

we know to be a fact and evident is that women are equal. By the way, it doesn't mean we are better. We are equal. We are equally good in some cases and equally bad in some cases—not better. But we know that and we respect that in this country, although I would still like to see the equal rights amendment be part of the Constitution. But basically we know that. We should take that knowledge and that commitment, and make sure the women of the world have a chance at life. I think we can do it through this treaty. I would think we would be proud to do it across the party line.

I think this is going to become an issue in this election because there is no reason why we shouldn't at least hold a hearing and debate these issues.

The chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee was down here today. He was eloquent in his opposition. Now I am on the floor and he is not here. I hope I have been a little eloquent on why we should pass the treaty. Why not bring that debate inside the Foreign Relations Committee where it belongs? Why not hear from Senators on both sides who care about this one way or the other? Why not vote it out? Why not come to the floor and have a good debate on these issues, and perhaps elevate the Senate? We get into our petty quarrels. Sometimes we take up issues that are, frankly, not as important as others. This one would be one that I think would make us all proud, whenever we come out on this matter and on this question. But in terms of the arguments against it, I hope I have put the other side out on the table.

Good people are behind this treaty—good, mainstream American groups. The treaty is a Magna Carta for women. We ought to be proud of it. We ought to stand with the countries in the world that are civilized, that give their women equal rights and fair rights. We ought to stand with them. It is time we do it.

It is International Women's Day. I will end where I started with happy International Women's Day. I hope when we think about this perhaps in the next few days and weeks and months, we will factor in a very important treaty—the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women—on the floor of the Senate for a high-level debate and a vote.

Thank you very much Mr. President. I yield the floor.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

CEDAW HEARING

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, let me thank the Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, for raising the issue that today is International Women's Day—it is a very important day for women around the world and their rights—and to thank her for her work on the resolution asking the Foreign Relations Committee to hold a hearing on CEDAW, which is a very important resolution. It is time that we as a Senate hear what is involved and have a chance to get testimony and to possibly move forward on it. It would be a great step forward.

PIPELINE SAFETY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this afternoon to publicly thank my colleague from the State of Washington, Mr. GORTON, for endorsing my bill, S. 2004, the Pipeline Safety Act of 2000. I am delighted Senator GORTON joined with me on this very important public safety issue. Senator GORTON has the respect of many in the Senate leadership, and I expect he will be a great help in helping us pass this pipeline safety bill. I look forward to working with him to make sure that the tragedies he talked about today—such as the one that occurred in Bellingham, WA—don't happen again.

I also wish to take a moment to recognize the efforts of many, many people in my home State of Washington—especially the mayor of Bellingham, Mark Asmundson, who has done more than anyone I know to raise public awareness about pipeline dangers and to call for stronger safety measures.

I encourage my colleagues, many of whom I have met personally over the last several months on this issue, to take this opportunity now to join Senator GORTON and me in helping to ensure the safety of the pipelines that transport natural gas, oil, and other hazardous liquids throughout our communities.

Since 1986, there have been more than 5,700 pipeline accidents nationwide. These accidents have killed 325 people and injured another 1,500. Three of those people died in Bellingham, WA, last June. We want to make sure we take steps this year to ensure that does not happen again to any other community. It is time to act. It is time to prevent another disaster.

My bill, S. 2004, would expand State authority. It would improve inspection practices, a move that is drastically needed. It would expand the public's right to know.

For any of you who may suffer from a disaster in the future, you will quickly find that your communities and cities won't have the ability to ask pipeline companies whether pipelines have been inspected, and what problems

there are, or actions they have taken to solve those problems, unless we pass the public's "right-to-know provision." It will improve the quality of pipeline operators, and it will increase funding to improve safety.

I look forward to working with the rest of the Washington State delegation to put the lessons that we learned all too tragically in Bellingham, WA, into law.

I ask my colleagues, many with whom I have met, to again take a look at this legislation and join us in sponsoring it, and for this Senate and Congress to move on this very important piece of safety legislation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

THE FAA CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes at this time to congratulate the majority leader, Chairman JOHN MCCAIN, Senator SLADE GORTON, Representative BUD SHUSTER, and everyone in Congress who has worked so hard to produce a conference report on the FAA. Many of my colleagues have discussed the importance of this bill to our national aviation infrastructure, so I will not repeat now their comments. It is my purpose to remark to the Senate how important this bill is to my State of Alaska.

Mr. President, 75 percent of Alaska's communities are accessible only by air. We have enormous needs and, frankly, those needs have often taken a back seat to major metropolitan areas of the lower 48. It is my hope this bill will address some of those inequities, and I congratulate my Congressman, DON YOUNG, for his hard work on this bill.

We have 71 unlighted airports in Alaska. In an area where we spend half of our year in darkness, those airports are unlighted. One hundred and fifty airports in my State are less than 3,300 feet in length. More than half of our rural airports are without minimal passenger shelters. You reach the airport, get off the airplane, and there is literally nothing there. One hundred and seventy-six public use airports do not have basic instrument approach capability, and 194 locations in Alaska lack adequate communication, navigation, and surveillance.

This bill does not address all of those needs, and I hope to work with the Members of the House and Senate on the Appropriations Committee to fill a few of those gaps. This is a classic case in which some congressional earmarking is appropriate because the national administration too often has