

COMMEMORATING WOMEN'S
HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, as March slips away, a number of women in the House did not want to let the year go by without commemorating Women's History Month. We recognize this is April 1. This is no April fool's joke. Women are a very serious concern of the women who will come forward this evening.

We note first the progress women around the world, our sisters in solidarity, are making; and then we compare that progress to the progress of American women who serve in the legislatures of their countries.

According to the data used internationally, women are considered to be at an acceptable threshold when they are about 30 percent of their legislatures. There are only 14 countries that qualify. The United States of America is not one of them. We are pleased at the increase in women, especially in the House and in the Senate; but we are not where we should be, particularly given the ideals that our country professes.

Interestingly, women made their greatest strides in Rwanda last year, and that may well be because there is a fixed percentage of women required in their legislature. But this should be said of Rwanda: This is one of the world's most tragic nations, which suffered from violence. Perhaps having women in the leadership will help send to that country the notion that violence, most of it perpetrated by men in that country in one of the worst cases of genocide in the 20th century, is no longer acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, just a couple nights ago Women's Policy, Incorporated, celebrated its 10th anniversary. This is a privately financed organization from which many Members of the House and Senate gather the information that they need to keep track of women's issues and where women need to go as far as legislation and other progress is concerned.

It was also the 27th anniversary of the Congressional Women's Caucus. It reminded us that it was in 1916 that the first woman came to serve in this House, the famed Jeannette Rankin. That was 4 years before women even got the right to vote. I believe that says something, Mr. Speaker, about the determination of women to exercise the vote, that before the Constitution of their country even gave them the vote, as a matter of State law they sent a representative to this body.

Today, we have grown from one in 1916 to 76 in this House and 14 in the Senate, well below the 30 percent threshold that the world acknowledges as a decent percentage. We are still struggling. We are still determined to

find our rightful place in this body and in our country.

□ 1845

We certainly do not suffer, as many of our sisters do around the world. For example, in Kuwait, one of our allies, women cannot even stand for election to any office.

Mr. Speaker, I was a Member of the House when the so-called "Year of the Woman" was informally proclaimed. That was the year when the confirmation of Justice Clarence Thomas brought women forward, given the controversy surrounding his nomination, that a man who had been accused of sexual harassment was nevertheless put on the bench. It sent a whole bunch of women to the House and to the Senate, more than before and more than since. Some of us, Mr. Speaker, I must say, are inclined to call 2004 the "Year of the Forgotten Woman," and we say so because we look for concrete evidence of where women are going in our country today. And for that, I think the best place to look is in the President's budget.

The budget document is the best evidence of the policy of the President in office. I think that the American people for whom women's rights, the progress of women and children means something would be absolutely astonished by what the President's 2005 proposed budget tells us about his priorities when it comes to women's concerns. So I want to start where the American people would start in evaluating where this President stands on matters affecting women and their children. They would start with where he puts his money. They would start with his budget.

As I look at that budget, it seems as if the President went on a search-and-destroy mission, focused heavily on the programs that affect women most. I looked, because I saw many programs that might tell us something about where an elected official stands on a given subject. I looked at signature issues for women, issues that are particularly identified with women and their children, although I am sure my good friends and colleagues in this body who are men would be quick to step forward and say that these issues mean just as much to them. It is simply that women have been at the front of the line advocating the issues that I am speaking about at the moment.

Let us take the child care and development block grant: frozen for the third year in a row. Children are not frozen. The numbers continue to come forward. They grow older. They need services. So that when we have a 3-year freeze, it means 3 years of cuts for child care and development. It, of course, means that we are leaving hundreds of thousands of women in line for child care, holding their kids' hands and wondering what in the world they are going to do, particularly if they are on TANF where the bill this House has passed says you have to work longer and have less child care.

Or let us take another signature issue: the Violence Against Women Act. These programs are cut for next year \$22 million over what was in the budget for this year.

Mr. Speaker, I can only hope that these programs that I am going to go through get the attention of the Congress and the appropriators and that they come to their senses and put some of this money back.

Republicans have been grandstanding about an important issue that concerns all of us. I say "grandstanding" because the way to indicate that it matters to you is, of course, to put just a little money in it. I am talking about trafficking in women and children, where women and children are essentially held virtually as slaves. Well, the Bush budget simply eliminates the program altogether.

By now it is gospel that the best straight line for reducing juvenile crime is to give kids something to do after school. Well, the President's budget provides half of the promised funding for after-school programs.

What about Head Start? Here is a program that is surely not one of the favorites of the President, even though children and education has been a signature issue for him. He has begun the gutting of the Head Start program by eliminating the health and nutritional aspects that is itself a signature of the program. We bring low-income children, we combine the services they need in preschool by the time they go to school, so that they are ready to learn.

There will also be no educational services in Head Start. Just a moment. I thought this was the education President. I thought the whole point is to begin education and the most rigorous education that a child can take according to age as soon as possible, so that we meet this goal that by grade 4 every child can read. How are we going to do that if we do not begin educational services in Head Start, particularly for low-income children who, of course, are and continue to be the furthest behind?

Speaking about behind, if the President had put just a little more money in Head Start, he might have given the best and biggest boost to his own Leave No Child Behind bill. Only 60 percent of the children who are eligible for Head Start are covered by Head Start. Put all of those children in there and we will begin to see some difference for low-income children in school, and No Child Left Behind can begin to take some of the credit for it, because it will pick them up, ready to learn.

Speaking of No Child Left Behind, Mr. Speaker, once again the President has simply declined to fund the bill. This has been a huge disappointment for Democrats, because this bill was passed in a bipartisan fashion on the promise that a very difficult issue would have the prerequisite funding and, therefore, a chance to succeed. That issue is taking children who are not learning in school and somehow

making it possible for them to learn; and not only that, Mr. Speaker, but indicating that they were not going to graduate unless they learned. Well, on the basis of that promise, this became a bipartisan bill. It overcame many doubts and much skepticism.

Now the promise of funding has dropped out of the President's budget. It has caused consternation in the House and in the Senate. But if we think that is all it has caused, we need only go into our own States and hear the howls and the cries about No Child Left Behind, its broken promises and the difficulties that States are having in meeting its goals, precisely because the promise of funding has not been kept.

Moving right along, Mr. Speaker, to Even Start. Now here we have not only a woman's program but a family values Congress program. Because, essentially, what the program does is to put adult literacy and childhood education and vital parental education all in the same package and say, if you put them all together, then we will get what children need to learn. They will have parents who know how to read and who have an appreciation for learning. That is the adult literacy part. They will have childhood education, which is focusing on the child itself. And, of course, the parental education is absolutely essential, because once you know how to parent, you recognize the value of education, and the rest is likely to take care of itself.

Well, this program, Mr. Speaker, is eliminated, not cut, but eliminated in the President's budget. I do not see how we can go home and leave that zero on our record, even though the President has left it on his.

Maternal and child health block grant, if ever there is funding that gets the motherhood award of agreement of everyone, it is that grant: frozen.

Some of the freezes are just plain cruel. Why would we want to cut off hearing screening for newborns? This program was started because we learned that if you catch a newborn with hard of hearing very early, the chances of correcting it soars. Hearing screening for newborns wiped out. Can you hear us, Mr. President? This is not a program to eliminate. It is not very costly. It is very vital.

Perhaps the greatest forgotten issue of the Bush administration is health care for the uninsured. Twenty million of them are women without health insurance. What does the President have to give to them? A \$1,000 tax credit for individual coverage only. I hope you have a job so the tax credit can help you out. But even this \$1,000 tax credit will cover only 5 percent of the uninsured.

Women, of course, we are told in this House, particularly by our Republican good friends, are the fastest-growing small business people. Indeed, they are about half of the small business people now, they have grown so fast. Why, then, would the President want to say,

well done, women. Let us cut \$79 million from the Small Business Administration, the chief agency you turn to for help, assistance, and funding.

We want the President to know that there are many of us in this Congress to remind him that 3.8 million women are looking for jobs and cannot find them. Nobody even talks about women's work anymore. We assume the obvious, that women must work; and indeed, Mr. Speaker, they must. And the fact that they cannot find work has a greater effect on children than any single group who cannot find work because of the disproportionate number of these women who are heads of household.

Mr. Speaker, I have more to say about women, but I see that one of my distinguished colleagues has come to the floor and, therefore, I would like to yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) for her comments on this vital subject.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for her perseverance and, as well, the rightness of her words.

Let me thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for remembering the month of March. The gentlewoman has indicated that this is not an April Fool's joke, that we have just continued that month a little longer. In fact, what better way to commemorate than to say that the issue is so important that if April 1 becomes March 31 and-a-half, or that we begin to say that it is foolish to ignore the history of women and we do it on this day, what an important tribute, and we thank the gentlewoman.

The gentlewoman has aptly laid out, and will continue to do so I know this evening, the misery that we are facing in light of the President's budget and, of course, the need to address the concerns of child care, of health care, some of the issues that women Members of the United States Congress have had very high on their agenda, and then some of the points that the gentlewoman has made, to cut out the resources needed for hard to hear children, and she mentioned child care, as I said.

What I would like to do this evening very briefly is to add a personal note to the concerns about maternal and child health block grants that have been cut and Head Start that has been cut and, particularly, child nutrition services, which I find particularly important, inasmuch as I spent some time in my district a couple of weeks ago visiting a school and participating in their school lunch program.

□ 1900

Seeing the joy of the children participating in having a nourishing meal and the equalizing of that nourishing meal by letting all the children have it. In fact, they gave me an assignment which said that we should cut out low income and literally just give free

meals to all of the children who are at the schools what are targeted because all the children are in need of good meals.

And that impacts women because it clearly impacts those women who are needing supportive services as they are seeking to educate their children. We know for a fact that we are under siege as relates to choice. And I always say the choice has no respect for age or income.

When I say that, this is not a question of child-bearing years. It is so much a question of humanity and the respect we have for the dignity of women to be able to make determinations along with their physicians and as well their spiritual advisor and their family.

Yet time after time we come to the floor of the House with constant undermining of the Roe v. Wade decision, which is a clear choice. It is not one that promotes one aspect of making a decision about an abortion or not. It does not promote an abortion, does not promote an abortion. What it does is it gives women the right to choose, the right to their own human dignity.

Why, then, do we have these constant battles regarding the partial birth abortion? As we speak, right now there are massive lawsuits across the country by physicians who have felt that their whole Hippocratic oath that they have had to take has now been challenged. And the rights of women to protect their own health has been damaged because of the legislation that was, if you will, signed into law by those who believe that they must make decisions for women and take away their individual dignity.

I hope that as we make these points we will be reminded of the historic contributions of women. And I can begin to recite certainly from the early beginnings of our history the numbers of women who engaged in this process. I remember the words of Abigail Adams who said to her husband as he went on to the Constitutional Convention, "Do not forget the ladies." Unfortunately, I think in time we did.

Certainly in this country not only were women not able to vote, but certainly those of us of African American heritage know that we were two-thirds of a person receiving more than a double indignity as relates to women.

So we know what it is like to premise, if you will, our respect for this month of women's history to the fact that women have been a part of the history of this Nation for a very long time.

In doing and recognizing their history, I am going to take a moment of personal privilege just to cite some of the individuals in my community who have given of themselves. And I will start with words from Barbara Jordan: "We want to be in control of our lives whether we are jungle fighters, craftsmen, company men, gamesmen. We want to be in control. And when the government erodes that control, we are

not comfortable." Those are the words of the Honorable Barbara Jordan who does not fear holding the Constitution to its most important interpretations and that is that of freedom and that of the ability to be protected by a Constitution that respects the will of the people.

And so my tribute is to Barbara Jordan who lived amongst us, served the United States Congress, one of the first to be elected from the Deep South, and, of course, the first African American since Reconstruction to serve in the Texas Senate.

Sissy Farentheld who ran for Governor in Texas more than 2 decades ago, who was a pioneering spirit and one who did not in any way diminish her fight for justice and equality.

Ninfa Laurenzo, a prominent Hispanic businesswoman who founded Ninfa's Restaurant that still bears her name, a civic leader, a philanthropist, and someone who understood the importance of women's involvement in business.

Ruby Morly. How can I speak about a community activist, 70-plus years old, I know she would not mind me saying. Whenever there is a need for a senior citizen in our community, Ruby Morly is there.

Dorothy Hubbard who works in my office, senior citizen, but takes no, if you will, denial of a senior citizen's right to Medicare and Social Security.

Ivalita Jackson, my mom, who spent most of her life as a medical professional, as a baby nurse in hospitals, who understands the importance of health care for women.

Valerie Bennett, a businesswoman and my aunt, someone who impacted my life.

Sybil Gouden, my aunt, another academic background who likewise continued to help children, young people seek education in higher education and impacted my life.

Representative Senfronia Thompson, the senior member in the State legislature in Texas who has been a champion for human rights and who helped to push into law the hate crimes legislation which is a model for this Nation.

Representative Ruth McClendon who, out of San Antonio, is a fighter for justice. And we thank her for fighting against the redistricting undermining that was going on in the Texas legislature.

Commissioner Sylvia Garcia, the first woman to be elected to the Harris County Commissioner's Court, certainly one who believes in women's rights who has been an excellence representative of the empowerment of women.

Carol Mims Galloway, council member, who has championed the rebuilding of neighborhoods.

Council Member Ada Edwards, who has fought continuously to engage young people in the political process.

Lorugene Young. What can you say about a community activist who fights not only with her words but with her

actions? And she provides clothing and toys for children from Easter to Christmas to Thanksgiving. She has never taken this attitude that the holiday is for me. She has been out there in the front lines for children.

Ruby Carver, a World War II fighter, someone who was an enlisted woman in the women's division in World War II. We honored her just a week ago. I am very proud of Ruby Carver, 84 years young, very proud that she stood as a symbol of women's involvement in World War II.

Mayor pro tem Carol Alvarado, who is now serving us as the mayor pro tem in the city of Houston and someone who is not afraid of empowering Hispanics and African Americans and women and fighting also to improve the rights of working people. And we are proud of her leadership.

Dr. Edith Irby Jones, a pioneering physician, graduated from the University of Arkansas as the first African American to graduate. Has been in practice for 50 years and has never turned a patient away.

Dr. Natalie Carrol Daily, likewise a past president of the National Medical Association and someone who has fought for doctors and the support of Medicare and joined me at my Medicare hearing just a couple of weeks ago.

Dr. Wanda Mott, not only a physician but also a scientist, someone who knows and is at the cutting edge of medical procedures for women and has been one of the major doctors of the Texas Women's Hospital.

Then we cannot close without acknowledging the many, many women that get up every day to go to work and certainly those who have made our job, our education opportunities their number one priority, that is, the teachers of America, the teachers of Houston, and the teachers of Texas and the teachers represented by many of the teaching organizations. We thank them so very much.

Then as I close to be able to thank simply the workers, women who work every day in all the fields. Women who sometimes hit the glass ceiling, women who are in corporate management who have every amount of ability to be CEOs and yet have not arrived there; women who are in academia and have every reason to be tenured and yet have not arrived; women who are in the crafts and have every ability to be foremen, supervisors, but yet have not arrived; women in the United States military who we are pulling for so that their dignity can be respected and that the sexual abuse that we have heard in this past week can be corrected so that all of the military can be accepted for their talent and be respected for their talent, as we do the fine men that are serving us. And hopefully as the days go on, that they too will continue to rise in leadership responsibilities.

And all of the women that have sought political office and still intend to seek political office, might I encour-

age them for the special insight that they bring to leadership in government, the sensitivity, and the ability to bring peace over war and life over death.

Then finally to the international peace activists and heads of state that happen to be women. Might we encourage you, even though this month is particularly related to the history of women in America, might we encourage you to join us in this international effort of the empowerment of women so that we can join and link arms fighting for peace. Whether it is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, whether it is in Iraq or Afghanistan, or whether it is in the conflicts of Africa, South America or Caribbean, we ask the women of the world to stand up and be counted and join us and link arms to make this place a better place.

I thank the Congresswoman for taking the time to yield to us this evening and taking the time to present to our colleagues the importance of women in the history not only of America, but of the world.

I am here tonight, joined by my colleagues in the Congressional Women's Caucus, to ask if women are indeed in control of their lives if they cannot make their own decisions regarding their bodies.

Right now we have an Administration that actively seeks to undermine a woman's right to choose. They falsely claim to be doing this in the interest of women and children, citing both the mother and child's well being as justifications for their actions. This same Administration has frozen the Title X family-planning program in each budget for the last three years. They have also cut domestic-violence prevention programs and frozen important programs for women and children, including the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, Head Start, and child-nutrition services.

By contrast, they have proposed more than doubling funding for unproven, dangerous "abstinence-only" programs that censor health information from young people—and instead of supporting programs that help women who face violence, they have resorted instead to exploiting the issue for an anti-abortion political base. Just this afternoon, President Bush signed the so-called "Unborn Victims of Violence Act." This legislation would, for the first time in federal law, recognize an embryo or fetus as a separate "person" with rights separate from, and equal to, a pregnant woman.

Raising awareness must be a high priority, America must begin to take this threat very seriously. On April 25, I will be joined by a million people who believe that our bodies deserve our choices, and that we must be in control of our lives, not the government. Marching in front of the Capitol, we will make our voices heard that our right to choose is at its most precarious point since over 31 years ago, when Roe versus Wade was decided. Our message will be clear: we will not tolerate the persistent government attacks on women's health and reproductive rights.

I am pleased that for the first time in its 95 year history, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) board of directors unanimously endorsed a pro

choice march. The Black Women's Health Imperative has also signed on. These organizations are part of a growing majority that believe contraceptive education and abortion rights for black and minority women must be a priority. Unintended pregnancy rates for African American women is almost three times the rate of Caucasian women, maternal mortality is 4 times higher for African American women than Caucasians. One out of four African American women had less involvement than they would like in decisions affecting their health care, with only 73% of African American women receiving first trimester prenatal care.

By making abortion illegal, we are going to harm those who turn to back alleys and home remedies to "fix" their situation, a scenario faced disproportionately by minorities and the underprivileged. We cannot make abortion inaccessible, illegal, or shameful. We must stand up for women's rights and let them make informed choices. I hope you will join me on April 25th to speak out against these injustices.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) coming down to offer her comments on this important issue at this time, and I appreciate the quality of those comments.

I am very pleased now to be joined by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) for whom these issues affecting women and children have been of priority and importance since she came to Congress.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I really appreciate the opportunity to come here to speak about women's History Month and thank the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia for providing all of us with this opportunity this evening.

They do not call it "history" for nothing. In general, the history of our Nation and our world has been about "his" story, about men's story. And it is not surprising, as men have written history books and have been considered the leaders that books are written about.

And this is not meant in any way as an anti-male statement, just a fact that most of history is about the leadership of men in our world.

I wanted to just share tonight a study that was done very recently by the Center for the American Woman and Politics, about why it is that more women do not run for political office. The premise is that study after study has shown that when women run, women win in the same numbers that men do.

And, yet, if you look at this wonderful body, our august House of Representatives, we are about 14 percent women. And the same is true of the United States Senate. And so the question really is why do we not appear in greater numbers and why do more women not run since they have equal opportunity to win?

So they did this study and what they did is they created what they called an eligibility pool, 1,000 men and 1,000 women who were from the fields that

produced most candidates, business, education, and law. And by definition, the thousand women and thousand men were equally qualified. These were people who were at mid- or upper-career level. They asked them a number of questions to determine the differences between them.

One of the differences that was really disturbing and chilling to me was that when asked about their own qualifications, the women in the study were twice as likely as the men to say about themselves that they were not qualified to run for office. Now, as I said, by definition these men and women were equally qualified.

And perhaps even more disturbing, that sense of being not qualified in twice the numbers as men ran across generations. The younger women were as likely to declare themselves not qualified as older women.

So clearly we have a challenge before us. What do we do to these qualified women to make them feel that they are not so?

But there was a hopeful part of that study. What it said was that the one factor that was in some ways the most responsible for someone making the decision to run for office was being asked to run for office, someone making the suggestion. And they divided those who make the suggestion into formal actors and informal actors. So, in other words, if someone is asked by a formal actor, that being an elected official, a party official or a political activist, to run for office, they are likely to think of themselves as candidates or potential candidates.

□ 1915

So to me that said, as a woman who is interested in getting more women involved in leadership positions, what we need to do is to encourage women, encourage young women and women older than that to run for office, to put that seed in their head and create really an old girl's network, if you will, that will bring women along to think of themselves as candidates.

We also need to, in this 21st century, explore what are those situations, what is the socialization process that ends up with women not feeling as qualified to run for office.

These were women who rated the activities involved in being a candidate as being something they were even more willing to do than men; and yet when it came to that final question, do you see yourself as qualified to run for office, twice as many women as men in this pool said they were not qualified.

So this is a challenge to us, to men and women alike. If we want to have the kind of diversity, if we want to have the benefit of women's leadership, then we are going to have to build in the systems that do that and the support networks that will encourage women so that we have the kind of equality as we move forward in this century.

So I wanted to share the outcome of this wonderful study. It is the Center

for the American Woman and Politics. They are at Rutgers University. They are part of the Eagleton Institute, and over the years they have provided us with very useful information in moving forward to include more women in our political universe.

So I thank my colleague from the District of Columbia for focusing on this important issue and for allowing me to participate tonight.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, may I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois for coming forward to inform the House of this intriguing study and for giving us I think some ammunition about what our responsibility is.

Women, in fact, need to be asked. It seems to me there is some asking that we all need to do; and you consider that women are increasingly better qualified, by education, to hold office because they get more education. You wonder what more do they need.

I guess it is important information for us all to have, and it is challenging information, and I thank the gentlewoman for staying this evening to come forward.

PARTIAL BIRTH ABORTION

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, a previous speaker spoke of the March for Women's Lives that is coming forward on April 25 next month. That march is being sponsored by nonpartisan organizations, tax-exempt organizations. So they come forward not under any political banner, but they do carry a banner.

They carry the banner of American women, and they fear for the right of choice that women won only in the last few decades. They fear about the Supreme Court and whether it will hold fast or whether it will overturn its own precedents quickly.

Today, Mr. Speaker, the case on the partial birth abortion ban is being argued in three separate jurisdictions at the very same time. Here we have the determination of some in the Congress and some in the country to simply go back to where we were before Roe versus Wade, and it looks like they will not stop, no matter what the Supreme Court tells them.

The Supreme Court settled this question in Stenberg versus Carhart, and when the Supreme Court speaks, we should usually respect the Supreme Court, because the Supreme Court, under the Constitution of the United States, is the final arbiter of constitutional right. That is the difference between us and many other countries, because the Constitution says you must respect certain rights even if the majority does not agree, but of course, when it comes to choice, the majority does agree.

Of course, late-term abortions are controversial, and this bill would not be controversial if it did not overstep. Under Roe versus Wade, of course, the State may regulate the third trimester, but that is not what is at issue in Stenberg versus Carhart.

This law is worded, it would seem, deliberately to trap the second trimester as well, the trimester where, of course, women are freer than they would be in the final weeks. Under the wording of this law, it is as clear as day that beginning in the 13th week procedures that are the most commonly used could not be used without risking prosecution.

The fatal flaw in the bill, of course, is that there is no health exception. So no matter how grave the risk to the health of the woman, a woman would not be allowed to have an abortion, as it turns out, under this bill, beginning with the 13th week, as it is worded and certainly not beyond.

I think that the American people are depending on a Supreme Court that will, in fact, respect the constitutional rights the Court itself has indicated are there for women. I want to quote from what the Supreme Court indeed said in the Stenberg decision to indicate why I really do not fear that the law that has just been passed, and indeed I think was signed today by the President, I do not fear that that law will be overturned by this Court. I do fear we could get a different Court, and that is something that every woman in America, when she goes to the polls in November, should bear in mind.

This Court has said the following, and I am quoting:

"Using this law some present prosecutors and future attorneys general may choose to pursue physicians who use the most commonly used method for performing previability, second trimester abortions. All those who perform abortion procedures using that method must fear prosecution, conviction and imprisonment. The result is an undue burden upon a woman's right to make an abortion decision. We must quickly find the statute unconstitutional."

The court has spoken. Trying to overturn the Supreme Court does not work in our system. Let us hope that whatever the Court says this time is, in fact, respected.

EQUAL PAY FOR WOMEN

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I am a former chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, so I cannot let this hour go by without saying a word about perhaps the right that most women depend upon today and recognize today and that is the right to equal pay.

This Congress has not looked at the Equal Pay Act since it was passed 40 years ago in 1963, more than 40 years ago now, and yet we are in a different world, with women with different aspirations and jobs totally different from what they were at that time.

To that effect, many women and men in this body are trying to update the Equal Pay Act with a Paycheck Fairness Act. The Paycheck Fairness Act is not a very radical piece of legislation. It would add national origin and race to the Equal Pay Act. The Equal Pay Act bars unequal pay on the basis of sex alone.

It would seem that by now everybody would agree that it is time to make sure that the typical protections involving the groups that are most likely to experience discrimination would find their way into the Equal Pay Act.

A very important part of the Act would keep a person from being punished or being fired for discussing her salary or his salary in the workplace with others. This is a favorite ruse of many employers. They do not want colleagues of one another to know what they make because, if they do, women might say, I do not know why this man is being paid more than I am.

A woman should be protected. If she goes to a man who is doing a job like hers or unlike hers and says, could I ask you what is your wage, what is your salary, there is no such protection now, and a woman could be fired for discussing or inquiring of the wage of another colleague.

Along with Senator TOM HARKIN, I have introduced the Fair Pay Act. Just as the Paycheck Fairness Act updates the Equal Pay Act, our bill would update the equal employment opportunity, Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, so that jobs that have the same skill, effort and responsibility would have to be paid the same.

Today, there are women doing work of equal value to the work of men who are being paid grossly differential salaries. For example, a man and a woman both graduate from college at the same time. He becomes a probation officer. She becomes a social worker. Guess who makes the most money? It would be very difficult to make the case that his job as a probation officer is more difficult than her job as a social worker.

The reason for the discrimination is that we still have sex segregation of jobs in our society, jobs that are essentially for women and jobs that are essentially for men, and the jobs that are for women are paid often according to gender, as opposed to the job to be done.

Women work in essentially three fields: clerical, sales and factory jobs. You will find that where women are bunched together their salaries are lower than men who do comparable jobs. As a result, the society is flailing around looking for women in the traditional women's occupations: teaching, nursing, social work. Women are fleeing those occupations, for no reason other than they are going where the money is. Nurses are becoming doctors. Social workers are becoming lawyers. Heaven knows who is going into teaching today when we most need them.

People who get educated are not going to continue to join professions that do not pay them according to what they are worth. Because women have filled very vital occupations in our society, this is dangerous indeed. One has only to go into the hospitals of America to understand what pressure we are under. We cannot get enough nurses. There are strikes at hospitals.

Nurses have to work on weekends, do not enjoy holidays. It cannot go on this way forever. An easy way to right that wrong is raise the pay.

I am an attorney. I have to tell you that this profession has been overpaid since it came into existence. Pay has nothing to do with the worth of lawyers. What it does have to do with is that it has been a male profession. I joke with my friends who are lawyers that as there are more women in the legal profession we are going to drive down the wage because it will be seen as a woman's occupation.

Very seriously, the occupations that concern me most are occupations that the society perhaps most depends upon: people to teach our children, nurses who in a very real sense are more vital than doctors today because of the breadth and depth of the health care tasks they perform, social workers because there are so many parts of what the society needs that have now integrated their skills.

We are in very deep trouble when people abandon these professions. We can recruit all we want to. We can preach all we want to. The way to get men and women into these professions is to pay these professions what they are worth.

Under our bill, a person could sue if, in fact, in the same workplace somebody in a comparable job was not paid for reasons of sex the same as that person. You would have to prove it. The burden would be on you. This would not change our economic system in any way.

□ 1930

It fits right into the way in which title 7 requires that you prove discrimination, and here you would have to prove that the difference in wage is based on discrimination. Because the difference in wage can be based on any number of factors, and the burden would be on the women.

In case you think this is a far-out idea, let it be known that 20 States have already done wage studies and adjusted the wages of women State workers based on those wage studies that showed that the wages of women were out of whack because they were women. In these States all over the United States, not following any particular pattern, north, south, east, and west, the wages have been raised for women who were teachers, nurses, clerical workers, and librarians simply based on looking at the skill, effort, and responsibility of the jobs they perform.

The evidence that women are continuing to be paid less is rampant in our society. The favorite I would cite is Wal-Mart, because it is the largest corporation and the most expanding corporation in our country and women there make \$1.16 per hour less than men. Is that why the prices are so low? Are they saving on what we spend on the backs of their own women workers? That is worth finding out.

Mr. Speaker, finally, I want to say a word about poor women, because there is so little discussion about women who do not work and want to work. I am very concerned about the TANF bill. About the most important thing that happens to a woman who becomes pregnant before marriage is that she wakes up and understands that there is somebody she is responsible for besides herself. It is an extraordinary awakening that occurs and maturity for such a woman. And I have seen what women are willing to do after the birth of such a child that they were not willing to do before, and one of those things is to go to school.

I cannot for the life of me understand why the TANF bill that we passed would not allow a woman to work part time and go to college part time if she had the gumption and the energy to do so. I do not know what we expect. Should she go off TANF and work at a minimum-wage job, or one close to minimum wage for the rest of her natural life? How does that help the children?

The whole point of this bill was to bring greater responsibility and to encourage people to take that responsibility or we were not going to pay for them. About the best way to take greater responsibility for yourself is to educate yourself and make sure you can support yourself decently, not just support yourself. What have we done? We have increased the work hour requirements to 40 hours per week and then limited what counts as work. It is penny-wise, pound-foolish, and cruel.

And, Mr. Speaker, one thing we are not going to let this House forget is that the Republicans in this House killed the child care credit for poor women and poor families; that those families that earn between \$10,000 and \$26,000 a year, including military families, cannot get that child credit. That issue is not going away. We are going to carry it to the American people. We are not going to let this House forget it until we have made good for those who most need the child care credit.

Mr. Speaker, I want to close simply by paying tribute once again to Dr. Dorothy Height and thanking the Congress of the United States for conferring on Dr. Height the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Dr. Height was for many years a resident of the State of New York. It is my great good fortune that a few years ago she moved to the District of Columbia and has become my constituent.

This is an American who richly deserved the honor she got last week. She has spent her whole life doing what many leaders have found difficult to do, fighting for a particular group while bringing people together. It is easy enough to fight for your own group. To a black woman, nothing is easier than for me to get up and talk about black women and what they need and what has been their history.

As the president emeritus of the National Council of Negro Women, that of

course is what Dr. Height has done for most of her life. She is now 92 years old. Why America was justified in awarding her the Congressional Medal of Honor is she has managed to fight with great strength for African American women while preaching the message of inclusion and brotherhood and sisterhood of all people at the same time. They are not contrary messages, but there are few who have been able to bring them forward and make them believable to those they reach.

I am particularly grateful as a young woman when feminism emerged that Dr. Height was one of those feminists who made black people understand that as white women came forward and demanded their equal rights, that that took nothing from black people; that their own movement for full equality was a movement that called forth universal principles; that black women had much in common with white women; and that this was not a cause for the two to be in dispute, but rather to be in coalition.

The world does not have enough leaders like Dorothy Height. That is why we extol them when we find them: the Mandrels of this world, the Martin Luther Kings of this world, and, yes, and the Dorothy Heights of this world.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that we have been granted this time so that American women understand that March would not go by, for those who expected women to come forward in this House and commemorate Women's History Month, that that month would not go by entirely without us remembering that this House, this Congress must never forget its women; that we must never forget the women of the world. And one way in which we indicate that women are always on our minds is to choose a month where we talk about them.

We have been talking about women throughout this House. We have been talking about their issues. It was time to talk about women on the floor of the House of Representatives this very evening.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order this evening.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia?

There was no objection.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, in March, we celebrated Women's History Month. We remembered those who have contributed to our progress, we recognized those who are changing our communities today, and we rededicated ourselves to improving the lives of women.

Women want what men want: a fair opportunity to succeed, a safe and prosperous America, good paying jobs, better access to health care, and the best possible education

for our children. Women want a secure retirement, the freedom to make the most of our lives and to make our own choices, and the chance to shape the future of our Nation.

Yet in terms of policies to assist women, we are lagging behind. Half of those currently living in poverty are single mothers. More than 3.8 million women are looking for work. Women are still paid only 80 cents to a man's dollar. And the Republican controlled Congress and the Bush administration continue to wage an assault on our reproductive rights, believing they can make better choices than women and their doctors.

To open doors of opportunity for women, I am proud to support policies in Congress that promote equality such as the FAIRNESS Act, which protects workers from discrimination on the basis of race, age, disability, or gender. I have long been a strong supporter of legislation to demand equal pay for equal work. My colleagues and I support legislation to increase the minimum wage to help single mothers and working poor women provide adequately for themselves and their families.

In every field, we must and will be equal partners in determining the future. Women represent more than half the population and are among the most knowledgeable and important thinkers in every field of policy, from science to education to health care to national security.

Women in government have made great gains but still face continued challenges. When I was first elected to Congress in 1987, there were only 16 women in the entire House of Representatives and only 2 in the Senate. Today, there are 62 women in the House and 13 in the Senate.

However, of the nearly 12,000 Members who have served in Congress throughout history, only 209—less than 2 percent—have been women. From 1916, when Jeanette Rankin of Montana became the first woman elected to Congress, until I was elected Democratic Whip in 2001, no woman had ever served in the top Congressional leadership.

In March, it was my privilege as House Democratic Leader to honor three magnificent women: journalist Mary McGrory, the late Congresswoman Mary T. Norton and civil rights leader Dr. Dorothy Height.

On March 2, I hosted a reception for Mary McGrory, the pioneering reporter for the Washington Star and Washington Post who has delighted so many readers and inspired so many women. For more than 50 years, she has walked the halls of Congress, interviewing Members, covering Congressional proceedings, and providing a voice for progressive issues. First, as a reporter for the Washington Star and then with the Washington Post, she earned a reputation for her brilliant reporting and her ability to get to the heart of any debate. She also earned a Pulitzer Prize—the first to a woman for commentary—for her coverage of Watergate.

On March 18, several women Members gathered in my office to unveil a portrait of the late Congresswoman Mary Norton of New Jersey, who in 1924 became the first Democratic woman elected to the House. She was the first person in modern times to chair three major committees. A solid supporter of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, her finest hour may have been passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, while Chair

of the House Labor Committee. She was instrumental in raising the minimum wage from 40 cents to 75 cents per hour.

In a marvelous ceremony in the Rotunda of the Capitol on March 24, Dr. Dorothy Height received the Congressional Gold Medal, the most distinguished award bestowed by the U.S. Congress. The struggle for equality in America in the 20th century—for civil rights, for women's rights, for voting rights, for human rights—is the story of Dr. Height's life. At age 92, she remains a beacon to her own generation and generations to follow. Countless young people have been inspired by her idealism, strengthened by her courage, and guided by her faith. She has empowered these young people to make a difference by her own passion for justice.

It is a great honor to be the first woman to lead a party in the House of Representatives. When I was first elected to that position, we made history. Now we are making progress. As we celebrate the achievements of women throughout history and work toward progress of our own, we are inspired by the words of Eleanor Roosevelt: "It's up to the women!"

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, for over a decade, Women's History Month has celebrated the achievements and accomplishments of women nationwide. The incredible contributions women have made in politics, science, art, and activism, demonstrate some of the revolutionary advancements in American women's rights. Women today follow in the footsteps of pioneers such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Alice Paul, who fought for women's right to vote in 1920, or Dolores Huerta, a contemporary champion of women's rights.

We must continue to create platforms for women's voices and opinions and support a continuing momentum toward women's freedom and equality. During this month and throughout the year, women all across the United States should take a moment to recognize the gains afforded to them through their predecessors' hard work and unwavering commitment to improving the lives and rights for all women.

As a Latina, and one of 16 million Latinas nationwide, I recognize some of the unique and continuing societal obstacles for Latinas—like unequal pay, educational disadvantages, unmet health care needs, and civil rights struggles. I am certain, however, that through the work of courageous leaders in our community, our accomplishments and contributions as women of color will continue to grow well into the future.

Together, women will continue to make the difference.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

NARCOTICS IN THE UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. SOUDER. First, Mr. Speaker, let me thank tonight's Speaker pro tempore, the gentleman from California (Mr. OSE), for his leadership in Congress on the issue that I am going to address tonight, which is our narcotics

problem in the United States. He has been a valuable member of this subcommittee from the time he got here, an aggressive member. We have held several hearings in California with him.

And I want to personally thank him and tell him how much he will be missed, since he has chosen to leave Congress, because we really need people of his expertise and his commitment. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues on narcotics I am going to talk about tonight. We have had a busy number of days here in Washington on this subject, and I want to start first with Colombia, where we have the largest investment in the narcotics effort.

Just not that many days ago, President Uribe, the President of Colombia, was here. He met with leaders on both sides of the aisle. He met with the Speaker's Drug Task Force, which I co-chair; and we had the opportunity to hear what is interestingly one of our great success stories.

In the area of narcotics, it is not possible ever to totally defeat the drug problem in America because every day new people are exposed. We are dealing with fundamental human weaknesses. But we can either make progress or we can go back. We were making progress for nearly 10, 11 straight years when Ronald Reagan implemented a policy of "just say no," articulated so ably by the First Lady.

We, in fact, made tremendous progress. It was not just a slogan, just say no, but that was the message communicated to young people and people across the country. There was an aggressive effort to cut the sources of supply, interdiction, law enforcement, along with efforts in communities around the country to just say no and then help those who fell into drug abuse.

As we backed off of that in the early to mid-1990s, and sent a different message of "I didn't inhale," and cut back interdiction efforts, cut the drug czar's office from 120 employees down to about 30 employees, we saw such a surge in drug use in the United States and narcotics in the United States that it would take a 50 percent reduction from the 1993-94 levels, at the peak of the kind of drug revival in America to get back to where we were in the 1990-91 era.

In the latter years of the Clinton administration, and since President Bush has taken office, we have had a steady reduction in drug use in junior high, sophomore year in high school, senior year in high school; and we are making steady progress. We have also had dramatic changes in the country of Colombia.

Let me briefly refer to this map of Colombia. Colombia is a large country, the oldest democracy in South America. We often hear about its civil war, but it is a civil war with thugs. It is not a civil war in the sense of a traditional type of civil war. These are peo-

ple who are violently trying to overthrow their government. Any poll will show any numbers in the group, and a number smaller than our prison population in all but a few States even, let alone our country. They are people who are thugs who have not been captured, and they provide protection and are increasingly taking over the production of cocaine.

Ninety percent of our cocaine comes from Colombia; the heroin, and most of our heroin in America comes from Colombia, and they manage a lot of the networks for the marijuana distribution as well. But that was not always the way in Colombia. Colombia has been destabilized because of our use of narcotics in the United States and in Europe.

Colombia is a beautiful nation for tourism, with Cartagena and many cities along the coast. This is the Amazon basin here, feeding into the Amazon River. You have, in the darker green, beautiful areas of rain forest in that basin. These are the start of the Andes Mountains, beautiful high mountains. Up along the border with Venezuela we see Lake Maracaibo, the big piece of water coming in, and Venezuela there is one of the richest oil areas in the world, which is also true down in Colombia.

We spent, with American tax dollars, millions to try to protect that pipeline. Colombia was our eighth largest supplier of oil. More than Kuwait. But it was stopped as narcoterrorists came in and started breaking the pipelines to try to deny the government of Colombia the ability to function. The oldest democracy.

Anybody who has seen the fiction movie "Clear and Present Danger" has at least a fiction version of the violence that took place there, and an understanding of when the Cali and Medellin cartels were dominating the country what that was like. They basically corrupted the government, killed lots of the judges, killed 30,000 policemen, which is the equivalent of an incredible number in the United States. But they had oil. They were a rich oil country.

This area in here, and in some of the other multiple other zones, is of course the richest coffee area in the world. You hear about Colombian coffee. If you have emeralds, they come from Colombia, odds are, unless they are fake. Gold. They have gold there. Most of our flowers that we buy in the United States come from there. If you fly into the beautiful city of Bogota, in the lower parts of the Andes, you will see just acres and acres and acres of places growing flowers. Many of the supermarkets, the major chains bring that in. I have heard a figure as high as 70, 80 percent of the flowers sold in America come from Colombia.

It is a stable, solid, economic country. That is not even mentioning textiles and other industries there. It is the oldest democracy that has been wrecked by us and by others. Now, as