

This exciting new initiative is designed to prepare underprivileged students for college. Gear Up is a competitive grant program and supports early college awareness activities at both the local and the State level.

Specifically, this initiative will award multiyear grants to locally designed partnerships between colleges and high-poverty middle schools plus at least two other partners, such as community organizations, businesses, religious groups, State education agencies, parent groups or nonprofit organizations, to increase the number of students going to college among the low-income youth.

Gear Up partnerships will be based on the following proven strategies: working with a whole grade level of students in order to raise the expectations for all students; starting with sixth or seventh grade students and continuing through high school graduation with comprehensive services, including mentoring, tutoring, counseling, and other activities such as after-school programs, summer academic enrichment programs, as well as college visits; promoting rigorous academic coursework based on college entrance requirements; informing students and parents about college options and financial aid, and providing students with a 21st century scholar certificate—an early notification of their eligibility for financial aid.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge and encourage all local educational agencies to get involved in applying for this important grant. It is my firm belief that mentoring programs such as Gear Up can make all the difference in the lives of our middle school students.

A mentor may be the person who makes the difference by providing a role model for positive behaviors, like studying hard and staying away from trouble, by helping with academic work, by encouraging the student to take the right college-preparatory courses, or by providing extra moral support and encouragement.

We have a fantastic opportunity to help our local students—their future success depends on our leadership now. They fail if we fail to live up to our responsibility to ensure them the strongest chances for academic success.

Mr. Speaker, expanding after-school opportunities is a top legislative priority for the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

Our President is committed to triple funding for the 21st Century Learning Center Program, which supports the creation and expansion of after-school and summer school programs throughout the country.

Experts agree that school-age children who are unsupervised during the hours after school are far more likely to use alcohol, drugs, and tobacco, commit crimes, receive poor grades, and drop out of school than those who are involved in supervised, constructive activities.

The program increases the supply of after-school care in a cost-effective manner, primarily by funding programs that use public school facilities and existing resources.

In awarding these new funds, the education department will give priority to school districts that are ending social promotion by requiring

that students meet academic standards in order to move to the next grade.

The President's budget includes \$600 million in fiscal year 2000 to help roughly 1.1 million children each year participate in after-school and summer school programs.

I have visited many of the schools in my congressional district. I have listened to teachers, principals, supt's, and schoolboard members. I have suggested they try converting schools to "After School Community Centers." After school snacks, tutoring, mentoring, homework, organized sports, theatre, number sense.

I strongly support funding for this program and urge all my colleagues to do the same.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about an issue that is near and dear to my heart, women in business, specifically women-owned small businesses.

As the mother of four and a former small business owner myself, I know just how hard it is to balance the full-time job of being a mother and then adding to it the challenges of owning and running your own business.

From women-owned construction firms to women-owned public relation firms to Donna, Jo-Jo, and Angela who own Donna's Hair Design in my own district town of Chappaqua, New York, all of these women deserve all of the support that we here in Congress can give them.

Everyone needs to remember that small business is the most important sector of our economy. Currently, in the United States, there are approximately 8.5 million women-owned businesses. That is 8.5 million women-owned businesses, 36 percent of all businesses in the United States. These 8.5 million businesses employ 23.8 million employees. These businesses have seen their sales increase from \$2.3 trillion to \$3.1 trillion in just the last 6 months.

My congratulations to all of the hardworking women who are doing more than their share to contribute to the economy of our Nation.

The number of women-owned small businesses have increased by 89 percent in the last decade. During the same period, these businesses have increased

their revenue by 209 percent. Women are a force to be reckoned with in today's economy.

□ 1615

During my life, I have had many roles: The mother of four, a public school teacher, a college professor, a rape crisis counselor, a professional patient advocate, a small business owner, and now a United States Congresswoman.

I have learned countless lessons in these roles and have brought them with me to the House of Representatives. Many of these lessons were learned as a small businesswoman. This has given me some insight as to what women need in order to fully compete with their male counterparts, and for this reason I have devoted my energy to working with the Committee on Small Business to enable small businesses to run more efficiently.

I have introduced legislation again this year that expresses the sense of Congress regarding the need to increase the number of procurement contracts that the government awards to women-owned businesses. The Federal Government is America's largest purchaser of goods and services, spending more than \$225 billion each year, and women should have more access to these projects.

In 1994 Congress set a 5 percent procurement goal for women-owned businesses. Five years later, however, the rate of procurement for women-owned businesses is 1.9 percent. This percentage is a poor reflection on the access to these jobs when considering the rate of growth of women-owned businesses.

I want to continue to do what I can to improve the procurement process for women in this Congress, and I am happy to say that a few weeks ago the House passed H.R. 774, The Women's Business Center Amendments Act of 1999. This bill authorized appropriations of \$11 million for the expansion of this program in fiscal year 2000.

I want to congratulate the chairman of the Committee on Small Business, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. JIM TALENT), for his work, as well as the ranking minority member, the gentlewoman from New York (NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ), and many other people who worked to make this accomplishment here on the floor of the House.

Currently, there are 60 centers now operating in 40 States. These centers assist women in many ways, including helping them to focus their business plans through courses and workshops, providing information on capital, as well as helping the women choose their location. The centers have the freedom to tailor their programs based on the needs of the communities in which they work.

Recently I have been able to meet with many women business owners and some of the women who run these centers and heard firsthand the challenges and the successes of these businesses. These are just a few of the issues that

women business owners face. There are many others, like tax and regulatory issues, ensuring fair access to capital, that we all need to stay involved with.

I know my colleagues here share my concerns. Let me close by congratulating all of the women businesses in our Nation. I know all too well how difficult their jobs are. They are an important part of our Nation's economy, and I will continue to do what I can to ensure that they are not forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GRANGER).

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues today in discussing the need for this Congress to help America's working women. I am proud to be a part of the Women's Caucus and I am proud that this caucus is committed to raising and addressing important issues concerning women.

Today, more than ever, working women are no longer the exception, they are the rule. America's working women are redefining the workplace as we know it. They are learning how to balance their dual responsibilities of work and family. In today's business world, women own about 6.5 million companies. That is one-third of all the businesses in America. Today, women are creating businesses at twice the rate of men. In fact, it is estimated that by the year 2000 women will own 40 percent of American companies.

These facts make it vitally important this Congress address the issues and the interests of this growing segment of our economy. Yes, it is becoming increasingly clear that women's issues are economic issues. Jobs, taxes and economic growth are the top issues for today's women.

Since women are creating more jobs than men, they are disproportionately affected by burdensome taxes, rules and regulations, and too often it is too difficult for women-owned businesses to get started. Once started, it is often difficult for women-owned businesses to stay afloat.

According to a 1995 survey of women-owned businesses, 84 percent of women entrepreneurs used their own personal savings to start their businesses. And once underway, women business owners often find themselves dipping into their savings to stay in business.

Mr. Speaker, as a small business owner myself, I have made it a commitment to stand up and speak out and stay focused on the issues that face women-owned businesses. Female entrepreneurs are here to stay, and while it is true that Washington cannot create wealth, it is no less true that we have an obligation to make the business environment as conducive as possible for women.

I believe that excessive government taxation, regulation and litigation hold back our working women by holding up production costs. Government taxes prevent female employers and employees from keeping more of their hard-earned money, and it has often been noted that today taxes consume more

of the family income than families spend on food, education and shelter, or anything else. We need to make our tax system flatter and fairer so that our women will not have to work almost half the year to foot government costs. Working women need to be able to keep more of their hard-earned money.

We also need to review our regulations as well. Each year over 100,000 pages of new rules and regulations are produced in Washington, and many of these guidelines overlap and they are repetitive.

Moreover, it has been estimated that regulations cost businesses over \$700 billion each year. These regulations impact every single business owned by women. And since businesses often have to raise prices to afford these new regulations, it is estimated that each American family pays an extra \$700 per household to cover the cost of regulations.

It has also been estimated that regulations add as much as a third to the cost of building an airplane engine and almost double the price of a new vaccine. Mr. Speaker, we need to be working on ways to increase, not decrease, the number of women in business, and adding cost is not the way to do that.

Moreover, government rules and litigation often subject our small businesswomen to years of legal battles and legal costs. Let us let our working women spend more time in the board room and less time in the courtroom. Only then can we truly create a conducive business environment for women.

Mr. Speaker, today's working women are the pioneers of tomorrow. As they struggle to create more jobs, growth and opportunity, let us make our government work for our women, not against them; stand by their sides, not ride on their backs.

Mr. Speaker, we must never forget that working women have yet another job waiting for them when they get home at night. In our efforts to enhance and encourage the careers of women, I am afraid we sometimes lose sight of the fact that many of our working women are also working mothers. These working mothers need the opportunity to balance their schedules between work and home. After all, meetings with our children are more important than meetings with our staffs.

I was a working mother of three, and I understand there is no price tag put on the time we spend away from our families. That is why when I became Mayor of Fort Worth several years ago, I took an active interest in ensuring our employees had the kind of schedules necessary to take care of their jobs and also take care of their families.

One of the tools we used to help create a family-friendly city hall was comp time. This program allowed workers to choose time off instead of overtime pay. It is extraordinarily popular in the public sector, but it is still

not available in the private sector. Let us help our working women by giving workers in the private sector the same choice.

Mr. Speaker, the working women of America are essential to ensuring that our Nation continues on a path of economic growth and personal responsibility. I urge my colleagues to support measures which promote and protect the dual role of American women as leaders in the office and leaders at home.

I want to thank the Women's Caucus for raising awareness about the importance of women's issues.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York, for bringing attention to these important issues that affect women and for drawing attention to the contributions that women business owners have made.

It is true that women business owners now employ more people than the Fortune 500 companies combined in the United States. They have made great strides, but we know that women in the work force still face discrimination in many, many forms, both as business owners and as employees.

Women in the work force today, as we enter into the 21st century, still earn only 74 cents for every dollar that men earn at the very same jobs. This persistent wage gap forces families into poverty and deprives them of the benefits that women would earn if only they were men; that is, if only they were men making more money at the very same jobs.

This discrimination follows women into their retirement. Because they make less money through their working years, they have fewer private pensions and they get fewer Social Security benefits. Often they have less health care coverage during their working years, and so they bring into their retirement years more disease. They are less well.

I want to focus for a minute on the issue of Medicare because now this Congress is engaged in a great debate on what we are going to do about Medicare. And I would say that while it is important for Congress to ensure Medicare solvency in the future, any proposal must protect women who receive Medicare.

Of course, Medicare is a program that serves both men and women, but women comprise most of the beneficiaries. Elderly women aged 65 outnumber elderly men three to two. There are 20 million elderly women on Medicare and another 2 million women who are on Medicare because they receive Social Security disability benefits. In fact, 58 percent of all elderly beneficiaries are women.

Seventy-one percent of the beneficiaries aged 85 or older are women. That is, of course, because women live longer than men do. Women aged 65

years and older are more than twice as likely as older men to live within 125 percent of the poverty line. That is to say that they are twice as likely as men to have to live on \$10,000 a year or less, and we know how hard that is.

Recently, older women were projected to spend over \$200 a year more on out-of-pocket health care costs than men. And we know today that the elderly are spending a greater percentage of their income on health care out-of-pocket than they did when Medicare was enacted in 1965. This is a particular burden for women.

One of the proposals that has been on the table that frightens me the most and should frighten older women the most is that of raising the eligibility age for Medicare from 65 to 67. To underscore how dangerous that would be, currently there are a million people between the ages of 62 and 64 without insurance, and three out of five of those are women. So currently the numbers of uninsured people in the older age groups are mostly women already.

Many women are uninsured because they are younger than their already retired husbands who are on Medicare and they do not have employer-based insurance themselves. Raising the eligibility would deny people access to health care during their early 60s and would expand their need for more complicated and expensive treatment in later years.

There are many problems with some of the proposals that are on the table, but the reality of raising the age of eligibility for Medicare is that it would accomplish one thing, and that is, it would increase the numbers of uninsured people. Because employers are not looking for women aged 65 to 67 to hire and to provide health care benefits to, it would dramatically increase the numbers of people who are uninsured, and most of those people would be women.

So I would say if we care about elderly women in the United States, then we want to make sure that we do not agree to any proposal that increases the age of eligibility.

□ 1630

I thank my colleague from New York for allowing me this time to speak on this important issue.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute our Nation's women business owners and to join my colleagues in the Congressional Women's Caucus in bringing to the forefront the impressive contributions women business owners are making to the strength and vitality of our economy.

Over the past 2 decades, women-owned businesses have been amongst the fastest growing areas of our economy. In 1973, when I started my home-based law practice, women owned less than 5 percent of all businesses in the United States. By 1997, that figure

jumped to 36 percent. Over the last decade, the number of women-owned firms increased by 89 percent nationwide. Employment nearly tripled and sales nearly doubled.

Who are today's women business owners and how can we help ensure that they are free to grow and prosper? There are more than 8.5 million women-owned businesses in the United States, employing nearly 24 million people. That is more than all of the Fortune 500 companies combined.

Where do we do business? Everywhere. Today, women own businesses in all sectors of the economy, not just in the service sector or the so-called traditional women-owned business areas. In fact, the top growth industries for women-owned businesses in recent years has been in construction, wholesale trade, transportation, communications, agribusiness, and manufacturing.

What is it that motivates women to start their own businesses? The National Foundation for Women Business Owners surveyed women across the country and found that nearly half stated one of two reasons. A great idea for a product or service, or the realization that they could do for themselves what they had previously done for an employer. Frustrations with the corporate environment, including feeling unchallenged and experiencing a glass ceiling were also cited as motivation for women to become entrepreneurs.

The foundation also asked women why they stay in business. Not surprisingly, the greatest reward of business ownership for women is gaining control over their own fate, and the greatest challenge of business ownership for women is being taken seriously.

In my home State of Illinois, the largest and most comprehensive women's business assistance center has thrived for 14 years. The Women's Business Development Center has served over 30,000 women through counseling, training, financial assistance, and new marketing opportunities. Thanks in part to the help of the center, in Illinois there are now over 336,000 women-owned businesses employing 23 percent of all Illinois workers and generating 15 percent of the State's business sales.

But despite the explosive growth in women's business ownership in the United States, we still generate only 18 percent of all business revenues. So there is still much work to be done, and Congress can help accelerate the growth and success of women-owned businesses.

Women need new and more access to market opportunities and to contracts at all levels of government. Women need access to technical assistance to develop and grow their businesses.

Most importantly, like all businesses in the United States, women-owned businesses must be free from excessive regulation and taxation, and they must have access to markets for their products and services abroad.

I thank my colleague for allowing me to participate today on this important issue.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague and friend from California (Ms. WOOLSEY).

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleagues, and particularly my friend from New York, who put this together tonight and for all who have spoken so eloquently in honor of women and Women's History Month.

I come to the floor of the House today to salute the mothers of Women's History Month, the National Women's History Project, known as "The Project." The Project is from the Sixth Congressional District in California, the district that I am so very proud to represent.

Almost 1 year ago, I traveled to Seneca Falls, New York, with a group of my colleagues to celebrate our Nation's women, the 150th anniversary of the Women's Rights Movement. This was truly a special occasion because Sonoma County, which is where I live, is the birthplace of the National Women's History Project, the organization responsible for the establishment of Women's History Month and a leader in the 150th anniversary of the women's rights celebration.

The Project is a nonprofit educational organization founded in 1980. They are committed to providing educational resources, recognizing and celebrating women's diverse lives and historic contributions to society. Today, The Project is repeatedly cited by educators, by publishers and journalists as the national resource for information on U.S. women's history.

Thanks to The Project's efforts every March, boys and girls across the country recognize and learn about women's struggles and contributions in science, literature, business, politics, and many, many other fields.

As recently as the 1970s, women's history was virtually unknown, left out of schoolbooks and classroom curriculum. In 1978, as chairwoman of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women, I was astounded by the lack of focus on women in our education system. Later, The Project petitioned Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. Due to their efforts, Congress issued a resolution declaring the month of March to be Women's History Month.

Each year since then, nationwide programs and activities on women's history in schools, in workplaces, and communities have been developed and shared.

Under the leadership of Mary Ruthsdotter and through the hard work of these wonderful women, the celebration of International Women's Day was expanded and declared by Congress to be National Women's History Week.

Together, the women of the Project succeeded in nationalizing the awareness for women's history. I want to acknowledge Molly MacGregor for her

thoughtful leadership and Lisl Christy, Cindy Burnham, Jennifer Josephine Moser, Suanne Otteman, Donna Kuhn, Sunny Bristol, Denise Dawe, Kathryn Rankin, and Sheree Fisk Williams. They are the women that are at the Project presently. All of these women serve as leaders in the effort to educate Americans of all ages about the contributions of women in our society.

I also want to pay tribute to the "first lady" of Marin County, California, just across the bridge from San Francisco, part of my district. This woman's name is Vera Schultz. Vera was the first woman on the Mill Valley, California, City Council and the first woman on the Marin County Board of Supervisors.

Vera's career in Marin County during the late 1940's and early 1950's was a pivotal era in Marin's social and political history. As the area grew in population with the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge, Vera had an important vision and dedicated herself to the changing face of Marin County. Vera faced great opposition to reforming an unfair tax structure that would have taxed newcomers at a higher rate, and she also fought hard so that Marin County could have the very best possible civic center.

Vera knew that Marin deserved the best, so she got the best. Due to her persistent prodding, in 1959, Frank Lloyd Wright submitted his plan for the Marin County Civic Center, and in 1960 construction began. Marin County now has another precious treasure to share with our country because of Vera Schultz.

As I pay tribute to Women's History Month, I am truly grateful to Vera Schultz and to all the devoted women at the Project because of their continued commitment and for making an indelible mark on our country. We now understand the importance of women in our history.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my friend, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. CAPPS).

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my colleague from New York (Mrs. KELLY) for organizing and leading us in this wonderful opportunity to speak here on the floor regarding issues which we can give our attention to, which really do affect women across this country.

It is a real pleasure to hear the wide range of emphases that have been mentioned already today, and we have more coming. But whether it is women in their own businesses, and as they own and participate in business, whether it is the way Social Security affects women and Medicare affects women in all of these areas, there is much to speak about pertaining to women in this recognition of Women's History Month.

I want to rise today, Mr. Speaker, in support of a most important piece of legislation which is among us and at our table in Congress today, and that is the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act.

Just 2 weeks ago, I joined the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) in introducing this bipartisan bill, which will help to treat low-income women who have been diagnosed with cancer.

In 1990, Congress took a very important first step to fight breast cancer and cervical cancer by authorizing a screening program for low-income, uninsured, or underinsured women through the Centers for Disease Control; and they called this program the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, and now it is in place over this past decade in virtually every part of our country.

Now, the problem is that while the program covers screening services, it does not cover treatment for women who are found to be positive and in need of services through this screening program. Thus, these vulnerable, poor women are left to an ad hoc patchwork of providers, volunteers, and charity care programs, making their treatment unpredictable, delayed, and in so many cases incomplete and resulting in really disastrous results for themselves and their families.

Approximately 3,600 women per year are diagnosed through the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. And now that they are diagnosed, they need services. All the screening in the world will not help if women who are diagnosed with the disease do not have access to quality treatment for their condition.

And so, the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act, which is before us now, gives States the opportunity and the option to provide Medicaid coverage to uninsured or underinsured women who have been diagnosed through the early detection program but cannot afford treatment.

I was very heartened a couple of weeks ago to notice in our first hearing in the Subcommittee on Health and Environment of the Committee on Commerce that the hearing that we held on this particular issue that there was unanimous, it seemed, and very bipartisan support for enacting this legislation.

And I was pleased that one of my constituents, Dr. John Cox, the Director of Student Services at the University of California at Santa Barbara, was one of the expert witnesses; and the various people who presented were lauded by both sides of the aisle for their recognition that this early detection program is working well. But what it is uncovering is the need for services for these very women.

With that enthusiasm that we felt in the room that day, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ESHOO) and I and some other members of the committee have set aside Mother's Day as our goal for obtaining 218 cosponsors on the bill to bring it to the floor for a vote. What better way to honor mothers across the Nation this year than by providing this life-saving treatment?

□ 1645

Mr. Speaker, I pledge my commitment to working in a bipartisan manner, and I know my colleagues today will be joining that effort, toward passing the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act.

This bill is widely supported by women's health groups and is a top priority for the breast cancer community, including the National Breast Cancer Coalition and the California Breast Cancer Coalition.

Over 100 Members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans, men and women, have already signed on to be original cosponsors. I urge my other colleagues to sign on as well.

I cannot think of a better Mother's Day gift for women across the Nation than to pass this legislation.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. MEEK).

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. I thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) for letting us share this particular special order with America. I do not think there is any week with any more importance or month as significant as Women's History Week. The contributions of women in this country are so outstanding until if every woman in Washington were to be here today, they could not say enough about what women have done. On both the local, State and national level, women have made significant contributions to our society and they will continue to do so. Our role in government is increasing. Our role in the health medical sciences is increasing. Our role in science is increasing. Our role in every facet of American culture is increasing. But most of all, Mr. Speaker, women now are sort of the bedrock of the family. We seek to be the glue to hold it together. Regardless of what phase of life that we participate in, we still feel that we have the family as our most significant contribution. We give, we yield, we culture, we nurture our children and we do our best to have them grow into outstanding individuals.

I came today to talk about a health problem that is so devastating to young women. Many of my colleagues may not have ever heard of this disease. It is called lupus. It kills women in their childbearing years. It cripples them. It maims them. It makes them feel as if they have no life-style at all. When you hear the word again, you will say, that is a devastating disease that is pretty much outstanding in significance and incidence among young women. It is serious, it is inflammatory, and for the past 6 years I have tried to get this bill authorized in the Congress so that the National Institutes of Health would receive at least 20 to \$50 million a year for research into lupus. If you could see some of the young women that become seriously impaired by lupus, you would say to the health subcommittee of Labor-HHS, that is a disease that needs to be

stopped. The immune system becomes so overreactive that it goes out of control. The antibodies in the woman's body attack her other tissues. This causes inflammation, causes redness, swelling, and it affects women nine times more than it does men. Between 1.4 to 2 million Americans have been diagnosed with this disease. There are so many cases that go undiagnosed and that doctors cannot many times diagnose lupus. Many times the diagnosis for lupus is worse than the treatment, and doctors are not very adept at finding out whether or not a woman has lupus or not. Our body's immune system is known for protecting the body, but if a woman has lupus, the immune system just goes haywire, it loses its ability to tell the difference. It is not infectious, it is not rare, it is not cancerous, but it is not well known. It is more prevalent than AIDS, Mr. Speaker, sickle cell anemia, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis and cystic fibrosis combined. So you can see what a devastating disease it is and its impact on women. It is so important that during Women's History Month that I call America's attention to this devastating disease and how much it is leading to the impairment of women.

I can relate to lupus firsthand. I had a sister to die from it. There are so many people here in this Congress who have had relatives. I have had several hearings on lupus. We are losing our children, Mr. Speaker, we are losing our sisters, our mothers, grandmothers and friends. We need to really do something about this deadly disease. We need to say to NIH, look, more research is supposed to be done on this disease. There has to be a cure. American women are at high risk for this deadly and debilitating disease. There is a need for more professional awareness. That is why I am glad that my wonderful colleague gave me this opportunity to come to the floor and speak about lupus because of its significance to women and during Women's History Week. We must fight those diseases that cause morbidity and mortality among the ranks of women.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) the cochairwoman of the House Women's Caucus.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. I thank the gentlewoman for organizing this special order and for her fine leadership in this body this year and other years in support of women's issues and family issues. I was elected in 1992, the so-called Year of the Woman, when many Americans voted for women candidates not as a slogan but as a force to be reckoned with. We came to Congress. There were 48 of us. Our presence did make a difference in doubling monies for health care for women and access to clinics, in child care, in education, in many, many areas. And we have made progress since then in the number of women that are elected.

In 1999 there are 89 women who hold statewide offices across this country,

and there are other positive signs. There are now three women governors, 58 women in the House, and nine women Senators. In fact, the First Lady might even choose to run for the Senate in New York State. We have women in posts that never have been held before. We have the first woman to ever serve as Secretary of State, Attorney General, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, head of the National Science Foundation, and many, many more.

But I am still concerned that women did not receive the vote until 1920, a right that we should have been born with. In fact, my mother was born without the right to vote. We all owe a great debt to the many women who came before us, on whose shoulders we stand, who worked for and fought for women's rights, Alice Paul, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, Carrie Chapman Catt and many, many others, because the vote is so important. The vote is what enables women to be not only at the kitchen table but the peace table, the economic development table, the congressional table. It is important that we as Members of Congress support other women in other countries as they work for and gain the right to vote.

Earlier today, a resolution passed this House authored by the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) and the chairman of the International Relations Committee, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN). It was supported by every Member of this body. It congratulated Qatar on the first ever election to be held where men and women could vote and where women could stand for that right.

The gentlewoman from New York and I traveled all the way to the tip of the Gulf to be part of this historic and important event. It was held on March 8, International Woman's Day. What better way to celebrate the progress and advancement of women and girls throughout the world than by giving women the right to vote and stand for office in an emerging democracy in the Gulf. The Gulf Cooperation Council, which is in the area, this is the first such election to take place, and we hope it will encourage the movement forward in other countries.

In comparison, Kuwait has an elected parliament which exercises limited legislative and oversight powers, but women are not allowed to vote. In Oman they have an elected consultative council; however, only selected male and female citizens are enfranchised, and the Sultan retains the final say over who is part of that council. Bahrain had an elected parliament which was dissolved by the Emir in 1975, and the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia have no elected institutions. So we hope this historic election in Qatar will be a banner, a leadership step for the region.

We live now in a world economy and we must recognize that democracies help us in our shared world with stable

environments and really improved rights for individuals. It was very exciting for the gentlewoman from New York and myself to meet the six women who were running for office. One almost won. She lost by 24 votes, but next time we hope that she will win. It looked very much like an American election, with banners and rallies and meetings, just good plain campaigning.

Any democracy is a journey. It is one that begins with many steps. This was the first step towards a full parliamentary election. It was for an advisory council. But it is an important first step. Seeing the faces of the individuals reminded me very much of the faces that I saw on television of our brothers and sisters in South Africa when they first received the right to vote. It was exciting, it was historic and it was wonderful to be there. But as we work here in Congress, we are working every day to help women and families and children.

Just this week, along with the gentlewoman from New York, we introduced a very important bill that will provide screening and protection for breast cancer and prostate cancer. Roughly 1,500 cancer-related deaths per day take place in our country. Early detection of cancer through screening can extend a patient's life, reduce treatment time and cost, and improve a person's quality of life. The first step we need to take to reduce the number of cancer-related deaths is to increase access to screening exams in the private sector.

In 1997, Congress, through the Balanced Budget Amendment, included a bill that Barbara Vucanovich and I had authored in 1992. Barbara was a survivor of breast cancer. It called for the coverage of annual mammograms for women in Medicare. It was very important that this bill passed and was part of the Balanced Budget Amendment. It will save hundreds of thousands of lives.

The bill we introduced will extend these same benefits to Americans under the age of 65 if they are at risk and if the patient and their doctor know that such a test is needed. Most insurance companies provide coverage for some cancer screening, but that coverage is inconsistent and often does not provide coverage for the appropriate type of screening test given a person's risk level. My office has received comments from not only colleagues and constituents but doctors who talk about plans that do not cover tests that are needed to save lives and to prevent cancer from growing. If it is caught in the beginning, it is a very minor procedure. Yet if it continues to a more life-threatening stage, it is not only costly in terms of suffering but also in terms of medical dollars.

□ 1700

This bill assures that all individuals with health insurance are guaranteed coverage for important cancer screening tests such as mammograms and

prostate cancer screening. Science has proven that these screening exams work. If a doctor and patient have decided together that the patient would benefit from a screening exam, insurance companies should not have the right to deny coverage of a potentially lifesaving exam. This bill will save lives and lower the cost of treating cancer by increasing the rates of early detection.

We have worked together on a number of bills, not only in health care, but in child care, in helping women-owned businesses and strengthening educational opportunities for our young people and our people who are displaced from work, and I look very, very much forward to working with my colleagues in the Women's Caucus, especially the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) who has been an outstanding leader in so many issues, particularly those that help women in business, women, children and families.

I want to note that the Women's Caucus has probably been the most successful caucus in a bipartisan way of actually passing and enacting legislation. It was my privilege to work with the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) last year when we really enacted into law many important measures to help women, children and families, and the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Mrs. JOHNSON) on the other side of the aisle.

So I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY), for organizing this special order for women's history. We have to realize that we are making history every day as we work here to strengthen the rights that so many women gave their lives for as they worked to gain the right to vote for women in this country. I thank her for going to Qatar with us and being part of that exciting election, and I thank all my colleagues for going on record and voting in support of the elections and the right for women to stand for office in Qatar.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding to me, and I especially thank her for her initiative in organizing this special order.

Mr. Speaker, I am a former Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, have spent much of my life working on women's issues. Many of them are discrimination issues, many of them are not, and if you would ask the average woman which of the literally hundreds of women's issues are more important, you would have a hard time coming up with a single answer. But I think you would probably find more women saying that pay today is important than any other issue, and that is because women are out here and have to be out here working.

Senator TOM HARKIN and I simultaneously introduced the Fair Pay Act just before recess because Equal Pay

Day, when we would have introduced it, occurred when Congress was out of session. Equal Pay Day is a day that women in the year, usually four months, earn about what men earn during the entire prior year.

Thereafter we had a meeting at the White House with the Chief of Staff, John Podesta. At that meeting I asked that the President use Equal Pay Day to do an event to raise the profile of pay issues because they already high with the people of the United States, and to his credit the President and the First Lady had an event attended by several hundred women leaders on April 7 where, interestingly, they did not lecture us but invited in women, four women, to tell their own pay stories.

Why does pay carry so much weight today? Even women who live in two-parent families, two-thirds of them work. In year-round wages you have women up to somewhere in the 70s. It has bounced between 70 and 75 percent during this decade. The source of the progress we have made in the last 20 years has been largely a thin slice of women at the highly-trained level, and sadly, because of the decline in men's wages, women are catching up.

There are a number of bills, and I support them all, but I wanted to say just a word about the Fair Pay Act, because if you want to meet the problem of the average woman today who works, it will not even be an equal pay, as much as we still have to do in that. It will be an equivalent pay for equivalent jobs in traditional women's occupations. It is the mainstream women's occupations that are undervalued.

Regardless of their education, the women now get more bachelors degrees, and women finish high school more often than men, women cannot catch up, and it is largely because even when they have working jobs where they have the same skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions as men, they are not paid the same so that if a woman is an emergency services operator and a man is a fire dispatcher, he is going to earn more money even though they both may have 2 years of community college.

The Fair Pay Act therefore says that discrimination in jobs that are equivalent in skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions should be paid the same, and it would add that to the law. Equivalent pay for equivalent jobs is going to be the issue of the next decade, just as the issue of the 1960's when we got the Equal Pay Act was equal pay for equal jobs. The Fair Pay Act does not tamper with the market system because the woman has to show that the reason for the disparity is not market factors but discrimination.

I would like to go through and talk about the women who appeared at the White House on April 7, but in deference to the woman who still may want to speak during this special order, I would like to conclude by saying that I think we are off to a good

start and we ought to keep before the House this entire term the importance of women's issues.

I congratulate the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) who organized this special order, and I congratulate her strong partner, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), for her work in a bipartisan manner with the gentlewoman from her own home state.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON).

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make sure that the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) had completed her sharing with us over the pay equity, which is so important for the full House to understand, so I want to, if I may, yield additional time as she may want to conclude that statement. She was so gracious.

Ms. NORTON. That is very kind of the gentlewoman and very typical of her.

Unless the gentlewoman from New York needs that time, I do think it would greatly illustrate my point to have some examples.

Mrs. KELLY. If the gentlewoman will just manage to fit it in, I think like in 2½ minutes, it is fine. I personally would like to hear the examples, Mr. Speaker, and I would be delighted to have her take that time if she would like to have it.

Ms. NORTON. I very much appreciate it. It will take just a couple of minutes.

These are the women that came. One my colleagues may have read about, a woman from Massachusetts Institute of Technology who is a molecular biologist who is at the top, who never dreamed of herself as a victim of discrimination, at the top at MIT of a tenured professor, the top of the scale. Then she found out that she was making 20 percent less than men who had come at the same time, had done the same amount of work, and she talked to other women, found 14 other tenured women had precisely the same circumstance. To MIT's credit, instead of becoming defensive, MIT said, "Let us do a study. We're scientists, let us study," and have been decided to bring up the women's pay. That is the example, it seems to me, that we want to put forward.

Sanya Tyler who is the head women's coach, basketball coach, at Howard University sued Howard University. She now compliments Howard University because our university has now moved forward to rectify a situation where the only team that was winning was the girls' basketball team, and yet they had disparities in everything from facilities to her own pay. Her pay was brought up, and again the employer has moved forward instead of becoming defensive.

Patricia Higgins, a nurse from Cleveland, Ohio, who testified that her daughter wanted to be a nurse, but the fact is she is a pharmacist. People who are not doing the same job, had no

more training, did not work in the high-pressured nursing and high-skilled nursing that she did and yet earned more money, and she expects that she is now in a union organizing drive, and she thinks that AFSCME is simply going to be able to negotiate up the salaries of the nurses so that they are equivalent to the salaries of the pharmacists.

These were three of the most salient examples, and I think when America hears those examples, America wants to do something about it.

I very much thank the gentlewoman from New York, and I particularly thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON).

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON); however I would like to retain 1 minute for myself.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, I really wanted to congratulate the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. KELLY) as well as the gentlewoman who is also from New York, our colleague (Mrs. MALONEY), in holding this special order and allowing me to participate and to thank them for raising issues that are important to women in our communities and in our Nation. I particularly am interested in supporting the effort of encouraging women to take leadership roles in emerging countries. I was pleased to be voting on the bill that allowed that to happen.

I encourage also the whole enterprise effort of women who are now becoming the growing percentage of small business people, so those issues that would allow our families not only to be viable, but also to be businesswomen and to be striving as businesswomen, not just existing.

I just want to bring up one issue, and I will conclude. That is the issue of child care. If we are going to talk about ability for mothers to go out to work, they have to be concerned about child care.

I am introducing a bill where we will provide tax credit not only for child care, but also for the training of child care workers to make sure that we can assure quality child care for mothers who need that so desperately. So issues about income, issues about leadership and issues about our children and child care are very much issues about families, and I want to support that and urge my colleagues also to be ready to support those initiatives that come in.

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I do not think I will take all of the remaining time, but I want to note that many women have spoken here this afternoon, and, as you can see, women's interests in Congress cover a vast array of legislation. One of the positive things about the House Women's Caucus is our ability to recognize that we, working together, can affect the course of legislation in the United States Congress and hopefully, therefore, make life better for all of the families, women and children in the United States.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the members of the Women's Caucus

for having this Special Order tonight and for allowing me the opportunity to speak. I would like to focus on the issue of Domestic Violence against women. The dynamics of domestic violence can be as subtle as verbal attacks or as overt as murder. Nationwide, one out of every four women of all women has been battered at some point in their lives.

Violence against women destroys families, takes the lives of women and their children, and it traumatizes the young people who witness it. It is a well documented fact that children who witness violence in the home grow up to repeat the same patterns as adults.

The tragedy of violence against women is not just a personal problem, it is a community crisis. It is up to the community to get involved to address this issue.

Domestic violence affects women of all races and socio-economic backgrounds. A high percentage of these victims are women of color. African-American women account for 16% of the women who have been physically abused by a husband or partner in the last five years.

According to the Houston Area Women's Center, over 1100 women in Houston called for counseling services in 1997 for family violence. This counseling included services for women with children and teenagers who have also survived violence.

This figure only accounts for the women who have sought help. There are others who continue to suffer in silence. There were also 102 women in Houston who were killed by their partners in 1997.

We all have heard the stories of women who have suffered abuse. In my district I have heard the personal stories of domestic abuse survivors and I have also heard the tragic accounts of women who lost their lives at the hands of their partners.

One of my staff members recounted for me a story from her days at Legal Aid. A young woman with three children came in for assistance to get permanent custody of her three small children. She had suffered from years of abuse from her husband and she had finally decided to leave him.

Although her husband continued to harass and threaten her, this brave young woman came to seek help in defiance of his threats. She declared that she was better off poor and alone than dead. This woman's story is inspiring because she made the decision to speak out about her situation. This means that we must continue our efforts to get domestic violence out in the open.

I hope that domestic violence will continue to be viewed as a serious public health issue that deserves our attention. We must encourage women to speak out and to seek help. As a community, we must provide support, encouragement and compassion.

Mrs. ROUKEMA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my Colleague from New York—SUE KELLY for her leadership—and the other Members of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues in the special order. As the senior woman in the House, by virtue of seniority, I have been laboring in these vineyards for many years. I am always pleased to have fresh recruits. So I welcome all the Congresswomen to this special order today.

ALL ISSUES ARE WOMEN'S ISSUES

When I first ran for Congress, my experience was that every interview with every reporter started off with the same set of question: "What is your position on the 'women's issues?'"

And my response was always the same: all issues are women's issues. And I still believe that.

But I have to tell you, when I got to Washington, I found that some of the "women's issues"—the "family issues"—weren't being addressed by the men in power. Things like child support enforcement and women's health issues and family safety issues. It wasn't that the men were opposed to these issues—they just didn't get it. They were not sufficiently aware of them.

So I realized, in many important areas—if we women in government don't take action, no one else will.

NEED MORE WOMEN

That's why we need more women in Congress.

That's why we need more women State legislators.

That's why we need more women Governors.

That's why we need more women in the County Courthouses, the Township Municipal buildings and the City Halls.

Of course, there are countless issues that have been thrust into the national spotlight due in large part to the efforts of women in Congress—health care, equal pay, family and medical leave, education to name just a few.

I would like to take a moment to examine one issue upon which women lead.

Child support enforcement

The first issue stems from the national epidemic of child support neglect. This epidemic of shame affects over 20 million families where parents ignore both the financial and psychological needs of their children.

I have a long history of standing up for child support enforcement, having been a pioneer on child support reforms and having served on the U.S. Commission for Inter-State Child Support Enforcement. It's a national disgrace that our child support enforcement system continues to allow so many parents who can afford to provide for their children's support—both financially and psychologically—to shirk these obligations.

Among those due support, about 50% received the full amount, about a 25% received partial payment and about 25% received NOTHING. In 1991, of the total \$17.7 billion owed for child support, \$5.8 billion was not paid! This figure is unconscionable!!

Through the years, Congress has taken many concrete steps to crack down on child support deadbeats. The most recent major reform was contained in the landmark welfare reform legislation we passed in 1996—because after all, child support enforcement reform is welfare prevention.

Now we have another opportunity to strengthen the child support enforcement network.

One of the major unfinished items of business from the last Congress is bankruptcy reform. Indeed the Leadership has indicated that bankruptcy reform will be considered in the House in the next few weeks.

I am very pleased that the Bankruptcy Reform Act of 1999, H.R. 833, introduced by Representative GEKAS, strengthens child support enforcement in a bankruptcy proceeding. H.R. 833 does the following: (1) Makes child support payments number one when determining which debts are paid first in a bankruptcy case (2) confirmation and discharge of Chapter 13 plans are made conditional upon

the Debtor's complete payment of child support (3) provides that the automatic stay DOES NOT apply to a state child support collection agency trying to recover child support payments.

I will be working with Chairman GEKAS and Representative CLAY SHAW to further refine and improve the language that will eventually be included in the final bill.

It is important to remember that failure to pay child support is not a victimless crime. The children are the first and most important victims. We must ensure that these children are taken care of and I will continue my relentless effort in this pursuit.

Remember, All issues are women's issues", nevertheless, women and children are sometimes victims because of indifference or lack of sensitivity. We pledge here today to give them the sensitivity they need.

Ms. SANCHEZ. What a century this has been for the advancement of women's rights in America. Women vote, we own businesses, we explore outer space. We fight in our nation's armed services, we represent our fellow citizens in our legislature, courts and state houses, and we have a greater role in U.S. public policy than ever before. But first and foremost among these accomplishments is the ability to control our own economic destinies.

I am here tonight to salute women business owners who have helped this remarkable change grow. And in particular, I praise the Women's Economic Summit, one of the first gatherings of its kind. It is planting the seeds for even greater future successes, and I am proud to be a part of that progress.

Women everywhere build their success on that of the women who have gone before them. Tonight I salute women business owners for their work in making the American dream available to our friends and daughters.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Lundregan, one of its clerks, announced that Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. NICKLES, Mr. GRAMM, Mr. GORTON, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. CONRAD, Mrs. BOXER, and Mrs. MURRAY, be the conferees on the part of the Senate to the bill (H. Con. Res. 68) "A concurrent resolution establishing the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2000 and setting forth appropriate budgetary levels for each of fiscal years 2001 through 2009."

OVERWHELMING NEGLECT: THE ARITHMETIC OF FEDERAL AID TO EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SWEENEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. OWENS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. OWENS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to clearly label my discussion this evening with a topic. I want to call it "Overwhelming Neglect: The Arithmetic of Federal Aid to Education."

Overwhelming Neglect: The Arithmetic of Federal Aid to Education, and I am pleased that this special order has fallen in a period when there may be

large numbers of school-going youngsters, students in high school and elementary school and junior high school, awake, and maybe a few will be listening.

□ 1715

I want to address a large part of my remarks to those students, and I assure them that what I have to say will not be complicated. I am not going to talk in terms of complex and abstract ideas. I am going to talk about the simple arithmetic of Federal aid to education, no higher mathematics, no logarithms, no differential equations and calculus, nothing complicated, just simple arithmetic.

I want the students of America out there attending school to join me in trying to educate my colleagues here in the House of Representatives and in the whole Washington decision-making arena. There is something wrong with decision-making in Washington at this point about education, something radically wrong.

I think we need the children, the students, younger minds, to come to the aid of the decision-making circles here. We have some decision-making circles with closed minds. We are hemmed in and smothered by some conventional thinking and we need a breakthrough, and I am going to call on the children of America to help us make this breakthrough.

There is some simple arithmetic we should start with. The arithmetic begins with an allocation of priorities here in terms of time and attention and money based on the priorities that are established by the American people. In other words, we live and die by opinion polls here in Washington. Public opinion polls are very important to the Republicans, they are important to the Democrats, they are important to the White House. Everybody is concerned about what the public thinks and we spend a lot of time and energy discussing public opinion polls.

There are a large amount of resources committed to finding out what is it that the public thinks. The impact of public opinion polls, of course, can be tremendous on public policy. We saw the impact of public opinion on the impeachment proceedings which the Republican Party insisted on going ahead with despite the fact that common sense, as reflected by public opinion, the common sense of the American people dictated that it was a wasteful venture, kind of a silly venture and that is what it turned out to be. So public opinion can sometimes be ignored by powerful forces here that refuse to listen.

Right now we have a war in Kosovo which public opinion, I think, will play a great role in determining what else do we do, where do we go in terms of United States policy.

For good or ill, sometimes public opinion is not so desirable in terms of the results that I think we need. I did not agree with public opinion when we

had a dictator, self-imposed Army dictator, in Haiti for 3 years. They got rid of the lawful government and they sat there and they would not move, and negotiations went on and on and on.

I wanted to go in and restore the rightful president of Haiti, elected leader of Haiti, and if it took troops to do that, armed intervention, then I was in favor of that. Two-thirds of the American people said no. Two-thirds of the Congress said no. I am glad that the President did not listen to public opinion in that case. I am glad that he went ahead and took some decisive action and it all worked out in the interest of not only the people of Haiti but in the interest of democracy in this hemisphere.

I am glad that Abraham Lincoln did not listen to the opinion of his cabinet when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation. All the votes were against the Emancipation Proclamation which set the slaves free, but he went ahead and signed it anyhow.

So there are times when public opinion, I admit, I may not agree with it but we do listen to it. We do listen to it.

I want to call upon the decision-makers in this Congress and in the whole Washington arena to listen to public opinion on the issue of education. Public opinion has been speaking not sporadically but consistently over a long period of time about the priority it assigns to education.

The great majority of the American people say that government assistance to education ranks highest on their list of priorities, and it has been among the top priorities in the last 5 years.

Education consistently, the American people say, needs help. We need government at every level to do more for education and certainly we need the Federal Government to do more because the Federal Government really does very little in terms of dollar value. The Federal Government is responsible for less than 8 percent of the total budget for education in general. That includes college education, where most of the money goes. So the Federal Government should do more. The public keeps saying that.

Just to refresh everyone's memory, let me cite the polls generally. Whether taken by Republicans or Democrats, they are saying that education ranks number one. Seventy-four percent of the American people consider education as a number one priority. We might think it is Social Security because we hear more talk about saving Social Security. Among the elected officials and political leaders of both parties, Social Security is on everybody's lips. So Social Security is important. However, it is the second highest concern. Seventy-one percent rank Social Security as the highest priority.

Crime reduction is the third. Health care reform is the fourth. Eliminating poverty is the fifth. Tax cuts are the sixth. Jobs, number seven; getting rid of the national debt, number eight;