

arsenals and depots—or our organic base. This organic base is what ensures that our military is warm and ready to go at a moment's notice.

That is why I am also concerned about proposals that would reduce organic base specialization in areas like manufacturing.

Without the ability to specialize in these areas, our warfighters could be left flatfooted when emergencies happen. For example, the Rock Island Arsenal was able to produce up-armor kits for the doors of Humvees for our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan when their vehicles were being attacked with IEDs. The Arsenal's ability to do this work quickly gave industry the time it needed to create long-term fixes for them and provided our troops with the tools they needed to most safely and effectively accomplish their missions.

During this time of fiscal constraint we must be careful not to penalize our organic base—which provides quality to the warfighter and value to the taxpayer. We must preserve and strengthen our organic base, not weaken it. The workers at the Rock Island Arsenal are a great example of how manufacturing skill can yield success for our warfighters.

In addition to serving on the House Armed Services Committee, I also serve on the Small Business Committee where our focus is solely on job creation through helping small businesses.

Small businesses have proven that they can perform a service or produce goods for the government at a lower cost and often at a faster pace than their larger counterparts, but many challenges remain for businesspeople seeking to break through the bureaucracy.

My colleague on the Small Business Committee, Representative JUDY CHU, and I introduced H.R. 3985, the Building Better Business Partnerships Act in February, which passed through the Small Business Committee last month, to reform mentor-protégé programs that exist to help small businesses win government contracts.

The Building Better Business Partnerships Act allows the Small Business Administration to oversee civilian mentor-protégé programs to streamline the process for each agency and ensure the programs are benefitting all small businesses.

This bipartisan language was successfully included in the FY 2013 NDAA in Committee to help small businesses compete for and win more government contracts so they can create jobs and get folks back to work.

This week, the House will debate the Defense Authorization bill. Our Constitution requires that we “provide for the common defense” and for fifty years in a row, Congress has acted to authorize defense programs. I look forward to working on a bipartisan basis to deliver a strong, common sense defense bill for the United States of America.

Again, I want to thank Congresswoman ROBY for holding this leadership hour. This July, the Rock Island Arsenal will celebrate 150 years of protecting our brave men and women. As a member of the House I will continue to pursue policies that allow our arsenals to thrive and grow their workload so that the Rock Island Arsenal can celebrate another 150 years and beyond.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4970, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4310, NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

Ms. FOXX (during the Special Order of Mr. REED), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 112-481) on the resolution (H. Res. 656) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4970) to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4310) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, to prescribe military personnel strengths for fiscal year 2013, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

#### REAUTHORIZING THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROKITA). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to take this 1 hour.

We want to spend this hour discussing a piece of legislation that is extraordinarily important to every woman and every man who lives within the United States. It's the Violence Against Women Act, which is up for renewal, and we'll be discussing that. But before I go into that, we've just heard an hour of discussion on an extremely important matter, which is the issue of national defense.

I do sit on the House Armed Services Committee, and I spent about 16 hours last week working to move that bill out of committee. Every single person on that committee and every single person in this House and in the Senate cares deeply about this Nation's security and providing the necessary support for the men and women who are currently in the military and those who have served in the past. There's no doubt about that.

There is, however, a very important debate underway about how we provide those services, given the ability of this Nation to find the money to pay for it. You heard a most remarkable debate this last hour—or a discussion this last hour, not a debate—but a discussion that basically, on the one hand, said, we've got this terrible deficit problem, and we have to deal with it; and on the other hand, we have to spend more and more money on the military.

Now recognizing that the war in Afghanistan is drawing down and hopefully will very soon be over, we are moving away from carrying on two

major wars to a period in which we will not be having men and women overseas in these wars. That allows this Nation to draw down the military in an appropriate and very careful manner. Unfortunately, the bill that moved out of the House Armed Services Committee didn't do that. In fact, it moved away from the current law, which is one that was voted on by all of our Republican colleagues, which was the Budget Control Act that actually said the military had to be brought down. And the discussion you heard here about the President not having a plan, it simply isn't true. The President has put forth a balanced solution to the deficit within the confines of the Budget Control Act, a balance that has been rejected by the Republicans, a balance that calls for revenues, ending unnecessary tax breaks—for example, for the oil industry. Why should they receive \$5 billion a year of our tax money on top of the tens of billions of dollars in profits that they are making in the sale of overpriced gasoline and diesel to the American public?

So the President says, take away those unnecessary subsidies and bring those back into dealing with the necessary things that we must do in this Nation. He also said that men and women who earn over \$1 million a year in adjusted gross income ought to be paying their fair share.

There was discussion a moment ago about the budget reconciliation bill that passed this House. Understand that the budget reconciliation bill, as proposed by the Republicans, would increase the national deficit by \$4 trillion. How does it do it? By giving an extraordinary new tax break to those at the very top. Those who earn more than \$1 million a year would see their taxes reduced. So at \$1 million a year in earnings, they would receive an additional tax reduction of \$394,000. That's neither fair, that's neither balanced, and that clearly leads to an additional \$4 trillion.

Back to the defense. We need a wise Defense appropriations bill out of this House. Unfortunately, though, what did pass was not wise, and it actually increased the number of men and women in Afghanistan. These are our Armed Forces. Under that bill, there would be an increase of 20,000 new soldiers into Afghanistan. That's not where we want to go.

Having said enough about that, I just thought we ought to put a little balance on the previous hour of discussion. So let us get on to what we really wanted to talk about tonight, which is, how do we protect women in America?

In 1994, a previous Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act, and that act provided a level of protection to every woman in America to be protected from domestic violence. I have with me tonight one of the key architects of that piece of legislation. She is now a Member of Congress. She is from the great State of Maryland. Her name is DONNA EDWARDS. Back in the nineties, she was the founding director and

the executive director of the National Network to End Domestic Violence.

The National Network to End Domestic Violence was an organization that Representative EDWARDS put together composed of State organizations that were dealing with domestic violence, many different kinds of organizations throughout the United States. Representative EDWARDS put that together. And she's here tonight to lead the discussion on how we can renew the Violence Against Women Act in a way that expands the protection to all women in the United States, all women. And central to this discussion will be that issue of all women within the United States.

But before I turn it over to her, as the Republicans always want us to do, I would like to read a couple of clauses of the United States Constitution. The 14th Amendment, in the end of section 1, says:

No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws. And section two of the 14th amendment of the United States Constitution, says, "The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

"Any person," a key subject for tonight's debate.

Representative EDWARDS, you've been at this for many years. Please share with us the background, the history, and why this is such an important part of what we must do here.

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the gentleman from California for yielding and for your leadership.

I was thinking here, as I was sitting, that 18 years ago almost this month, I testified before the House Judiciary Committee before the passage of the Violence Against Women Act on behalf of the domestic violence advocates and survivors all across this country. And 18 years ago, we were discussing with a bipartisan group of Members, Republicans and Democrats, men and women who believed that it was finally time for the Federal Government to provide resources for shelters and services and programs and support for law enforcement and for protections for women who were experiencing domestic violence.

□ 2040

And I am actually saddened today that here we are in the Congress with Republicans taking one track and Democrats on another track on an issue that for the time that I have had professional experience on working on this issue in State legislatures and in the Congress has always been worked across both sides of the aisle with great agreement about the need to protect women against violence, and that in fact we stand here today with a partisan divide that I think for so many millions of women across this country

who are experiencing violence is not something that we understand.

Today, we had an opportunity on the grounds of the Capitol to honor peace officers from across the country. Some of those peace officers lost their lives because they were responding to situations of domestic violence.

When the Violence Against Women Act was passed in 1994, it was passed because of several years of prior work. I remember working on the Violence Against Women Act and its various iterations as early as 1990 with ORRIN HATCH, a Republican from Utah, and Senator JOSEPH BIDEN, now Vice President, a Democrat from Delaware, working on the House side with Republicans and Democrats as we sought the right kind of compromise so that we can end the scourge of domestic violence in homes all across this country.

Since the passage of the Violence Against Women Act as a bipartisan piece of legislation, it really revolutionized the way that violent crimes against women are prosecuted and prevented and the way that communities respond to survivors. I can recall as long ago as when I was in second grade living on a military installation in very close quarters where you could hear through the thin walls the family that was experiencing domestic violence. And our experience then is that the military police would respond. They would drive the servicemember around the block and he would be back in the home. That was happening not just on military installations, but in communities all across the country.

With the passage of the Violence Against Women Act, it was a real message to law enforcement: we're going to provide you the tools and training and capacity to respond appropriately to victims of domestic violence.

That's what we did in 1994. It's what we reauthorized with bipartisan support in 2000, and then again in 2005.

I can remember as a resident adviser in college the horrible situation of having to call an emergency service for a young woman who had attempted suicide because she was in a violent relationship. In 2005 and 2000 we put resources in the Violence Against Women Act that enabled colleges and universities and communities to provide the kind of support and services that that young woman would have needed.

I can recall being a coworker of a young woman who showed up at work every day, working in a high-technology field, fully educated, but she was experiencing violence. She calls me on the telephone in the middle of the night from a phone booth, naked, having been battered by her abuser, not having anyplace to go and a shelter very far away. Today, because of what we've done in the Federal level on violence against women, that particular survivor, that victim has recourse and has the ability to seek shelter and services available to her.

When I testified 18 years ago before our House Judiciary Committee, I told

the story of my own family, a family of four girls—and they say one in four women experiences violence at any time in their lifetime. Well, that was my family. My one sister was held at gunpoint and at knifepoint in my household.

And I think that what we did in 1994, what we've done in constituent legislation reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act in 2000 and 2005, has gone a long way to ensure that women like my sister, women like my coworker, like the students in college, like battered immigrant women who, under threat of deportation from their abuser, under the threat of their own physical safety, afraid—because they might be deported—from going to seek shelter and services.

Well, in 2005, when we reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act, we said to those battered immigrant women: you don't have to be under threat of deportation if you're experiencing domestic violence. And yet here we are today in a Congress where the other side of the aisle, the Republicans in the Congress, are actually proposing rollbacks in the protections that we have offered to those who have experienced domestic violence, whether they are citizen survivors or they're immigrant women or they require cultural and linguistic services or they're lesbians and gays and transgender people in relationships that also require services.

This is not the kind of country we are. I think certainly in 1994 and in the subsequent reauthorizations of the Violence Against Women Act in 2000 and 2005 that passed with overwhelming bipartisan support, that we did not envision that in 2012 we would actually be rolling back the protections that we had offered those who experience violence.

I will have more to say about this because I think when I think back to my history of working on this issue—and so many of us have in this Congress—across the aisles to provide the kinds of supports and services and shelters and programs and training and law enforcement and prosecution that hold people accountable, that it is really sad that we're here on this floor of the House today rolling back the protections for those who experience violence.

With that, if you would not mind, Mr. GARAMENDI, I know that we've been joined by others.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Why don't we work together here. But before we pass the baton to our colleagues here, I think we all need to recognize the extraordinary work that you have done over these many, many years on this issue, and understand now how it affected your family. And I dare say it affects every family in America. If it's one in four women are at some time in their life abused and threatened with violence, we're talking some 40 million women. It's an extraordinarily serious problem. And the legislation that you helped write back in 1994 needs to be

reauthorized and strengthened, not weakened.

I would like now to turn to SHEILA JACKSON LEE, our colleague from Texas, who is deeply interested in this and has spoken on this before. And then, with your permission, Representative EDWARDS, I'll let you conduct the rest of this meeting.

Ms. EDWARDS. Thank you, Mr. GARAMENDI.

Ms. JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Let me thank the gentleman from California and applaud the gentlewoman from Maryland for her early, early involvement and leadership on this issue. It was certainly advocates like herself that allowed members of the Judiciary Committee, of which I was a very young member, to be able to draw upon that advocacy and write the VAWA legislation at that time. And I did it with bipartisan support. Chairman Hyde was the chairman of the Judiciary Committee at the time, and I remember distinctly. In fact, I was with Senate Members today who remember us from the House coming down to the swamp on the Senate side in a bipartisan manner to stand and support VAWA and its writing. And it couldn't have been done without the many stories and the many advocates like yourself. And so I'm delighted to serve on the Judiciary Committee on each and every reauthorization that has come about. I have been involved with it and been involved legislatively in a bipartisan manner.

The sadness today to all of us is that we're not able to do this in a bipartisan manner. And I will just briefly recount, if I can, what it means to a woman—and the enormous range of ages—and then conclude my remarks by indicating that the legislation that will be on the floor of the House tomorrow, H.R. 4970, is sad because it has not given the opportunity to do the right thing for women in a bipartisan manner.

□ 2050

Just let me cite these stories: Jonathan Barnes, 23, strangled his girlfriend, Jessica, to death. Barnes was charged with Jessica's murder.

Carlos Rodriguez, 38, strangled his wife, Rumalda, who was found deceased in her bed. She was 27.

Lucy Garcia, 63. Florentino Suchil, 54, beat and then ran over his girlfriend, Lucy, with a vehicle. She died from severe trauma.

Yolanda Punch, 47. Lonnie Punch, 47, shot his wife, Yolanda, to death at her friend's apartment complex.

Lucinda Bernard, 34. Donald Bernard, 44, stabbed his wife, Lucinda, to death in their home.

Rosa Limon, 25. Victor Azua, 28, shot his girlfriend, Rosa, to death before he shot and killed himself.

Shannon Strickhausen, 38, was shot by Jimmy Yarbrough. He shot Shannon to death before he turned the gun on himself. Her 14-year-old daughter who was at home called the police.

Vanessa Favela, 23, was shot and killed.

Donna Baeza, 48, was stabbed to death by Harold.

Marquita Brown, 25, was shot to death.

Another unidentified victim was shot by someone they believed to have been her husband, and the children discovered both deceased.

Someone by the name of Fortunata was killed by Juan Perez, shot to death.

It goes on and on in terms of the violence. It is not a respecter of age.

And what we have in this legislation, H.R. 4970, that is so striking for those of us who have dealt with women, I sat on the Houston Area Women's Center that provided refuge for women. I have dealt with women who have had their faces shot off and have had to run for their life.

Here's what we have in this legislation, very briefly. As we commemorated law enforcement officers who lost their lives today, we know when they come upon a domestic violence circumstance, they are in jeopardy. But what they want most of all is for that victim to be able to talk to them.

In a series of amendments to this legislation that is not in the Senate bill, we have taken to do immigration reform or immigration enforcement or immigration oppression, and we have used it in the wrong way. We have decided to take victims who happen to be immigrant women who happen to be here legitimately through the visa of their spouse, and we've indicated these three points. It would unduly restrict what we call the U visas. Currently to obtain a U visa for victims of serious crime, Federal, State or local law enforcement certifies that the applicant has or is likely to be helpful in the investigation, but this bill would restrict the law enforcement agency certification only to victims for 60 days. Some of these women are running for their lives. Some of these women cannot be found.

Another provision on this would encourage vulnerable victims of particularly serious crimes, this would deny them the opportunity for a green card. That has always been law, that you have the access. And then, of course, it would suggest that these victims are using their abuse to fraudulently get a status or to get an immigration process. So it would enhance the penalties for those women if they found some flaw in their testimony.

Clearly, a whole segment of the population would be ruled, in essence, ineligible for relief or help. But, more importantly, you would cast a whole litany of women who have been involved in this violence who happen to be immigrants, whose children happen to be immigrants, it would, in essence deny them the rights that they had before. It would take away current law.

Let me close by saying the Senator from Minnesota offered an amendment that I have offered and hope even

though it may be a closed rule to be able to provide 70 percent funding to end the backlog of rape kits. There is a massive backlog of rape kits, which means that a woman is denied justice because those rape kits are not being processed. These rape kits are in hospitals. They are in evidence rooms. They are in back-door pantries. They are in places where they cannot be found, but they are there. We need to be able to put an emphasis on ensuring that these rape kits, sometimes years old, sometimes women haven't gotten justice. Sometimes the perpetrator, having raped again, has not been brought to justice because we have not been able to process those kits.

So there are many things that we could have done in a bipartisan manner. Tomorrow we will be debating this bill. Many people will be left out. I only say to the women and men who are on the floor tonight and those who may be listening to us, let's put this back. Let's go forward in a bipartisan manner. Let's make this bill the kind of bill that answers all of the concerns that have been expressed, and let's do better than H.R. 4970 because the women of this Nation deserve it.

Mr. GARAMENDI. I thank the gentlewoman from Texas for her very thoughtful and thorough discussion of this piece of legislation. It is about all women. We should never exclude any women from the protection of this law.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 5, 2011, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. EDWARDS) is recognized for 35 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding his time, and I thank the gentlelady from Texas and for your leadership on the Judiciary Committee, and just a reminder to the Chair that at the latest count, the bill that the gentlelady from Texas refers to, H.R. 4970, that would reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, is currently opposed by 325 advocacy organizations from around the country who remain concerned that the legislation proposed by the Republicans actually rolls back many protections for immigrant women, for Indian women, and for the LGBT community.

With that, I would like to yield to the gentlelady from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. First, let me thank you, Congresswoman DONNA EDWARDS, for your long-time and steady support and work on behalf of so many issues relating to women, especially those as they relate to violence against women. You have consistently over the years done this work, oftentimes when no one else was doing it, and thank you for staying the course. It is so important that we come together again in a bipartisan way to get the right bill, the correct bill, passed; and so thank you very much.

I want to thank Congressman GARAMENDI for your leadership in helping to put together this Special Order but also for your leadership on behalf of women all around the world. I know your wife very well and your children, and you have always really stood on the side of what was right for equity and for justice as it relates to women, so thank you very much.

I believe we all can agree there really is an acute need to put an end to domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and sexual harassment. It's critical that we continue to speak out against intimate-partner violence at every opportunity and call attention and awareness to it whenever we can. And so that's why we really have to get this bill back in the shape that it needs to be in so we can protect women, because I can remember when I was in the California legislature. For example, I wrote California's Violence Against Women Act for the State of California; and I worked on many domestic violence bills that were signed into law, mind you, by then-Governor Pete Wilson, a Republican Governor. And, of course, I continue to cosponsor and work on numerous bills here in Congress to support victims of domestic violence and to prevent domestic violence.

Now, as someone who understands domestic violence on a deeply personal level, I know how traumatic this experience is. I know the strong and consistent support system needed to emerge as a survivor. There was no Violence Against Women Act in the late sixties and early seventies when I had to deal with many, many issues that we're talking about tonight. There was no place to turn. I also know from personal experience that domestic violence is not only physical. It is emotional. It is brutal. It is dehumanizing to the batterer and the battered. And without strong and enforceable criminal laws and services in place, one's life really can be shattered and destroyed.

Unfortunately, instead of being serious about the Federal reauthorization of VAWA, Republicans are attempting to roll back current law and weaken protections for women. This bill, H.R. 4970, would further marginalize LGBT victims, tribal victims, and immigrant victims by removing the limited, but important, protections that the Senate version extends to LGBT domestic violence victims, including key non-discrimination provisions. Those are essential.

It removes the commonsense and constitutionally sound provisions in the Senate version that would allow the prosecution of nontribal violators who commit domestic violence against tribal women. This is horrible. It's wrong. It's immoral.

□ 2100

Under this bill, the protection of immigrant victims would be subject to unsubstantiated, abuser-provided evidence, among other bureaucratic bar-

riers to protection, including delays in the prosecution of abusers.

Now, without changes and rollbacks like these—and these are only a few of them—I question, really, if the Republican proposal should even be called a Violence Against Women Act. I understand that Congresswoman ADAMS' amendment would make some small changes to this bill; however, it would still roll back key protections for immigrant victims, allowing the abuser to have the power during investigations and to maintain control of the victim's immigration status.

Under the guise of fraud concerns, Republicans are attempting to roll back important protections even as the Department of Homeland Security officials say that VAWA petitions are among the hardest immigration programs to defraud because of the already high evidence requirements.

Now, our colleagues in the Senate recognized the need to modernize and expand protections for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence. On April 26, the Senate version of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act passed with a rare show of bipartisan support, and that is what we are here to say we should do tomorrow in this House.

In this bill, though, that the House is considering, this would really pose a serious threat to the lives of victims. This is happening while all around the world nearly one in three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime—one in three, here in the United States. As many as one in three American women report being physically or sexually abused by a husband or a boyfriend at least once in their lives. That's shocking.

In my home State of California, the statistics are even more staggering, where approximately 40 percent of California women experience physical intimate partner violence in their lifetimes. Of these women, three out of four had children under the age of 18 at home.

Children who see or experience domestic violence have a much greater chance to become either victims or perpetrators as adults. They are also more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs, run away from home, engage in teenage prostitution, and commit other crimes.

So there is unquestionable evidence of the need for a serious proposal to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. So I urge my colleagues to pass the Senate Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act.

We cannot afford to play political games with women's lives. We must not go back to the days, which many of us remember, where there were no protections, no safe places, where the courts would not allow battered women syndrome as admissible evidence in court, and women were incarcerated for defending themselves against their abusers.

So I have to thank Congresswoman EDWARDS, again, for your tremendous leadership in bringing us all together and continuing to try to work in a way that's in a bipartisan fashion—because that's the only way we can do this—on behalf of all women. This really is, in many ways, about life and death.

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the gentlelady. And thank you so much for pointing out, especially with these diverse communities, the real importance of developing programs and services that respond directly to those communities, whether they're immigrant populations, LGBT populations, native populations, and others, that require the services and support that have been offered traditionally in the Violence Against Women Act and its subsequent reauthorizations up until now.

I'm actually reminded that, years ago, one of the most horrible calls that I responded to on a hotline was a woman in a lesbian relationship that was abusive and the difficulty of getting her into a program and services that were uniquely tailored to make sure that she could live safely. It is so sad for me to think, as the gentlewoman has pointed out, that we are going to roll back provisions in the Violence Against Women Act that would deny that woman the protections that would be offered to any other person who was experiencing domestic violence because we made some political and partisan decision about who should get services and who should be denied. So I thank the gentlelady.

With that, I'd like to yield to my good friend, the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR).

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much, Congresswoman EDWARDS, for your leadership before you even became a Member of Congress, but especially tonight to lead this discussion.

I can't believe what we're about to do tomorrow in a vote to reauthorize. I was here in 1994 when we were so proud of creating this historical legislation to protect women against violence. It wasn't some women; it was all women. And now we're on the verge, 18 years later, of saying, well, let's change that.

What's so appalling about it is we're going to take that in a debate tomorrow in this room, where every time we're in session we start that session by getting up and taking a pledge to that flag behind you saying "justice for all." That's our role. We're elected here to bring about justice for all.

We just had a census in the United States. In that census, we didn't just count some people because they were citizens, some people because they were rich, some people because they were this or that or had an education. We counted every living being in the United States. Why? Because the laws of this country are supposed to be protecting and enhancing and providing a quality of life for every living being. Now we're on the verge, in an election year—when the majority of voters in this country are women—to say to the

women of this country, Oh, by the way, we're going to start taking back some of the provisions that have protected you.

You know, I rise, as Mr. GARAMENDI did before me, we rise as brothers, as husbands, as fathers, as a grandfather. In every one of those situations, the brother is because I have a sister, the husband is because I have a wife, the father is because I have a daughter, and the grandfather is because I have a granddaughter. My world in politics is about their lives and the future and growing up in the great country of the United States of America.

So here we are with this law that we passed back in 1994. We reauthorized it. We didn't have takeaways when we reauthorized that law in 2000. We didn't take away things when we reauthorized it in 2005. And now we're in 2012 and the vote before the Congress is: Let's take away some stuff. Why? It doesn't make any sense at all.

Why do you say, well, you can exclude Native Americans? Why? Aren't they? They're Americans. They're Native Americans. They're probably more American than anybody. Take away rights that those women have been given and now are being taken away.

Noncitizen women? Noncitizen women. Those are a lot of immigrants. It doesn't matter whether you have a green card or no card, taking away your rights to complain about violence.

To those in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities, they're individuals. You take away their rights? Shame.

It's an election year. Women are voting. I hope they will wake up and understand that the Congress, led by the Republican leadership in this House, is about to destroy the ability for people to access justice in a Congress and in a Nation where we pledge allegiance and pledge justice for all. Not tonight.

Thank you for having this special session.

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the gentleman. And I thank him for his leadership because it took real courage for a bipartisan consensus to develop in this Congress, in this House of Representatives, in the Senate, with virtually no opposition because Members of Congress came together from every single State, from every community, from every congressional district and said that this kind of violence that happens in intimate relationships is not right, and that the Federal Government has a special role to play in making sure that those who experience violence have the ability to receive the kinds of programs and services and shelter and law enforcement protections, no matter what their status, because violence is wrong.

I thank the gentleman from California and other Members of the Congress who, in 1994—and then again in 2000, and then again in 2005—reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act across party lines because we share an oath and an obligation to provide those

kinds of protections and services to all who experience violence. It is such a sad day that here we are here in the House of Representatives, and tomorrow we will have before us legislation that strips away that bipartisan effort that we engaged in just 18 years ago.

□ 2110

With that, I'd like to yield to my good friend, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. I want to thank Congresswoman EDWARDS for her phenomenal leadership throughout her adult life on this issue, before she came to Congress and, obviously, now, a tremendous leader here on an issue of vital concern, and I underline the word vital, to America's families, to America's women, to those in tribal communities, to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender communities, to our immigrant families, to our immigrant spouses.

Let me just say that I don't recall ever the Violence Against Women Act being controversial. We have always, on a unanimous basis practically, passed it year after year after year. But this year, House Republicans have decided that they want to make an issue where they shouldn't be an issue. How sad. Sort of devolutionist, trying to move America backwards rather than forwards.

Every American should be free from fear. They should be free from abuse, and they should have equal protection under the law. The Violence Against Women Act does exactly that.

And I have two cases I just wanted to briefly mention, one from my district, where a horrible crime occurred. A woman was literally dismembered by her spouse, and each body part was put in a different trash can in the western part of one of the counties that I represent. And I thought about the agony that that woman suffered, year after year after year, fear for her own life, and eventually it was lost, and not reporting this, not going anywhere, being completely consumed by the fear that eventually resulted in her death. No American should face that.

And then I recall being called in our office by a gentleman saying, Marcy, you know, up the street from me, a woman has moved in with a man, and she's an immigrant from Russia. And my wife and I believe she's being beaten, but she's not a citizen. What can we do? How can we help her? This was years ago. This was a few years ago.

And I think of these cases that have come across during my period of service, and I know how important the Violence Against Women Act is to reduce domestic violence in our country and give women and give individuals a place to go. Even today, since 1994, we know that domestic violence has dropped more than 50 percent. However, the other 50 percent is still there. And I see this, sadly, in the regions that I represent. And I'm not alone. But there's still a lot of people that don't know where to go.

I recall one time traveling with then-Congresswoman, now Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis. We were down at the border in Texas, and we went to one women's shelter with this gigantic electric fence around it to try to protect the women in those border communities for the violence that they were enduring.

And so I want to thank Congresswoman EDWARDS for taking this lead tonight, to help to reauthorize this important program, to assure that we have adequate refuge for those who are living in fear in order to save their lives.

My goodness. This is the greatest country in the world, and we know that statistics show 1 in 4 women, this is a shocking number, have been the victims of severe physical domestic violence, and 1 in 5 women have been raped in their lifetimes, many in the U.S. military.

And I want to compliment Congresswoman JACKIE SPEIER for her phenomenal leadership on that issue to try to get justice inside the military, as well as in civilian society.

So I just want to say that I'm sorry that there are those who don't want to protect the lives of all citizens that live inside our borders, and immigrants that have come here who face tremendous obstacles of various kinds that many people can't imagine, but they're actually happening, and to make sure that all those within our borders are given equal protection under the law and justice and the opportunity to live in freedom without fear.

So I want to thank Congresswoman EDWARDS for bringing us together this evening and for making such a tremendous contribution to doing what's right and what's necessary for our country. Thank you for leading us forward.

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the gentle lady, and thank her also for her leadership and commitment to all those who experience violence. And I think the message here tonight is that clearly we need to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. I think we agree about that.

But the question is, what do we do that actually expands the protections of a really vital piece of legislation for women all across this country, however they're situated? Unfortunately, H.R. 4970 simply doesn't do that. It eliminates protections for crime victims that are offered by the U visa, as our colleagues have pointed out. It deters immigrant victims from reporting crimes by denying nearly all U visa recipients the protections offered by lawful permanent resident status.

If anyone has ever held the hand of an immigrant woman whose status is in question and whose abuser has known that and uses that as part of the instrument of violence against her, you could not be possibly for legislation that would, in fact, roll back the protections that she deserves. I've held that woman's hand.

There's no reason, in this great country, that we should not have protections for those who've come here, for those whose legal status is actually under threat only because they're a victim of violence.

Now, there are some who suggest that somehow there's great fraud going on, and that principally, women are saying that they are experiencing violence so that they can receive protections.

I have to tell you, in my more than 20 some years of working on issues of domestic violence, on responding to telephone calls, and taking intakes in shelters, and sitting with victims and survivors in court, I can't recall anyone saying that they had experienced violence when they hadn't. And so I don't know what fraud the other side is trying to get at.

What I do know is that H.R. 4970 would roll back protections from the very women, from the very victims who are the most vulnerable, who need those protections. It would endanger victims by making it difficult for them to obtain visa protection.

H.R. 4970 needlessly requires that an investigation or prosecution is actively pursued. Can you imagine that a batterer would love the idea that you'd have to pursue an active investigation and prosecution, otherwise that person is free to continue battering, free to continue the abuse because they know that they, in effect, have the protection of the law. This is, unbelievable.

H.R. 4970 would require that a victim help to identify the perpetrator. All of us who have worked, particularly, with victims of sexual assault and other victims, would know what a dangerous position it puts a victim in of having to identify a perpetrator. Very often a sexual assault victim will not even know who the perpetrator is.

So I would urge my colleagues, as we consider reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act, which we know we need to do for those who experience violence all across this country, that we consider those who are the most vulnerable, and that we stop down this path of politicizing and turning the Violence Against Women Act into a partisan issue, when we know that since 1994, to 2000, to 2005, Republicans and Democrats in this Congress have come together to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act because we stand together against domestic violence.

I've been joined by my colleague from Vermont, PETER WELCH, and I'm sure that he has a few words to share with us about supporting a robust, bipartisan Violence Against Women Act.

□ 2120

Mr. WELCH. Thank you.

You've been a leader on this; but the challenge that we face in Congress is whether we're going to take seriously the epidemic of violence that's inflicted on women throughout this country. This legislation has to address what is a very serious problem in this

country, which is that women are being subjected to violent attacks and that do we have it in our heart—do we have it in our will?—to provide legal protections to women who are the victims of assaultive and violent conduct in this country? It's really that simple.

That should apply to all women. Any person who is attacked on the basis of gender should be protected. What their views are about anything—what their views are on politics, what their views are on sexual orientation—are really irrelevant to the basic, independent, individual right that all of us have—men and women, incidentally—which is to live our lives in peace and with protection and with the confidence that our physical integrity will not be violated. It's really as simple as that.

So this is a question of whether this country has it in its heart to understand that there is violence out there that is affecting half of our population. Do we as a society have the desire and have the will to provide legal protection to people who are on the receiving end of violent conduct?

In my view, we have that in our heart, we have it in our soul, we have it in our will, and we can do it.

Ms. EDWARDS. I think the gentleman from Vermont raises an interesting point. We do have it in our heart. The question is whether we have the will to do the right thing.

This is not a selfish question, because, in fact, while we can sympathize and empathize with the experiences of victims and can provide support and services to them, we also recognize that it is really costly to us as a society when people are experiencing violence in their homes. It impacts our workplaces; it impacts our communities; it impacts our streets. When young people witness violence—when children witness violence in their homes—it is more likely that they will either experience violence themselves or they will become perpetrators. Our prisons and jails are filled with young people, men and women, who, when you get down to the core and ask them the question about their life experiences, will repeat to you their experiences of violence.

So this isn't an abstract question about whether we feel good in doing it. The impact for all of our communities and for society is really tremendous. Domestic violence spills out onto our streets and into our workplaces. It is estimated that the cost to our Nation is on the order of \$8 billion in lost productivity because of domestic violence. It's attributed to productivity and to health care costs—the violence that causes 2 million injuries each year, three deaths each day, untold amounts of suffering to women and others who experience violence.

I know that we talk about women because the overwhelming majority of those who experience intimate partner violence are women, but we want to acknowledge that there are some men who experience violence. Some of those

men are in same-sex relationships, and for some of those men, the women are perpetrators of violence; but the overwhelming majority of violence is violence that takes place between men and women, with men being the principal perpetrators.

It is why we've supported at the Federal level through the Violence Against Women Act a system of shelters and services and support for those who experience violence. It's why we've provided training for police officers, for all in law enforcement—for our prosecutors so that they become better prosecutors, for our judges so that they actually understand in our family courts and in our criminal courts what's going on with violence and so that it makes them better at meting out justice. It's the reason that we provide training in workplaces and with medical practitioners—so that they are able to identify when violence is happening in the emergency rooms and other health care facilities. It is the reason that here in this Congress we have this debate.

The fact is, under H.R. 4970, which we are considering, if you are an immigrant woman, you can say, You know what? The abuser, because he knows about my immigration status, can abuse me all he wants because I will not be afforded any protection. There is no place that I can go. If you are from the LGBT community, you can experience untold violence, and there will not be protections and services for you.

So H.R. 4970 actually turns on its head what we began to do in 1994 with the first passage of the Violence Against Women Act and with its subsequent reauthorizations, which is that we began to expand the protections. Then we began to ask: What are the levels of services that we can provide to communities, however they're situated, so that we can make sure we have culturally sensitive programs and services, linguistically sensitive programs and services, and programs targeted at specific communities so that they can take advantage of them?

Mr. WELCH. What about the kids? Whether they're lesbian or immigrants who take care of the children, isn't it the mothers who have the burden of that at the end of the day? Aren't we doing something that's going to protect those kids as well?

Ms. EDWARDS. The gentleman makes an amazing point.

When children witness violence, and especially as they grow older, children will often want to protect their mothers, and that actually puts them in greater danger. That is especially true for young boys, for male children, who will want to protect their mothers and think that they can intervene. There are children who grow up thinking that they were the reason that their mothers were experiencing violence, and then that has an untold downstream impact on them as they grow older.

The fact of the matter is we need to reauthorize the Violence Against

Women Act, and we need to do that in a bipartisan fashion. We need to make sure that whether you're an immigrant woman, whether you're a Native American woman, or whether you are in the LGBT community that you have the full protections of the law against experiencing violence in your intimate relationships. This is the least that we can do. It is just unfortunate that the Republicans aren't even going to allow an amendment that would actually allow us to expand these protections so that we could come to a bipartisan solution.

I can't tell you—I will just say to the chair—how sad it makes me as somebody who was in the trenches in 1990 to 1994, with advocates from across this country who were seeking to expand protections and services and programs for those who were experiencing violence, to know that we were able to do that with Republican ORRIN HATCH from Utah; with JOE BIDEN from Delaware, a Democrat; with Connie Morella, a Republican from Maryland; with JOHN CONYERS, a Democrat from Michigan. We were able to do that across the aisle; but today, instead, what we are doing is a Republican bill that would roll back the protections that many of us had sought to have.

Mr. WELCH. You make a good point.

Is it the case in this country that it's Republican women or Democratic women or Republican children or Democratic children who are on the bad end of violence? We know that's not the case. There is a lot of human emotion that goes into this, and it's uncontrolled emotion. We know that whether you are a Republican or a Democrat child or woman that you're entitled to the physical integrity of your own safety.

So it's not an issue that should be decided on partisan grounds. It should be decided on the basic right of human beings to physical security, and it should be about the goal all of us, I believe, have—that we want to have respectful and loving relationships, particularly in our intimate relationships.

Ms. EDWARDS. I thank the gentleman for pointing out the baseline, which is, when you're experiencing violence, you don't identify yourself as a Republican or as a Democrat.

□ 2130

You're not a Christian or a Jew or a Muslim. Children witness violence, women—and some men—experience violence. Native American women experience violence, and so do immigrants experience violence. Our law should afford the full protection of the law against those who would perpetrate and provide services and programs for those against whom violence is committed.

I strongly urge the passage of the Violence Against Women Act that is a bipartisan bill. Unfortunately, H.R. 4970 simply misses the mark and would tip the scales in favor of abusers, that would tip the scales against immigrant

women, that would tip the scales against the LGBT community, and would tip the scales across the board.

With that, I urge that we would defeat H.R. 4970 and come back to the table with sensible bipartisan legislation in the tradition of the Violence Against Women Act.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Karen L. Haas, Clerk of the House, reported that on May 8, 2012, she presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills.

H.R. 3247. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1100 Town and Country Commons in Chesterfield, Missouri, as the "Lance Corporal Matthew P. Pathenos Post Office Building".

H.R. 3246. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 15455 Manchester Road in Ballwin, Missouri, as the "Specialist Peter J. Navarro Post Office Building".

H.R. 3004. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 260 California Drive in Yountville, California, as the "Private First Class Alejandro R. Ruiz Post Office Building".

H.R. 2244. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 67 Castle Street in Geneva, New York, as the "Corporal Steven Blaine Riccione Post Office".

H.R. 2660. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 122 North Holderrieth Boulevard in Tomball, Texas, as the "Tomball Veterans Post Office".

H.R. 3248. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 112 South 5th Street in Saint Charles, Missouri, as the "Lance Corporal Drew W. Weaver Post Office Building".

H.R. 2767. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 8 West Silver Street in Westfield, Massachusetts, as the "William T. Trant Post Office Building".

H.R. 298. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 500 East Whitestone Boulevard in Cedar Park, Texas, as the "Army Specialist Matthew Troy Morris Post Office Building".

H.R. 1423. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 115 4th Avenue Southwest in Ardmore, Oklahoma, as the "Specialist Michael E. Phillips Post Office".

H.R. 2079. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 10 Main Street in East Rockaway, New York, as the "John J. Cook Post Office".

H.R. 2213. To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 801 West Eastport Street in Iuka, Mississippi, as the "Sergeant Jason W. Vaughn Post Office".

#### ADJOURNMENT

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 31 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, May 16, 2012, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5990. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department's Annual Report for FY 2011 regarding the training, and its associated expenses, of U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) with friendly foreign forces for the period ending September 30, 2011, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2011; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5991. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting authorization of 14 officers to wear the authorized insignia of the grade of major general; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5992. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Department of Defense, transmitting a letter on the approved retirement of Lieutenant General John C. Koziol, United States Air Force, and his advancement to the grade of lieutenant general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

5993. A letter from the Acting Chairman, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting the Office of Minority and Women Inclusion's annual report for 2011; to the Committee on Financial Services.

5994. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting the Department's Vehicle Fleet Report on Alternative Fuel Vehicles for fiscal year 2011, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 13218; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5995. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Commerce, transmitting a certification of export to China; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5996. A letter from the Executive Secretary, Agency for International Development, transmitting a report pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5997. A letter from the Chairman, Commodity Futures Trading Commission, transmitting the Commission's Federal Employee Antidiscrimination Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act) Report for FY 2011; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5998. A letter from the Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago, transmitting the 2011 management reports and statements on the system of internal controls of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 9106; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

5999. A letter from the Chairman, Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission, transmitting the Commission's FY 2011 Annual Report pursuant to Section 203, Title II of the Notification and Federal Anti-discrimination and Retaliation (No FEAR) Act of 2002; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6000. A letter from the Director, National Science Foundation, transmitting the Foundation's annual report for FY 2011 prepared in accordance with Title II of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

6001. A letter from the Chief, Office of Special Counsel, transmitting the Office's annual report for FY 2011 prepared in accordance with Title II of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.