

General Accounting Office and any other such expert opinion as may be necessary in conducting its review of information provided by nominees.

D. Report on the Nominee. After a review of all information pertinent to the nomination, a confidential report on the nominee shall be made by the designated investigators to the chairman and the ranking minority member and, upon request, to any other member of the Committee. The report shall summarize the steps taken by the Committee during its investigation of the nominee and identify any unresolved or questionable matters that have been raised during the course of the inquiry.

E. Hearings. The Committee shall conduct a public hearing during which the nominee shall be called to testify under oath on all matters relating to his or her suitability for office, including the policies and programs which he or she will pursue while in that position. No hearing shall be held until at least 72 hours after the following events have occurred: The nominee has responded to pre-hearing questions submitted by the Committee; and the report required by subsection (D) has been made to the chairman and ranking minority member, and is available to other members of the Committee, upon request.

F. Action on confirmation. A mark-up on a nomination shall not occur on the same day that the hearing on the nominee is held. In order to assist the Committee in reaching a recommendation on confirmation, the staff may make an oral presentation to the Committee at the mark-up, factually summarizing the nominee's background and the steps taken during the pre-hearing inquiry.

G. Application. The procedures contained in subsections (C), (D), (E), and (F) of this rule shall apply to persons nominated by the President to positions requiring their full-time service. At the discretion of the chairman and ranking minority member, those procedures may apply to persons nominated by the President to serve on a part-time basis.

RULE 9. PERSONNEL ACTIONS AFFECTING COMMITTEE STAFF

In accordance with Rule XLII of the Standing Rules of the Senate and the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (P.L. 104-1), all personnel actions affecting the staff of the Committee shall be made free from any discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, state of physical handicap, or disability.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today I'd like to commemorate International Women's Day. This day is an occasion to honor the many and diverse achievements and contributions of women worldwide, and the progress that they have made toward equal rights. It is also an important time to reflect upon the hardships and injustices that millions of women still face, and to reaffirm our commitment to take actions to overcome them and to further women's progress.

For nearly a century, women in communities across the globe have been uniting on March 8th to celebrate their achievements and to bring attention to their fight for equality, justice and peace. In that time women have made great strides toward equal participation in all spheres of life, and at all levels of decision-making.

Here in the United States, more women are earning college degrees, entering the workforce and starting their own businesses than ever before. Economic opportunities for women are expanding and home ownership is up. Women are playing a greater role in shaping local, state and federal policies that affect their families and them, as they are more active in the political process at all levels. The recent 2000 elections resulted once again in a record number of women serving in the U.S. Senate, House of Representatives and as Governors of States. We continue to see more women in top positions of federal agencies and in President's Cabinets. For the first time in American History, we have a woman, Condoleezza Rice, serving as our National Security Advisor to the President.

Despite these impressive strides, much work still needs to be done. Women are still vastly under-represented at all levels of government. Although the gender wage-gap has narrowed since 1963, when Congress mandated equal pay for equal work, unfair wage disparities continue to be a problem. Wage discrimination is costing families thousands of dollars each year. These financial losses, coupled with a lack of affordable quality child care, forces many women to still have to make difficult choices about their children and their career.

Just this week, women lost an important battle when the U.S. Senate voted to overturn the Occupational Health and Safety Administration's final ergonomics standard. This standard would have helped protect the 1.8 million Americans workers who suffer workplace injuries caused by repetitive motions. These injuries are particularly prevalent among women because many of the jobs held predominately by women require repetitive motions or repetitive heavy lifting. So we must recognize that there is still much work to be done in the area of equal rights for women.

Today we must also consider the achievements and challenges of women abroad. As Ranking Member of the African Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, I have had the opportunity to learn more about the status of women on that continent. Last month, as I traveled to the West African countries of Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Senegal, I was reminded of the tremendously important role that women play in the political, economic, and social fabric of that region and so many others. I met Nigerian women who have been prodding officials to face the HIV/AIDS crisis head-on; women working to build peace in Sierra Leone, and women devoted to improving girls' education in Senegal. I am pleased to celebrate their achievements and contributions today.

However, millions of women in Africa and throughout the world face a great uphill battle before they will achieve full equality. Women are still more

likely than men to be poor, malnourished and illiterate, and have less access to health care, financial credit, property ownership, job training and employment. In some places women are still denied the very basic right to vote, to let their voices be heard.

Many girls and women around the world face tragic human rights abuses daily, as victims of domestic violence, and exploitive practices such as illegal trafficking for slavery or prostitution. In some countries, deplorable "honor killings" are still prevalent, where women are murdered by their male relatives for actions—perceived or real—that are thought to bring dishonor on their families. In regions of conflict, rape and assaults on women are used as weapons of war, and perpetrators are rarely prosecuted.

For years, mass rape and sexual crimes have been considered normal occurrences of war, and only recently have these heinous crimes started to get the international attention that they deserve. An important victory for girls and women occurred last month when the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague, convicted three men for rape, torture and enslavement during the war in Bosnia. The international court set an important precedent by defining rape as a crime against humanity.

There are many important ways that we can further protect women's human rights and improve the status of women and their families both domestically and internationally. One of the ways that the United States Senate can work towards that end is by acting upon the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW. Two decades have passed since the U.S. signed this important treaty, and yet it remains pending before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I once again call upon the committee to hold hearings on CEDAW so that the Senate can offer its advice and consent on this treaty.

The U.S. can also support efforts to ensure that it is devoting significant resources to battling HIV/AIDS which is killing millions of women and their families, in Africa and other regions of the world. Congress can pass legislation such as the Paycheck Fairness Act to provide more effective remedies to victims of salary discrimination on the basis of gender. These are only a few of many initiatives that will impact women's lives.

So, in closing as we mark International Women's Day, today and in the future, it is important for us to remember both the accomplishments of women and the many injustices that remain, and for the United States and the international community to reaffirm their commitment to promoting gender equity and human rights across the globe.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today is an important day for women

and girls around the world. Today, we stand firmly on the side of basic human rights. Today, we rededicate ourselves to a better tomorrow. Today, we state loud and clear to those who seek to do women harm, "No more." Today is March 8, 2001, International Women's Day.

Having spent many years trying to raise awareness about the need for equality for women and girls in the United States and around the world, I am encouraged by the advancements we have made since the United Nations first designated March 8th as International Women's Day in 1975. Nevertheless, we still have a long ways to go and I would like to take this time to discuss several critical issues that I believe are vital to the lives of women and girls and require U.S. leadership: international family planning, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, CEDAW, sex trafficking, rape as an instrument of war, and the plight of women in Afghanistan.

Every Senator, I believe, is well aware of the issue of United States assistance to international family planning organizations. There have been few issues in recent years that have been more debated, with people of good intentions on both sides of the issue. Consequently, I was dismayed when President Bush opted to start his administration by reinstating the "global gag rule" restricting United States assistance to international family planning organizations.

Do we not understand the importance of family planning assistance? There are now more than 6 billion people on this Earth. The United Nations estimates this figure could be 12 billion by the year 2050. Almost all of this growth will occur in the places least able to bear up under the pressures of massive population increases. The brunt will be in developing countries lacking the resources needed to provide basic health or education services.

Only if women have access to such educational and medical resources needed to control their reproductive destinies and their health will they be able to better their own lives and the lives of their families.

No one should doubt that international family planning programs reduce poverty, improve health, and raise living standards around the world; they enhance the ability of couples and individuals to determine the number and spacing of their children.

Nevertheless, in recent years these programs have come under increasing partisan attack by the anti-choice wing of the Republican party, despite the fact that no U.S. international family planning funds are spent on international abortion.

All American women, as they consider their own reproductive rights, should consider the aim and intent of a policy in which the reproductive rights of American women are approached one way, and those of women in the developing world another.

Since President Bush is unlikely to change his mind, I urge my colleagues to support the Global Democracy Act of 2001, introduced by my friend and colleague from California, Senator Boxer. This important piece of legislation will allow foreign Non-Governmental Organizations that receive U.S. family planning assistance to use non-U.S. funds to provide legal abortion services, including counseling and referrals, and will lift the restrictions on lobbying and advocacy.

The United States must reclaim its leadership role on international family planning and reproductive issues. The United States must renew its commitment to help those around the world who need and want our help and assistance. On International Women's Day, I urge my colleagues to support the Global Democracy Act of 2001.

Last year, I was proud to join a bipartisan group of women Senators in co-sponsoring Senate Resolution 237, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee should hold hearings on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and the full Senate should act on the Convention by March 9, 2000.

That day came and went and here we are a year later, still waiting for the Senate to act.

In fact, women have been waiting for over 20 years for the Senate to ratify the convention on discrimination against women. The United States actively participated in drafting the convention and President Carter signed it on July 17th, 1980.

In 1994, the Foreign Relations Committee recommended by bipartisan vote that the convention be approved with qualifications, but acted too late in the session for the Convention to be considered by the full Senate.

Given the length of the delay and the level of scrutiny, one might expect the convention on discrimination against women to be a technically demanding international agreement. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In fact, the convention is simple. It requires states to take all appropriate steps to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life, law, education, employment, health care, commercial transactions, and domestic relations.

One hundred and sixty-one countries have ratified the convention. Of the world's democracies, only the United States has yet to ratify this fundamental document. Indeed, even countries we regularly censure for human rights abuses China—the People's Republic of Laos, Iraq—have either signed or agreed in principle.

In our failure to ratify the convention on discrimination against women, we now keep company with a select few: Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Afghanistan among them. Remember, as the old saying goes, we are judged by the company we keep. Is this how we want to be known when it comes to de-

fending the human rights of those unable to defend themselves?

In failing to ratify this convention on discrimination against women, we risk losing our moral right to lead in the human rights revolution. By ratifying the convention, we will demonstrate our commitment to promoting equality and to protecting women's rights throughout the world. By ratifying the convention, we will send a strong message to the international community that the U.S. understands the problems posed by discrimination against women, and we will not abide by it. By ratifying the convention, we reestablish our credentials as a leader on human rights and women's rights.

Today, as we commemorate International Women's Day, I call on my colleagues in the Senate to move forward and ratify Convention on discrimination against women.

The coerced trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation is an ugly, disturbing, and, unfortunately, growing practice that demands our attention.

Over 1 million people are trafficked each year around the world, with 50,000 going to the United States. Trafficking generates billions of dollars a year and now constitutes the third largest source of profits for organized crime, behind only drugs and guns.

These criminal groups prey upon women from poor countries who suffer from poverty, war, and hopelessness and desperately want a chance at a better life. They are enticed by promises of good paying jobs in richer countries as models, au pairs, dancers, and domestic workers.

Once the women fall victim to the these gangs they are forced into labor, have their passports seized, and are subjected to beatings, rapes, starvation, forced drug use, and confinement.

These victims have little or no legal protection. They travel on falsified documents or enter by means of inappropriate visas provided by traffickers. When and if discovered by the police, these women are usually treated as illegal aliens and deported. Even worse, laws against traffickers who engage in forced prostitution, rape, kidnaping, and assault and battery are rarely enforced. The women will not testify against traffickers out of fear of retribution, the threat of deportation, and humiliation for their actions.

I am shocked and appalled that this horrible and degrading practice continues. The United States must act as a leader to rally the international community to put a stop to the trafficking of women and girls. I am proud that the 106th Congress passed, and President Clinton signed into law, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. Among other things, the bill: directs the Secretary of State to provide an annual report to Congress listing countries that do and do not comply with minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; establishes an Interagency Task Force

to Monitor and Combat Trafficking; provides assistance to foreign countries for programs and activities to meet the minimum international standards for the elimination of trafficking; withholds U.S. non-humanitarian assistance to countries that do not meet minimum standards against trafficking and are not making efforts to meet minimum standards, unless continued assistance is deemed to be in the U.S. national interest; and increases penalties for those engaged in sex trafficking.

In addition, the fiscal year 2001 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act earmarked at least \$1.35 million for the Protection Project to study international trafficking, prostitution, slavery, debt bondage, and other abuses of women and children.

These are significant steps, but much work needs to be done. We must enforce the laws we have passed and we must consider new laws to protect victims and bring traffickers to justice. On International Women's Day, I urge my colleagues to continue the fight against the sexual trafficking of women and girls.

Rape as an instrument of war is an issue which, in recent years, has been of increasing concern to me.

Rape is no longer an isolated by-product of war; it is increasingly a tool to advance war aims. In recent years in Bosnia, Rwanda, and East Timor soldiers and militiamen used rape on an organized, systematic, and sustained basis to further their goal of ethnic cleansing. In some cases, women were kidnaped, interned in camps and houses, forced to do labor, and subjected frequent rape and sexual assault.

I was pleased that the United Nations, in setting up the war crime tribunals for the Balkans and Rwanda, recognized rape as a war crime and a crime against humanity.

Nevertheless, I was very disappointed by the repeated failure of the international community, especially in the former Yugoslavia, to see that those who were indicted for perpetrating these crimes were brought to justice. It appeared that the major step forward taken by the creation of the tribunals would be nullified by inaction.

Finally, on February 22, 2001, the international tribunal in The Hague sentenced three Bosnian Serbs to prison for rape during the Bosnian war. I was very pleased the court took this step. Clearly, there is still much work to be done. Estimates are that up to 20,000 women in Yugoslavia were systematically raped as part of a policy of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Many perpetrators still remain at large.

Nevertheless, the court has stated loud and clear that those who use rape as an instrument of war will no longer be able to escape justice. They will be arrested, tried, and convicted. As Judge Florence Mumba of Zambia stated, "Lawless opportunists should expect no mercy, no matter how low their position in the chain of command may be."

I commend the victims who courageously came forward to confront their attackers and offer testimony that helped lead to the convictions. The international community, and women in particular, owe them a debt of gratitude.

On International Women's Day, I urge the Administration and the international community to join me in continuing the fight to end the practice of rape as an instrument of war, and to pursue justice for its victims.

Perhaps nowhere in the world today is there a clearer test of our commitment of the cause of women's rights than Afghanistan.

To put it simply, I am shocked and dismayed at the treatment of women in Afghanistan by the Taliban. Afghan women have been banned from work and school and are largely confined in their homes behind darkened windows. They are required to wear full-length veils, or burka, when in public and must be accompanied by a male member of the family. In addition, access to medical services has been dramatically reduced. Widows are not allowed to work and must beg to subsist.

The women of Afghanistan, who have seen their families destroyed by war, are now having their economic life and their fundamental human rights stripped away, and the violations of Afghan women's basic human rights have pushed an already war-torn and war-weary Afghanistan to the brink of disaster.

The suffering of Afghan women and girls must not be ignored by the United States and the international community. I am working on legislation with Senator BOXER to address their plight and put pressure on the Taliban to respect basic human rights.

On International Women's Day, the United States, with our history of commitment to women's rights and equality, must redouble its efforts to place respect for women's rights at the top of the international community's agenda regarding Afghanistan.

We must debate and ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. We must rededicate ourselves and our resources to international family planning programs. We must enforce tough anti-trafficking legislation. We must not ignore the gross violations of the human rights of Afghan women.

We cannot afford to remain silent. We cannot afford to place women's rights on a second tier of concern of U.S. foreign policy. On International Women's Day, the United States and the international community must take a strong stand and issue a clear warning to those who attempt to rob women of basic rights that the world's governments will no longer ignore these abuses, or allow them to continue without repercussion.

PRAYER AT THE HOUSE THE SENATE BUILT PROGRAM

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, this morning, Members of the U.S. Senate came together to kick off the House the Senate Built Program with Habitat for Humanity International. Today's event partnered Members of the Senate with HUD Secretary Mel Martinez, Habitat founder Millard Fuller, and a host of building partners to begin work with the Spencer and Williams families on their new homes in Capitol Heights, MD.

Before the event began, Ms. Helena Spencer, mother of one of the two families who will be moving into the homes upon completion, shared with us her frustrations of living in substandard housing and her plea to God to help her find a new home for her family. Her message to us was that Habitat for Humanity was an answer to prayer. I want to share her prayer with you today, because I feel it reflects well on the work of Habitat for Humanity.

Ms. Spencer prayed:

Lord, my future looks so uncertain. It seems as if everything dear to me has been shaken or removed. He answered me, and said in His word, I will remove what can be shaken so that those things which "cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:27). My life has to be built upon an unshakeable foundation. He says I'm removing from you all insecure foundation to force you to rest on the foundation of me alone. A spiritual house, in order to stand, must not be built on a flimsy foundation. Your false resting place is being shaken so that you will rely wholly on me.

With these words, Helena Spencer spoke volumes about how great a blessing Habitat for Humanity is to so many people in need. These words inspired us this morning as we worked side by side building the houses that the Spencer and Williams families will call home. These words have motivated us to see through the House the Senate Built Project to its stated end; at least one new Habitat home built by Members of the U.S. Senate in each of our home States.

I am thankful for the work of Habitat for Humanity in this country and am encouraged by the faith and hope displayed today by Ms. Helena Spencer.

RECENT SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, earlier this week, the community of Santee, CA was struck by a horrible tragedy when a student opened fire on his classmates at Santana High School. Two people were killed and 13 others were wounded in the worst episode of school violence since the mass shooting in Littleton, CO almost 2 years ago. Although students returned to school yesterday, the grief over losing two of their classmates and the memories of what occurred will stay with them forever. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families and the people of Santee, CA as they attempt to cope with this tragedy.