

By Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CARNAHAN, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. SNOWE, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 1573. A bill to authorize the provision of educational and health care assistance to the women and children of Afghanistan; read the first time.

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER:

S. 1574. A bill to ensure that hospitals that participate in the medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act are able to appropriately recognize and respond to epidemics resulting from natural causes and bioterrorism; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DOMENICI (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, and Mr. BOND):

S. 1575. A bill to provide new discretionary spending limits for fiscal year 2002, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Governmental Affairs, jointly, pursuant to the order of August 4, 1977, with instructions that if one Committee reports, the other Committee have thirty days to report or be discharged.

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER:

S. 1576. A bill to amend section 1710 of title 38, United States Code, to extend the eligibility for health care of veterans who served in Southwest Asia during the Persian Gulf War; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. HUTCHISON:

S. 1577. A bill to amend the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Resources Conservation and Improvement Act of 2000 to authorize additional projects under that Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. INOUE, and Mr. REID):

S. 1578. A bill to preserve the continued viability of the United States travel industry; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. ENZI:

S. 1579. A bill to expand the applicability of daylight saving time; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. THURMOND:

S. 1580. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to issue a certificate of documentation with appropriate endorsement for employment in the coastwise trade for the vessel M/V Adios; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1581. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a business deduction for the purchase and installation of qualifying security enhancement property; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida:

S. 1582. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to delay for 1 year the mandatory beginning date for distributions from individual retirement plans, and to accelerate the effective date for modifications of the AGI limit for conversions of Roth IRAs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida:

S. 1583. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a refundable tax credit for recreational travel costs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRAIG (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 1584. A bill to provide for review in the Court of International Trade of certain determinations of binational panels under the North American Free Trade Agreement; to the Committee on Finance.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 1502

At the request of Mr. JEFFORDS, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. BREAUX) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1502, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a refundable tax credit for health insurance costs for COBRA continuation coverage, and for other purposes.

S. 1546

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1546, a bill to provide additional funding to combat bioterrorism.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CARNAHAN, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. SNOWE, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 1573. A bill to authorize the provision of educational and health care assistance to the women and children of Afghanistan; read the first time.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, no one in America can have read a newspaper or seen a television report about the plight of women in Afghanistan, and children, without being horrified. All 13 women of the Senate, led by myself and Senator MIKULSKI, are introducing a bill today that would authorize the President to give education, health care benefits, and other help to the women and children of Afghanistan, and to those in refugee camps, at the first opportunity we possibly can.

Women are not able to be educated under the Taliban. Women are not able to get health care under the Taliban. They are not able to work.

I am going to talk about some of the things that have happened. But my colleague from Maryland and my colleague from the State of Washington have other commitments, and I want to yield to my colleague from Maryland who is a cosponsor of this bill. Every woman in the Senate is sponsoring this bill: Senator BOXER, Senator COLLINS, Senator LANDRIEU, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator STABENOW, Senator CLINTON, Senator CANTWELL, Senator SNOWE, Senator MURRAY, Senator LINCOLN, Senator CARNAHAN, and of course my key cosponsor, Senator MIKULSKI from Maryland.

Mr. President, I yield the floor to the Senator from Maryland.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland is recognized.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President I rise to be a proud original cosponsor with Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON in introducing the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act. This act will provide education and assistance and health care to the women and children of Afghanistan.

I have stood with the Senator from Texas on other issues related to the

employment of women. We worked on economic security, pension security, health care opportunity, and educational opportunity for women and children as we worked on other issues related to the economic issues of our own States. Today I join with her, speaking on behalf of all of the women of the Senate—and I know all of the men of the Senate who will join with us—to see this crisis in Afghanistan is an opportunity to lift up the women and children from what has happened under the Taliban regime.

The Taliban regime represents repression of all people and particularly is most brutal to women and children. Taliban restrictions on women's participation in society make it nearly impossible for women to exercise their basic human rights. Restrictions on Afghan freedom of expression, association, and movement deny women full participation in their society. They don't even have access to the basic ability to work, go to school, and have health care.

The facts speak for themselves. Afghanistan has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. Only 5 percent of the rural people have access to safe drinking water. It is estimated that 42 percent of all deaths in Afghanistan, up until this terrible situation was because of contaminated food and water. Over one-third of the Afghan children under 5 suffer from malnutrition.

I could go on with the data from the World Health Organization and others. This is not about statistics, this is about the people of Afghanistan, particularly the women. Because their human rights have been denied, we need to work with our own Government and the NGOs to make sure, as we work to create a new world order in Afghanistan, that women and children will have access to education and health care.

Often people have said the women face these repressions under the guise of traditional customs. Let me say this: I don't believe that. In an article in the New York Times by scholars Jane Goodwin and Jessica Neuwirth entitled "The Rifle and the Veil," they point out that the very visible repression against women is not about religion, "it is a political tool for achieving and consolidating power."

I ask unanimous consent that that op-ed be printed in the RECORD at the end of my statement.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See Exhibit 1)

Mr. MIKULSKI. They point out that under the guise of religion, using a distorted view of the Koran, women are forced into subjugation. Women in Afghanistan can't work in their own professions. Women and girls can't go to school. Women who are capable of teaching in school are forbidden to do so. Widows, who are deprived of their ability to earn a living, have been beaten when they have resorted to begging to feed themselves and their children.

Afghan women and children have fled to escape this repression, but their plight as refugees is not much better. At the camps, either in Pakistan or other countries or in no-man's land, they depend on international assistance for survival, but their future is bleak. Secretary Albright went to those Afghan camps. I spoke to her about it. She talked about those dire circumstances. And she led the effort to help the Afghan people.

We now have an opportunity to create a new world order. This is what this legislation is all about. America will demonstrate our solidarity and our support to these women and children. As America leads the international coalition against al-Qaida and the Taliban regime, let's use this as the opportunity to help the women and children there.

Let me conclude by saying this. As our Government—and I salute President Bush on what he is doing—works to create a new government in Afghanistan, if we are having a new government, let us insist that there not be the old rules, the old repression. We respect religion, we respect the traditions of the Muslim Community, but I do not believe that includes denying health care and education to the women.

If we are going to have a new world order, let's start with making sure we help the women and children. I thank Senator HUTCHISON for taking the lead on this legislation.

On a personal note, I particularly want to thank Senator HUTCHISON at this time, when I have been displaced from my own office, for the wonderful courtesy she has extended to my staff to be able to work in some of her rooms at the Russell Building. I say to you, Senator HUTCHISON, not only has the space meant a lot to us, but so did your graciousness in making it available.

See, Mr. President, this is what the terrorists don't understand. They can't stop us. We are the red, white, and blue party. If you look at HUTCHISON, MIKULSKI, and the other 11 women of the Senate, the Taliban can't stop us from helping the women of the world. I yield the floor.

EXHIBIT 1

[From the New York Times, Oct. 19, 2001]

THE RIFLE AND THE VEIL

(By Jan Goodwin and Jessica Neuwirth)

Anyone who has paid attention to the situation of women in Afghanistan should not have been surprised to learn that the Taliban are complicit in terrorism. When radical Muslim movements are on the rise, women are the canaries in the mines. The very visible repression of forced veiling and loss of hard-won freedoms coexists naturally with a general disrespect for human rights. This repression of women is not about religion; it is a political tool for achieving and consolidating power.

Sher Abbas Stanakzai, then the Taliban regime's deputy foreign minister, admitted as much in a 1997 interview. "Our current restrictions of women are necessary in order to bring the Afghan people under control," he said. "We need these restrictions until people learn to obey the Taliban."

In the same way that many Islamic extremist crusades use the oppression of women to help them gain control over wider populations, the Taliban and Osama bin Laden are now employing the tactics of terrorism to gain control.

The Taliban did not start the oppression of Afghan women, nor have they been its only practitioners.

In 1989, Arab militants working with the Afghan resistance to the Soviet Union based in Peshawar, Pakistan—and helping to finance the resistance fighters—issued a fatwa, or religious ruling stating that Afghan women would be killed if they worked for humanitarian organizations. At that time, a third of the Afghan population of 15 million were displaced from their homes, and many were heavily dependent on humanitarian groups for food and other necessities. Among the 3.5 million of these refugees who were then living in Pakistan, many were war widows supporting their families by working for the aid groups. After the fatwa, Afghan women going to work were shot at and several were murdered. Some international aid groups promptly stopped employing Afghan women, and though many women were infuriated, most complied after being intimidated by the violent attacks. Soon afterward, another edict in Peshawar forbade Afghan women to "walk with pride" or walk in the middle of the street and said they must wear the hijab, the Arab black head and body covering and half-face veil. Again, most women felt they had no choice but to comply.

In 1990, a fatwa from Afghan leaders in Peshawar decreed that women should not attend schools or become educated, and that if they did, the Islamic movement would meet with failure. The document measured 2 feet by 3 feet to accommodate the signatures of about 200 mullahs and political leaders representing the majority of the seven main mujahedeen parties of Afghanistan. The leading school for Afghan girls in Peshawar, where many Afghan refugees still lived, was sprayed with Kalashnikov gunfire. It closed for months, and its principal was forced into hiding.

When an alliance of mujahedeen groups took over in Kabul in 1992, it forced women out of news broadcasting and government ministry jobs and required them to wear veils. But it was the Taliban who institutionalized the total oppression of women after Kabul fell to them four years later, and who required the total coverage of the now familiar burqa.

Now, as Afghans, Pakistanis and Americans look to the future of Afghanistan, most plans call for a broad based new government giving representation to all of Afghanistan's ethnic groups and major political parties, including the Taliban. No one, however, has called for the participation of women, even though women, after many years of war, now almost certainly make up the majority in the adult Afghan population.

Afghan women gradually gained rights in the first decades of 20th century. Women helped write their country's Constitution in 1964. They served in parliament and the cabinet and were diplomats, academics, professionals, judges and even army generals. All of this happened well before the Soviets arrived in 1979, with their much-touted claim of liberating Afghan women.

Many of the forces now opposing the Taliban include signatories of the later fatwas that deprived Afghan women of their rights. History is repeating itself.

Any political process that moves forward without the representation and participation of women will undermine any chances that the principles of democracy and human rights will take hold in Afghanistan. It will be the first clue that little has changed.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Maryland for her kind remarks. We are all in this, and one of the things we are trying to do is help our colleagues who still are out of their offices, who have not received mail for over a week, who do not have the places. We are happy to do that and especially because my colleague from Maryland has had two postal workers who have died at the Brentwood Station. At a time of huge crisis in her State, she is left without an office. We all want to back her and help her and help her constituents in every possible way.

I will take a few moments, because I deferred to the Senator from Maryland, to talk about some of the statistics in Afghanistan that have caused us to highlight this issue. We have seen repression of women in other countries, but we have never seen the repression that is happening in Afghanistan today. The pictures of women being beaten on the streets because their burqa was opened a little bit by the wind, or beaten on the streets because the religion police heard a clicking of heels of shoes on the sidewalk and believed the woman must be wearing high-heeled shoes—this is unbelievable.

In one account I read in a journal, a widow who did not have a male relative to escort her to the hospital watched her small son die of dehydration. She tried to make the journey to the hospital by herself but was beaten by the religion police as she left her home.

This is not a country that should be allowed, with the Taliban, to do this to its own people. That is why we are standing here today to say we want to come in and make sure the women and children of this country have opportunities for health care, for education. We are not trying to put our religion on other people. We are not trying to say you have to do it our way. But there are some basic human rights that everyone accepts, and they are that a woman is equal to a man, that a woman should be able to have basic health care, she should be able to take her children to see a physician, she herself should be able to go to a physician. That is not the case today in Afghanistan. She can't see a physician because she is not allowed to see a male physician and the woman physicians are gone because the Taliban will not allow women to work.

Afghanistan today has a 16-percent infant mortality rate and a 25-percent children mortality rate.

We cannot allow that to stand. That is why the women of the Senate are standing together to say when the aid comes in that we want to make sure the women get the aid in health care, that they are allowed to be educated, and that they will be allowed to support themselves and their children in a respectful way, and not be required to beg on the streets and sell themselves into prostitution, which is happening today.

That is why we feel so strongly about this and why we are standing together and hoping that we can pass this bill with the help of the Foreign Relations Committee very quickly—so the women and children in the refugee camps in Afghanistan know that when America helps, it will be help for them too because they are also equal people.

I yield up to 3 minutes to the Senator from Michigan.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Michigan, Ms. STABENOW, is recognized for 3 minutes.

Ms. STABENOW. Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to, first, thank my colleague, Senator HUTCHISON, for her leadership and for the eloquent words of Senator MIKULSKI who spoke earlier.

This is a wonderful example for working together. We are in the Chamber today not as Democrats or Republicans but as the women of the Senate speaking because we believe it is our responsibility to speak up on behalf of the women and children of Afghanistan who are being terrorized by their own government, the Taliban.

Senator HUTCHISON spoke very eloquently about the statistics and about what is happening. I am honored to represent in Michigan a very large Muslim-American population. They assure me this is not Islam. It is not the words of the Koran. This is an extremist, perverted group of people who have twisted the words. They hide behind the religion, which is a very perverse and twisted view of the world that is disenfranchising half of their population.

We come together to indicate that, as they move to a new coalition government, we expect and we will demand on behalf of the women and the children of the world that the women and children of Afghanistan are not left out of this new government; that the women who are physicians in Afghanistan will be allowed to treat their patients; that the country will benefit from the women who have been educated and who have the skills to help rebuild that country; and, that we empower the next generation of girls by making sure they are educated and will have the skills and knowledge they need to help rebuild the country of Afghanistan.

We know that once the Taliban has been defeated there will be much work to be done. If they continue to exclude half of their population, they are not only committing a travesty against them but they are placing their own country in jeopardy by not using the talents and the abilities that are there.

I, once again, thank all of my colleagues. It is wonderful to see everyone in the Chamber and to see a unified effort. I know we will continue to stay focused until we make sure the outrageous violence and atrocities that have been committed are stopped, and that the women and children of Afghanistan have the opportunity to live and be healthy and successful in their country.

I yield the floor.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from Maine.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maine, Ms. COLLINS, is recognized for 2 minutes.

Ms. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I commend my colleague from Texas and my colleague from Maryland for their extraordinary leadership in shining the spotlight on a very dark, dark part of the Earth.

We, the women of the Senate, represent different States, different ideologies, and are from different backgrounds, but we are united in our determination to expose the horrendous treatment of the women and children of Afghanistan. We are determined to help them in every way possible.

It was our colleague from Louisiana, MARY LANDRIEU, who first brought to my attention an excellent CNN documentary called "Women Behind the Veil," which demonstrated the appalling treatment by the Taliban of the women of Afghanistan. Women are not allowed to be educated.

That, to me, says it all because by denying women an education, you are denying them knowledge, awareness, and opportunity.

I am happy to join with the Senator from Texas, my colleague, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and the Senator from Maryland, my colleague, Ms. MIKULSKI, in this excellent initiative. I hope all of our colleagues will join in supporting this legislation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Maine for her remarks, and the Senator from Michigan.

I yield 2 minutes to the Senator from California.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from California, Mrs. BOXER, is recognized for 2 minutes.

Mrs. BOXER. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

Let me add my thanks to Senators HUTCHISON and MIKULSKI for their leadership on this important piece of legislation. Let me pledge to my friend from Texas and my friend from Maryland, and all the women in the Senate who are behind this, as the only woman on the Foreign Relations committee, that I will work with them to ensure we move this forward to markup.

The committee has a very good record when it comes to dealing with this issue. In 1999, Senator Brownback and I coauthored a resolution condemning the practices of the Taliban. It went through the Senate very fast. We pointed out some of the issues that my colleagues have pointed out today about the treatment of women. It said the United States should never recognize the Taliban if they continue this type of treatment of women.

Yesterday, in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, Senator BROWNBACK and I were able to pass two

amendments: one that called for women to be part of a new postwar Afghanistan government; and, second, a training program.

We actually funded that for women leaders in Afghanistan. But unless we pass this bill ensuring the health of the women in Afghanistan who have been denied health care—there is a law under the Taliban that says a woman may not go to a male doctor. She may not go to a male doctor. Yet they have said to the women doctors that they can no longer practice and they can no longer learn medicine.

What kind of situation is this? Women are forced to wear the burqas. You see them more and more on television. I put one on to get the sense of how it feels. I say to my friend from Texas that it feels as if you are nonexistent. It feels as if you are a nobody. You are no one.

In closing, let me say that this important piece of legislation must be heard soon by the Foreign Relations Committee. We must act on it. We must ensure that women who have been mistreated and who have been made, in essence, invisible must get the health care they deserve as well as their children. To carry that out, the Boxer-Brownback amendment which we agreed to yesterday must be part of an emerging new government.

My thanks to my friend from Texas. This is a very strong bill. It has bipartisan support. I am proud to be a cosponsor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from California for her efforts, along with Senator BROWNBACK, to bring the plight of Afghan women to the forefront. The bill that we have before us I hope can be moved expeditiously. I want any dollars that go to Afghanistan or to the refugees who are Afghans in camps outside the country to help these women who have been so abused.

I am stunned at some of the statistics. Forty-two percent of all deaths in Afghanistan are due to diarrheal diseases caused by contaminated food and water. This is 2001. Contaminated food and water is the most preventable kind of affliction that we could ever imagine. We have clean food and water. Forty-two percent of the people who die from something so preventable is just stunning.

As we have said, before the Taliban came, women could be educated. Schools were coeducational. Women accounted for 7 percent of the teaching force. Women represented 50 percent of government workers, and 40 percent of the physicians were women. But today, the Taliban prohibits women from working in any occupation.

Clearly, the Afghan people, before the Taliban, had basic human rights. The women and children were treated at least with respect. But when the Taliban came in and prevented women

from being educated, prevented women from working, and prevented them from having health care, you wonder what kind of beasts are these? What kind of beasts would do this to other human beings? What kind of beast would let a little child die because the mother had no one to escort them to the hospital?

We cannot conceive of this kind of terrorism to the people who are their own people, much less what they have harbored against America.

So, Mr. President, I am proud the women of the Senate are coming together to speak for the women of Afghanistan, to say that our dollars are going to come and help rebuild Afghanistan.

We have no problem with the people of Afghanistan. We feel sorry for the people of Afghanistan living under this regime of the Taliban. That is why we are trying to root the Taliban out because they have harbored terrorists who have killed innocent Americans and innocent people from around the world. But when we do, we are going to make sure that women and children have the basic respect and the basic human rights that everyone in the world should have, and American dollars coming in will be dollars that will help bring a quality of life that is the basic decency that we all expect in our lives.

I know the bill will stay at the desk. I hope to work with the members of the Foreign Relations Committee to have an expedited procedure.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I rise today with the other 13 women Senators and Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON of Texas to introduce a bill that will authorize the use of existing funds in the foreign operations bill for the education and health care services of Afghan women.

There is no doubt that the Taliban regime has been particularly heinous to the women of Afghanistan. Women are not allowed in public, girls are not sent to school, and the basic human rights that are afforded to women across the world, especially women here in America, are denied.

The record is clear, women and girls in Afghanistan are abused regularly by the Afghan Government. It is my hope that the monies made available by this bill will help ameliorate the lives of the Afghan women by bettering their educational opportunities and increasing their access to necessary and vital health care services.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise this morning alongside my colleagues Senators HUTCHISON and MIKULSKI to voice my support for the Afghan Women and Children's Relief Act of 2001, which I am proud to cosponsor.

This bill authorizes the President to provide educational and health care assistance to the women and children living in Afghanistan and as refugees in neighboring countries. This is an important new front in our war against terrorism—and for the people of Af-

ghanistan—and a much overdue one at that.

For over twenty years Afghanistan has known little but violence, bloodshed, and civil war. It has seen mass killings, disappearances, land mines, child soldiers, and one of the world's largest refugee outflows and internally displaced populations in history.

And, since the Taliban takeover in 1996, Afghanistan has also been witness to a horrifying war against women.

Until the accession of the Taliban women in Afghanistan were involved in public life, had access to education, were able to travel freely within their own country, and had access to jobs. Indeed, many were professionals—doctors, nurses, and teachers.

But under the Taliban women have been systematically denied access to education and health care. They have been denied access to employment. They have been forced to wear burkas, an all-encompassing garment, if they go out in public—something they can only do if accompanied by a male relative. Indeed, without a male relative to accompany them, many are even denied access to humanitarian aid and food assistance.

In short, under the Taliban Afghan women have been systematically denied their basic and fundamental human rights.

At the same time Afghanistan has witnessed a burgeoning humanitarian crisis. Two decades of war have destroyed or degraded much of the housing stock in Afghanistan's major cities. Afghan war-widows have been forced to become the primary bread-winners for their families and children, but, under Taliban law, are often prevented from working. As a result, tens of thousands of Afghan children are undernourished or malnourished. Most Afghans do not have access to safe drinking water. It has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. Millions of Afghans have fled to neighboring countries, and millions more are internally displaced within their own country.

I first became concerned about the plight of Afghan women five years ago, during the 105th Congress, when, shortly after the Taliban takeover of Kabul, I first started to hear the horror stories of what was transpiring in a country which at that time rarely made the news section of American newspapers.

As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee I held a public hearing on women's rights in Afghanistan to learn more about what was happening, and I introduced legislation which condemned the Taliban, called on the United States to provide additional humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan, and stated that the U.S. government should not recognize any government of Afghanistan which systematically maltreated women.

Alongside a handful of my colleagues—Senators BOXER and BROWNBACK foremost among them—I have continued to try to bring attention to

this issue in the years since, addressing it in letters to the President, addressing it every year in statements on International Woman's Day, cosponsoring further legislation in the Senate, and, earlier this year, urging the Administration to consider additional emergency assistance for the people of Afghanistan, with an emphasis on the special needs of women and children.

For too many years, however, all too few people listened.

But I would argue that how a regime treats its women and children can be seen as an early warning indicator that can alert us to larger systemic problems that demand our attention.

Indeed, as I stated before the Foreign Relations Committee in addressing this issue in 1998, "The conditions of near-anarchy that have resulted from the sectional fighting and civil war have created in Afghanistan an environment well-suited for the training of terrorists and the production and shipment of drugs. It is no coincidence that Osama bin Laden has chosen Afghanistan as a base of operations . . ."

Today, tragically, we have all become experts on Afghanistan and its tumultuous recent history.

The "Afghan Women and Children's Relief Act of 2001" is an important statement of the United States commitment to the future of Afghanistan and its people. A commitment to make sure that Afghanistan's women and children, who have borne the brunt of the Taliban's brutality for the past half-decade, will receive the assistance they need, and have the opportunity for a future.

As we continue to push forward in our effort to combat international terrorism I can think of few tasks more valuable than making sure that Afghanistan will never again face conditions which have made it an ideal base for terrorist operations, and that the people of Afghanistan will never again face the human suffering that they have been subject to for the past two decades.

I urge my colleague to join with Senators HUTCHISON and MIKULSKI in support of this important piece of legislation.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise today in support of this very important piece of legislation. I would like to commend my colleagues, Senators HUTCHISON, MIKULSKI, and BOXER, for their leadership not only on this bill, but also in these issues generally. Women and children make up 80 percent of refugees worldwide. In Afghanistan, twenty years of civil war, political turmoil, continuing human rights violations and recent drought have already displaced more than five million of the Afghani population. Some four million refugees are displaced in neighboring countries and across the world, while another one million people are internally displaced within Afghanistan. Before September 11, severe drought had brought the country to the verge of famine and existing Taliban

restrictions on relief agencies had severely hampered the delivery of assistance and civilian access to basic services. Approximately 1 million people, the majority of them women and children, will die of starvation if aid is not given to them before the winter arrives.

In addition to being denied physical needs, the women and children of Afghanistan have long been denied the freedom and respect that are also necessary to sustain human life. The oppressive rule of the Taliban removes from their lives the very freedoms we embrace, education, free speech, and the opportunity to make a living. The Taliban restrictions are so severe that they make it nearly impossible for women to exercise these and other basic human rights. Under this rule, the very lives of women are in danger. There are hundreds of stories of women being executed, raped, or beaten. Just recently, RAWA reported that at least four women in the last six months were burned alive by their husbands for their alleged infringements of Taliban law. They received no trial for these offenses and their husbands were praised, not punished for these horrible acts.

The women members of the Senate and many of our colleagues have called on the U.S. to act to bring an end to these violations of basic human rights. Over the past several years, Senator BOXER, myself and others have called on the Foreign Relations Committee to take immediate action to ratify the Convention to End Discrimination Against Women, a treaty designed to stamp out this type of behavior worldwide. Over the last two months, Americans have been reminded of the importance of their freedoms. Many are prepared to die to protect them for all Americans. Yet if we are to be the true and lasting democracy that we hope to be, democracy and freedom cannot end at our borders. We must work to ensure that men, women and children everywhere know what it is like to be truly free.

This bill recognizes that the war to preserve freedom must be fought on two fronts. First, through military action designed to bring an end to oppressive rule. Secondly, through targeted humanitarian aid designed to provide education, health care, food and support to the citizens so that they may one day form the base of a new and free society. In providing this type of support to the women and children of Afghanistan, the United States is protecting the principles upon which this country was founded, that each and every individual in this world is "endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are, life liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Again, I am proud to join Senators HUTCHISON and MIKULSKI in support of this important legislation and I urge that we pass it into law as soon as possible.

AFGHANISTAN WOMEN AND CHILDREN RELIEF ACT OF 2001

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues today to again raise the plight of women, girls and children in Afghanistan. I commend Senator HUTCHISON and Senator MIKULSKI for taking the initiative to introduce the Afghan Women and Children Relief Act of 2001.

Many of us have been working since the Taliban seized control in Afghanistan to give voice to women who have been silenced, beaten, harassed and even executed.

Afghanistan has been in a cycle of war and conflict for more than twenty years. These two decades have been hard on the Afghani people but especially difficult for women, young girls and children. When the Taliban seized control in Afghanistan, the plight of women, girls and children went from a crisis existence to a catastrophic one.

As noted in our bill and mentioned by my colleagues, women in Kabul, Afghanistan represented 70 percent of the teachers when the Taliban came to power. Women in Kabul represented 50 percent of the public employees and more than 40 percent of the medical professionals including doctors. Women students made up 50 percent of the student body at Kabul universities.

Throughout Afghan society women served their country, their culture and their families as scientists and professors, as members of parliament, as leaders of their communities. The Taliban changed all of that quickly and cruelly with little consideration for the rights of women or the many roles played in Afghan society by women.

The Taliban now bans women from working as teachers, doctors or for that matter, in any profession.

The Taliban closed schools to women. Not just the teachers. But to all young girls. It is against the law for a young girl to attend a school in Afghanistan. To attend school, women and young girls in Afghanistan risk floggings, death by stoning, or single shot execution.

Women cannot leave their homes without the heavy veil style clothing. They must be accompanied by a male. Women must not laugh or make noise in public. The punishment for violating Taliban law as we have now seen in several informative documentary pieces can be deadly. Many of my constituents have contacted me shocked and outraged at the video clip of the woman ushered into a soccer stadium to the jeers of a crowd. She's forced onto the playing field on her knees where she is quickly executed by a single shot from a rifle.

Women in Afghanistan, every generation now living, is suffering under the Taliban rule. Some have been forced from meaningful lives to absolute poverty. Others now see no future in Afghanistan for themselves and their children. Still others, war widows and elderly women, are forced into prostitution or forced to sell all of their possessions to feed themselves.

Yesterday, we passed the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. I served on this subcommittee for a long time and its many programs offer hope to women in Afghanistan. The Afghan Women and Children's Relief Act notes many of these programs.

We provide assistance to help educate and immunize young girls in the world. We provide assistance in the form of maternal health care and family planning in the most needy areas of the world. We support microcredit lending, particularly to women led households, in many impoverished areas of the world.

We support international organizations from UNICEF and other UN entities to non-governmental organizations based here in the United States and throughout the world. Our bill would include Afghani women and girls in these vital programs.

As we look to aid women, young girls and children in Afghanistan, we must not assume that simply ending the Taliban rule will cure the problem. We walked away from Afghanistan when the Cold War ended, we cannot do that again when the Taliban goes. We must ensure that women and children are fully protected in the Afghan government which will eventually follow the Taliban. Women in Afghanistan must be brought back—fully brought back—into Afghani society. All of Afghanistan will be better when women are allowed again to teach, to serve publicly, and to treat illness.

Mr. President, I thank my colleagues for raising this issue. I join them as an original cosponsor of this legislation and I urge its prompt passage. Further, I call on all of our colleagues to support the appropriate funding levels which will ultimately make a great difference in the lives of Afghani women, young girls and children.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today in support of a bill sponsored by Senators HUTCHISON and MIKULSKI that would authorize the use of Federal resources to increase the education, health and living standards for women and children in living in Afghanistan, and as refugees in neighboring countries. Importantly, it also specifies that this assistance is provided in a way that protects and promotes the human rights of all people in Afghanistan.

Allow me to begin by praising the work and leadership of my colleague from Texas, Senator HUTCHISON, on behalf of women both at home and abroad. This legislation is entirely consistent with her strong beliefs and leadership to extend opportunities to women throughout the world, and I am proud to join her in support of this effort.

It is simply unconscionable that we should even have to consider such a measure in this day and age. But there should be no mistake, the facts show that Congressional support for women in Afghanistan is nothing short of a moral imperative.