

“(ii) a summary of the reasons for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction;

“(iii) the proposed date for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction;

“(iv) notice of the opportunity of a hearing, if requested; and

“(v) notice of the opportunity for public comment, including suggestions.

“(3) Any person served by the post office that is the subject of a notification under paragraph (1) may offer an alternative relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction proposal during the 60-day period beginning on the date on which the notice is provided under paragraph (1).

“(4)(A) At the end of the period specified in paragraph (3), the Postal Service shall make a determination under subsection (a)(3). Before making a final determination, the Postal Service shall conduct a hearing, if requested by persons served by the post office that is the subject of a notice under paragraph (1). If a hearing is held under this paragraph, the persons served by such post office may present oral or written testimony with respect to the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of the post office.

“(B) In making a determination as to whether or not to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office, the Postal Service shall consider—

“(i) the extent to which the post office is part of a core downtown business area;

“(ii) any potential effect of the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction on the community served by the post office;

“(iii) whether the community served by the post office opposes a relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction;

“(iv) any potential effect of the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction on employees of the Postal Service employed at the post office;

“(v) whether the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of the post office is consistent with the policy of the Government under section 101(b) that requires the Postal Service to provide a maximum degree of effective and regular postal services to rural areas, communities, and small towns in which post offices are not self-sustaining;

“(vi) the quantified long-term economic saving to the Postal Service resulting from the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction;

“(vii)(I) the adequacy of the existing post office; and

“(II) whether all reasonable alternatives to relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction have been explored; and

“(viii) any other factor that the Postal Service determines to be necessary for making a determination whether to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct that post office.

“(C) In making a determination as to whether or not to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office, the Postal Service may not consider compliance with any provision of the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (29 U.S.C. 651 et seq.).

“(5)(A) Any determination of the Postal Service to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office shall be in writing and shall include the findings of the Postal Service with respect to the considerations required to be made under paragraph (4).

“(B) The Postal Service shall respond to all of the alternative proposals described in paragraph (3) in a consolidated report that includes—

“(i) the determination and findings under subparagraph (A); and

“(ii) each alternative proposal and a response by the Postal Service.

“(C) The Postal Service shall make available to the public a copy of the report pre-

pared under subparagraph (B) at the post office that is the subject of the report.

“(6)(A) The Postal Service shall take no action to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct a post office until the applicable date described in subparagraph (B).

“(B) The applicable date specified in this subparagraph is—

“(i) if no appeal is made under paragraph (7), the end of the 30-day period specified in that paragraph; or

“(ii) if an appeal is made under paragraph (7), the date on which a determination is made by the Commission under paragraph 7(A), but not later than 120 days after the date on which the appeal is made.

“(7)(A) A determination of the Postal Service to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct any post office may be appealed by any person served by that post office to the Postal Rate Commission during the 30-day period beginning on the date on which the report is made available under paragraph (5). The Commission shall review the determination on the basis of the record before the Postal Service in the making of the determination. The Commission shall make a determination based on that review not later than 120 days after appeal is made under this paragraph.

“(B) The Commission shall set aside any determination, findings, and conclusions of the Postal Service that the Commission finds to be—

“(i) arbitrary, capricious, an abuse of discretion, or otherwise not in accordance with the law;

“(ii) without observance of procedure required by law; or

“(iii) unsupported by substantial evidence on the record.

“(C) The Commission may affirm the determination of the Postal Service that is the subject of an appeal under subparagraph (A) or order that the entire matter that is the subject of that appeal be returned for further consideration, but the Commission may not modify the determination of the Postal Service. The Commission may suspend the effectiveness of the determination of the Postal Service until the final disposition of the appeal.

“(D) The provisions of sections 556 and 557, and chapter 7 of title 5 shall not apply to any review carried out by the Commission under this paragraph.

“(E) A determination made by the Commission shall not be subject to judicial review.

“(8) In any case in which a community has in effect procedures to address the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of buildings in the community, and the public participation requirements of those procedures are more stringent than those provided in this subsection, the Postal Service shall apply those procedures to the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of a post office in that community in lieu of applying the procedures established in this subsection.

“(9) In making a determination to relocate, close, consolidate, or construct any post office, the Postal Service shall comply with any applicable zoning, planning, or land use laws (including building codes and other related laws of State or local public entities, including any zoning authority with jurisdiction over the area in which the post office is located).

“(10) The relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of any post office under this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470h-2).

“(11) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to apply to a temporary customer service facility to be used by the Postal Service for a period of less than 60 days.

“(12)(A) For purposes of this paragraph the term ‘emergency’ means any occurrence that forces an immediate relocation from an existing facility, including natural disasters, fire, health and safety factors, and lease terminations.

“(B) If the Postmaster General makes a determination that an emergency exists relating to a post office, the Postmaster General may suspend the application of the provisions of this subsection for a period not to exceed 180 days with respect to such post office.

“(C) The Postmaster General may exercise the suspension authority under subparagraph (A) once with respect to a single emergency for any specific post office.”●

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

● Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, I rise today to join others around the world in marking International Women's Day. This day celebrates the contributions and accomplishments of women worldwide, and also reminds us that, unfortunately, many women are still treated as second-class citizens. Gender-based discrimination and harassment, domestic violence, and sexual assault are far too common in too many places. The glass ceiling, while perhaps a bit cracked, still blocks the progress of many women who work outside the home. Lack of affordable quality child care forces many women to make a painful decision between their children and their careers.

The wage gap between men and women around the world is still vast. According to 1997 statistics from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, American women working outside the home in non-agricultural jobs earn about seventy-five percent of what their male counterparts earn; that is, seventy-five cents on the dollar. International Labour Organization statistics from 1996 state that women in Japan make sixty-two percent of what their male counterparts earn; the figure in Kenya is eighty-five percent. Australian women fare better, earning virtually the same wages as men.

In many places, women and girls are not considered valued members of society. Rather, their basic human rights are curtailed, sometimes to the point of denial of adequate medical care and basic educational opportunities. The illegal trafficking of women and girls for purposes such as slavery and prostitution is rampant in some areas of the world. In some places, it is common for women to be burned with acid by their husbands if their dowries are not large enough.

The deplorable practice of so-called “honor killing”—men murdering female relatives accused of things ranging from infidelity to objection to an arranged marriage—is again receiving international attention. What is even more deplorable is that the men committing these murders take pride in their crimes, which they justify as cultural tradition, and are routinely given light prison sentences. Some women endure voluntary imprisonment to escape male relatives who intend to murder them.

Despite the challenges they face—or maybe in spite of them—women in the United States and around the world contribute to their families and their countries in countless ways.

In the United States, March is Women's History Month. It is a time to celebrate the contributions of women such as Carrie Chapman Catt, a native of Ripon, Wisconsin, who served as the last president of the National American Women Suffrage Association, and was the founder and first president of the National League of Women Voters. Her influence on the direction and success of the suffrage movement is legendary, and her legacy in grassroots organizing is equally significant. She led a tireless lobbying campaign in Congress, sent letters and telegrams, and eventually met directly with the President—using all the tools of direct action with which political organizers are now so familiar today.

Catt's crusade for suffrage saw a homefront victory on June 10, 1919, when Wisconsin became the first state to deliver ratification of the constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote before it was adopted as the Nineteenth Amendment in August of 1920.

The legacy of Carrie Chapman Catt is alive and well today—in Wisconsin and across the globe—as women take a more and more active role in the political process. I am proud to serve alongside Congresswoman TAMMY BALDWIN, the first woman elected to Congress from Wisconsin. The 106th Congress includes a record 67 women—nine in the Senate and 58 in the House of Representatives.

As Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, I have monitored how the women of Africa participate in the political process and make vital contributions to the economies of their countries. During the recent assembly and presidential elections in Nigeria, women served as poll workers and were candidates for the assembly. I regret that voter turnout among women was noticeably low, but was pleased to see some progress being made.

One way in which the Senate can honor women worldwide is to fulfill our long-overdue constitutional obligation to offer our advice and consent to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) at the earliest possible date. This year marks the 20th anniversary of CEDAW, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979. CEDAW was signed by the United States on July 17, 1980, and was transmitted to the Senate for its advice and consent by President Carter on November 12, 1980. Almost two decades later, the treaty is still pending before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. As of December 1998, 163 countries have ratified CEDAW. Only three signatories have yet to ratify the con-

vention: Afghanistan, San Tome and Principe, and the United States. It is high time for us to ratify this important document.

In closing, Mr. President, as the father of two daughters, I am hopeful that the world we leave to our children and grandchildren will be devoid of domestic violence and other forms of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence. As we prepare to enter the 21st century, we must redouble our efforts to protect and promote the rights of women and girls at home and abroad. ●

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CUBA AND COMMEMORATING THE BROTHERS TO THE RESCUE

● Mr. MACK. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for Senate Resolution 57 condemning the Cuban government's human rights record and calling on the President to make all efforts necessary to pass a resolution condemning Cuba at the UN Human Rights Commission meeting in Geneva, Switzerland.

Many people have written and spoken about the latest crackdown in Cuba as if they were discovering for the first time the nature of Fidel Castro's brutal regime. Fidel Castro is a tyrant. He rules with absolute authority and uses fear and greed to maintain his power. For forty years he has demonstrated to us his nature. He has not changed. We must continue our pressure on him—voice our opposition to him. And we must continue our support for the struggling Cuban people. The choice should not be difficult to make: we must stand with those suffering under one of the few totalitarian Marxists remaining in power in the world, and we must stand up to condemn the actions of the brutal regime.

One clear reminder of who we are dealing with is the murder in the Florida straits of four Americans in 1996. They were flying a humanitarian mission when the Cuban Air Force shot their unarmed aircraft out of the sky. For three years, Mr. President, we have all known about this murder, and for three years, I have been struggling to understand why this administration refuses to take appropriate action.

The Boston Globe published a very powerful essay by columnist Jeff Jacoby to mark this anniversary. I'd like to read from it. Jeff captures the starkness of the mismatched foreign policy in place, comparing the act, which Fidel Castro committed with this administration's unprincipled response. His piece is titled "Murder Over the High Seas."

They were trying to save lives. Three years ago this week, they paid with their own.

When Armando Alejandro, Carlos Costa, Mario de la Pena, and Pablo Morales took to the skies that day in their little blue-and-white Cessna 337s, their plan was to search the Florida Straits for stranded boat people, refugees fleeing Cuba in makeshift rafts or flimsy inner tubes. There was little enough the fliers could do for any rafters they came

upon—toss down food and bottled water, radio their location to the Coast Guard—but that little could make the difference between life and death.

Of the four, Carlos was the most experienced. He had flown more than 500 such missions for Brothers to the Rescue, and had saved scores of boat people from drowning or dying of thirst. Armando, by contrast, was going up for only the second time. What all four had in common was a love of American liberty—and a profound concern for any Cubans so desperate to escape Fidel Castro's Caribbean hellspot that they would risk their lives to get away.

On Feb. 24, 1996, Carlos, Armando, Mario, and Pablo took off from an airfield in Opa-Locka, Fla. They intended to fly just below the 24th parallel, well north of Cuba's territorial waters. Both planes contacted Havana air-traffic controllers as they approached the 24th parallel, identifying themselves and giving their position. Whereupon the Cuban Air Force, without warning and without reason, scrambled two MiG fighters and blew the rescue planes out of the sky.

The Cessnas and their passengers were disintegrated by the Cuban MiGs. Only a large oil slick marked the spot where they went down. No bodies were ever recovered.

Three of the men—Carlos, Mario, and Armando—were US citizens. Pablo, a former refugee who had himself been saved by Brothers to the Rescue in 1992, was a permanent US resident. What happens when four American civilians are butchered in cold blood, over international waters, by the air force of a Third World dictatorship? What terrible retribution does the United States exact for a quadruple murder so barbaric and unprovoked?

The astonishing answer is: Nothing happens. There is no retribution. Indeed, the Clinton administration takes the position not only that Castro must not be punished for the four lives he destroyed, but that the victims' families must not be permitted to recover anything for their loss.

In the wake of the shootdown, under intense political pressure, President Clinton agreed to sign the Helms-Burton Act. Title III of the statute allows American citizens whose property was confiscated by the Cuban government—Castro nationalized billions of dollars' worth of American assets in the 1960s—to file suit against any foreign company using that property. Title IV bars any officer of a foreign company trafficking in stolen American property from receiving a visa to enter the United States.

Properly enforced, Helms-Burton would weaken Castro's grip on power by reducing the flow of foreign capital into his treasury. But Helms-Burton is not properly enforced. Title III has never taken effect because Clinton keeps suspending it (as the law permits him to do if he finds that a suspension "will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba"). Title IV has never taken effect because the State Department refuses to carry it out.

The hobbling of Helms-Burton is a stinging insult to the memory of the four murdered men. But the Clinton administration has delivered a cut unkinder still.

In 1996, the families of Armando, Carlos, and Mario sued the Cuban government for damages caused by the wrongful deaths of their loved ones, a legal remedy specifically authorized by the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. In December 1997, Senior US District Judge James Lawrence King awarded the plaintiffs \$187.7 million in damages. "Cuba's extrajudicial killings . . . were inhumane acts against innocent civilians," he wrote in his final judgment. "The fact that the killings were premeditated and intentional, outside Cuban territory, wholly