

Women's World Cup. This was the women's third world title. In fact, in their 31-year history, they have not placed lower than third in the World Cup.

Much of the team's success can be attributed to the impact of title IX. Title IX's implementation means that schools have to give girls equal opportunity to play sports, and this opened the door to a new generation of girls who grew up on soccer fields and went on to represent our country on the U.S. Women's National Team, including Hawaii's own Natasha Kai, who became a breakout soccer star, playing for Kahuku High School and the University of Hawaii. Natasha went on to become part of the 2008 U.S. women's soccer team at the Beijing Olympics, and they brought home a Gold Medal.

While Natasha and the Women's National Team are examples of success thanks to title IX, they also remind us that our work is not done. After years of getting paid less than their male counterparts even though they were more successful, five members of the Women's National Team filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alleging wage discrimination. Earlier this year, this Senate unanimously passed a resolution supporting their fight for equal pay.

Of course, the fight for equal pay and equal rights is not limited to women in sports; it extends to women in all fields. This month, I am introducing two new bills that build on Patsy's work to further improve gender equity.

The Equity in Career and Technical Education Act would give schools more resources to close equity gaps in career and technical education. It also provides support to students interested in nontraditional career paths.

The second bill, the Gender Equality Educational Act, would increase training and grants to help States, school districts, and institutions of higher learning implement programs and policies to reduce sex discrimination and comply with title IX requirements. This bill also includes nondiscrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Science, technology, engineering, and math, or STEM, is one area where gender equity improvements need to be made, especially in light of the fact that there will be a need in our country for millions of workers with STEM backgrounds.

In March, I read an op-ed from Hope Jahren, a geobiology professor at the University of Hawaii. She wrote in the New York Times about the pervasive challenges women face in education and the workplace, particularly in the STEM fields. She painted a very disturbing picture of how widespread harassment and other barriers discourage young women from pursuing STEM careers.

Women are much more likely than men to switch out of STEM majors in college and leave the STEM workforce.

Moreover, many girls drop out of STEM pursuits long before they ever get to college. The many reasons for women abandoning STEM pursuits include negative stereotypes about women in STEM, perceived gender barriers, feelings of isolation in their jobs, and the lack of role models and mentors.

These challenges are only compounded for women of color. Asian American and Pacific Islander women often report facing bullying, sexual harassment, and discrimination in educational settings because of language issues, cultural stereotypes, and even immigration status.

I have introduced two bills to combat these systemic barriers. These bills seek to improve outreach and success of women and minorities at all stages of the STEM pursuits. We need to keep women in the STEM pipeline if we are going to come up with the millions of workers we need with STEM backgrounds in our country to keep us competitive.

Title IX has been life-changing for millions of girls and women for 44 years. Passing this law was a landmark achievement. It is a strong foundation that we must continue to build upon.

I would like to close this morning by turning to another seminal law—the Voting Rights Act—that made real for millions of Americans their fundamental right to vote. Saturday is the third anniversary of the Supreme Court's devastating and disastrous ruling in Shelby County. In a 5-to-4 decision, that case essentially gutted the Voting Rights Act and made it easier for States to make voting harder. At least 13 States have done just that.

Alabama passed a law that would require voters to show a photo ID. The State then kept 31 driver's license offices in predominantly African-American communities open just 1 day a month—1 day a month—for people to get their IDs. The city of Athens, GA, has proposed closing nearly 12 polling places, replacing them with only two early-voting centers, both of which would be located in police headquarters. Intimidating? I would say so. These are just a few examples of laws that, in effect, make it harder to vote.

So our work is not done. Three years after the Shelby decision and the ensuing laws passed by too many States to limit voting, we in Congress must enact laws that recognize beyond a shadow of a doubt that voting is a fundamental right of a free nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

RECESS SUBJECT TO THE CALL OF THE CHAIR

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:07 p.m., recessed subject to the

call of the Chair and reassembled at 1:14 p.m. when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. SASSE).

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

MOTION TO RECOMMIT WITHDRAWN

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I withdraw my motion to recommit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is withdrawn.

MOTION TO COMMIT WITH AMENDMENT NO. 4858

Mr. McCONNELL. I move to commit the bill to the Judiciary Committee with instructions. This is amendment No. 4858.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL] moves to commit the bill to the Judiciary Committee with instructions to report back forthwith with an amendment numbered 4858.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on my motion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4859

(Purpose: To authorize the Attorney General to delay or deny the transfer of firearms and explosives and issuance of Federal firearms and explosives licenses and permits to known or suspected terrorists.)

Mr. McCONNELL. I have an amendment to the instructions, amendment No. 4859.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL], for Mr. JOHNSON, proposes an amendment numbered 4859 to the instructions of the motion to commit H.R. 2578.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask for the yeas and nays on the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

AMENDMENT NO. 4860 TO AMENDMENT NO. 4859

Mr. McCONNELL. I have a second-degree amendment at the desk, No. 4860.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Kentucky [Mr. McCONNELL] proposes an amendment numbered 4860 to amendment No. 4859.

The amendment is as follows: