please contact our Policy Director, Terri Poore, with any questions.

Sincerely,

MONIKA JOHNSON HOSTLER
President.

MARCH 8, 2021.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. BRIAN FITZPATRICK,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN JACKSON LEE, REPRESENTATIVE FITZPATRICK, AND CHAIRMAN NADLER: The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) applauds you for introducing the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is one of the three pillars of the Federal response to domestic violence. First passed in 1994 under the leadership of then-Senator Biden, VAWA has been reauthorized three times since then, most recently in 2013. VAWA's authorization lapsed in 2018.

Every reauthorization included critical updates to enhance America's response to domestic violence and other forms of gender-based violence. These enhancements reflect the evolution of our understanding of the dynamics of violence and the needs of impacted communities. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 is the successor bill to these previous reauthorizations and is a slightly updated version of the H.R. 1585/S. 2843, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019, which passed the House of Representatives with strong bipartisan support before dying in the Senate.

Like its predecessor, the updated 2021 bill invests in prevention; keeps guns out of the hands of adjudicated dating abusers and stalkers; promotes survivors' economic stability; ends impunity for non-Natives who commit gender-based violence on Tribal lands by expanding special tribal criminal jurisdiction beyond domestic violence; and

increases survivors' access to safe housing. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 also recognizes the disparate impact of gender-based violence on communities of color due to systemic racism and Increases funding for culturally specific organizations serving these communities. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 expands VAWA's life-saving provisions to increase access to safety and justice for all survivors.

It is particularly critical to reauthorize and improve VAWA as we continue to battle the COVID–19 pandemic. In a recent survey of domestic violence programs, 84% reported that intimate partner violence has increased in their community during the pandemic. Fifty percent reported the use of firearms against intimate partners has increased, and one-third reported intimate partner homicides have increased in their communities. The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 responds to the needs of survivors and supports the programs that serve them.

We thank you, again, for your leadership, and we urge the House to pass the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 as a matter of upmost urgency.

Sincerely,

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS,
Washington, DC, March 16, 2021.

Re: Support for Passage of HR 1620, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

Hon. BRIAN FITZPATRICK,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON LEE AND REPRESENTATIVE FITZPATRICK: I am writing on behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the nation's oldest and largest organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments, to thank you for your leadership in introducing HR 1620, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act (VAWA) of 2021, and to convey our support for your efforts. NCAI has been actively involved in the development of the tribal provisions of VAWA in each of the past reauthorizations of the bill. Each time VAWA has been reauthorized, it has included important provisions aimed at improving safety and justice for Native women.

In 2019, NCAI adopted resolution ECWS–19–005 (attached), which sets forth five priorities for reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act:

(1) include provisions, like those included in the bipartisan Native Youth and Tribal Officer Protection Act and Justice for Native Survivors of Sexual Violence Act, that amend 25 U.S.C. 1304 to address jurisdictional gaps including: child abuse and endangerment; assaults against law enforcement officers; sexual violence; stalking; trafficking; and the exclusion of certain tribes from the law;

(2) create a permanent authorization for DOJ's Tribal Access to National Crime Information Program and ensure that TAP is available to all tribes;

(3) improve the response to cases of missing and murdered women in tribal communities;

(4) identify and address the unique barriers to safety for Alaska Native women and provide access to all programs; and

(5) reauthorize VAWA's tribal grant programs and ensure that funding is available to cover costs incurred by tribes who are exercising jurisdiction pursuant to 25 U.S.C. 1304.

We are pleased to see that your legislation continues to build on VAWA's promise and includes the key priorities that have been identified by tribal governments and advocates to further enhance safety for victims in tribal communities.

As you know, tribal communities continue to be plagued by the highest crime victimization rates in the country. A recent study by the National Institute of Justice found that over 80% of Native Americans will be a victim of intimate partner violence, sexual violence, or stalking in their lifetime. The study also found that 90% of these victims were victimized by a non-Indian perpetrator. Sadly, Native children are particularly affected by this violence. Native children are 50% more likely to experience child abuse and sexual abuse than white children. The complicated jurisdictional framework at play in Indian Country continues to undermine safety for victims of violence in tribal communities.

Eight years ago, when Congress passed VAWA 2013, it included a provision, known as Special Domestic Violence Criminal Jurisdiction (SDVCJ), that reaffirmed the inherent sovereign authority of Indian tribal governments to exercise criminal jurisdiction over certain non-Indians who violate qualifying protection orders or commit domestic or dating violence against Indian victims on tribal lands. Since passage of VAWA 2013, we have witnessed the ways in which tribal jurisdiction has transformed access to justice for some domestic violence victims, and also the ways in which it falls short for victims of sexual violence, stalking, trafficking, and child abuse. We welcome introduction of your bill, which would address many of the gaps in the existing law and make important strides toward restoring public safety and justice on tribal lands.

We are particularly grateful that your legislation recognizes that Native children are equally in need of the protections that were extended to adult domestic violence victims in VAWA 2013. The Tribal Nations implementing SDVCJ report that children have been involved as victims or witnesses in SDVCJ cases nearly 60% of the time. These children have been assaulted or have faced physical intimidation and threats, are living in fear, and are at risk for developing school-related problems, medical illnesses, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other impairments. However, federal law currently limits SDVCJ to crimes committed only against intimate partners or persons covered by a qualifying protection order. The common scenario reported by Tribal Nations is that they are only able to charge a non-Indian batterer for violence against the mother, and can do nothing about violence against the children. Your bill would change that.

Your bill will also make strides in improving the coordination and collaboration between tribal, local, and federal jurisdictions, particularly with regard to criminal justice information sharing. These reforms are desperately needed and will make a real difference for victims of crime in Indian Country. We look forward to continuing this important work with your offices and thank you for your commitment to tribal communities.

Thank you,

FAWN SHARP,
President.

THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS RESOLUTION #ECWS–19–005

Urging Congress to Pass a Long-term Reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act that Includes Key Protections for Native Women

Whereas, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

Whereas, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

Whereas, NCAI resolution STP–00–081 established the NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Native Women, which has worked since that time to identify needed policy reforms at the tribal and federal levels, including in the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA);

Whereas, VAWA was first passed in 1994, reauthorized in 2000, again in 2005, and 2013 and each of these bills included important provisions aimed at improving safety and justice for Native women;

Whereas, the last long-term reauthorization of VAWA expired on September 30, 2018 and Congress has passed a series of short-term extensions that leave VAWA currently scheduled to expire on February 15, 2019;

Whereas, Native communities continue to experience high levels of domestic violence, sexual violence, child abuse, stalking, murder, and trafficking, many of these crimes are committed by non-Indians, and there is a need to amend federal law to improve access to justice and safety for victims in tribal communities;

Whereas, VAWA 2013 included a provision that reaffirmed the inherent sovereign authority of Indian tribal governments to exercise criminal jurisdiction over certain non-Indians who violate qualifying protection orders or commit domestic or dating violence against Indian victims on tribal lands;

Whereas, by exercising jurisdiction over non-Indian domestic violence offenders many tribal communities have increased safety and justice for victims who had previously seen little of either;

Whereas, the Department of Justice (DOJ) testified before the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs in 2016 that VAWA 2013 has allowed tribes to ''respond to long-time abusers who previously had evaded justice,'' but that there are significant additional gaps that need to be addressed;

Whereas, the tribes implementing VAWA 2013 report that children have been involved as victims or witnesses in their cases nearly 60% of the time and federal law prevents tnbal courts from holding non-Indian offenders accountable for these crimes;

Whereas, according to DOJ, American Indian and Alaska Native children suffer exposure to violencci at rates higher than any other race in the United States, and this violence has immediate and long term effects,

including: increased rates of altered neurological development; poor physical and mental health; poor school performance; substance abuse; and overrepresentation in the juvenile justice system;

Whereas, a 2016 report from the National Institute for Justice (NIJ) confirmed that 56% of Native omen experience sexual violence within their lifetime and nearly 1 in 2 report being stalked;

Whereas, according to NIJ Native victims of sexual violence are three times as likely to have experienced sexual violence by an interracial perpetrator as non-Hispanic White victims and Native stalking victims are nearly 4 times as likely to be stalked by someone of a different race, but federal law prevents tribal courts from holding non-Indian offenders accountable for these crimes;

Whereas, VAWA 2005 included. a provision directing the Attorney General to permit Indian tribes to enter information into and obtain information from federal criminal information databases;

Whereas, in 2015 DOJ announced the Tribal Access Program for National Crime Information (TAP), which provides eligible tribes with access to the Criminal Justice Information Services systems;

Whereas, there has never been funding authorized for the TAP program and some tribes report that they are unable to access the program;

Whereas, on some reservations, American Indian and Alaska Native women are murdered at more than 10 times the national average;

Whereas, in many cases, law enforcement has failed to adequately respond to cases of missing arid murdered American Indian and Alaska Native women, leaving family members to organize their own searches and community marches for justice and without access to support or services; and

Whereas, Alaska Native women experience some of the highest rates of violence in the country and geographical remoteness, extreme weather, the lack of transportation infrastructure, and unique jurisdictional complexities present unique challenges to Native women's safety;

Whereas, certain tribes subject to restrictive settlement acts have not been able to implement the tribal jurisdiction provision of VAWA 2013.

Now therefore be it resolved, that NCAI calls on Congress to move swiftly to pass a long-term reauthorization of VAWA that will:

Include provisions like those included in the Native Youth and Tribal Officer Protection Act and Justice. for Native Survivors of Sexual Violence Act that amend 25 USC 1304 to address jurisdictional gaps including: child abuse and endangerment; assaults against law enforcement officers; sexual violence; stalking; trafficking; and the exclusion of certain tribes from the law;

Create a perment authorization for DOJ's Tribal Access to National Crime Information Program and ensure that TAP is available to all tribes;

Improve the response to and classification of incidents of missing and murdered Indian women consistent with NCAI Resolution PHX–16–077;

Identify and address the unique barriers to safety for Alaska Native women, based upon meaningful findings, and provide access to all programs; and

Reauthorize VAWA's tribal grant programs and ensure that funding is available to cover costs incurred by tribes who are exercising jurisdiction pursuant to VAWA;

Be it further resolved, that NCAI will oppose any VAWA reauthorization bill that undermines tribal sovereignty, unfairly penalizes tribes in accessing federal funds, or that diminishes tribal inherent authority to define and address crimes of domestic or dating violence, sexual violence, stalking, or trafficking; and

Be it finally resolved, resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Executive Committee at the Executive Council Winter Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Capital Hilton, February 12, 2019, with a quorum present.

Attest:

JUANA MAJEL DIXON,
Recording Secretary.
JEFFERSON KEEL,
President.

LEGAL MOMENTUM—THE WOMEN'S LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND,

New York, March 8, 2021.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. BRIAN FITZPATRICK,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE JACKSON LEE AND REPRESENTATIVE FITZPATRICK: Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund commends you for introducing the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021. Legal Momentum is the nation's first and longest-serving advocacy organization dedicated to advancing gender equality. We make these advancements through targeted litigation, innovative public policy, and education. Preventing and responding to gender-based violence is a core pillar of Legal Momentum's work, in recognition of the fact that freedom from violence is central to achieving true equality.

Legal Momentum is proud to have been closely involved in developing the landmark bipartisan legislation that became the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994. Our organization played a critical role in drafting and advocating for VAWA's passage, beginning this effort with then-Senator Joe Biden in 1990. We have since worked in coalition with the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence to see enhanced services and protections included in each.reauthorization of VAWA, each of which had bipartisan support. Legal Momentum is grateful to you for your dedication to reauthorizing VAWA-in a way that responds to the needs of all those affected by gender-based violence.

The updates to the existing Violence Against Women Act that are included in your bill reflect the real needs of victims and survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. In particular, we are pleased that this reauthorization of VAWA meets the needs of communities of color. We applaud your commitment to pass a bipartisan reauthorization of this critical legislation. We support introducing the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 and hope that your colleagues across the political spectrum will recognize the importance of these enhancements and join in supporting it.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to protecting victims and survivors.

Sincerely,

LYNN HECHT SCHAFRAN, Esq.,
Senior Vice President.

JWI,

Washington, DC, March 8, 2021.

Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.
Hon. BRIAN FITZPATRICK,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN JACKSON LEE, REPRESENTATIVE FITZPATRICK, AND CHAIRMAN NADLER: Jewish Women International (JWI), the leading Jewish organization working to end gender-based violence, applauds your steadfast dedication and leadership in introducing the bipartisan Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 (H.R. 1620).

As a Steering Committee member of the National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence, convener of the Interfaith Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and Clergy Task Force to End Domestic Abuse in the Jewish Community, and co-chair of Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence, JWI supports this bill that builds on VAWA's previous successes and adds key enhancements to ensure the safety of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) is our nation's single most effective tool in responding to the devastating crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking—providing lifesaving programs and services. Since its initial passage, VAWA has dramatically enhanced and improved our nation's response to violence against women. VAWA is essential in the funding of programs and services that survivors rely on every day. This commonsense legislation protects victims and survivors, helps save lives, and makes our communities safer places to worship, heal, and thrive.

Even with all of the advancements in the last twenty-seven years, there is still a tremendous amount of work that remains. One third of all women (nearly 52 million women) in the United States have been victims of physical violence by an intimate partner. In 2016 alone, there were 1.1 million domestic violence victimizations, 54% of which involved domestic partners. The Department of Justice's Criminal Victimization 2016 Bulletin found that more than 10% of all violent crime is due to intimate partner violence.

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 responds to the urgent issues survivors face every day by supporting programming to prevent gender-based violence, closing Tribal and firearms loopholes to protect all survivors, strengthening public housing protections for survivors, expanding the ability of providers to respond to sexual harassment, and prioritizing support for Communities of Color.

JWI and our 75,000 members and supporters greatly appreciate your dedication and leadership in advancing the critical mission of passing a targeted bill that will have a broad impact on all survivors. Congress now has an opportunity to come together and pass meaningful legislation to help save the lives of victims of gender-based violence—we are grateful that you are spearheading this effort.

Thank you again for being tireless champions of survivors.

Sincerely,

MEREDITH JACOBS,
JWI CEO.

CASA DE ESPERANZA,
March 8, 2021.

Hon. JERROLD NADLER,
Hon. SHEILA JACKSON LEE,
Hon. BRIAN FITZPATRICK,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES NADLER, JACKSON LEE AND FITZPATRICK: I am writing on behalf of Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities to convey our support of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2021 (VAWA Reauthorization, H.R. 1620). We greatly appreciate your leadership and effort to fulfil the promise of the landmark Violence Against Women Act of 1994.

Casa de Esperanza was founded in 1982 in Minnesota to provide emergency shelter and support services for women and children experiencing domestic violence. In 2009, Casa de Esperanza launched the National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities, which is a national resource center that provides training & technical assistance, research, and policy advocacy on addressing and preventing gender-based violence in Latin@ communities. Through offering direct services in Minnesota and nationwide advocacy, we are very aware of the critical role that VAWA has played in enhancing access to services, safety, and justice for all survivors.

VAWA Reauthorization is a necessary part of our nation's commitment to ending gender-based violence. It includes narrowly focused, yet critical, enhancements to address gaps identified by survivors and direct service providers. Among many provisions, the measure maintains vital protections for all survivors, invests in prevention, improves access to safe housing and economic independence, and includes long overdue funding for culturally specific communities.

Since the enactment of VAWA in 1994 and during each subsequent reauthorization of VAWA in 2000, 2005, and 2013, Congress has continued to support and improve protections for survivors in a bipartisan manner. During this time in which we are experiencing the dual crises of the Coronavirus and gender-based violence, we are reminded of the fragility of life. It is not now or ever acceptable to merely maintain the status quo, let alone undermine current protections and reduce access to safety and justice for victims and survivors, particularly those from vulnerable communities which also have been more deeply impacted by the COVID–19 pandemic.

In addition to ensuring important pathways to safety, justice, and well-being for all survivors, H.R. 1620 includes important enhancements that improve access to intervention and prevention services. We are enthusiastic about the funding for legal and housing services that are life-saving resources for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. We are also very encouraged by the funds provided for culturally specific programs in H.R. 1620.

We appreciate your commitment to moving this bill forward with bipartisan support and continue the longstanding commitment of Congress to support enhanced services and protections in each reauthorization of VAWA. Thank you for being a champion on behalf of all victims and survivors and for your commitment to improving the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

Sincerely,

PATRICIA J. TOTOTZINTLE,
CEO.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1620, the "Violence Against Women Act of 2021," that will reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994.

The Violence Against Women Act is landmark legislation first enacted in 1994 and signed into law by President Bill Clinton which has—through policy reforms, interstate cooperation and grant allocation—been pivotal in providing a national response to protecting half of the population.

Equally important, it has ushered in a seismic transformation on how society perceives violence against women.

VAWA was enacted in response to the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence, and the significant impact of such violence on the lives of women.

I remember those days well because I was serving on the board of the Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC), at that time the sole shelter in the Houston area offering sanctuary to victims and women at risk of domestic violence.

Despite its import, VAWA has been expired since September 30, 2018, and we as a body are now called upon by survivors to reauthorize it.

VAWA has a proven success record—in the quarter-century since it passed, domestic violence has decreased by approximately two-thirds, and intimate partner homicides decreased by approximately one-third.

However, despite these gains, domestic violence and sexual assault cases I have rapidly increased during this COVID–19 crisis, where perpetrators are spending significant amount of time at home with their victims.

This landmark, transformative legislation is needed now more than ever.

Police departments around the country have reported increases in domestic violence: 18 percent increase in San Antonio; 22 percent increase in Portland, Oregon; 10 percent increase in New York City.

A recent meta-analysis of 18 different studies concerning domestic violence during the pandemic found that domestic violence cases have increased an average of over 8 percent across the country.

In the United States, an estimated 10 million people experience domestic violence every year, and more than 15 million children are exposed to this violence annually.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, about 20 people per minute are physically abused by an intimate partner.

About 1 in 4 women and 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner physical violence, sexual violence, and/or partner stalking with injury.

Today, in Texas, 35.10 percent of women and 34.5 percent of men are subjected to domestic violence.

We cannot forget the victims of domestic violence like Yashica Fontenot, who was murdered in Harris County, Texas, by her husband just one day after Christmas last year while she was trying to escape her relationship.

Nor can we forget Debra Seidenfaden, who was murdered by her husband in Houston after an argument.

Nor can we forget the Houston woman who was tied up and sexually assaulted in her own home just last week; or the Houston woman who was shot multiple times by her husband at a medical office this month; or the Houston mother and grandmother who was murdered by her son-in law while she attempted to protect her daughter and grandchildren.

There are countless stories like this throughout this country, which is why it is imperative to reauthorize VAWA by passing H.R. 1620.

The stories of these women remind us of the urgency to protect survivors now, before it is too late, because many of these deaths are preventable.

Since VAWA's codification in 1994, more victims report episodes of domestic violence to the police and the rate of non-fatal intimate partner violence against women has decreased by almost two-thirds.

VAWA has also led to a significant increase in the reporting of sexual assault.

From 1994 to 2015, the rate of women murdered by men in single victim/single offender incidents dropped 29 percent.

In the first 15 years of VAWA's validity, rates of serious intimate partner violence declined by 72 percent for women and 64 percent for men.

Research suggests that referring a victim to a domestic violence or sexual assault advocate has been linked to an increased willingness to file a police report—survivors with an advocate filed a report with law enforcement 59 percent of the time, versus 41 percent for individuals not referred to a victim advocate.

Prior to VAWA, law enforcement lacked the resources and tools to respond effectively to domestic violence and sexual assault, and this progress cannot be allowed to stop.

Congress must continue sending the clear message that violence against women is unacceptable.

VAWA has been reauthorized three times—in 2000, 2005, and 2013—with strong bipartisan approval and overwhelming support from Congress, states, and local communities.

Each reauthorization of VAWA has improved protections for women and men, while helping to change the culture and reduce the tolerance for these crimes.

H.R. 1620 continues that tradition, and therefore, is intended to make modifications, as Congress has done in the past to all previous reauthorizations of VAWA.

H.R. 1620 is a bipartisan bill, reflecting a reasonable and compromise approach to reauthorize grant programs under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

These moderate enhancements will address the many growing and unmet needs of victims and survivors of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

H.R. 1620 addresses the needs of sex trafficking victims while creating a demonstration program on trauma-informed training for law enforcement.

H.R. 1620 increases access to grant programs for culturally specific organizations and ensure culturally specific organizations are included in the development and implementation of service, education, training, and other grants.

H.R. 1620 adds a purpose area to assist communities in developing alternatives to housing ordinances that punish survivors for seeking law enforcement intervention.

H.R. 1620 expands protections for vulnerable populations such as youth, survivors without shelter, Native American women, and LGBTQ persons.

H.R. 1620 ensures Deaf people are included in grants relating to people with disabilities.

VAWA is central to our nation's effort to fight the epidemic of domestic, sexual, and

dating violence and stalking, and we as a body are now called upon by survivors to reauthorize it.

It is important to note that H.R. 1620 did not happen on its own.

It was the product of a collaborative effort of stakeholders, including victim advocates.

It was the product of those willing to share their stories of the abuse suffered at the hands of those who were entrusted to love, but instead harmed.

The courage, strength, and resilience displayed by survivors has reminded all that we must continue to foster an environment for victims of violence to come forward and expose episodes of violence against women.

Having listened to concerned stakeholders from all pockets of the country, we have put pen to paper and produced a bill that is endorsed by the bipartisan National Task Force to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (NTF), which is a national collaboration comprising a large and diverse group of 35 national, tribal, state, territorial, and local organizations, advocates, and individuals that focus on the development, passage and implementation of effective public policy to address domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

This bill recognizes the urgency and dire need faced by the victims and survivors throughout this country during a significant moment of ongoing domestic violence caused by this pandemic and experienced by both women and men.

The love for a spouse, the comfort of a mother and the best wishes for a sister know no political allegiance.

I am determined to work with my colleagues and others to complete the mission I accepted in the 115th Congress when the House passed the VAWA legislation I authored, H.R. 1585, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2018, all the way this time through passage by the Senate and to presentment for signature to President Biden, a strong supporter of the bill and the original creator of VAWA.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SPANBERGER). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to Resolution 233, the previous question is ordered.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the joint resolution.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the joint resolution.

The question was taken, and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mrs. FISCHBACH. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question are postponed.

□ 1130

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2021

Mr. NADLER. Madam Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 233, I call up the bill (H.R. 1620) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 233, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 117–3, modified by the amendment printed in part A of House Report 117–12, is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 1620

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization Act of 2021''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Universal definitions and grant conditions.
Sec. 3. Agency and Department Coordination.
Sec. 4. Effective date.
Sec. 5. Availability of funds.
Sec. 6. Sense of Congress.

TITLE I—ENHANCING LEGAL TOOLS TO COMBAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DATING VIOLENCE, SEXUAL ASSAULT, AND STALKING

Sec. 101. Stop grants.
Sec. 102. Grants to encourage improvements and alternatives to the criminal justice response.
Sec. 103. Legal assistance for victims.
Sec. 104. Grants to support families in the justice system.
Sec. 105. Outreach and services to underserved populations grants.
Sec. 106. Criminal provisions.
Sec. 107. Rape survivor child custody.
Sec. 108. Enhancing culturally specific services for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
Sec. 109. Grants for lethality assessment programs.

TITLE II—IMPROVING SERVICES FOR VICTIMS

Sec. 201. Sexual assault services program.
Sec. 202. Sexual Assault Services Program.
Sec. 203. Rural domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, and child abuse enforcement assistance program.
Sec. 204. Grants for training and services to end violence against people with disabilities and Deaf people.
Sec. 205. Training and services to end abuse in later life.
Sec. 206. Demonstration program on trauma-informed, victim-centered training for law enforcement.

TITLE III—SERVICES, PROTECTION, AND JUSTICE FOR YOUNG VICTIMS

Sec. 301. Rape prevention and education grant.
Sec. 302. Creating hope through outreach, options, services, and education (CHOOSE) for children and youth.
Sec. 303. Grants to combat violent crimes on campuses.

TITLE IV—VIOLENCE REDUCTION PRACTICES

Sec. 401. Study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
Sec. 402. Saving Money and Reducing Tragedies (SMART) through Prevention grants.

TITLE V—STRENGTHENING THE HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS RESPONSE

Sec. 501. Grants to strengthen the healthcare systems response to domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.

TITLE VI—SAFE HOMES FOR VICTIMS

Sec. 601. Housing protections for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
Sec. 602. Ensuring compliance and implementation; prohibiting retaliation against victims.
Sec. 603. Protecting the right to report crime from one's home.
Sec. 604. Transitional housing assistance grants for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
Sec. 605. Addressing the housing needs of victims of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking.
Sec. 606. United States Housing Act of 1937 amendments.

TITLE VII—ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR VICTIMS

Sec. 701. Findings.
Sec. 702. National Resource Center on workplace responses to assist victims of domestic and sexual violence.
Sec. 703. Provisions related to Unemployment Compensation and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program.
Sec. 704. Study and reports on barriers to survivors' economic security access.
Sec. 705. GAO Study.
Sec. 706. Education and information programs for survivors.
Sec. 707. Severability.

TITLE VIII—HOMICIDE REDUCTION INITIATIVES

Sec. 801. Prohibiting persons convicted of misdemeanor crimes against dating partners and persons subject to protection orders.
Sec. 802. Prohibiting stalkers and individuals subject to court order from possessing a firearm.

TITLE IX—SAFETY FOR INDIAN WOMEN

Sec. 901. Findings and purposes.
Sec. 902. Authorizing funding for the Tribal access program.
Sec. 903. Tribal jurisdiction over covered crimes of domestic violence, dating violence, obstruction of justice, sexual violence, sex trafficking, stalking, and assault of a law enforcement officer or corrections officer.

TITLE X—OFFICE ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Sec. 1001. Establishment of Office on Violence Against Women.
Sec. 1002. Office on Violence Against Women a Deputy Director for Culturally Specific Communities.

TITLE XI—IMPROVING CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN IN FEDERAL CUSTODY

Sec. 1101. Improving the treatment of primary caretaker parents and other individuals in federal prisons.
Sec. 1102. Public health and safety of women.
Sec. 1103. Research and report on women in federal incarceration.
Sec. 1104. Reentry planning and services for incarcerated women.

TITLE XII—LAW ENFORCEMENT TOOLS TO ENHANCE PUBLIC SAFETY

Sec. 1201. Notification to law enforcement agencies of prohibited purchase or attempted purchase of a firearm.
Sec. 1202. Reporting of background check denials to state, local, and Tribal authorities.