

On January 29th, 2009 in Houston, Texas a man was accused of killing his estranged girlfriend's mother and then shooting himself. He had been charged with domestic violence days earlier, after he beat his 17-month-old daughter. Elaine Walker was shot trying to protect her daughter when Roydrick Jiles burst into the daughter's home. Auriel Walker had refused to see or talk to Jiles, after he beat her and their child several days before. She tried to stop him from breaking into their home and he then shot Elaine Walker, Auriel's mother. He then abducted his estranged girlfriend and their child until he shot himself.

Both of these stories prove that sometimes there are preliminary warning signs of domestic violence which, if not handled correctly, can often times lead to severe abuse and even death. Approximately 1.3 million women and 835,000 men are physically assaulted by an intimate partner annually in the United States. One in every four women will experience domestic violence in her lifetime.

Witnessing violence between one's parents or caretakers is the strongest risk factor of transmitting violent behavior from one generation to the next. Boys who witness domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners and children when they become adults.

We must continue to raise awareness in this country of how common domestic violence is, and without funding and proper resources local governments cannot combat this problem alone. It takes all of us, and informing people of this nationwide problem is the first step. And that's just the way it is.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Resolution 817 to support the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and to raise awareness of domestic violence in the United States.

When we discuss domestic violence, we are often surprised to discover that domestic violence happens to people of every socioeconomic background in the United States. Everyday, countless individuals become victims of acts perpetuated by intimate partners that seek to establish, maintain, or regain power and control in a relationship. These acts can be as basic as mental and verbal abuse and range to the more obvious physical and sexual abuse. Many times, the victims of these acts are the least likely people one would suspect to suffer from abusive situations, and for this reason domestic violence awareness month is so important.

It is also crucial to note that women are the most frequent victims of domestic violence, and it is estimated that one in every four women will experience domestic violence at some point in their life. Additionally, more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends in the United States every day, and in 2005 alone, 1,181 women were murdered by an intimate partner. These staggering numbers remind us that we must do all we can to end domestic violence, and particularly domestic violence against women.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting House Resolution 817 so that we can raise awareness about domestic violence and help to end it.

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution to declare October 2009 the twenty-second Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

The first Domestic Violence Awareness Month was observed in 1987. Over these last 22 years, we have made major strides in making Americans safer and more secure and ensuring the victims of violence receive the services they need.

With the support of federal and state funds, the number of domestic violence shelters, rape crisis centers and service programs has increased significantly. These shelters offer victims a place to turn for help: for emergency shelter and crisis services, and also for legal assistance, transitional housing, and services for their children.

Not only have we strengthened our laws and justice system, we have also brought together victims advocates, law enforcement, and health care professionals to ensure more effective treatment for victims of domestic violence.

This month is an occasion to recognize dedicated law enforcement officers, special prosecutors, counselors, and shelter programs that understand that ending violence requires the efforts of an entire community. It is also a time to reiterate that domestic violence in any form is a crime. It does not matter whether the abuser is a family member; a current or past spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend; an acquaintance; or a stranger. It is a crime, and it is wrong.

Today, I also commend those who have found the courage to leave an abusive relationship. When individuals get the resources they need, they become strong, and so do their families.

Despite all the gains we have made in reducing domestic violence, we must recognize that the work is not complete; too many are still victims, and too many live in fear on a daily basis. It will take all of us to fulfill the promise to end domestic violence and assault.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, domestic violence is a widespread problem. Over two million people a year are physically assaulted by an intimate partner, and an additional 1.3 million are the victims of stalking. H. Res. 817 is an important reminder that October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and that we need to raise awareness of the problem and its serious consequences for victims and their families.

We know that the majority of these domestic violence victims are women, and they often need leave from work to address the effects of this violence. While the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA, P.L. 103-3) allows employees to take unpaid leave from work for other situations (e.g. for birth, adoption or to care for a spouse, child under age 18, or parent who has a serious health condition), there is no leave for workers who are recovering from domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking, and who need medical attention, legal assistance, counseling, or to participate in other activities that take place during working hours.

H.R. 2515, the Domestic Violence Leave Act, which I have introduced, expands the FMLA to allow workers to take leave to address the consequences of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. It also provides leave to workers so that they can care for a family member—spouse, parent or child, including an adult child—who is a victim of abuse. In addition, the bill extends all of the protections of the FMLA to “domestic partners,” and “children of a domestic partner.”

Our primary goal must be to stamp out domestic violence altogether. But until then, we

need to help those victims who need time off to deal with its effects.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PIERLUISI. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to vote for the resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 817, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 3 o'clock and 19 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1730

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. PETERS) at 5 o'clock and 30 minutes p.m.

DECLARATION OF A NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE 2009 H1N1 INFLUENZA PANDEMIC—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 111-73)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 201 of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1621), I hereby report that I have exercised my authority to declare a national emergency in order to be prepared in the event of a rapid increase in illness across the Nation that may overburden health care resources. This declaration will allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services, if necessary, to temporarily waive certain standard Federal requirements in order to enable U.S. health care facilities to implement emergency operations plans to deal with the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic in the United States. A copy of my proclamation is attached.

Further, I have authorized the Secretary of Health and Human Services to exercise the authority under section