

Take the case of Eric VonEuw, a veteran of 4 years with the airborne infantry. Even with G.I. bill benefits, he is working part time to make ends meet and cover the cost of his community college. If he is able to finish at UC Davis, his benefits won't cover half his bills.

Today's military looks a lot different from the military I served in during the Vietnam war. Today, almost 60 percent of enlisted men and women are married. These veterans are faced with a choice: to borrow for their education or to take care of their families now.

The amendment I offered on the Defense appropriations bill, cosponsored by Senator ENSIGN, would have required a report on G.I. bill educational benefits—who uses them, how they are used, and how they can be improved. The report would have included cost estimates to help us assess various options for increasing the value of the education benefits so they cover more, if not all, of the costs of a 4-year public education.

In the course of preparing this amendment, Senator ENSIGN and I were invited to work with the Veterans' Affairs Committee to accomplish the same thing. We hope this approach will be successful and will therefore not bring our amendment to a vote.

This is the start of an effort to improve G.I. bill educational benefits. It is not just the right thing to do; it is critical to our national security. We all know that this is the most challenging recruiting environment in the history of the All-Volunteer military. In a 2004 survey, servicemembers reported that the G.I. bill is the number one reason they choose to enlist in the military. We must make sure that we understand how those benefits are being used and what the alternatives are to improve them.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the letter I sent with Senator ENSIGN to the Veterans' Affairs Committee, which was mentioned above, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,

Washington, DC, October 5, 2005.

Senator LARRY CRAIG,

Chairman,

Senator DANIEL AKAKA,

Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

Representative STEVEN BUYER,

Chairman,

Representative LANE EVANS,

Ranking Member, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR CRAIG, SENATOR AKAKA, CONGRESSMAN BUYER, AND CONGRESSMAN EVANS: As you continue negotiations on The Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2005, S1235, and its companion bills in the House, we write to draw your attention to 38 USC, Section 3036, which required a biannual report from the Secretary of Defense on the use and adequacy of readjustment and educational benefits for veterans. As of January 2005, no additional reports are required by this section.

We believe receiving this report remains vital today. This country is at war. American forces are serving heroically around the world, in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The men and women of our armed forces serve for many reasons. Undoubtedly, all serve with a sense of patriotism and duty to country. But there are other important reasons a young American chooses the military, and as recently as 2004 a survey indicated that educational benefits are the primary reason soldiers cite for their decision to enlist.

It is no secret that we are today in the midst of the most challenging recruiting environment our all-volunteer military has ever faced. The Army officially fell short of its FY2005 recruiting goals, delaying the expansion of the active-duty Army. It is essential that we continue to receive periodic updates from the Secretary of Defense on the value of education benefits to new recruits, how these benefits are used by veterans, and recommendations about how the benefits can be improved.

Accordingly, we ask you to reauthorize 38 USC Section 3036, with the minor modification of the first issuance of the report being required within six months of enactment of this bill. We also ask that you consider an additional modification to require that the first report include the attached provisions from an amendment we offered on the Defense Authorization bill to provide a more accurate estimate of the costs of various proposals to increase GI Bill benefits.

We appreciate your continued leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

JOHN KERRY.

JOHN ENSIGN.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I rise today to applaud my Senate colleagues for unanimously passing legislation to protect American women from domestic violence.

The Violence Against Women Act expired this past Saturday, October 1. I cosponsored the renewal of this vital legislation because it strengthens Federal and State efforts to prevent domestic violence and assist victims of domestic violence. It focuses resources and attention on some of the most vulnerable women in our society—women who too often suffer in silence.

I am so pleased that by passing this bill the Senate has reaffirmed its commitment to helping women, men, and children prevent and cope with domestic abuse.

The Violence Against Women Act responds to an ongoing crisis within many American families. Too many of our grandmothers, mothers, and daughters, and too many of our grandfathers, fathers, and sons are abused at home by a partner or family member. Every day in America some women and men, some elderly, are beaten, have objects thrown at them, suffer emotional and verbal abuse. Teenagers suffer abusive dating relationships. Many victims of domestic violence feel trapped and need support and assistance to leave their abusers and start violence-free lives.

The image of a severely battered woman spurs many of us to stop do-

mestic violence, but what is also disturbing is the prevalence of domestic violence. Domestic abuse is the common cold of violence. According to the Journal of the American Medical Women's Association, nearly one in every three women will experience a physical assault by a romantic partner. And of this group, one in three will experience a severe physical assault. Every day more than three women in this country are murdered by their husbands and boyfriends. Children also suffer. Half of women who report rape are under the age of 18. Shockingly, 22 percent are under the age of 12. And I know that violence against the elderly is a serious and growing problem.

For the past decade, the Violence Against Women Act has provided crucial aid to women, men, and children experiencing violence. Between 1994 and 2000, Congress distributed over \$3.8 billion to States and local communities to train and support police, lawyers, judges, nurses, shelter directors and advocates to end domestic violence and sexual assault. Our efforts contributed to almost a 50 percent drop in domestic violence.

The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 renews several successful programs and provides funding for training, education and outreach to protect women. It encourages collaboration among law enforcement, the courts, and public and private services providers to victims of domestic and sexual violence. It stiffens criminal penalties for repeat Federal domestic violence offenders, and updates the criminal law on stalking to incorporate new surveillance technology like global positioning systems. It incorporates prevention strategies targeted at men and boys. And it strengthens rape crisis centers and the health care system's response to family violence.

The bill also addresses the special needs of victims who are elderly, disabled, children, immigrants, residents of rural communities, and members of ethnic and racial communities. It provides emergency leave and long-term transitional housing for victims.

The Violence Against Women Act of 2005 will save lives. It also will save money. A 2002 university study found that money spent to reduce domestic violence saved nearly ten times the potential costs incurred between 1995 and 2000 for medical, legal, and other victimization costs. On an individual level, the bill costs roughly \$15.50 per woman in the United States and saves an estimated \$159 per woman.

Despite the funding provided by the Violence Against Women Act, I believe that reducing the scale and alleviating the human toll of domestic violence requires stronger Federal support. In my own State of New York, in Albany, an award-winning organization dedicated to providing legal assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault faces the possibility of shutting down. Just this past September, the Department of Justice informed the group,

The Capital District Women's Bar Association Legal Project, that its application for continued funding had been denied. The Department of Justice has supported the CDWBA Legal Project's efforts on behalf of battered women for nearly a decade. With this financial assistance, the group has provided critical services for more than 4,000 poor, battered women and their children since 1996. The program has been so successful that the United States Office of Justice Programs identified it in 2003 as a "best practices program" as a model for communities striving to better serve and protect victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Yet this program and, Director Lisa Frisch told me, other programs like it, are losing their funding and ability to prevent abuse and assist victims.

We critically need to provide this funding—to stop domestic violence, and aid its victims.

Domestic abuse is an ongoing crisis for many American families. It is the common cold of violence for Americans today. But working together, as Federal, State, and local officials, as governmental and nongovernmental organizations, as individuals, we can reduce the severity and the prevalence of domestic violence. We can protect the most vulnerable members of our society: women, the elderly, children. I applaud Senators BIDEN, HATCH, and SPECTER who introduced the Violence Against Women Act of 2005 in June, and the nearly 60 Senators who cosponsored the legislation. Members on both sides of the aisle. Their hard work helps to strengthen American families.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2005

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. Each Congress, Senator KENNEDY and I introduce hate crimes legislation that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society. Likewise, each Congress I have come to the floor to highlight a separate hate crime that has occurred in our country.

On December 7, 2003, in Largo, FL, Reshae McCauley, a 30-year-old transgender person, visited Z109, a local club. The following evening Reshae's body was discovered near her home where she had died of severe upper body trauma. According to police, the apparent motivation for the attack was her sexual orientation.

I believe that the Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

NATIONAL LATINO AIDS AWARENESS

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, even as our Nation faces new public health challenges, it is crucial that we not lose sight of a devastating disease that has remained a challenge for decades: the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Over the past two decades, the Nation has witnessed tremendous strides in the diagnosis and treatment of this disease, and overall, affected individuals are living longer and in better health. Yet approximately 40,000 Americans are still infected every year, half of whom are under the age of 25, and over 1 million Americans are living with this disease. My own State of Illinois ranks sixth in the Nation for HIV/AIDS, and our health officials and experts continue to work diligently to reduce the number of newly infected, as well as provide high quality care to those who are infected.

As with so many diseases, HIV/AIDS has had a disproportionate impact on the Latino community. While representing only 14 percent of the U.S. population, Latinos comprise 20 percent of the population affected by HIV/AIDS. However, unlike every other racial and ethnic group, the number of estimated deaths among Latinos with AIDS is actually increasing—a 17 percent growth between 1999 and 2003.

As the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group in the U.S., it is imperative that HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in the Latino community remain a top priority for our Nation.

I am proud to join Representative HILDA SOLIS, Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' Task Force on Health, and other members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and Congressional Black Caucus, in recognizing October 15 as National Latino AIDS Awareness Day. On this day, we renew our commitment to ending the spread of HIV and ensuring quality of life to those with HIV regardless of their country of origin or immigration status. We do this whether we are Latino, African American, Asian, Caucasian or Native American. Although we all belong to separate communities, it is important that we stand as one community in the fight against this disease that is rapidly targeting populations of color.

The numbers are growing and so should our national attention towards the issue. The reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act is an example of how our Nation can help. It is also critical to increase funding for the Minority AIDS Initiative, MAI, which addresses the disproportionate impact of HIV/AIDS on people of color by allocating specific funds for programs under the Ryan White CARE Act. Programs like Ryan White provide our most vulnerable populations, such as HIV/AIDS-stricken Latinos, with a chance for quality health care and a brighter future.

On October 15 and every other day of the year, I encourage all of us to join

in the fight against HIV and AIDS. We cannot become complacent. The need is great, and the time to act is overdue.

NOMINATION OF WAN J. KIM

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure and admiration that I support the nomination of Wan J. Kim, of my home State of New Jersey, to be the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the Department of Justice.

Wan Kim's life is a testament to the American dream. Mr. Kim's father came to New York from South Korea in 1971, with only a few hundred dollars in his pocket and the dream of building a better life for his family. He spoke no English and he took a job washing dishes. His wife joined him several months later, and worked in a garment factory. In 1973, Wan Kim and his sister left South Korea, where they had been staying with their grandmother, to reunite with their parents on U.S. soil. Wan Kim was 5 years old at the time.

The family soon moved to New Jersey, where Mr. Kim's parents purchased a luncheonette in Jersey City, and later a home in Union Township. Mr. Kim's parents worked 7 days a week to provide an education and a life of opportunity for their children. Mr. Kim excelled in school, graduating as valedictorian of his high school class and serving this country in the Army Reserves. He received his bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins University and his law degree from the University of Chicago Law School.

Following law school, Mr. Kim clerked for Federal Judge James L. Buckley on the DC Circuit Court. He then worked as a trial attorney in the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice, where he participated in the prosecution of the Oklahoma City bombing case. Mr. Kim later served as an assistant U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, as counsel on the Senate Judiciary committee, and as a lawyer in private practice. Since August 2003, Mr. Kim has served as a deputy assistant attorney general of the Civil Rights Division at the Department of Justice, where he is charged with oversight of the criminal, educational opportunities, and housing and civil enforcement sections.

If confirmed as assistant attorney general, Mr. Kim will be the Nation's top civil rights law enforcement officer. In that capacity, he will be responsible for overseeing more than 300 attorneys nationwide and with ensuring the vigorous enforcement of this Nation's civil rights laws—including those relating to voting rights, employment discrimination, human trafficking, and police misconduct. Mr. Kim will enjoy the distinction of being the first Korean-American and the first naturalized citizen to assume that post.

The position to which Mr. Kim is nominated is one of vital importance to our Nation. There are those who