

successful tracking and arrest of key terrorist figures.

Just last week, we learned how, in 2002, a terror plan to hijack a commercial airliner and fly it into the Los Angeles Library Tower was thwarted. Authorities discovered that Khalid Sheik Mohammed, the mastermind of 9/11, had recruited a suicide hijacking cell to bring down the 73-story skyscraper—the tallest building on the West Coast.

Authorities were able to hunt down and capture Khalid Sheik Mohammed, along with his accomplice, Hambali, the leader in al-Qaida, in Southeast Asia, the leader of the terrorist cell, and three of its terrorist members.

It was a tremendous victory in the war on terror, and it saved countless innocent lives. But it also reminded us that our enemies are ruthless. It reminded us that they are determined to kill scores of Americans, hundreds of Americans, right here on American soil. They are determined to exploit any weakness or slip through any potential loophole.

We cannot let our guard down. We must never, ever let our guard down. We have to stay on the offensive. On 9/11, the enemy was able to allude law enforcement, in part, because our agencies weren't able to share key intelligence information. That is why, within 6 weeks of the attacks on America, Congress passed the USA PATRIOT Act with overwhelming bipartisan support. It was near unanimous. The vote was 98 Senators voting in favor.

The PATRIOT Act went to work immediately, tearing down the information wall between agencies, and it allowed the intelligence community and law enforcement to work more closely in pursuit of terrorists and their activities. Since then, it has been highly effective in tracking down terrorists and making America safer. Because of the PATRIOT Act, the United States has charged over 400 suspected terrorists. More than half of them have already been convicted. Law enforcement has broken up terrorist cells all across the country, from New York to California, Virginia, down to Florida.

In San Diego, officials were able to use the PATRIOT Act to investigate and prosecute several suspects in an al-Qaida drug-for-weapons plot. The investigation led to several guilty pleas. The PATRIOT Act also allowed prosecutors and investigators to crack the Virginia jihad case involving 11 men who had trained for jihad in Northern Virginia in Pakistan and in Afghanistan. We need to continue to provide these tools to track and foil terrorist plots before harm can be done to innocent Americans.

The PATRIOT Act has been debated thoroughly. It has been negotiated. It has been drafted, and it has been re-drafted again. It is time to bring this process to a close. The bill before us is the result of sincere, good-faith efforts and builds on the work that was accomplished last year to renew the PATRIOT Act. It strengthens our civil lib-

erties protections as well as the core antiterrorist safeguards that have been so critical in fighting the war on terror.

In 2006, the USA PATRIOT Act, as written, once passed, will help us to combat terrorist financing and money laundering, protect our mass transportation systems and railways from attacks such as the one on the London subway last summer, and to secure our seaports. It will help us fight methamphetamine drug abuse, America's No. 1 drug problem today, by restricting access to the ingredients used to make that poisonous drug, methamphetamines.

So the question before us now is pretty straightforward. It is simple. Why delay all of these provisions any longer? Why wait to move forward to make America safer? Why wait to give law enforcement the same tools they already use against white-collar criminals and drug offenders? It doesn't make sense to postpone, to delay, to wait.

Those who are delaying the bill claim they are taking a stand for stronger civil liberty protections. Yet they admit that the renewal of the PATRIOT Act is a vast improvement over current law. Again, why wait to enact the dozens of civil liberties protections in this bill that they have supported for so long. We have a duty and responsibility to protect our fellow Americans. Indeed, it is our highest duty as Senators.

I urge my colleagues to move forward to renew the PATRIOT Act. The time to act is now. It is the only, the best, and the right thing to do.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAFEE). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. ALLEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

#### HEART FOR WOMEN ACT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I wish to take a few moments to speak very briefly about heart disease. Many people might not know but February is American Heart Month, and heart disease, as we certainly know, is the Nation's leading cause of death.

Many women believe heart disease is a man's disease. Unfortunately, there are many women in this country who

do not view this as a serious health threat. Yet every year since 1984, cardiovascular disease has claimed the lives of more women than men. In fact, cardiovascular disease death rates have declined in men since 1979, which is great news, but the death rate for women during that same period has actually increased. The numbers are disturbing.

Cardiovascular diseases claim the lives of more than 480,000 women per year. That is nearly a death a minute among females and nearly 12 times as many lives as claimed by breast cancer. One in four females has some form of cardiovascular disease. Again, these are statistics many of us would find alarming, certainly, but also find that it is new information, something we didn't know.

I am pleased to join with my colleague from Michigan, Senator STABENOW, to introduce important legislation we have entitled the HEART For Women Act, or Heart Disease Education, Analysis, and Research, and Treatment For Women Act. This important bill improves the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease and stroke in women.

In Alaska, we have some very troubling statistics as they relate to heart disease. In Alaska, cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death, totaling nearly 800 deaths per year. Women in Alaska have higher death rates from stroke than do women nationally. Mortality amongst Native Alaskan women is dramatically on the rise, whereas it is appearing to decline among Caucasian women in the lower 48. So these statistics, again, should cause us concern.

Despite being the No. 1 killer, many women and their health care providers do not know the biggest health care threat to women is heart disease. In fact, a recent survey found that 45 percent of women still do not know heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women.

Perhaps even more troubling is the lack of awareness amongst our health care providers. According to the American Heart Association figures, less than one in five physicians recognize more women suffer from heart disease than men. Only 8 percent of primary care physicians—and even more astounding—only 17 percent of cardiologists recognize that more women die of heart disease than men. Additionally, studies show women are less likely to receive aggressive treatment because heart disease often manifests itself differently in women than in men.

This is why this HEART Act is so important. Our bill takes a three-pronged approach to reducing heart disease death rates for women through education, research, and screening.

First, the bill would authorize the Department of Health and Human Services to educate health care professionals and older women about the unique aspects of care and prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of women with heart disease and stroke.