

hear appalling statistics highlighting this fact; particularly regarding cases of domestic violence.

Nearly one-third of American women report being physically or sexually assaulted by a husband or boyfriend during their lifetime. The violence is not limited to adult women: One in five high school girls reports being abused by a dating partner.

In 2002 in my home State of New Jersey there were 79,844 domestic violence offenses reported by the police. Women were the victims in over 77 percent, or 61,715, of all these domestic violence offenses. In New Jersey, one act of domestic violence occurs every 6 minutes and 35 seconds.

In Passaic County, New Jersey there were 4,892 reported cases of domestic violence. The numbers are shocking. The crimes: heinous—3 Homicides, 6 Criminal Sexual Contacts, 2,825 Assaults, 280 Criminal Mischief cases, 469 Terroristic Threats, 48 Burglaries, 8 Kidnappings, 23 Criminal Trespass cases, 6 Criminal Restraint cases, 1,183 Harassment cases, 3 False Imprisonments, 20 Stalking cases, and 18 Sexual Assaults. Women were the victims in at least 3,767 of these cases.

We have a responsibility to reverse these unacceptable statistics. The women of Passaic County, of New Jersey and the entire Nation, deserve better. No woman should live in fear of domestic violence.

In addition to the terror, domestic violence is a serious health care issue that affects thousands of women and their children. The health-related cost of domestic violence against women exceeds \$5.8 billion each year.

Health care providers are on the front lines of the battle as they often identify domestic violence and provide victims with care and support. That is why I support the Domestic Violence Screening, Treatment and Prevention Act, which would provide research on the health impact and prevention of family violence; training for health care professionals regarding identification and treatment for families experiencing family violence; and health care coverage for domestic violence identification and treatment.

There is great need for both women and men to join together to speak out and stop the violence. Stop the violence against women. As a Congress, as a Nation, we must work to protect the rights of women and ensure that they have the support and services necessary.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT FOR H.R. 3936

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, today, along with Mr. EVANS, and Mr. SKELTON, I am introducing H.R. 3936, a bill to authorize the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, now located in commercial office space in the District of Columbia, to seek a new location in the greater national capital region. This measure would also express the sense of Congress that a dedicated Veterans Courthouse and Justice Center should be provided for the court and the veterans it serves. It would be located, if possible, on one of

three small parking lots next to I-395 on the Pentagon Reservation.

The court, created by statute in 1988, is an independent Article I judicial tribunal that for the first time gave our Nation's veterans the right to judicial review of the Department of Veterans (VA) benefits decisions on their disability, pension, education and other claims. It should, like all other article I courts, have a permanent courthouse.

In addition to the court, occupants of the new Courthouse would be members of those constituencies that regularly practice before the court, for example, the Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program, the National Veterans Legal Services Program, and the appellate attorneys of veterans service organizations. The court and the offices of its constituents pay over \$3.7 million per year for their rent. The General Services Administration anticipates that the court's rental costs will increase substantially in the not-too-distant future, so it would be desirable to relocate the court on a government-owned site, if possible.

H.R. 3936 would also require the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Administrator of General Services to submit a joint report to the House and Senate Committees on Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs on the feasibility of locating a new Veterans Courthouse and Justice Center at an appropriate site owned by the United States that is part of or near the Pentagon Reservation.

Mr. Speaker, given the past, present, and future sacrifices of the many men and women of our Armed Forces, I cannot imagine a better use for one of the present parking lots near the Pentagon, than a stand-alone, dedicated Veterans Courthouse and Justice Center to embody the gratitude and respect this Nation has for the service of every veteran.

I invite my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation as a first step toward a Veterans Courthouse and Justice Center for the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.

VETERANS ACCESS

HON. C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. OTTER. Mr. Speaker, many veterans in the first district of Idaho, which I represent, live in rural areas where access to VA healthcare facilities is limited.

In Idaho, access for many veterans is limited by geography; mountain ranges, rivers, and great distances. These veterans deserve better access to the health benefits they've earned by serving our country.

While there are no easy solutions to these problems, I feel the VA has worked hard to provide veterans living in rural areas some opportunities to receive care.

A number of programs including outpatient clinics, temporary clinics, and mobile care units have all helped to address the access problem in these areas.

While these programs have shown some success, I believe there are other innovative ways we can address the access issue.

One such way is limited outsourcing. I am a cosponsor of H.R. 3777, the HEALTHY Vets Act, which was introduced by my colleague

SCOTT MCINNIS. This bill creates opportunities for Veterans in rural areas to access timely healthcare from doctors and hospitals in their communities.

Many rural communities understand the value of their community doctors and hospitals. Rural healthcare is expensive, and these communities are fighting hard to maintain these resources. Allowing veterans access to community hospitals makes sense for our veterans and our communities.

I have a deep appreciation for the men and women who have risked their lives for America's freedoms and feel our Nation should keep its promises to our veterans.

Throughout our history our Nation has been forced to maintain our commitment to freedom, and likewise, we must continue our commitment to our Nation's veterans.

COOPERATIVE RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENT (CREATE) ACT OF 2004

SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 10, 2004

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this legislation. I cannot overstate the importance of encouraging collaboration when it comes to developing new technologies, particularly in the medical field. That is why Congress amended the patent laws in the mid-1980's to allow the patenting of inventions even when the inventions were not developed by a single person.

Unfortunately, the Federal courts have interpreted the law in a way that vitiates our intent in enacting it in the first place. The Federal Circuit ruled in the OddzOn case that an inventor's knowledge of "secret prior art" could prevent the issuance of a patent unless the inventor basically worked in the same organization that developed the prior art.

This ruling is having a detrimental impact on innovation. Because many universities and other non-profits do not enter into the formal structures envisioned by OddzOn when they work to develop drugs and other technologies, they are losing patent protection and an incentive to work together. We will see a decline not only in collaborations but also in the development of life-saving drugs and other inventions.

That is why I am pleased we are considering this bill, of which I am an original cosponsor. H.R. 2391 reiterates the importance of research collaborations by allowing them to obtain patent protection without entering into formal relationships. This legislation will encourage collaboration and spur innovation.

I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on this legislation.

TRIBUTE TO IRENE COLLINS

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, last week my district lost a beloved member of our community and, with great sorrow, I pay her posthumous tribute today.

Irene Collins was a fiery, dedicated, and very determined lady, who never stopped giving of herself to her community, be it helping troubled teenagers or supporting numerous civic activities and community causes. This special lady is survived by her four siblings; six children; seventeen grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. May all who knew her and are terribly saddened by the loss of Irene take comfort in the kindness of her enduring works, which constitute the finest and truest tribute to her.

COMMENDING WHITKO HIGH
SCHOOL ART STUDENTS

HON. MARK E. SOUDER

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the artistic achievements of 15 students at Whitko High School in South Whitley, Indiana. Whitko High School was one of 18 schools in the United States that recently participated in the 34th World School Children's Art Exhibition in the Republic of China, Taipei. The purpose of the exhibition is to promote mutual understanding and friendship among the younger generation of the world.

It is a tremendous honor for Whitko High School students to be recognized for their artistic abilities on an international level, especially considering nearly 40 countries were represented at the exhibition.

I'd now like to recognize by name each of the fifteen Whitko students who received the international award medals: Hannah Brennenman, Mark Harness, Jessica Cripe, Kristine Rotach, Rebecca Morford, Kayla Green, Adam Porter, Tasia Boggs, Angie Roberts, Lisa Wilkinson, Katie Menzie, Jana Rowland, Dana Sellers, Emily Crist, and Hillary Lacy. Each of these students has demonstrated outstanding artistic skill and talent by being recognized in the World School Children's Art Exhibition, and I applaud them for their fine work.

I also commend Whitko High School's art teacher Walter C. Malicki for his dedication and enthusiasm for developing the artistic abilities of Whitko students. Over the past several years, Whitko High School students have received 32 national and 95 international awards. These honors are due, in large part, to the leadership of Mr. Malicki and his encouragement of each student's artistic abilities.

Once again, I extend my congratulations to the Whitko High School art students for their achievements in the 34th World School Children's Art Exhibition. Keep up the good work.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS
OF HEATHER TAYLOR-MIESLE

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Heather Taylor-Miesle, a dedicated and passionate young woman who has worked in my office as a Legislative Assistant handling

environmental and transportation issues for nearly three years.

Heather was instrumental in shepherding into law a bill that is important to my community and close to my heart—the San Gabriel Valley Watershed Act (Public Law 108–65). Signed into law on July 1, 2003, the bill implements a study that will investigate how to preserve green, open and recreational space in the San Gabriel Valley Watershed in Los Angeles County. This law will go a long way towards ensuring environmental justice for the community I represent—one that is often the victim of environmental blight, rather than the beneficiary of environmental good fortune.

Heather is a proud environmental advocate who constantly pushes to ensure that the health and well-being of people remains at the top of the environmental agenda. She has worked with the local cities I represent to focus on cleaning up polluted Superfund sites and assessing the health risks of dust emitted by local gravel mining pits.

As Heather leaves the office to pursue a new professional opportunity, I wish her, her husband Don, and son Isaiah the best of luck. Her warm personality and friendly demeanor will be greatly missed.

“CHAVEZ’S DISRESPECT FOR
DEMOCRACY”

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, last week I released a statement expressing my disappointment with the use by Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE) of hyper-technical points and controversial procedural rulings to repress what appears to be the clear will of a sufficient number of Venezuelan citizens to move the country to a constitutional referendum on President Chavez.

The Organization of American States and the Carter Center observed first hand the democratic spirit shown by Venezuelans during the signature collection process, and they have publicly stated that they saw no significant problems with the collection of signatures.

Both organizations have also said they disagree with the Chavez-dominated electoral board's decision to set aside 876,000 signatures unless citizens come forward to validate them because the large numbers involved here, and the short time period allowed in which to appeal these signatures, could frustrate the will of the Venezuelan people to have a referendum on their president.

Because the decision of the CNE seems to me likely to obstruct the constitutional referendum process, I am submitting into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD a recent editorial from The Washington Post entitled “Coups by Technicality” which provides specific details on the decision.

I think it is also important that President Chavez understand that if the will of the Venezuelan people is disregarded, the international community will appropriately blame him, as the country's leader, for contributing, through his rhetoric and actions, to such a profoundly anti-democratic outcome.

[From the Washington Post, March 5, 2004]

COUP BY TECHNICALITY

LATE LAST YEAR 3,448,747 of Venezuela's 24 million citizens turned out in just four days to sign petitions calling for a recall referendum on President Hugo Chavez. This extraordinary civic exercise, monitored by observers from the Organization of American States and the Carter Center, offered a democratic solution to years of political conflict in that important oil-producing nation—trouble that threatened to push Venezuela into dictatorship or civil war. Now Mr. Chavez, whose crackpot populism and authoritarian methods provoked the crisis, blatantly seeks to stop the vote, in violation of his commitment to both the OAS and his own constitution. His actions have already prompted a new wave of unrest across the country, including demonstrations in which at least seven people have been killed. Unless he can be restrained, Mr. Chavez may complete his destruction of one of Latin America's most enduring democracies.

Though the constitution, drawn up under Mr. Chavez's own administration, requires 20 percent of all voters to back a referendum, opposition groups collected 1 million signatures more than should have been needed for the recall vote. These signatures were rigorously audited by a nonpartisan civic group before being forwarded to the electoral commission. Yet, after delaying its response for weeks, the commission, dominated by Mr. Chavez's supporters, rejected 1.6 million of them, or nearly half the total. To do so, it invented requirements that didn't previously exist. Most notably, it threw out 876,000 signatures, each accompanied by a thumbprint, because someone other than the voter had entered registration details on the petition.

Mr. Chavez's functionaries subsequently announced that they would give about a million of those stricken from the list a chance to restore their names—but only if they appear in a limited number of registration centers during one two-day period. In practice, that poses a next-to-impossible logistical challenge to the opposition, even if there were no harassment from Mr. Chavez's police and civilian goon squads. But attempts by the foreign mediators to reverse this Kafkaesque coup have so far been unsuccessful.

Mr. Chavez, who has built a strong alliance with Cuba's Fidel Castro and imported thousands of Cuban personnel, appears eager for a domestic and international confrontation. Last weekend he called President Bush an “illegitimate” president, referred to him with a vulgar epithet and threatened to cut off oil supplies to the United States. Opposition leaders say that more than 300 people have been arrested in recent days, and that some have been tortured. Given the Bush administration's weak position in the region, hope for a peaceful or democratic solution rests mostly with Venezuela's Latin American neighbors, starting with Brazil. If Mr. Chavez continues to deny his people a democratic vote, leaders from those nations must be prepared to invoke the Democracy Charter of the OAS and threaten him with the isolation reserved for autocrats.

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE JOHN
MICHAEL “MIKE” SEGER

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 11, 2004

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mourn the loss of John Michael “Mike” Seger.