

public life, law, education, employment, health care, commercial transactions, and domestic relations.

The United States is one of the only leading democracies in the world that has yet to ratify this important treaty. In fact, our partners outside the Convention include Iran, North Korea, and Sudan. Are these countries with whom we share the values of democracy, freedom, and respect for human rights? Are those the countries we can count on in the international arena?

Women and girls around the world who turn to the United States for leadership in advancing their rights are mystified that we do not take the simple step of ratifying the Convention. When we do, the sky will not fall, the sun will rise in the morning, and the Constitution will still be the law of the land.

By ratifying the Convention, the United States will reclaim its leadership status as a champion of the rights of women and girls and send a strong signal to those states who abuse those rights.

On International Women's Day, I call on my colleagues in the Senate to move forward and ratify the Convention.

While women have made great strides internationally in recent years, abuse of women remains a global problem. Worldwide, it is estimated that 1 in 3 women is abused or sexually assaulted in her lifetime. And anywhere from 20 to 50 percent of women worldwide have experienced some type of domestic violence. These numbers are astounding.

Even in the United States, certainly a leader in promoting women's rights, a woman is battered every 15 seconds and battering is the leading cause of injury to women between ages 15 and 44. On average, 3 women are murdered by their husbands every day in the United States. And as many as 750,000 women and children have been trafficked into the United States over the last decade. Certainly, we must do more at home to protect women from domestic and sexual abuse.

On International Women's Day, the United States must also reaffirm its commitment to combating HIV/AIDS, an epidemic that has had devastating effects on women and girls.

Transmission of HIV from men to women is twice as likely as transmission from women to men and the International Center for Research on Women has shown that there is a high correlation between violence against women and HIV infection.

The impact that this disease has had on the lives of women is shocking. In 2002, 2 million women were infected with HIV and 1.2 million women died from AIDS-related illnesses. Young women, ages 15–24, represent 66 percent of people with HIV in the 14 most-afflicted countries designated in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Teenage women in Sub-Saharan Africa are five or six times more likely to contract HIV than teenage males.

This is truly a women's issue that must be addressed.

Mr. President, on this day, we honor women. On International Women's Day, the United States and the international community must take a strong stand and issue a clear warning to those who attempt to rob women of basic rights—the world's governments will no longer ignore these important issues.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

(At the request of Mr. DASCHLE, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

HONORING DOTTIE POTTER

• Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the contributions and accomplishments of a dedicated journalist serving readers in my State of South Dakota. For years, Dottie Potter has served as a reporter covering important news impacting South Dakota's Native American population. As a writer for the Indian Country Today and the Lakota Nation Journal, Dottie is truly a credit to her profession.

She has worked hard over the years to educate the general population of the talents, accomplishments and skills of Native Americans in South Dakota. Dottie has helped educate and inform thousands of readers. I have always respected her professionalism and skill as a journalist, and her sensitivity to the issues affecting her readers.

Her tireless efforts to dig for details and to explore all sides of particular issues symbolizes her dedication to the field of journalism. She is a well-respected reporter in South Dakota. But she is also well-known for her empathy and care when writing human interest stories. Dottie has delivered stories to her readers on almost every topic, from those that involved the road to success for a favorite son or daughter to words of wisdom from a tribal elder to the plight of South Dakota Indian families.

Among the many awards she has received over the years, she received the South Dakota Education Association Golden Apple Award in October of 2002, in recognition of outstanding media coverage of public education issues and events in South Dakota.

Dottie now works on a personal story, a fight to overcome cancer. A reporter to the core, Dottie continues to make an impact on her community. With remarkable spirit and bravery, she still works as a reporter with Lakota Nation Journal as she educates, entertains and informs readers. Her fight against cancer serves as an inspiration to others.

I congratulate and commend Dottie Potter on her many years as a journalist. Her body of work serves as a long-standing tribute to her commitment to the Native American populations of South Dakota and the Nation.●

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2003

• Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. On May 1, 2003, Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

On May 6, 1999, in Santa Clarita, CA, two men were charged with suspicion of committing a hate crime after they allegedly burglarized a residence and beat three gay men.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.●

TRIBUTE TO MARY F. DIAZ

• Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, last month, this Nation suffered the tragic loss of one of its most effective and most compassionate advocates for women and children throughout the world.

Mary Diaz was only 43 when she died on February 12 in New York after a long battle of cancer. I know she will be profoundly missed by all who knew her and worked with her and were helped by her.

For the last 10 years, Mary was executive director of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, an affiliate of the International Rescue Committee. She was there whenever she was needed and wherever she was needed—in Serbia or Angola or Rwanda or Pakistan or Nepal or Haiti and in many other places, often putting her own safety at risk to see firsthand the hardships of women and children displaced by war or fleeing persecution.

After each of her travels, Mary would return and eloquently share the stories of those she saw who needed help the most. She met with lawmakers and government agencies to urge them to respond. She worked with President Clinton to create a fund for refugee women in Bosnia. Visiting Tanzania, she worked to change the rules allowing Burundian women to distribute food with the men. Even in the all too short time she had, Mary inspired us all with her dedicated and tireless work on behalf of the disenfranchised.

It is easy to see where Mary learned her passion for helping others. Her father was a doctor and her mother is a nurse. Her two brothers are doctors. One sister is an inner-city teacher and another is a librarian. After studying international relations at Brown University, Mary worked for a television station in Philadelphia and volunteered in her free time to help refugees settle in the city. As her interest in