

the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 392, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

CONVEYING SYMPATHY OF CONGRESS TO FAMILIES OF YOUNG WOMEN MURDERED IN CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 90) conveying the sympathy of Congress to the families of the young women murdered in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, and encouraging increased United States involvement in bringing an end to these crimes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 90

Whereas the Mexican cities of Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua have been plagued with the abduction, sexual assault, and brutal murders of over 400 young women since 1993;

Whereas there have been at least 56 murders of women in Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua since 2004;

Whereas at least 152 of the victims were sexually assaulted prior to their murders;

Whereas more than half of the victims are women and girls between the ages of 13 and 22, and many were abducted in broad daylight in well-populated areas;

Whereas these murders have brought pain to the families and friends of the victims on both sides of the border as they struggle to cope with the loss of their loved ones;

Whereas many of the victims have yet to be positively identified;

Whereas the perpetrators of most of these heinous acts remain unknown;

Whereas the Mexican Federal Government has taken steps to prevent these abductions and murders in Ciudad Juárez, including setting up a commission to coordinate Federal and State efforts, establishing a 40-point plan, appointing a special commissioner, and appointing a special prosecutor;

Whereas the Mexican Federal special prosecutor's review of the Ciudad Juárez murder investigations found evidence that over 100 police, prosecutors, forensics experts, and other State of Chihuahua justice officials failed to properly investigate the crimes, and recommended that they be held accountable for their acts of negligence, abuse of authority, and omission;

Whereas the Government of Mexico has recognized the importance of the work of the Mexican Federal special prosecutor and has shifted the mission of the prosecutor's office to assist local authorities in investigating and prosecuting crimes of violence against women throughout the country;

Whereas in 2003 the El Paso Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the

El Paso Police Department began providing Mexican Federal, State, and municipal law enforcement authorities with training in investigation techniques and methods;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development has begun providing assistance to the State of Chihuahua for judicial reform;

Whereas the government of the State of Chihuahua has jurisdiction over these crimes;

Whereas the Governor and Attorney General of the State of Chihuahua have expressed willingness to collaborate with the Mexican Federal Government and United States officials in addressing these crimes;

Whereas the Department of State has provided consular services on behalf of the American citizen and her husband who were tortured into confessing to one of the murders;

Whereas Mexico is a party to the following international treaties and declarations that relate to abductions and murders: the Charter of the Organization of American States, the American Convention on Human Rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the United Nations Declaration on Violence Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention of Belem do Para, the Inter-American Convention to Prevent and Punish Torture, the Inter-American Convention on Forced Disappearance, and the United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons From Enforced Disappearance; and

Whereas continuing impunity for these crimes is a threat to the rule of law in Mexico: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) condemns the ongoing abductions and murders of young women in Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, since 1993;

(2) expresses its sincerest condolences and deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of these murders;

(3) recognizes the courageous struggle of the victims' families in seeking justice for the victims;

(4) urges the President and Secretary of State to incorporate the investigative and preventative efforts of the Mexican Government in the bilateral agenda between the Governments of Mexico and the United States and to continue to express concern over these abductions and murders to the Government of Mexico;

(5) urges the President and Secretary of State to continue to express support for the efforts of the victims' families to seek justice for the victims, to express concern relating to the continued harassment of these families and the human rights defenders with whom they work, and to express concern with respect to impediments in the ability of the families to receive prompt and accurate information in their cases;

(6) supports ongoing efforts to identify unknown victims through forensic analysis, including DNA testing, conducted by independent, impartial experts who are sensitive to the special needs and concerns of the victims' families, as well as efforts to make these services available to any families who have doubts about the results of prior forensic testing;

(7) condemns the use of torture as a means of investigation into these crimes;

(8) encourages the Secretary of State to continue to include in the annual Country Report on Human Rights of the Department

of State all instances of improper investigatory methods, threats against human rights activists, and the use of torture with respect to cases involving the murder and abduction of young women in the State of Chihuahua;

(9) encourages the Secretary of State to urge the Government of Mexico and the State of Chihuahua to review the cases of murdered women in which those accused or convicted of murder have credibly alleged they were tortured or forced by a state agent to confess to the crime;

(10) strongly recommends that the United States Ambassador to Mexico visit Ciudad Juárez and the city of Chihuahua for the purpose of meeting with the families of the victims, women's rights organizations, and Mexican Federal and State officials responsible for investigating these crimes and preventing future such crimes;

(11) encourages the Secretary of State to urge the Government of Mexico to ensure fair and proper judicial proceedings for the individuals who are accused of these abductions and murders and to impose appropriate punishment for those individuals subsequently determined to be guilty of such crimes;

(12) encourages the Secretary of State to urge the State of Chihuahua to hold accountable those law enforcement officials whose failure to adequately investigate the murders, whether through negligence, omission, or abuse, has led to impunity for these crimes;

(13) encourages the Secretary of State to urge the Government of Mexico to ensure that the Mexican Federal special prosecutor's office, responsible for assisting local authorities in investigating and prosecuting crimes of violence against women throughout the country, gives particular attention to the murders of women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City;

(14) strongly supports the work of the special commissioner to prevent violence against women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City;

(15) condemns all senseless acts of violence in all parts of the world and, in particular, violence against women; and

(16) expresses the solidarity of the people of the United States with the people of Mexico in the face of these tragic and senseless acts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 90, introduced by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS).

The resolution before us respectfully conveys to the families of more than 400 young women who have been murdered in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, the deepest sympathy of the

United States Congress. It also encourages law enforcement in the United States to seek closer cooperation with Mexican law enforcement authorities to solve these crimes and bring the perpetrators to justice.

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Mr. Speaker, the border with Mexico can be a violent place. With drug traffickers, migrant smugglers, and other violent malefactors operating along the border, young women who live and work in the many border communities often fall prey to these violent criminals.

Over the past 12 years, more than 400 murders and disappearances of women have been committed in the cities of Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua City. Fifty-five women have been killed in Juarez and Chihuahua City since 2004 alone. Unfortunately, very few of these cases have been resolved and even fewer perpetrators of this violence have been caught and prosecuted. As a result, the violence continues.

Mr. Speaker, House Concurrent Resolution 90 will hopefully bring much-needed attention to the brutal torture, rapes, and murders committed against women along the U.S.-Mexican border, especially in the State of Chihuahua, and will underscore the need for more cooperative law enforcement in both the United States and Mexico.

Before this resolution was introduced and brought to the floor, too little attention was paid to this important issue. Today, Congress is taking a stand and urging both the United States and Mexico to ensure its people, wherever they may live and work, that they will be secure within their homes and workplaces and that they can live without the fear of violence which is now sweeping our border communities.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we in Congress continue to encourage our governments to work with Mexico not only to protect the women in Juarez but also to thoroughly investigate these crimes and bring an end to these murders. House Concurrent Resolution 90 would serve as a call to action along the border and would be a constant reminder to both the United States and Mexico that we must do more to protect our citizens against criminal elements and cooperate more on bringing criminals to justice. I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before the House introduced by my distinguished California colleague and good friend, Congresswoman HILDA SOLIS, shines the spotlight on the murders of impoverished young women in Mexico. I applaud my friend and colleague, Chairman HYDE, for recognizing the importance of this resolution and fa-

cilitating its consideration both by our committee and the full House.

Mr. Speaker, since 1993, over 400 gruesome killings have plagued Mexico's nearly lawless northern border. In the last 2 years alone, over 56 women in this region have had their lives brutally extinguished.

Although these statistics are shocking at face value, the numbers often hide due to time and distance the very human stories that bleed from the pages of crime reports. In the Ciudad Juarez murders, the tragic tales are about girls and young women in the prime of their lives who, as they are walking home from one of the many sweatshops along the border, are kidnapped, raped, and brutally murdered. Their bodies are then unceremoniously dumped at the fringes of town. Families are left wondering what happened to their daughters or sisters or mothers.

As a result of the combined efforts of honorable individuals like my good friends and colleagues, Congresswoman SOLIS and Congressman REYES, as well as organizations such as the Washington Office on Latin America and the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, the Mexican government of President Fox finally took action. Among President Fox's initiatives were the establishment of a commission to coordinate federal and state efforts in Mexico, the appointment of a special prosecutor to review and bring related cases, and a plan to prevent future crimes.

It is not yet clear, Mr. Speaker, that these efforts have slowed the pace by which girls and women are being murdered in Ciudad Juarez or in Chihuahua City. Credible reports indicate that at least as many murders have been committed each year since the Mexican federal and state authorities began implementing their new policies.

It is also not apparent that local authorities are seriously committed to investigating and bringing to justice the criminals who are behind the murders. Suspects have been arrested for only about half of the Ciudad Juarez murders. In a significant number of cases, the defendants claimed that they were tortured into confessing their guilt. Real, impartial, professional investigations and prosecutions are needed to take the killers off the streets and to bring closure to the victims' families.

Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us today takes steps to address these remaining problems. It encourages the administration to include the Ciudad Juarez murders as part of the bilateral agenda between our government and the government of Mexico. It supports ongoing efforts to identify unknown victims through forensic analysis, including DNA testing, and it urges the Mexican authorities to invest in a new sense of urgency and professionalism as part of their continuing work.

These killings, Mr. Speaker, must stop. I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to my friend, Congressman ENGEL of New York, the ranking member of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from California for yielding to me; and as both a co-sponsor of this resolution and as ranking member of the House International Relations Subcommittee for the Western Hemisphere, I rise in strong support of this important resolution.

I want to thank and commend my colleague, Congresswoman SOLIS, for her leadership in raising attention to the dire problem in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua, Mexico. I also want to thank my friend, Congressman REYES, for highlighting this important issue as well.

In a congressional hearing last week, Mr. Speaker, on U.S.-Mexico relations, I directly called on senior U.S. Department of State officials to continue to press Mexican authorities on the approximately 400 women who had been brutally murdered in the Mexican cities of Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua since 1993 and to provide U.S. assistance; and I remain deeply concerned over the killings of these young women. It is time that a serious effort was made to solve these terrible murders that are plaguing the towns in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua, and I hope that the U.S. State Department will take appropriate action to help Mexico address these heinous crimes, not only the crimes that have been committed but obviously we want to prevent any further crimes from being committed.

I continue to urge the American government to work with Mexican authorities to halt this brutal violence against Mexican women and to investigate these horrible crimes. How can we just sit by as hundreds of women are killed and sexually assaulted just across the Texas border? I condemn the ongoing abductions and murders of women in Ciudad Juarez and Chihuahua City and express my heartfelt condolences to the victims' families. We will continue to press this issue until it is resolved.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 5 minutes to my good friend, the distinguished author of the resolution and co-chair of the Congressional Women's Caucus, Ms. HILDA SOLIS of California.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend my great thanks and honor to Congressman LANTOS and Congressman ENGEL and also to Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN for her support.

Mr. Speaker, we are strongly in support of this resolution to support the families of women who have been murdered in Ciudad Juarez and in the city of Chihuahua in Mexico. I have always believed that attacks on women are attacks on women everywhere.

This came to my attention some 4 years ago, and I was very proud to help lead a delegation for the first time, a House delegation to Ciudad Juárez, which is 5 minutes from our border, our frontier there. And what I found was a horrific, horrific problem, brutal murders of women, as was already stated by our colleagues. And to hear that over the past 13 years this had been allowed to continue without any involvement on the part of our government and Mexico, I felt compelled as a woman, as a Latina, as someone who felt very strongly that, if we are going to stand up for women's rights in other continents of the world and the Middle East to defend the Afghani women who are being tortured by the Taliban, why not then also come forward and support the women of Ciudad Juárez?

We know that there are well over 400 victims that have been brutally murdered; and recently just this past year we found that a young girl, 7 years old, was kidnapped, raped, and brutally murdered. Another girl just 10 years was raped, killed, and set on fire in her home. These children were taken away from us too soon, and the anguished families will never be the same.

When I took a delegation to Ciudad Juárez, we had the opportunity, along with other members of the House, to meet with the families, to meet with the mothers of the victims, and what they asked for was nothing more than respect and acknowledgement and hopefully the force of our offices to get both sides, the Mexican government as well as the U.S. government, to come to an agreement to recognize that these atrocities must stop, to recognize the valor and respect of these families, and help to provide some closure; and through this resolution I hope that we can begin to do that.

This poster here illustrates an area that we actually visited very close to a grave site where eight bodies were thrown. It was almost as though there was a message being sent to authorities in Mexico that this is how we treat people in Ciudad Juárez, and very little regard for the value of human life. As you can see in the picture, we had several individuals that went with us to visit there. We had Congressman REYES, we had at that time Congressman *Ciro Rodríguez*, Congressman *LUIS GUTIERREZ*, and we also had a good friend of mine who is depicted in the photograph, *Dolores Huerta*, who joined me.

But the value of that trip was to really meet and speak to the families, to speak to the mothers, to speak to the fathers who had recited their individual accounts of how they found their daughters and in what state they found their daughters or corpses. Yet we find today that we still have many remains that have not been identified, not because there is not a willingness to do it but because perhaps someone did not collect appropriate DNA information and tampered with perhaps evidence at the time so that you could not

then retrace who was actually involved in these criminal atrocities.

That, I hope, will come to an end with the passage of this resolution, that we can begin to work in all honesty to identify the remains that are still left unclaimed by the families and provide some resolution.

I am very, very pleased that I had the support of our caucuses and outside community groups that helped to support us in this effort. It has been a long journey, and I want to personally thank various groups that helped us along this way. I want to thank in particular our committee staff, *Paul Oostburg*, for helping us, the Washington Office on Latin America, the Latin America Working Group, and Amnesty International, and many others across the country who helped us to lay out the foundation for the final passage of this legislation that I hope we will find later this afternoon.

I would ask that the House join us in support of this resolution, and I look forward to seeing our friends and colleagues in the Senate also assist us with passage of their similar resolution that also outlines the same provisions in this resolution.

Today I rise to voice my strong support for the families of women who have been murdered in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City, Mexico.

I have always believed that attacks of women anywhere are attacks on women everywhere. That is why three years ago I introduced House Concurrent Resolution 90, a resolution to raise awareness, express concern and propose a set of actions to address the murders and disappearances of young women in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City, Mexico.

I was horrified by the brutal murders of women just five minutes beyond our border. Over the past 12 years, more than 400 women have been brutally assaulted and murdered in Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua City, and few of the perpetrators of this violence have been prosecuted or even found.

Women and young girls from all parts of Mexico moved to Ciudad Juárez in hopes of finding work, including jobs at American-owned maquiladoras.

These jobs involve late hours, forcing women to travel home in the dark, alone, leaving them vulnerable to attack.

Many of their bodies have been found in abandoned or desolate areas, showing signs of rape, torture and mutilation.

These acts are more than just crimes; they are horrific violations of women's rights and human rights.

Today, these crimes are not decreasing in frequency or brutality.

As an example, in 2005, a 7 year-old girl was kidnapped, raped and brutally murdered. Another girl, just 10 years old, was raped, killed and set on fire in her own home. These children were taken from us too soon, and their anguished families will never be the same.

While the men who murdered these particular children were caught, most of the victim's killers remain free and investigations of their cases have been minimal.

In 2001, the so-called "cotton field" murder victims were discovered in a Ciudad Juárez

cotton field. Eight women were found raped, mutilated, and killed.

This case exemplifies the brutality of violence in Ciudad Juárez.

Mexican officials tortured two men into confessing to the cotton field murders. Their convictions were later overturned. One of the men who was wrongly accused died in prison and the lawyers in the case were gunned down. And this horrific case remains unsolved.

This pattern of torturing innocent men into confessing has touched the community I represent.

In 2003, *Neyra Cervantes* disappeared near Chihuahua City, Mexico, and her cousin, *David Mesa*, lived in the Congressional District I represent.

Mesa traveled to Juárez to help investigate his cousin's disappearance. He was incarcerated for criticizing the efforts of local authorities and allegedly tortured into confessing to the murder of his cousin. *David* is still in prison for the murder of his cousin—a murder he did not commit.

We must end the violence against women in Ciudad Juárez and catch the real criminals who are murdering women, not make more victims by torturing innocent people into confessing. The women and families in Ciudad Juárez are living their daily lives in fear. We must bring more attention to these crimes and help end the violence.

House Concurrent Resolution 90, the resolution we will vote on today, expresses concern about the continuing injustices that are killing young women and affecting American families in our border cities.

This resolution urges the U.S. government to take action and commit to working with the Mexican government to end these tragedies.

It is important that we, in Congress, continue to push the United States to work with Mexico to not only protect women in Juárez, but also to thoroughly investigate these crimes and bring an end to the murders. These atrocities have real affects on victims' families.

In 2003 and 2004 I organized Congressional Delegation trips to Ciudad Juárez to meet with families of victims, Mexican government officials, and human rights groups.

The mothers of victims and their families are suffering at the loss of their family members and continue to suffer because of inaction of the Mexican government. It was on these trips that my dedication to helping the women of Juárez was solidified. I would like to thank the Members of Congress and activists who have traveled to Ciudad Juárez with me, including Congressman *LUIS GUTIERREZ*, Congressman *SILVESTRE REYES*, our former colleague, Congressman *Ciro Rodríguez*, Congresswoman *JAN SCHAKOWSKY*, and my friend, *Dolores Huerta*, cofounder of VFW.

I have hosted briefings to educate others about this issue, sent letters to the State Department and President Bush and even to Mexico's President *Vicente Fox* urging action to end the murders of women and give peace to their families.

Last year I was joined by Senator *JEFF BINGAMAN* of New Mexico, in securing \$200,000 from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to help fund a team of independent forensic experts from Argentina to work in Juárez identifying the unknown victims' remains and provide closure to their families.

These murders have caused incredible pain for the families of victims, compounded by the

lack of response from their police and local government.

For the first time, families of the missing will receive dependable, legitimate identifications of their daughters.

While changes have been made in local and state government and some answers are coming to light, we must continue to pressure Mexican authorities to investigate crimes and do more to end the violence.

As we move forward, we must push for thorough investigations, so the families have closure and so the streets are safer for all women and children.

We also need to ensure safer conditions for the women of Juárez, in their homes, communities and workplaces.

We must remember that no matter where it takes place, on either side of our border, a murder of any woman is a terrible tragedy.

As one, unified voice against violence and one, unified voice for justice, our strength is in our solidarity to find peace for the families of Juárez.

Ni una mas! means "Not one more!"

I would like to thank the 143 bipartisan cosponsors of House Concurrent Resolution 90.

I would like to thank Chairman HYDE, Ranking Member LANTOS, Subcommittee Chairman BURTON, and Subcommittee Ranking Member ENGEL for their continued support as we work to bring peace to Ciudad Juárez.

I would also like to thank Committee Staff Paul Oostburg for his assistance and advocates from organizations such as the Washington Office on Latin America, the Latin America Working Group and Amnesty International for their passion.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of House Concurrent Resolution 90, and demonstrate our strong support for the families of victims in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. And I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the fight for women's rights, human rights and an end to the violence.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to yield 3 minutes to my good friend and distinguished colleague from Texas, Mr. SILVESTRE REYES. His El Paso district is the sister community to Ciudad Juárez. He is Chair of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Task Force on International Relations, and an invaluable colleague.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I would like to first thank Chairman HENRY HYDE and Ranking Member TOM LANTOS, my good friend, for bringing this resolution to the floor today. Likewise, I would like to thank my colleague from Florida for handling the time on this very important issue.

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I would also like to thank Ms. SOLIS for introducing H. Con. Res. 90, a resolution conveying sympathy to the families affected by the murder of young women in Chihuahua, Mexico, and encouraging the United States to be involved in bringing an end to these crimes.

As the representative of El Paso, Texas, the neighboring city to Ciudad Juárez, the issue of unsolved murders is of great concern to me and my constituents.

Since 1993, many women have been violently murdered in Chihuahua, Mexico, and many have yet to be positively identified. This leaves family members with more questions than answers about the fate of their loved ones. In the past, I have urged Mexican President Vicente Fox to launch a comprehensive investigation to help bring an end to these murders and to bring those responsible to justice. In addition, I hosted, as the Ms. SOLIS mentioned, a congressional delegation in El Paso and Ciudad Juárez so my colleagues, including Congresswoman SOLIS, could learn more about the subject and about the assistance needed in this region of Mexico.

In July of 2005, I offered an amendment to the Foreign Relations Authorization Act for fiscal year 2006-2007 to encourage the administration to raise the issue of murdered women in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, with their counterparts in Mexico and to assist with the identification of murdered women.

Thorough forensic analysis and DNA testing are necessary to identify the bodies that have been found to date. An example of how this technology can be crucial to an investigation took place in May 2005. With the cooperation of the El Paso Police Department and the FBI, the body of 7-year-old Airis Estrella Enriquez from Ciudad Juárez was identified and had her killers brought to justice due to DNA analysis.

In addition, with the financial assistance of USAID, the Bode Technology Group, a DNA laboratory located in Springfield, Virginia, and local forensic teams have been collecting thousands of samples from exhumed remains in order to process the samples and help identify possible future matches. This technology will not only provide answers and bring peace of mind to the families, enabling them to grieve, heal and seek justice for their murdered loved ones, but it will also contribute to the strengthening of judicial institutions in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico.

I urge my colleagues to join me in sending our sincere condolences to the families of murdered women, condemning the homicide against women, and encouraging the U.S. and Mexican authorities to work together to solve these murders and help ensure the safety of the women of Ciudad Juárez. Please support H. Con. Res. 90.

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 90 and stand in solidarity with the families of 370 women who have been abducted, brutally assaulted, raped and murdered in the Mexican cities of Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua since 1993. These families seek justice for the atrocious acts committed against their daughters—some as young as the age of 13—and I urge President Bush to offer whatever assistance he can to bring these criminals to justice.

Even today, we do not know who many of the perpetrators are. Many of the victims bodies have yet to be identified and returned to their families. Local government and law enforcement agencies in the State of Chihuahua

have been ineffective in their investigations and require massive reform. Spurred by public outcry, the Mexican Federal Government launched a special investigation into the local governing bodies, only to uncover countless instances of negligence and abuse of power by over 100 police, prosecutors, and other government officials.

Mr. Speaker, we have an obligation as members of the international community to condemn violence against women and offer humanitarian assistance where we can. The President and the Secretary of State must intervene in this matter. These vicious criminals must be prosecuted and punished to the full extent of the law as soon as possible. We cannot allow ineffective government officials and bureaucratic defects to prevent justice from being served.

The families of these 370 women deserve closure and we must do all we can to prevent any further tragedies of this nature from recurring. As a father, grandfather, and husband, I could not think of any more horrific or painful a tragedy to strike a family.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 90, Conveying the Sympathy of Congress to the Families of the Young Women Murdered in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, and Encouraging Increased United States Involvement in Bringing an End to These Crimes. I am a cosponsor to this important resolution and would like to thank Representative SOLIS for introducing this legislation.

For over thirteen years, a stones throw from the U.S. border, almost 400 women and young teenagers have been brutally assaulted and murdered. A disgraceful number of these murders have still not been resolved and many perpetrators still roam free, attacking other innocent women.

Family members of murdered women have worked tirelessly to try to bring justice to their daughters, wives and sisters. They have often faced great odds and opposition from local Mexican officials, yet have continued to fight for the truth and work to try to prevent future atrocities by bringing the rule of law to Ciudad Juárez and Chihuahua. My heart goes out to these families for their losses, and I urge the FBI, the U.S. State Department and all levels of the government of Mexico to reinvigorate their efforts and work to do all that is possible to bring justice and closure to these horrible tragedies.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 90, and I wish to express my respect and admiration for the gentle lady from California, Congresswoman SOLIS, for her important leadership on this tragic issue.

Since 1993, nearly 440 women have been killed in Ciudad Juárez and the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. Most of the victims are young, poor women. Nearly one-third worked in maquiladora factories that flourish along the U.S.-Mexican border; another third were students; Over 100 of these women were sexually assaulted prior to their murders, and these cases may be related. Other murders appear to be the product of domestic and intimate partner violence.

Regrettably, the Mexican authorities have done little to investigate the murders: According to human rights investigations into these

murders, at least 130 police, prosecutors, and forensic officials were negligent or abusive in their handling of the murder investigations. Frequently, these officers of the law blame the victim for her own violent death. They have ignored, deceived, harassed and even attacked the families of the victims. While a few men have been convicted for some of the sexual murders, several of the victims' families believe these men are scapegoats, while the real perpetrators remain free at-large. As long as the wrong people are in prison, the killers remain unpunished and able to kill again and again.

We know that the police have used torture to obtain confessions from several people, even though no physical evidence connected these individuals to the crimes. For example, days after eight women's bodies were found in a field in downtown Juarez, two men were arrested and tortured into confessing to their murders. No physical evidence links them to the crime. Police killed one of their lawyers. One of the men died in prison. The judge presiding over the case ignored the remaining detainee's credible allegations of torture and the lack of evidence against him, and convicted him to 50 years in prison for the murders. The families of the murdered women do not believe he is the person responsible for their daughters' deaths.

Mr. Speaker, the Ciudad Juarez murders are an issue that embraces both sides of the border: U.S. citizens have been arrested for the murders, have been victims of the murders, and have had loved ones lost to murder. U.S. citizen Cynthia Kiecker and her husband, a Mexican national, were arrested and tortured in June 2003, accused of the murder of a young woman in Chihuahua. They were acquitted in December 2004. In another case, one U.S. citizen's daughter disappeared in July 2000.

I believe that the Mexican government will respond to U.S. and international pressure to solve these murders and bring peace of mind to the victims' families, and restore peace and security to the people who live in the State of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juarez, in particular. Already, as a result of international pressure, the federal Mexican government has appointed a special commissioner to prevent violence against women in Juarez, as well as appointing a special prosecutor to find out what went wrong with the previous murder investigations.

But Mexican federal and state authorities have made too many promises, and still there is too little progress in any of these investigations.

Mr. Speaker, H. Con. Res. 90 will clearly tell the families of these women that their voices and their pleas for justice have not gone unheard. They have our sympathy, and they have our support. But passage of this bill will also send a clear message to the Mexican authorities that the United States Congress is concerned about these murders, willing to have our government assist in their investigation, and that we want the perpetrators of these heinous acts arrested and put behind bars.

The lives of all these young women had meaning and promise. Let us remember them now, and solemnly vow to their families that we will work to bring their killers to justice.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GINGREY). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 90, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF WORLD WATER DAY

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 658) supporting the goals and ideals of World Water Day, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 658

Whereas the global celebration of World Water Day is an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro;

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly, via resolution, designated March 22 of each year as World Water Day;

Whereas although water resources are renewable, differences in availability of water resources exist due to variations in seasonal and annual precipitation in different parts of the world;

Whereas although water is the most widely occurring substance on earth, only 2.53 percent of all water is freshwater and the remainder is salt water;

Whereas freshwater resources are further reduced by various forms of industrial, chemical, human, and agricultural pollution;

Whereas the drainage of wetlands for agriculture and the dissipation of water sources by land clearance lead to further exacerbation of water scarcity;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, by the middle of this century, at worst, seven billion people in 60 countries will be water-scarce;

Whereas the poor are the most affected by water scarcity, with 50 percent of the populations of developing countries exposed to polluted water sources;

Whereas water-related diseases are among the most common causes of illness and death, afflicting primarily the poor in developing countries;

Whereas the estimated mortality rate due to diseases transmitted by water and sanitation is five million people per year;

Whereas initiatives that promote access to safe drinking water and sanitation that prevents contaminants from infiltrating fresh drinking water supplies are vital tools in raising the awareness of the importance of freshwater to the quality of life; and

Whereas freshwater is vital to the development, sustainability, and progression of all humanity: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of World Water Day;

(2) recognizes the importance of conserving and managing water resources for sustainable development, including environmental integrity and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and human health and overall qual-

ity of life in the United States and across the globe; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe World Water Day with appropriate recognition, ceremonies, activities, and programs to demonstrate the importance of water and water conservation to humanity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Resolution 658, expressing support for the goals and ideals of World Water Day. The global celebration of World Water Day is an initiative that grew out of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro. The United Nations General Assembly by resolution designated March 22 of each year as World Water Day.

I want to thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON), for introducing this important resolution. Passing this resolution will add to the strong bipartisan support in Congress for fighting global water challenges. This resolution builds upon the accomplishments of this Congress as embodied in the Senator Paul Simon Water For the Poor Act of 2005, Public Law 109-121, introduced by Mr. BLUMENAUER.

Water-related illnesses claim the life of one child approximately every 8 to 15 seconds, killing up to 5,000 children a day and up to 5 million people every year. The statistics associated with global water issues are shocking. According to the World Health Organization, 1.2 billion people do not have access to safe water, and 2.4 billion people lack access to basic sanitation.

World Water Day helps to raise awareness among international community members about this humanitarian catastrophe which places global development and human security in peril.

This resolution communicates our support for World Water Day. It recognizes the importance of conserving and managing water resources for sustainable development, environmental integrity, and the eradication of poverty and hunger, human health and overall quality of life; and it encourages the people of the United States to observe World Water Day.