

RESIGNATION FROM THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

The Speaker pro tempore laid before the House the following resignation from the House of Representatives:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, November 15, 2001.
Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Office of the Speaker,
Capitol, Washington, DC.

DEAR DENNY: I am writing to inform you that February 15, 2002 has been set in Oklahoma as the date for my resignation from Congress. I am pleased to report that the Oklahoma legislature recently passed a law that will ensure that Oklahoma's 1st Congressional District will not go unrepresented as I make the transition to a full-time campaign for governor. The law required that I make my intent to resign irrevocable, which I have communicated to Oklahoma's Secretary of State.

Serving in the House of Representatives has been one of the greatest honors and challenges of my life. I want to thank you for your leadership, your steadfastness in the pursuit of our ideals, and for your friendship during the past few years. While I will miss working alongside my colleagues in Congress, I am eager to fight for the principles our party stands for as the next governor of Oklahoma.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or my chief of staff, Mike Willis, if you have any questions regarding this transition.

Sincerely,

STEVE LARGENT,
Member of Congress.

Enclosure.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, October 26, 2001.

Hon. MIKE HUNTER,
Oklahoma Secretary of State,
Oklahoma City, OK.

DEAR SECRETARY HUNTER: Pursuant to enrolled Senate Bill Number 7X, enacted and signed by the Governor this week during the first extraordinary session of the 48th Legislature, please accept this letter as official notice of my resignation as Congressman of the First District of Oklahoma. This resignation is irrevocable and shall become effective on February 15, 2002.

My decision to leave was made after much prayer and consideration for the constituents I now serve. It has been an honor and a privilege to have served as the Representative for the people of the First District.

Sincerely,

STEVE LARGENT,
Member of Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that she will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate has concluded on motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6:30 p.m. today.

Any record vote, if ordered, on a concurrent resolution expressing the gratitude of the House of Representatives to the General Accounting Office and its employees will be taken tomorrow.

AFGHAN WOMEN AND CHILDREN
RELIEF ACT OF 2001

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1573) to authorize the provision of educational and health care assistance to the women and children of Afghanistan.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1573

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) In Afghanistan, Taliban restrictions on women's participation in society make it nearly impossible for women to exercise their basic human rights. The Taliban restrictions on Afghan women's freedom of expression, association, and movement deny women full participation in society and, consequently, from effectively securing basic access to work, education, and health care.

(2) Afghanistan has one of the highest infant (165 of 1000) and child (257 of 1000) mortality rates in the world.

(3) Only 5 percent of rural and 39 percent of urban Afghans have access to safe drinking water.

(4) It is estimated that 42 percent of all deaths in Afghanistan are due to diarrheal diseases caused by contaminated food and water.

(5) Over one-third of Afghan children under 5 years of age suffer from malnutrition, 85,000 of whom die annually.

(6) Seventy percent of the health care system in Afghanistan is dependent on foreign assistance.

(7) As of May 1998, only 20 percent of hospital medical and surgical beds dedicated to adults were available for women, and thousands of Afghan women and girls are routinely denied health care.

(8) Women are forbidden to leave their homes without being escorted by a male relative. This prevents many women from seeking basic necessities like health care and food for their children. Doctors, virtually all of whom are male, are also not permitted to provide certain types of care not deemed appropriate by the Taliban.

(9) Before the Taliban took control of Kabul, schools were coeducational, with women accounting for 70 percent of the teaching force. Women represented about 50 percent of the civil service corps, and 40 percent of the city's physicians were women. Today, the Taliban prohibits women from working as teachers, doctors, and in any other occupation.

(10) The Taliban prohibit girls and women from attending school. In 1998, the Taliban ordered the closing of more than 100 privately funded schools where thousands of young women and girls were receiving education and training in skills that would have helped them support themselves and their families.

(11) Of the many tens of thousands of war widows in Afghanistan, many are forced to beg for food and to sell their possessions because they are not allowed to work.

(12) Resistance movements courageously continue to educate Afghan girls in secrecy and in foreign countries against Taliban law.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the President is authorized, on such terms and conditions as the President may determine, to provide educational and health care

assistance for the women and children living in Afghanistan and as refugees in neighboring countries.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—(1) In providing assistance under subsection (a), the President shall ensure that such assistance is provided in a manner that protects and promotes the human rights of all people in Afghanistan, utilizing indigenous institutions and non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, to the extent possible.

(2) Beginning 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, and at least annually for the 2 years thereafter, the Secretary of State shall submit a report to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives describing the activities carried out under this Act and otherwise describing the condition and status of women and children in Afghanistan and the persons in refugee camps while United States aid is given to displaced Afghans.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Funds made available under the 2001 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Recovery from and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States (Public Law 107-38), shall be available to carry out this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the Senate bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, as Chair of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights, and as an original cosponsor of the House companion, I rise in support of the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001.

In 1996, a heavy shroud was placed on the people of Afghanistan when the Taliban captured Kabul. From that moment onward, the Taliban took the peaceful and sacred scriptures of the Holy Koran and distorted them into a rulebook of terror.

Through their creation of the Department for Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, the Taliban enforced a perverse rendition of Islam which gruesomely joined prayer with the barbaric practices of beatings, torture, rape, and executions.

But the Taliban's brutality and blatant disregard for the lives and well-being of the Afghan people was perhaps most clearly evident among half of its population, the women of Afghanistan, who bear the deepest scars.

Made widows and orphans by the will of the Taliban, the same women who

once made up 50 percent of Afghanistan's doctors, nurses, teachers, college students, and diplomats, have been made destitute, sick, and marginalized.

The Taliban further banned them from receiving any education past the age of 8, for which the curriculum was limited to the Taliban's corrupted version of the Koran. In the year 2000, the United Nations educational, scientific, and cultural organization estimated that as few as 3 percent of Afghan girls were receiving primary education.

The gender adviser to the U.N. in Afghanistan further reported that female literacy was approximately 4 percent versus 30 percent for males.

Women in Afghanistan were further alienated by the denial of proper medical treatment. They could only be treated by male doctors in certain hospitals; and when allowed to be treated, the male doctor was prohibited from examining her unless she was fully clothed in Taliban-approved garb.

Further, the doctor could not touch her, thus limiting the possibility of any medical diagnosis or meaningful treatment.

Throughout, the indomitable will and courage of Afghan women have helped them endure these most deplorable circumstances. While the end of the Taliban's oppressive rule is now palpable, the struggle of Afghan women to save themselves and their children from disease and starvation, their hope for a future for peace, freedom, and democracy continues.

How can we discuss the future of Afghanistan without first addressing the humanitarian crisis which engulfs its people? We cannot. How can we talk about reconstruction when half of its population, its women, have been marginalized, and when many of its future leaders, the children of Afghanistan, barely survive past the age of 5?

This bill seeks to address these grave concerns. The legislation before us today is about helping to save lives by focusing U.S. assistance on providing basic medical care to the women and children inside Afghanistan and those living in refugee camps outside their beleaguered country.

This bill is about helping to secure a future of hope and prosperity for women and children by calling on the President to provide educational assistance for these two critical sectors of Afghan society. It lays the groundwork for democratic principles, as it requires the protection and promotion of human rights for all the people of Afghanistan.

It builds on the ingenuity and the courage of the Afghan population by recommending that institutions and nongovernmental organizations, especially women's organizations, be used to the extent possible.

The U.S. and the international community should invest in these efforts, as they can afford the greatest access to those who are suffering the most.

The value and importance of using indigenous women's organizations is

perhaps best reflected in the health sector. In the refugee camps of Pakistan, for example, most medical assistance is provided by the Pakistan directorate for health.

However, in instances where camp-based medical units are operating, women's access is restricted due to the transportation problems and cultural restrictions on mobility which require that women be escorted by a male relative, among many other restrictions. As a result, there have been frequent complaints from Afghan women about the quality of the services provided.

Immediately, Afghan women NGOs began to work on filling the gaps from multiple angles, running small clinics and providing mothers and children with basic medical assistance so they may live long and healthy lives.

□ 1415

This is what the bill that we are considering today supports, Madam Speaker.

The legislation also acknowledges and supports the impressive work of Afghan women's groups in filling the educational void created by the Taliban's oppressive and discriminatory practices against women. Several women-led organizations have established and are operating home schools to afford this forgotten and marginalized sector of Afghan society with the opportunities denied to them by the Taliban and their perverse interpretation of Islam. Many are involved in the provisions of education within the refugee context and running schools in the camps, adult literacy classes, and English language training.

Indeed, Afghan women's groups are not novices to humanitarian response activities. Beginning with the decade-long Soviet occupation of their country, more and more Afghan women's organizations have emerged to address a variety of needs, particularly in the areas of medical care, education and, in recent years, trauma counseling and rights awareness.

Throughout the years they have refined their skills and gained expertise through working in United Nations' agencies as administrative staff and as implementers of assistance programs both inside and outside of Afghanistan. Some examples include UNICEF projects as well as refugee resettlement protection programs with the Office of U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Afghan women and groups that they lead have also entered into symbiotic relationships with international NGOs as implementers of their programs, programs such as CARE's widow's feeding program in Kabul and Action Contre La Faim's programs for malnourished children in many locations.

These are the types of activities that this bill supports, activities which, in turn, are vital to the welfare of Afghan women and children; activities which, in turn, will help ensure that women will be prepared to actively participate in the future of their country.

This bill is about relief and survival. It is about life.

As Surah 5 of the holy Koran reads, "He who wrongfully slays another would be as if he slew the whole people; and if any one save a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people."

The Congress of the United States must act to save one life at a time and, by that, do what we can to help save the people of Afghanistan. We can begin by rendering our full support to the legislation before us today.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this bill. We are well aware of the horrendous treatment that women have received in Afghanistan under the Taliban rule. The Taliban restrictions on women's participation in society have made it nearly impossible for women to exercise their basic human rights. Women have essentially been prevented from securing basic access to work, education and health care. These restrictions on women also prevented them from adequately providing and caring for their children.

It will come as no surprise to anyone in this Chamber that, after 2 decades of conflict and 6 years of Taliban rule, Afghanistan has one of the highest infant and child mortality rates in the world. Only 5 percent of rural and one-third of urban Afghans have access to safe drinking water. Over one-third of Afghan children under 5 years of age suffer from malnutrition; 85,000 die annually.

During the years of Taliban rule in Afghanistan, women were not made to feel subservient. It is far more insidious than that. Women were made invisible. They became non-people.

Any woman can endure this for herself, but not to be able to protect your children, to see them go without food and watch their small bodies shrivel up and die, to see them sick and suffering and not being able to provide medicine or medical attention to heal them and save them, to watch their young minds atrophy for lack of an education, this is too much for any woman to bear.

Madam Speaker, this bill takes a significant first step to ensure that, as we move forward in helping the people of Afghanistan reclaim their lives and rebuild their society, that we give particular emphasis to the needs of women and children. I am sure that everyone who rejoiced at the sight of women lifting off their veils, men shaving their beards and children dancing to music in the streets of Kabul just 2 weeks ago will also understand the symbolic importance of this legislation.

H.R. 1573 sends an important message to the women and children of Afghanistan, and I hope all of my colleagues will support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the sponsor of the legislation, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE).

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend, the gentlewoman from Florida, for yielding me time and for her hard work and dedication to this issue. I would also like to thank my good friend, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), for all of her work and assistance on this bill, along with the gentleman from Illinois (Chairman HYDE) for his help.

Madam Speaker, I rise in the strongest support for the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act. This legislation authorizes our President to use funding from the 2001 Emergency Supplemental under such terms and conditions as he may decide to provide health and educational assistance to the women and children of Afghanistan.

As we all know, the plight of women and children under the ruling Taliban regime and their terrorist allies has been dire. As recognized by this legislation, Taliban restrictions on women's participation in society made it nearly impossible for women to exercise their basic human rights. The restrictions on Afghan women's freedom of expression, association and movement denied women full participation in society and, consequently, kept them from effectively securing basic access to work, education and even health care.

Under Taliban rule, women were beaten and in some cases shot for simply leaving their homes unaccompanied, even if only to seek medical attention for a sick child. The heavy suffering of Afghan women has been unthinkable and immeasurable. As described by one Afghan woman, the owner of a secretly run beauty shop, "It was like being in prison," she said. "We had no life. We were not people."

Madam Speaker, there is a tide in the course of human history. Taken at its height it can lead to progress, to advancement, to success; but missed it can leave any cause trapped in shallow water. Therefore, we must act with haste and determination when the current moves and the water is deep with opportunity. Madam Speaker, the current is moving.

The tide of history is nearing a peak moment in Afghanistan, and this legislation provides the tools to respond.

The Taliban, along with their record of brutal oppression, are being driven out of the country and out of power, and women have already begun to emerge from beneath their burkas. They are awakening to what I deeply hope will be a new day. There has rarely been a more important moment, a more crucial time than this.

While women may be free of the hand of Taliban injustice, we do not know what lies ahead for them. Therefore, at this time of change and uncertainty we must act to give the women of Afghanistan hope and to help them reclaim their dignity, respect and, ultimately, their right and equal place in society.

Life for women before the Taliban stands in stark contrast to the last 5 years. Over time, the drive towards greater rights for women was moving forward. In the 1920s, Afghan women received the right to vote; and in the 1960s, the Afghan constitution recognized their equality.

By the early 1990s, in Kabul, women represented 70 percent of school-teachers, 50 percent of government workers and 50 percent of doctors. To say the very least, the cause of women's rights in Afghanistan suffered a major setback under Taliban rule.

President Bush and the First Lady have recognized the dire plight of Afghan women. The administration is already taking steps to cast light on the evil that has been done to Afghan women and has spoken out in favor of giving women a voice in their new government, along with the right to economic freedom.

Congress must do its part in this important effort by giving the President the resources to help these women recover from the years of abuse they have suffered. This means providing most basic health care and educational assistance, which will authorize the President over the next 3 years to provide targeted funding to aid organizations already on the ground. Through our work, we can help Afghan women to regain their footing.

Madam Speaker, we may never be able to understand why the Taliban chose a path of such brutality and oppression. It certainly does not come from Islam, which teaches peace and respects human rights. In fact, in many other parts of the Muslim world, women play important roles as doctors, teachers, journalists, lawyers, diplomats and other professionals. It is not the Muslim religion which has oppressed women in Afghanistan. It is hate, fear and the injustice of the Taliban.

After the Taliban began their retreat, one woman who was among the first women to read the news at Radio Afghanistan burned her burka. She said, "Now I see the sunlight, and it is so beautiful." Madam Speaker, all the women of Afghanistan deserve to see the sunlight. Let us play our part by passing important legislation.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield as much time as she may consume to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for the recognition and command her for managing her first bill. How appropriate that the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) would be managing the bill to assist Afghan women, a bill sponsored by women, for women and managed by women, presided over by women.

I commend the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. Ros-LEHTINEN) for her excellent statement and leadership and the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) for her leadership as the author, along with the gentlewoman from

California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) for her leadership on this important bill.

I, too, want to join in commending the Bush administration. It was quite a remarkable day when the First Lady of our country, for the very first time maybe, addressed the White House radio address alone on an issue, and how appropriate that that issue would be the plight of Afghan women and the need for there to be more assistance from the United States. Yes, to help with medical and humanitarian assistance but also to ensure that in the government that is formed in Afghanistan that women will have a leadership role and be part of the decision making.

Our colleagues have very clearly spelled out the suffering of the Afghani women during the time of the Taliban regime, and indeed even preceding that girls were not educated fully in Afghanistan. Preceding the takeover by the Taliban, women constituted 70 percent of the teachers in Afghanistan, 50 percent of the government workers, 40 percent of the health professionals; and, of course, with the onset of the Taliban regime they were forbidden from working. Women suffered, girls suffered, but everyone suffered. Who taught the little boys? Because 70 percent of the teachers were women. So everyone in Afghanistan suffered, and everyone in Afghanistan will benefit under the provisions of H.R. 3330 which authorizes educational and health care assistance to the women and children of Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, I think it is important to note that the United States is the single largest contributor of a huge amount of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, and this well preceded September 11, very much preceded September 11.

I was pleased to serve under my ranking member, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), and was our former ranking member on the Committee on Foreign Operations with the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CALAHAN) as my chairman. He beefed up, I would say, the Child Survival Account, now we call it the Callahan Account, now under the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. KOLBE).

We appreciate this authorization coming as it does. When we go back to do the appropriation for next year, we will be fully armed with the authority to take money as it spells out in the bill from the Child Survival and Health Programs, UNICEF, immunization, safe injections, maternal health, medical equipment, women and development, children's basic education and refugee assistance, and whatever other accounts and amounts might be available under the 2001 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act.

One other point I want to make, Madam Speaker, is I think women of America deserve a great deal of commendation because they early on talked about the plight of women in Afghanistan long before September 11.

It is completely appropriate that the Congressional Women's Caucus is taking the lead on this issue. It is a reflection of the mood of our country, as was clearly demonstrated by the willingness of the First Lady to make this her first White House radio address; and how proud we were of her in doing that, as I said before.

□ 1430

But the women of America are the ones who spoke out early and said, look, listen, see what is happening in Afghanistan. It was an early bellwether of awful things to come. So I think this leadership role played by women should be recognized, should be heeded; and one giant step we can take in doing that is to pass H.R. 3330. Again, I commend all my colleagues for their leadership on this.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), who has been leading the charge on our side on this bill.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman yielding me this time. As the brutal Taliban regime is coming to an end in Afghanistan, the women and children there need our help. That is why I am proud to support Senate 1573.

For 5 years, the women and children and girls of Afghanistan have been denied medical care and schools have been shuttered. Women have been forced to beg in the streets to feed their children. This bill will provide the much-needed health care and education assistance to begin the long road to recovery.

Afghanistan's women and girls have been singled out by the Taliban for abuse. We have not seen such a state-sponsored systematic program of discrimination and oppression since Nazi Germany or South Africa under apartheid.

A recent State Department report details a shocking story about the shooting of an Afghan woman whose child was in dire need of medical attention. The doctor was across town; and because she did not have a male escort, the woman was prohibited from making the trip to take her child to the doctor. Knowing that without medical care her child could die, the Afghan woman set out to go across town with her child in her arms, but without that male escort. The woman was tragically intercepted by a Taliban officer and shot repeatedly in front of her child.

These and other atrocities will hopefully come to an end with the demise of the Taliban in Afghanistan. But the women and children of that country will continue to need our help to recover from this regime of terror. So far, the United States has been the largest provider of humanitarian aid to the Afghan people. We have contributed more than \$1 billion in aid since 1979. I applaud the President's recent decision to contribute an additional \$320 million in aid to the Afghan peo-

ple. There is need for humanitarian aid throughout Afghanistan, but the women and children need it the most.

Afghan women have been forbidden from activity outside their homes unless accompanied by a male relative and dressed in the now-familiar burqa. These women have not felt the sunlight touching their skin for many years. I was moved to see in the photographs the smile on women's faces as they took off their burqas and the sun touch their faces.

Attending a school or university has been out of the question for Afghan women. For years now, the only semblance of education has been for Afghan boys, who learned hatred at those schools. The girls have had no education. In many cases, Afghan women risked their lives to provide secret schools for girls in their homes.

Madam Speaker, children across Afghanistan are dying. Over one-third of Afghan children under 5 years of age suffer from malnutrition, leading to 85,000 needless deaths per year.

The United States has an opportunity to play an integral role in restoring humanity and decency to a country desperately in need of both health care and education after years under this regime. I applaud the President for his charge in leading this.

As the Taliban regime crumbles, the United States has a vested interest in the restoration of a civil society in Afghanistan. This will only be accomplished when healthy women and children are able to walk the streets without fear of assault, realize their potential, and develop the sense of worth to which they are entitled.

I would like to thank Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON for originally introducing this legislation in the Senate and my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE), for carrying this bill in the House. This measure was passed by unanimous consent in the Senate.

I would also like to thank President Bush for his strong support of women in Afghanistan, and women's rights generally. I am told the President is anxious to sign this bill.

I would also like to applaud our good friend, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD), who serves as co-chair, with me, of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues. This has been a top priority of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues.

The House leadership should also be thanked for making it a top priority on their agenda and putting it as the number one bill today, as should the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), chairman of the Committee on International Relations, who was instrumental.

Afghan women need to have a seat at the table when their government is rebuilt. We must pass this legislation now.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON).

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time; and I especially thank my good friends and colleagues, especially the women of the House and the Senate, who have taken the leadership on this important bill.

There have been lots of wonderful and sincere words on women's rights in the new Afghanistan. What is important about this bill is that it gives these words some teeth. And teeth will be needed. Anyone who looks at the unique oppression that women and children have suffered in Afghanistan will understand that they will not automatically be free when Afghanistan is liberated.

We should remind everybody concerned that the United States of America made victory in Afghanistan possible. We have an obligation, we ourselves, to help make that victory apply to women and children as well; and that is well beyond the indispensable restoration of freedom and equality.

After all, let us be real. Afghanistan is now one of the poorest societies in the world. People are hijacking trucks just to get enough to eat. Women and children do not act that way. To the victors always belong the spoils. And in a society that has been especially brutal to women, we have every reason to believe that will continue to be the case. The first to be denied in Afghanistan have been women and children. It is despicable how everything from food to health care have been denied women and children, who got what little there was left over, not what there was to be had.

What this bill essentially does is to target assistance for women and children. Otherwise, there is no reason to believe that automatically a society which has featured, above all, male macho will revert to equality for women and children. There has to be some march forward, some encouragement of equal opportunity. Men in Afghanistan, let us face it, are going to see the victory as theirs, not the victory of the United States of America, not the victory of the United Nations, and certainly not the victory of women and children.

Afghanistan must rebuild its own society on the basis of freedom and equality. However, we do have a right, I think we have earned the right to insist that these important goals apply not only to all the indigenous groups but to all the women and children in all the indigenous groups. We have an obligation to help reverse Taliban rule that has assured that women and children would be last. This is the way to help rebuild family life in Afghanistan.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I am pleased to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA), who joins me in thanking our men and women in the Armed Forces whose military offensive have helped to open the corridor for the humanitarian assistance to reach the people of Afghanistan which is spoken of in this bill.

□ 1445

(Mrs. MORELLA asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. MORELLA. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her leadership on this issue and for yielding me this time, and I rise in strong support of the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act because I believe it is a pivotal first step in the assurances that the United States must provide to ourselves and to the citizens of Afghanistan that women not be hidden from society in the future of Afghanistan. Children must be educated; girls and boys and women must not die at the second highest rate in the world from lack of maternal health care. The American people will accept no less than to ensure that women are given back the lives they knew before the Taliban and before the decades of civil war.

The liberation of Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, and other Afghan cities from Taliban rule is cause for celebration, but women are celebrating cautiously. Women were, in essence, banned by Taliban; ordered out of sight stripped of their basic freedoms. It remains to be seen, however, whether the women of Afghanistan will enjoy a fleeting moment in the sun or will truly be allowed to participate in the reconstruction of their country.

The Afghan Women and Children's Relief Act demonstrates a way that the United States can help to educate and provide health care for those in need. But we can also embrace the critically important role that women must play in Afghanistan's reconstruction. The First Lady's recent radio address, and the statements of Secretary of State Colin Powell and Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky demonstrate a commitment by the United States that Afghan women will not be marginalized as soon as this spotlight shifts.

Addressing women's needs and potential is not an academic question for us in the United States. We are paying a dear price for driving hatred and intolerance out of Afghanistan. We have every right to assume that the new government there and the society that emerges will repudiate the values of the Taliban and be a force for regional stability. What the future holds for Afghanistan largely depends on how its women, 54 percent of the Afghan population, are incorporated into the political, economic, and social life of the country.

I do ask this body to pass H.R. 3330 to promote educational opportunities for all children and access to health care, but I also want to point out that as a second step I invite all my colleagues to cosponsor H.R. 3342, which I have introduced along with the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY), and others, the Access For Afghan Women Act. It encourages the State Department and USAID to include women in negotiations to establish a new government in Afghanistan; recognize that

women's participation in the foundation of post-conflict stability and their own economic self-sufficiency is necessary; assist the voluntary resettlement and repatriation of refugees; and ensure that peacekeeping operations protect women from violence.

Madam Speaker, when hostilities cease, the Afghan people will have a precious chance to transform their war-torn country. The long-term stability is important to the United States; and both countries will benefit from recognizing and embracing the essential contributions that women can make and must make to the effort.

I applaud the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) for introducing H.R. 3330, and I encourage all Members to become engaged in the effort to do the right thing in Afghanistan for men, women, and children.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I believe, Madam Speaker, that one person can make a difference; and I believe that all of us serving in Congress, united, speaking with one voice, will make a significant difference to the people of Afghanistan. If we sit back and do nothing, knowing of the widespread pain and suffering of innocent women and children caught up in the madness of Taliban rule, then I fear we are almost as guilty as those who have perpetrated these crimes against humanity.

Now is our time to speak out, now is our moment in history to make a difference, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. BERKLEY) for yielding me these 2 minutes, because as we speak, delegates to the summit conference of Afghan groups are discussing a plan for an interim administration in Afghanistan. This would pave the way to a post-Taliban government that protects its citizens and safeguards the fundamental rights of women and children.

However, the road toward fulfillment of this goal begins with the people of Afghanistan, where reconstruction entails educations and empowering the beleaguered population so that they can reclaim control of their own destiny.

Under the Taliban, it was women and children who suffered the most from its abhorrent practices. Thus, to begin to overcome this grim legacy, we must ensure that our efforts give the necessary focus and assistance to programs providing education and relief services to Afghan women.

This bill focuses our humanitarian efforts to help ensure that U.S. assistance has the maximum impact, reaching those refugees and segments of Afghan society most affected by the Taliban's reign of terror.

Madam Speaker, it is a bill which reinforces the true essence and spirit of the United States, a country committed to the defense of those who are oppressed and subjugated, a Nation of caring people who now and in the past have led the world in providing humanitarian aid to the Afghan people. Let us lead the way once again by rendering our overwhelming support to the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of educational and health care rights for the women and children of Afghanistan. According to the Journal of the American Medical Association, the current health and human rights status of women in Afghanistan suggests that the combined effects of war-related trauma and human rights abuses by Taliban officials have had a profound effect on Afghan women's health. Moreover, support for women's human rights by Afghan women suggests that Taliban policies regarding women are incommensurate with the interests, needs, and health of Afghan women.

Before the Taliban regime took power, Afghan women were protected by law, had important freedoms and were active participants in society. In 1977, women comprised more than 15 percent of Afghanistan's highest legislative body. By the early 1990s women comprised 70 percent of schoolteachers. Women made up 50 percent of government workers. Forty percent of doctors in Kabul were women. Then came the Taliban and their destruction of the family.

For nearly 20 years, life in Afghanistan has been degraded by foreign and civil wars, but, since 1994, the regime of the Taliban militias has, by decree, officially taken away from women all rights to education, to work, and to health. Denial of freedom of movement renders Afghan women practically prisoners in their own homes, in the most extreme situation of material and moral destitution.

Until 1996, Afghan women were an integral part of society, they worked outside the home, they went to school, and chose their own doctor. Women constituted 50 percent of the student body in the universities, 60 percent of the civil servants, 75 percent of the hospitals workforce, a majority of teachers for boys' and girls' schools, and had businesses of their own. In the city of Kabul alone, there were around 17,000 women teachers. The 1964 and 1977 Constitutions of Afghanistan provided for gender equality and women were fully vested in the political process including the right to vote and get elected. Many women also wore either a chadari or scarf on a voluntary basis.

A child, who was born 12 or 13 years ago, is a young adult now. He was five years old when his father was killed, he was seven years old when his mother was raped and tortured in front of him, and he was only ten years old when his house was burned down to the ground. And now, he lives in a plastic tent with no place to go and, no one to turn to. The psychological impact of the past twenty years shall leave an immutable scar in over one million orphans' memories, unless they receive help now. Two generations of Afghans know only war, deprivation, homelessness, hunger, suffering, and loss, and their futures seem bleak in a world that has largely forgotten them.

In addition, there are estimated to be between 10 and 15 million land mines scattered in the landscape, exploding and injuring at a rate of 20 to 25 per day. They kill or injure predominantly children who are sometimes victims of mines disguised as toys. One out of four Afghan children dies before the age of five. Over one million Afghan children are orphans. Over 500,000 are disabled. Over 400,000 children are amputees, because of land mines. Over one million Afghan children are suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome.

History has demonstrated that supremacist and totalitarian regimes such as the Taliban militias maintained themselves in power only if the rest of the world remains silent. Human rights are founded on principles that all members of the human family are equal in dignity and rights. However, where discrimination against women and children exists, they are often excluded from effective participation in identifying and securing their rights. In recent years, some have argued that health, defined as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity," requires the protection and promotion of human rights. In Afghanistan, Taliban restrictions on Afghan women and children's freedom of expression, association, and movement deny women full participation in society and, consequently, from effectively securing equal opportunities for work, education, and access to health care.

I rise today to reiterate my support for the women and children of Afghanistan. Exclusion of women from employment, and women and children from education, jeopardizes their capacity to survive and participate in society. In my opinion, the health and human rights concerns of Afghan women and children are identified and the promotion of Afghan women and children's health is inseparable from the protection and promotion of human rights.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of S. 1573, the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001. This measure would authorize the President to provide educational and health care assistance to the women and children of Afghanistan from funds made available under the 2001 Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act for Recovery from and Response to Terrorist Attacks on the United States.

The oppression of Afghan women began when the regressive and repressive Taliban took control of Afghanistan. Under the regime of these Islamic fundamentalists, women became subject to a horrific system of gender apartheid whereby the rights enjoyed by women in so many other areas of the world, the rights they are entitled to, were virtually eliminated.

In Afghanistan, women are totally deprived of the right to an education, of the right to work, to travel, to health care, legal recourse, recreation, and of the right to being human. Islamic fundamentalism, instead, looks upon women as subhuman, fit only for household slavery and as a means of procreation. Women who violate the rules of conduct are beaten or brutalized, often in a public arena for the sake of entertainment.

This type of inhumane treatment will have a profound effect on the future of Afghanistan. As Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I am always concerned about the welfare of children here at home and abroad. Young

Afghan girls are also subject to the extreme restrictions imposed by the Taliban—restrictions to education, health care, and a normal way of life. Afghan children are some of the poorest and least healthy in the world. They have the highest mortality rates for children under five. These children have known only war, so they are suffering enormous trauma as well.

As the Taliban regime retreats from the major Afghanistan cities, the masses are rejoicing at the hope of renewed opportunities for the country. The talents and contributions of Afghan women will once again permeate the country. Prior to the Taliban regime, seventy percent of teachers were women, fifty percent of civil servants were women, and university students, and forty percent of doctors were women. This bill will assure that women and children are able to exercise their right to education and healthcare.

Madam Speaker, we, as Members of Congress, now have a tool to help restore the rights and human dignity of Afghan women and children. I urge my colleagues to support S. 1573.

Ms. SOLIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of S. 1573.

I am an educated woman. Not only do I hold an undergraduate degree, I also have earned a master's degree.

I am a healthy woman. Not only do I receive regular medical care from my physician, I also have access to superb emergency care if needed.

I am an independent woman. Not only do I have a challenging career, I also feel secure strolling the streets of this city alone.

Such is not the case, however, for the women and girls of Afghanistan.

During the days of Taliban rule, these women were denied education. They were denied health care. They were denied basic human freedoms.

In these emerging days of post-Taliban rule, it is our duty to ensure that these basic civil liberties are restored.

I commend the authors of S. 1573—and its companion legislation H.R. 3330—for their aim of providing education and health care opportunities to the women and children of Afghanistan. I especially applaud the desire to utilize women-led non-governmental organizations to achieve their goals.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this important piece of legislation.

Ms. HARMAN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 3330, the Afghan Women And Children Relief Act. This legislation will ensure that educational and health care assistance reaches the women and children of Afghanistan.

The Taliban's crimes against women have by now become well-known. Against the teaching of Islam and against the will of women across Afghanistan, the Taliban:

Ended education for girls over eight;
Shut down the women's university;
Forbade women doctors from practicing medicine; and

Then forbade women from receiving care from male doctors.

This deliberate, cruel treatment compounded the suffering of more than 20 years of war, extreme poverty, and drought in Afghanistan to create a dire health situation for women and children. Afghanistan has the

world's second worst maternal death rate during childbirth. One hundred sixty five out of every thousand babies die before their first birthday. The Taliban has done untold harm to its own people with these actions, and we must now help repair the damage done.

Rebuilding Afghanistan is part of the promise we have made to provide a comprehensive solution to the root causes of terrorism. We must offer hope to the people of Afghanistan, and we must work toward creating a stable Afghan government.

Aid to the women and children of Afghanistan will accomplish both of these goals. It will improve the lives of millions and increase opportunities for all members of Afghan society—including women—to have their voices heard.

The overwhelming bipartisan support by Congress today demonstrates that our support is no short-term political ploy. We are here for the long haul, and we expect to see results.

Ms. BERKLEY. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1573.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMPUTER SECURITY ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mrs. MORELLA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1259) to amend the National Institute of Standards and Technology Act to enhance the ability of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to improve computer security, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1259

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Computer Security Enhancement Act of 2001".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) The National Institute of Standards and Technology has responsibility for developing standards and guidelines needed to ensure the cost-effective security and privacy of sensitive information in Federal computer systems.

(2) The Federal Government has an important role in ensuring the protection of sensitive, but unclassified, information controlled by Federal agencies.

(3) Technology that is based on the application of cryptography exists and can be readily provided by private sector companies to ensure the confidentiality, authenticity, and integrity of information associated with public and private activities.

(4) The development and use of encryption technologies by industry should be driven by market forces rather than by Government imposed requirements.