problem, particularly within the garment industry. Even my Republican colleagues on the Committee on Education and the Workforce, the Gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. GOODLING, and the Gentleman from Michigan, Mr. HOEKSTRA, have noted the re-emergence of sweatshops.

The re-emergence of sweatshops has impoverished workers and their families and has driven reputable contractors out of otherwise profitable businesses. It represents a problem that cannot and should not be tolerated.

The ''Stop Sweatshops Act'' establishes joint liability on the part of manufacturers in the garment industry who contract with sweatshop operators for violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). This legislation strengthens the ability of the Department of Labor to enforce the law and improves the ability of garment workers to obtain redress where violations occur. As importantly, by encouraging manufacturers in the garment industry to deal with reputable contractors, this legislation acts to balance market pressures that have encouraged the re-emergence of sweatshops.

One hundred of my colleagues joined me last Congress as cosponsors of this legislation. I urge those of my colleagues who have supported this legislation in the past to do so again. And, I urge those who have not previously cosponsored this legislation to do so now. We cannot continue to allow unscrupulous employers to drive responsible employers out of business. Nor should we continue to tolerate working conditions that undermine rather than promote the well being of workers. As we near the end of the 20th Century, we must eliminate this vestige of 19th Century exploitation.

THE CHILDREN'S ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to protect the health of America's children, the Children's Environmental Protection Act.

In 1996, Congress unanimously passed the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) which requires the Environmental Protection Agency to consider children's exposure to pesticides in food limit pesticide exposure to children. While the FQPA focused on protecting children by ensuring that the food they eat does not contain harmful levels of pesticides, this bill establishes guidelines to help reduce and eliminate exposure of children to environmental pollutants in areas reasonably accessible to children. The bill also requires the collection of toxicity data by the EPA Administrator, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services so that we can begin to understand, with some level of accuracy, the long-term health effects and toxicity of pesticides and other environmental pollutants on children.

For too long risk assessments have been performed using the average, robust 170 pound male as a model. As a result, we really have no idea how these chemicals impact a child's system. This leaves our children at risk because their physiology, play habits, and patterns of exposure make them more vulnerable to toxic harm. For example, children breathe in more of an air pollutant per pound of body weight. They eat more fresh fruit by body weight and drink proportionally more tap water, juice, and milk.

This bill addresses that problem by requiring that all EPA standards for environmental pollutants be set at levels that protect children. In addition, the Act requires EPA to publish a ''Safe for Children'' list of products, in addition to providing parents and the public with advice on how to minimize a child's exposure to harmful pollutants.

This bill also helps families educate themselves about potential threats to their children's health through the creation of a family right-to-know information kit. The kit will include a summary of helpful information and guidance to families and practical suggestions on how parents can reduce their children's exposure to environmental pollutants.

This bill will begin to provide the essential information we need to quantify and evaluate the impact of environmental pollutants in children. The more we know about potential risks and the less toxic burden we put on the environment the healthier our children will be. This legislation has been endorsed by Administrator Browner and by several environmental and health organizations. I urge your support and co-sponsorship of this important legislation.

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY BURIAL ELIGIBILITY ACT

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the ''Arlington National Cemetery Burial Eligibility Act.'' I invite members to join me as a cosponsor of this important legislation. It is my expectation that the VA Committee will take prompt actions so that the House may consider this legislation early in the Congress.

This bill is almost identical to the legislation passed by the House during the 105th Congress by a vote of 412–0. The VA Committee learned as a result of its investigative efforts that the practice of allowing burial of persons who did not meet Army regulations prescribing eligibility for burial at Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) had become the subject of serious controversy. Further, the practice of allowing burial of persons without military service at ANC has caused considerable anguish on the part of members of military and veterans organizations. As a result, the VA Committee recommended this legislation to codify existing burial regulations for ANC with two significant changes. First, there would not be authority to grant exceptions, or ''waivers,'' under the proposed legislation. No one—not the Superintendent of ANC, the Secretary of the Army, or the President of the United States—could authorize the burial of a person who is not eligible under the proposed legislation. However, Congress could enact subsequent legislation on behalf of an individual whose accomplishments are deemed worthy of the honor of being buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Second, this bill eliminates the ''politically well-connected'' category of eligibility now found in existing Army Regulations. Under existing Army regulations, veterans who do not meet the military criteria for burial at ANC are nevertheless eligible if they served as a member of the House or Senate, as a Federal judge, a diplomat, or a high-ranking cabinet officer. This legislation eliminates future eligibility of such persons so that Arlington will once more be the final resting place for those with distinguished military service.

As indicated, this bill passed the House by an overwhelming margin and had the active support of all the major veterans service and military organizations. Unfortunately, the other body did not debate the issue during the 105th Congress. By introducing this bill and planning for its early consideration by the House VA Committee, we hope to give the Senate ample opportunity to consider it and reach agreement on what the nation's policy should be on this issue of abiding importance to veterans and their families.

EXTENDING COVERAGE OF THE FMLA

HON. WILLIAM (BILL) CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. CLAY. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to expand the protections afforded by the Family and Medical Leave Act. The bill I am introducing is identical to legislation I introduced in the 105th Congress, H.R. 109.

The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) grants employees the right to take unpaid leave in the event of a family or medical emergency without jeopardizing their jobs. As a former Chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor-Management Relations of the Committee on Education and Labor, I was privileged to work closely with the Hon. MARGE ROUKEMA, Senator DODD, Senator BOND, our former colleagues the Hon. Pat Schroeder and the Hon. William D. Ford, and many others to bring about the enactment of this important law. Necessarily, however, many compromises were made to bring about this precedent setting legislation.

Among the most important of those compromises was one that limited the applicability of the law to employers of 50 or more employees. My original intention had been to extend the law to employers of 25 or more employees. However, because of uncertainty regrading the impact of the law on employers and in order to increase support for the legislation, I agreed to accept the 50 employee threshold.

The effect of this compromise was to leave tens of millions of employees and their families outside of the protections afforded by the FMLA. In fact, only 57% of the workforce is protected by the FMLA. The fact that an employee may work for an employer of 40 rather than 50 people does not immunize that employee from the vicissitudes of life nor diminish that employee's need of the protections afforded by the FMLA. For my part, this was a very difficult and reluctantly entered compromise. However, it was my hope at that time that experience under the law would prove that the law does not unduly or unreasonably disrupt employer operations.

The FMLA was signed into law on February 5, 1993. Experience has shown that the law

does not unduly disrupted employer operations. Not only are the costs to employers of complying with the law negligible, but in many instances FMLA has led to improvements in employer operations by improving employee morale and productivity and reducing employee turnover. Experience has also shown that the protections afforded by the law are not only beneficial, but are essential in enabling workers to balance the demands of work and home when faced with a family or medical emergency. In short, we have now had sufficient experience under the law to justify extending the law to employers of 25 or more employees.

Beyond expanding the number of workplaces that are protected by the FMLA, the bill I am introducing would permit employees to take parental leave to participate in or attend their children's educational and extracurricular activities. In effect, employees subject to the FMLA would be able to take 4 hours of leave in any 30-day period, not to exceed 24 hours in any 12 month period, in order to participate in important educational activities undertaken by their children. In this way, the law would more effectively enable workers to meet parental responsibilities without sacrificing their economic security.

Despite the enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act, too many workers continue to face an impossible dilemma, pitting the emotional and physical well-being of a family against its economic security, when faced with a family or medical emergency. Enactment of this legislation would extend coverage to 73% of the workforce. A mother should not unreasonably or unnecessarily be forced to choose between caring for a new born and maintaining her job. A husband, recovering from a heart attack, should not also needlessly face the loss of his job and the resulting financial insecurity that would mean for his family.

Requiring employers of 25 or more to provide temporary, unpaid leave to workers who face a family or medical emergency will not impose an unreasonable burden on those employers. Such a modest expansion of the law, however, will significantly benefit families in crisis by extending the protections of the FMLA to 15 million workers and their families. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

THE GUN SHOW SAFETY & ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

HON. ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. BLAGOJEVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of 25 of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to reintroduce the Gun Show Safety & Accountability Act, the nation's first legislation aimed at closing a deadly loophole that allows criminals to purchase firearms at gun shows without undergoing Brady background checks.

While it is unfortunate that my bill was not acted upon by the 105th Congress, it is our hope that with new leadership and a showing of bi-partisan support, the 106th Congress will pass this legislation and help me to cut off the deadly supply of firearms to violent criminals that result in the countless deaths of innocent American citizens every year.

When a person buys a handgun from a gun store, they must fill out a Brady Form, undergo a background check, show proof of identification and a record of the sale is also kept. What most people don't know is that a loophole in the federal law allows that same person to buy a handgun at a gun show without doing any of these things.

The gun show loophole has created a situation that is both dangerous and unfair. It allows gun show participants to sell guns with little, if any, legal obligation to insure that they aren't putting deadly weapons into the hands of violent criminals or juveniles. Furthermore, it creates unfair business competition between law-abiding gun store owners whose time-consuming background checks and sales records are much less attractive to potential customers than a quick purchase from a gun show participant.

Hundreds of thousands of firearms are sold at gun shows every year, and experts believe participation to be on the rise. As gun shows have grown, so has evidence illustrating that a lack of regulation is creating a black market for violent criminals. Knowing that background checks would prevent them from buying guns from a gun store, criminals have found that they can obtain unlimited numbers of firearms at gun shows with ease. Because no sales records are kept at gun shows, these firearms can be resold on the street and used in crimes without being traced.

A one-year study conducted by the Illinois State Police indicated that at least 25 percent of illegally trafficked firearms used in crimes originate at gun shows, and national news accounts indicate similar situations across the nation. Most recently, a 17-year-old Kentucky boy shot and killed another youth with a handgun that he told police he was able to purchase at a gun show with cash, no waiting period, and ''no questions asked.'' In Florida, an escaped prison inmate was even able to purchase a handgun at a gun show.

As the link between guns used in crimes and gun shows grows, it makes sense that our nation should be rewarding gun store owners for taking time to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals—not penalizing them. As stated by Bill Bridgewater, former executive director of the National Alliance of Stocking Gun Dealers, ''The Grand Bazaar approach that we now have ensures that every pugnacious child with a grudge to settle and every other form of human predator have easy access to all the firearms that they might desire, while the legitimate firearms dealer is saddled with more and more onerous restrictions.''

Aimed at keeping guns out of the hands of violent criminals and bringing fairness and accountability to gun shows without creating new, onerous restrictions, the ''Gun Show Safety & Accountability Act'' is a fair and reasonable solution. By requiring gun store owners and gun show participants to comply with the same laws, the bill would promote fair business competition, while cutting off a deadly supply of firearms to our nation's dangerous criminals.

I urge my colleagues to make public safety a priority this Congress and join me in cosponsoring this groundbreaking piece of legislation.

UNIFORMED SERVICES FORMER SPOUSES EQUITY ACT OF 1999

HON. BOB STUMP

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. STUMP. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing a bill to restore a small measure of balance to the way military retired pay is handled during a divorce.

Under the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act, courts, were given the authority to divide military retirement pay as property. Since then, the Courts have almost uniformly taken advantage of that provision. This has resulted in certain injustices to military retirees. Chief among them is the fact that former spouses continue to receive a share of the retired pay even after one or more remarriages, regardless of the respective financial positions of the former spouse and the retiree. Moreover, there is no limitation on when former spouses can seek a division of retired pay.

My bill has three principal components addressing problems created by the original legislation. First, it would terminate payments made as a division of property from retired pay upon remarriage of the former spouse. Second, it would require computation of the former spouse's portion of retired pay based on the rank and longevity of the individual at the time of divorce, not at the time of retirement. Third, it would limit the time in which a former spouse may seek a division of retired pay.

I urge my colleagues to join me in seeking equity for military retirees.

IN TRIBUTE TO JEAN FROHLICHER

HON. BART GORDON

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 6, 1999

Mr. GORDON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with unfortunate news. While returning from West Virginia with her husband following the New Years weekend, I am sorry to report that Jean Frohlicher, the first president and general counsel of the National Council of Higher Education Loan Programs (NCHELP), passed away in Elkins, West Virginia. She is survived by her husband John, niece Sandra Neuse and two nephews, Lee and Carl Neuse.

Since coming to Congress, I have worked hard to enhance educational opportunities for students across the nation. I believe that it is imperative that we ensure access to a higher education for every child in America. And though I have done what I can to reach this goal, my efforts have been dwarfed by those of Jean Frohlicher.

As the Executive Vice President and General Council of NCHELP, Jean recognized early on that we truly are facing a crisis in the cost of higher education and need to provide more assistance to students. Working with her colleagues in the education community and my colleagues on Capitol Hill, Jean has helped reform and expand our student loan programs, making more money available to students each year. Her advice and guidance on higher education financing has been invaluable to me.