

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will return to legislative session.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period for morning business.

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

MOCKING PACIFIC ALLIES

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, last week, the Washington Post saw fit to print an article entitled "Many Willing, But Only A Few Are Able." Ostensibly about the U.S. and British-led force of the coalition now fighting in Iraq, the Post's article mocks the sovereign nations of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau—three of our country's most steadfast allies in the Western Pacific. This is both offensive and undeserved. As Chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee's subcommittee with responsibility for our relations with the freely associated states, I would like to set the record straight. In making this statement, I am speaking not only for myself but also on behalf of Senator DOMENICI, the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The citizens of these nations deserve better.

The Post would have its readers believe that these Pacific islands are nothing more than banana republics. This is not the case. It is obvious to me and anyone familiar with the special relationship between our Nations that the Post is unaware of the islands' historical significance and continued role in our national defense. The Post's failure to learn the most basic facts about our allies is sloppy and irresponsible.

These islands endured occupation by Japan under a League of Nation's Mandate and then saw some of the bloodiest fighting during World War II. It was the residents of these islands who endured the contests for Enewetak, Pelilieu, and Kwajalein.

After the War, the islands were placed under the United Nations' Trusteeship system. The United States brought self-government and the development of political institutions. The Congress of Micronesia rejected both integration with the United States and independence in favor of sovereignty and free association and Congress overwhelmingly ratified the Compacts of Free Association. An important aspect of that relationship is the ability of citizens of the freely associated states to attend the United States military academies and serve in the United States Armed Services.

As we speak, there are citizens of all three countries serving in Iraq in every branch of the U.S. military, ready to make the ultimate sacrifice.

Marshallese citizens are fighting with the 101st Airborne Division and the Third Infantry Division, in harm's way and approaching Baghdad. The Federated States of Micronesia has hundreds of its people on active duty. Indeed, the son of the current President of Micronesia, Leo Falcam, is a Lieutenant Colonel with the U.S. Marines and commands an air squadron in Okinawa. Clearly, the Marshall Islands and Micronesia are contributing to the war effort.

The Compact of Free Association has guided our relationship with these nations for nearly 20 years. During that time, these nations have been among our strongest allies in the United Nations and elsewhere. Their sons and daughters have known oppression and have volunteered to serve with our citizens to end despotism and terrorism. It is offensive to read articles like that published by the Washington Post that denigrate foreign nations and their citizens in an effort to ridicule President Bush and the administration.

The Post conveniently forgets the outrages committed by Saddam Hussein against the Kurds and the people of Iraq and now chooses to insult good and decent people who have the courage to stand with the United States.

As I said, I take issue with this article. So while the reporter and editor of the Post congratulate themselves on one more cheap and vulgar attack on the Administration, I would like to offer my apology to the thousands of citizens in our freely associated states. We owe them our gratitude for their commitment. The Post should be ashamed.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of Women's History Month. This time has been appropriately designated to reflect upon the important contributions and heroic sacrifices that women have made to our Nation and to consider the challenges they continue to face. Throughout our history, women have been at the forefront of every important movement for a better and more just society, and they have been the foundation of our families and communities.

In Maryland, we are proud to honor those women who have given so much to improve our lives. Their achievements illustrate their courage and tenacity in conquering what others perceive as overwhelming obstacles. They include Harriet Elizabeth Brown, civil rights leader, teacher and principal. In the 1930s in Calvert County, she fought to eliminate pay disparities between white and black teachers. Another noteworthy Marylander was Anna Ella Carroll who served as an unofficial adviser and strategist to President Abraham Lincoln in her efforts to preserve the Union during the Civil War. We are all indebted to Rose Kushner, teacher, medical writer, and psychologist, who worked tirelessly as an advocate for

better screening and treatment of breast cancer. Their accomplishments and talent provide inspiration not only to the residents of Maryland, but to people all over the globe.

My good friend and colleague from Maryland, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, is a tremendous example of the commitment and dedication women give to public service. From her background as a social worker to her election to the U.S. Senate, Senator MIKULSKI, who has served longer than any other woman currently in the Senate, has always worked to ensure those in need receive the critical support services necessary for them to live independently and with dignity. She appropriately played a key role in establishing this month when in 1981, co-sponsoring a resolution establishing National Women's History Week, a predecessor to Women's History Month. Today, I wish to honor her dedication and service to the people of Maryland and this Nation.

This Women's History Month is a fitting time to honor the women of the armed services and recognize the sacrifice they make for our country, especially in light of the unprecedented role women are playing in our military engagement in Iraq. Approximately 15 percent of all active duty personnel are women. From the American Revolution and the Civil War through modern day armed conflict, American women have made sacrifices along side their husbands, sons, brothers and fathers to preserve the freedom upon which this Nation was founded. At this time, we know that Army Specialist Shoshawna Johnson is being held as a POW in Iraq, and Private First Class Jessica Lynch is missing in action. We send our hopes and prayers for the safe return of these brave young women, and all of those serving our country, and want their families to know that our thoughts are with them during this very difficult time.

Women have made great strides in overcoming historic adversity and bias but they still face many obstacles. Unequal pay, poverty, inadequate access to healthcare and violent crime are among the challenges that continue to disproportionately affect women. While the most recent Census Bureau figures show that the percentage of women holding managerial jobs grew from one-third to a high of 46 percent since 1983, this figure has not improved since 2001. In addition, women continue to earn less than their male colleagues, earning only 77.5 percent of every dollar earned by men. Despite these obstacles, women push on. In recent years, the poverty rate for single women has declined and more women hold advanced degrees than ever before. Recent figures show that women received approximately 45 percent of law and 42 percent of medical degrees awarded in this country. This is a dramatic improvement from a few decades ago and should continue as more and more young women recognize their opportunities are limitless.