

President Bush and his administration have taken multiple actions to imbue embryos and fetuses with the status of personhood in an effort to undermine *Roe v. Wade*, even at the expense of potentially life-saving medical research and has distorted scientific information to further its anti-abortion and anti-family planning agenda.

President Bush also endorsed unnecessary legislation that establishes a fetus, embryo, and even a fertilized egg as an independent victim of a crime and, thus, a legal person with the same legal rights as live and born individuals, and, particularly, as its mother.

Ironically, at the same time he is attacking a woman's right to choose, he is making every, every effort to inhibit the ability to prevent unintended pregnancies. The Bush administration has consistently proposed inadequate and often even reduced funding for Title X, the family planning programs which provide women with family planning and other health care across the country.

The administration tried to end the requirement that health insurance plans offered to Federal employees which includes the coverage of prescription contraceptives if the plan covers other prescription drugs and devices such as Viagra.

President Bush named to the Reproductive Health Drugs Advisory Committee of the FDA Dr. David Hager, who reportedly has refused to prescribe birth control to unmarried women and has suggested prayer to women who suffer from premenstrual syndrome.

The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention under President Bush replaced a comprehensive online fact sheet about condoms with one lacking crucial information on their use.

On his first day in office President Bush reinstated the global gag rule and extended it to the entire State Department.

For 3 consecutive years, George Bush has withheld funding for the life saving reproductive health services offered through the United Nations Population Fund in over 150 poor countries around the world.

President Bush promotes the unproven abstinence only sex education programs, denying our Nation's young people critical information on ways to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS, even though we know that over 60 percent of 12th graders report having had sexual intercourse.

In fact, recent analysis of abstinence only programs found that such programs can actually reduce the use of condoms when program participants become sexually active, increasing their risk of pregnancy.

In my opinion, the President's "abstinence only" programs should be more accurately labeled "ignorance only," and we are placing the very lives of our youth in danger. This is unconscionable.

When the Nation is in such a severe budget crunch and running sky-

rocketing deficits, George Bush's decisions to spend millions upon millions of dollars on a program that is not only unproven but potentially harmful is dumbfounding. Moreover, he is also exporting this dangerous ignorance policy to other countries around the world.

Another example is the administration posting information on the National Cancer Institute Web site which misleadingly suggested a link between abortion and breast cancer despite objections from the Centers of Disease Control staff who said that scientific study has long refuted that connection.

Mr. Speaker, at this point I will insert the remainder of my statement into the RECORD.

In fact, the Bush Administration had to pull the false information off the Web site after significant outcry from the scientific community and the American public.

The most recent transgression is a decision by the Bush Administration's Food and Drug Administration to reject Barr Laboratories' application to make its emergency contraception, Plan B, available to women over-the-counter.

In doing so, the Bush Administration once again demonstrated its blatant disregard for the health and well-being of American women.

According to press reports, George Bush's political appointees based this decision on politics instead of science, going against an overwhelming vote by an independent expert advisory committee and his own staff at the FDA.

Such an action is unprecedented.

The FDA's scientific advisory panel and staff overwhelmingly recommended that this drug be made available to American women over-the-counter, because they know what we all know: The scientific facts irrefutably show that this drug is a safe, effective way for women to prevent unintended pregnancy. The scientific data show beyond a shadow of a doubt that Plan B could cut our Nation's unintended pregnancy rate in half and reduce the number of abortions performed in our Nation by hundreds of thousands.

But in an outrageous move, the FDA ignored the expertise of its own scientists and staff—and the will of American women and hundreds of women's, health and doctors' groups—and instead denied this safe contraceptive over-the-counter status.

The FDA threw the facts out the window and instead caved to pressure from right-wing ideologues.

Even FDA officials admitted that this decision was unusual. And last April, two FDA scientists wrote an article in which they openly speculated that political pressure was influencing the FDA's decision on emergency contraception.

We must get to the bottom of how this decision was allowed to happen. We cannot jeopardize future FDA decisions with partisan pandering.

American women trust the FDA to make the best decisions possible with respect to their health.

We absolutely must be able to trust that the federal agency responsible for allowing us access to miraculous drugs will leave politics out of decisions that can so profoundly affect our health.

In my mind, the FDA's decision on Plan B has completely shattered this trust, especially in the leadership of the FDA.

Therefore, my colleague HENRY WAXMAN and I spearheaded a letter along with 28 of our colleagues asking the General Accounting Office to conduct an investigation into the influence of partisan politics upon the FDA, eviscerating its ability to make decisions based upon sound science.

I also believe that FDA Acting Commissioner Lester Crawford and Dr. Steve Galson, acting director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, need to be held accountable for this outrageous decision that so clearly goes against the scientific data.

Therefore, I have called upon President Bush to request their resignations. Only when partisan politics are no longer allowed to take precedence over science will our trust in the FDA be restored.

There are so many other examples of President Bush and his cronies riding roughshod over science that I do not have time to discuss them all this evening.

However, I would encourage the American public to take a look at all of these reports to find out what the Bush Administration doesn't want you to know.

As I noted a few minutes ago, the President's moniker that "W is for Women" is a joke.

Mr. President, no one is laughing, because the actions you have taken against women are having devastating consequences.

Indeed, you have proven time and again that "W is for WAR on Women."

Mr. President, the women of America know what you are doing, and we will not stand for it!

BUSH'S RECORD ON WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise to also share with my colleagues two incredibly important studies that greatly impact women all around this country. These reports published by the National Women's Law Center and the National Council of Research on Women clearly demonstrate that women's fundamental rights in this country are under attack by this administration's politics and policies.

Since 2000, the Bush administration has been slowly chipping away at many of the hard won gains for women. This new data demonstrates that since his first few months in office, President Bush has used the power of his Presidency to manipulate, obstruct, and censor information that directly affects women's lives.

Priorities have been changed, funding has been cut, research findings have been distorted and social differences and inequalities have been masked. American women have a fundamental right to seek public information that is clear, easily accessible, and not contaminated by ideology.

And I am particularly concerned about the lack of information regarding violence against women. Violence against women is a serious problem that affects women and families nationwide. An estimated 1.5 million

women are physically assaulted or raped by their partners every year.

Women who suffer from violence depend on local services and health care providers to help them through their physical and emotional pain. Nationally battered women's shelters serve more than 300,000 women and their families, even though there is a far greater number who seek this assistance. These shelters and health care services are critical for women, victims of violence.

In the year 2000, the Violence Against Women Act mandated that the Attorney General conduct a national study of discrimination against domestic violence victims when they try to sign up for health insurance. This report would offer new insight into better ways that our Nation can serve domestic violence victims and help us understand the many struggles that women victims face day-to-day. This report, by the way, was due back in October of 2001 and here it is now, June of 2004. Where is the report?

I would also like to bring attention to the fact that the administration's healthy marriage proposal for the welfare reauthorization bill failed to include important protections for battered women in marriage protection programs.

In addition, \$1.8 billion in Federal and State funds that were allocated for these healthy marriage programs targeted at low income couples would come out of funds already squeezed from child care, job training, and transportation services. These services are especially critical for low income women.

But this is not the first time low income women's rights have been targeted by this administration. The new reports by women advocates also clearly demonstrate how the Bush administration's tax policy failed women in order to pay for tax cuts for the very wealthy.

The administration's budget proposes over \$191 billion in new tax cuts over the next 5 years, primarily for the benefit of the wealthiest in our country. These benefits for the rich come at the mercy of deep cuts in domestic programs.

Just look at the cuts in housing, for example. Affordable housing is essential to ensuring that women have equal opportunity in our society and have stable homes in which to raise their children. Currently 28 percent of women-headed families have critical housing problems. Yet because of the Bush administration's policy, next year 250,000 families, most of whom are headed by women raising children, will lose important housing vouchers. Within 5 years, 800,000 families could lose their housing vouchers.

We also cannot forget that the administration excluded millions of low income working families from the increase in the child tax credit of 2003. Over 7 million families with incomes between \$10,500 and \$26,500 were denied

in the 2003 increase in the child tax credit signed by President Bush. Two-thirds of those parents were hurt by this exclusion, in particular, women, disproportionately single mothers, women of color, and married women who were out of work.

It is clear that the Bush administration does not enforce policies that help women make economic strides. Women deserve better treatment by this administration. After all, we represent well over 50 percent of the population. And it is time that we stand up against these policies and politics that are eroding our rights as women.

DEGRADATION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker and distinguished Members of Congress present, I come before you to celebrate the millions of working American women who are blazing a bright path for young women to successfully contribute to the American economy and, most importantly, to the future of our Nation. Women are the backbone of America's homes and of America's economy. Our presence and career fields such as science, business, and politics, has only brought improvement to these areas where women have traditionally been underrepresented.

Though women have made tremendous gains in closing the gender gap in the workplace in the past, the current status of women in the workplace has become stagnant and on a decline.

Instead of full and equal pay, women are still hitting the glass ceiling. In the year 2002, data from the AFL/CIO stated that women are paid 77 cents for every dollar men received.

□ 1845

Of course, before that it was 76. Nationwide, working families lose \$200 billion of income annually to the wage gap. In addition to loss of wages, working American women have experienced a loss of jobs during the last 3 years. Following the 2001 recession, women workers lost over 300,000 jobs between the start of the recession and March of 2004. The 2001 recession marked the only period of sustained job loss for women in the last 40 years in the United States.

With startling facts like these, I ask, What is this administration doing to ensure equality in the workplace for working American women? Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to report that this administration has taken regressive actions to address the problems facing women in the workplace.

The Bush administration has made 25 publications on the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau Web site unavailable. This administration has disbanded and underfunded government

offices that were established to address women, such as the Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach in the White House and the President's Interagency Council on Women.

Mr. Speaker, these actions are really unacceptable, and Congress should lead the charge for procuring equality for women in the workplace by writing and passing bills that call for equal pay of both men and women employees for equal work, restoring the funding to government offices dedicated to women issues and reinstating the publications that have been removed from the Department of Labor's Web site regarding women in the workplace.

In the future, the majority of the workplace will continue to be female. What is this saying to our young people?

The Bush administration prides itself on being a champion of the economy and an administration that has taken action to stimulate our economy with tax cuts. However, this administration has failed to include women in this process for stimulating the economy. Women are 51 percent of the population in our country and growing, and over half of the working population is not being utilized to contribute to the growth of the American economy.

I urge my colleagues to take a stand against the degradation of the status of women in the workplace of this Bush administration.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time that the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GERLACH). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

EX-PRISONERS OF WAR NOT RECEIVING JUST COMPENSATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about yet one more example of how the Bush administration seems to put the needs of Iraq and Iraqis over the needs of America and Americans.

We all know that during the first Gulf War there were a significant number of American soldiers who were taken prisoner of war. Under the law passed by this House, we have given permission for those who have been tortured to take legal action against a terrorist state that was responsible for that torture. So 17 American prisoners of war, who were prisoner during the time of Saddam Hussein's regime, brought legal action; and the courts determined that they were, in fact, entitled to just compensation and granted them compensation.