

bipartisan bill. Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator COLLINS, an Independent and Republican, have acknowledged they want to bring this bill forward, and they have it done, so we will bring it to the floor. We have all our Appropriations bills, and we have to do those. So we have a lot to do to accomplish even a fraction of our to-do list, and it is going to take more cooperation and less conflict. Not everything has to be a knock-down, drag-out fight as it was on this highway bill. To think we wasted 3 weeks on a matter dealing with the health of women in America, but we did. So we stand ready to work with our Republican colleagues.

The Republican leader mentioned the small business jobs bill. We have been trying to do one for a long time. We are going to do a small business jobs bill. The House bill is not perfect. We are glad it is moving forward, and we are going to try to do something here to match so we can get it to conference and get this done.

I am hopeful that when Democrats reach across the aisle, we will find willing partners on the other side for a change.

I thank the Chair. I ask that the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the second half.

The Senator from Washington.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to join my colleagues to mark International Women's Day. This day, which across the globe is celebrated in many different ways, is, at its core, a day to reflect on the achievements of women in politics, business, and society. It is a day to reflect on what a woman's role was in the not-so-distant past and to celebrate how far we have come. But, unfortunately, on this International Women's Day in the year 2012, we cannot celebrate the progress we have made without also acknowledging the unsettling truth that that progress is under threat.

Today a shadow has been cast over this day of celebration by efforts to turn back the clock in Washington, DC,

and across the country, efforts we all must fight against. Only 1 week ago in the Senate, we had a debate on the ability for women across this country to access contraceptives. It is a debate most women believed was settled half a century ago and one we had all hoped was in the past. However, in a scene that was eerily reminiscent of half a century ago, last week one woman brave enough to come forward and give voice to the importance of birth control was targeted. First, her story of a friend's battle with ovarian cancer was purposely left out of a House hearing on women's health. Then, as we have all heard, she was scorned and ridiculed by a rightwing pundit.

It was a galvanizing and eye-opening moment for millions of women in our country. It was a reminder that some still see women as easy targets, and it awakened many women to the fact that the gains we are meant to celebrate on a day such as today could easily be lost to political strategy that preys on women.

For many of those who watched the last few weeks play out, it may have seemed an isolated incident. It could appear to some as a sudden and swift effort by some Republicans—who thankfully have been blocked for the time being—but that is not case. The truth is, women's access to care has rarely been at greater risk. From the moment they came into power, the Republicans in the House of Representatives have been waging a war on women's health.

If you don't believe me, look at the very first bills they introduced when they arrived. They campaigned across the country in the last election on a platform of jobs and the economy, but the first three bills they introduced when they got here were direct attacks on women's health. The very first one, H.R. 1, would have totally eliminated title X funding for family planning and teen pregnancy prevention. The amendment also included defunding Planned Parenthood and cutting off support for the millions of women who count on it. Another one of their bills would have permanently codified the Hyde amendment and the DC abortion ban.

Finally, they introduced a bill that would have rolled back every single one of the gains we made for women in the health care reform bill. That Republican bill would have removed the caps on out-of-pocket expenses that literally protect women from losing their homes or their life savings if they get sick. It would have ended the ban on lifetime limits on coverage, which is so important to everyone. It would have allowed insurance companies to once again discriminate against women by charging them higher premiums than men or even denying women care because of so-called preexisting conditions they had, such as pregnancy. It would have rolled back the guarantee of insurance companies' coverage of contraceptives.

Republicans have shown they will go to just about any length to limit access

to women's care, even shutting down the Federal Government. That may seem extreme to all, but that is exactly what happened 1 year ago when Republicans nearly shut down the Federal Government over a rider that was yet another attempt to go after title X and Planned Parenthood. I remember sitting in those meetings late at night, after months of negotiations over the numbers in the budget, astonished that Republicans were willing to throw all those negotiations away over one issue, and that was their attack on women's health.

The attack on women's rights is not just taking place in the Nation's Capitol. In State after State across the country, legislators bent on putting politics between women and their health care are undoing years of important work. A recently enacted law in Texas not only strips women of their rights but of their dignity. It is a law about which Nicholas Kristof of the New York Times recently wrote a column.

I ask unanimous consent to have the article written by Nicholas Kristof, "When States Abuse Women," printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(See exhibit 1.)

Mrs. MURRAY. It is a law that all women across the country should be insulted by and outraged over. Today, nearly 40 years after Roe v. Wade was passed, a woman in Texas who seeks an abortion—one of the most difficult choices a woman and her family can face—is not met with compassion and care but with humiliation, and that is because they have passed a law by Republicans that she is now subjected, against her will, to a vaginal ultrasound. Then she is instructed to listen to a fetal heartbeat, watch the ultrasound and numerous other State-mandated hurdles and then she has to go home and wait 24 hours before she can access a health care procedure that was made a right for women four decades ago.

One would think that after 2 years spent railing against any government involvement in health care, Republicans would not want the State to dictate procedures a doctor must perform on a woman, whether she wants them or not, but then you would be confused because, clearly, when it comes to women and their health care choices, these Republicans are willing to do whatever it takes for them to call the shots—not the women, not their doctors, not their families. The sad part is other States across the country are now contemplating similar laws.

So the threats to women's health care are very real and they are growing. We saw it on a panel on contraceptives in the House that didn't include a woman on the panel. We saw it in a young woman being called horrible names for telling the stories of a friend

in need. We see it in Republican efforts to allow an employer to dictate whether a woman has access to contraceptives, and we are seeing it in State laws across the country aimed at stripping women of their rights and more.

So on this International Women's Day, we celebrate our gains with the clear understanding that they must always be defended, and we join with women everywhere to make sure that progress is not reversed.

EXHIBIT 1

[The New York Times, Mar. 3, 2012]

WHEN STATES ABUSE WOMEN

(By Nicholas D. Kristof)

Here's what a woman in Texas now faces if she seeks an abortion.

Under a new law that took effect three weeks ago with the strong backing of Gov. Rick Perry, she first must typically endure an ultrasound probe inserted into her vagina. Then she listens to the audio thumping of the fetal heartbeat and watches the fetus on an ultrasound screen.

She must listen to a doctor explain the body parts and internal organs of the fetus as they're shown on the monitor. She signs a document saying that she understands all this, and it is placed in her medical files. Finally, she goes home and must wait 24 hours before returning to get the abortion.

"It's state-sanctioned abuse," said Dr. Curtis Boyd, a Texas physician who provides abortions. "It borders on a definition of rape. Many states describe rape as putting any object into an orifice against a person's will. Well, that's what this is. A woman is coerced to do this, just as I'm coerced."

"The state of Texas is waging war on women and their families," Dr. Boyd added. "The new law is demeaning and disrespectful to the women of Texas, and insulting to the doctors and nurses who care for them."

That law is part of a war over women's health being fought around the country—and in much of the country, women are losing. State by state, legislatures are creating new obstacles to abortions and are treating women in ways that are patronizing and humiliating.

Twenty states now require abortion providers to conduct ultrasounds first in some situations, according to the Guttmacher Institute, a research organization. The new Texas law is the most extreme to take effect so far, but similar laws have been passed in North Carolina and Oklahoma and are on hold pending legal battles.

Alabama, Kentucky, Rhode Island and Mississippi are also considering Texas-style legislation bordering on state-sanctioned rape. And what else do you call it when states mandate invasive probes in women's bodies?

"If you look up the term rape, that's what it is: the penetration of the vagina without the woman's consent," said Linda Coleman, an Alabama state senator who is fighting the proposal in her state. "As a woman, I am livid and outraged."

States put in place a record number of new restrictions on abortions last year, Guttmacher says. It counts 92 new curbs in 24 states.

"It was a debacle," Elizabeth Nash, who manages state issues for Guttmacher, told me. "It's been awful. Last year was unbelievable. We've never seen anything like it."

Yes, there have been a few victories for women. The notorious Virginia proposal that would have required vaginal ultrasounds before an abortion was modified to require only abdominal ultrasounds.

Yet over all, the pattern has been retrograde: humiliating obstacles to abortions,

cuts in family-planning programs, and limits on comprehensive sex education in schools.

If Texas legislators wanted to reduce abortions, the obvious approach would be to reduce unwanted pregnancies. The small proportion of women and girls who aren't using contraceptives account for half of all abortions in America, according to Guttmacher. Yet Texas has some of the weakest sex-education programs in the nation, and last year it cut spending for family planning by 66 percent.

The new Texas law was passed last year but was held up because of a lawsuit by the Center for Reproductive Rights. In a scathing opinion, Judge Sam Sparks of Federal District Court described the law as "an attempt by the Texas legislature to discourage women from exercising their constitutional rights." In the end, the courts upheld the law, and it took effect last month.

It requires abortion providers to give women a list of crisis pregnancy centers where, in theory, they can get unbiased counseling and in some cases ultrasounds. In fact, these centers are often set up to ensnare pregnant women and shame them or hound them if they are considering abortions.

"They are traps for women, set up by the state of Texas," Dr. Boyd said.

The law then requires the physician to go over a politicized list of so-called dangers of abortion, like "the risks of infection and hemorrhage" and "the possibility of increased risk of breast cancer." Then there is the mandated ultrasound, which in the first trimester normally means a vaginal ultrasound. Doctors sometimes seek vaginal ultrasounds before an abortion, with the patient's consent, but it's different when the state forces women to undergo the procedure.

The best formulation on this topic was Bill Clinton's, that abortion should be "safe, legal and rare." Achieving that isn't easy, and there is no silver bullet to reduce unwanted pregnancies. But family planning and comprehensive sex education are a surer path than demeaning vulnerable women with state-sanctioned abuse and humiliation.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator MURRAY for her comments, and I concur in her observations. What we have seen on women's health care issues in this body is how some are trying to turn the clock back on the progress we have made. I was listening to my colleague talk about ultrasounds. Virginia just enacted an ultrasound bill this week. The Governor signed it into law, so this is spreading to other States. We talk about big government, but the government mandating ultrasounds for pregnant women? This is outrageous and something that on International Women's Day, it is right that we bring this to the attention of our colleagues. We have seen the same type of action taken against family planning, contraceptives, those who want to repeal Roe v. Wade. We have to stand strong with women and women's health care issues as we in America lead the international community.

Around the world, International Women's Day is an occasion to honor and praise women for their accomplishments. On this International Women's

Day, I stand with my colleagues to celebrate women who are making a difference both in America and around the world, in countries where they lead in the fight for justice, equality, and fairness for all women. All of us, women and men alike, can help by supporting women's efforts to claim their legal rights, live free from violence, earn a decent income, get an education, grow food for their families, and make their voices heard in their communities and beyond.

I believe in the power of women to change the world and to help them hasten that change. U.S. international assistance policies should address and remove barriers between women, women's rights, and economic empowerment. Empowering women is one of the most critical tools in our toolbox to fight poverty and injustice. Integrating the unique needs of women into our domestic and international policies is critical. As chairman of the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Development and Foreign Assistance, Economic Affairs, and International Environmental Protection, I can attest that this must be the bedrock of our foreign assistance programming if it is to be successful.

I defy anyone's assertion that women's empowerment should take a backseat to so-called more important priorities. Decades of research and experience prove that when women are able to be fully engaged in society and hold decisionmaking power, they are more likely to invest their income in food, clean water, education, and health care for their children. This creates a positive cycle change that lifts entire families and communities and nations out of poverty. Simply put, when women succeed, we all do.

Accordingly, I was very pleased by last week's release of the new USAID "Policy on Gender Equality and Female Empowerment," which makes integrating gender and including women and girls central to all U.S. international assistance. This policy, which updates guidelines that were over 30 years old, recognizes that the integration of women and girls is basic to effective international assistance across all sectors such as food, security, health, climate change, science, technology, economic growth, democracy and governance and humanitarian assistance. It aims to increase the capacity of women and girls and decrease inequality between genders and also decrease gender-based violence. This new policy is as welcomed as it is necessary. As Secretary Clinton declared earlier this year:

Achieving our objectives for global development will demand accelerated efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Otherwise, peace and prosperity will have their own glass ceiling.

Unfortunately, as we know, there are still places this glass ceiling exists and there are major obstacles to women. Worldwide, one in three women will experience some form of violence in her

lifetime. Women and girls in emergencies, conflict settings, and natural disasters often face extreme violence, including being forced to exchange sex for food. The World Health Organization has reported that up to 70 percent of women in some countries describe having been victims of domestic violence at some stage in their lives.

The United States has the potential to be a true leader in preventing and responding to violence against women and girls—an issue that is inextricably linked to U.S. diplomacy, development, and national security goals.

What many people fail to realize is that violence against women and girls is both a major consequence and cause of poverty. Violence and poverty go hand in hand. Violence prevents women and girls from getting an education, going to work, and earning the income they need to lift their families out of poverty. We know that one in three women will be the victim of sexual abuse in her lifetime. But we also know that women have the potential to lift their families and communities out of poverty.

Violence against women and girls is an extreme human rights violation, a public health epidemic, and a barrier to solving severe challenges such as extreme poverty, HIV/AIDS, and conflict. It devastates the lives of millions of women and girls—in peacetime and in conflict—and knows no national and cultural barriers.

Today let's reaffirm our commitment to end gender-based discrimination in all forms, to end violence against women and girls worldwide, and to encourage the people of the United States to observe International Women's Day. On this day and every day, I am proud to stand in support of women across America and worldwide.

Investing in and focusing on empowering women and girls is one of the most efficient uses of our foreign assistance dollars and one of the best ways to make the world more peaceful and prosperous. As Secretary of State Clinton pointed out more than 15 years ago, "Women's rights are human rights"—and nothing is more fundamental, in my opinion.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am very pleased to join my colleagues Senator CARDIN and, earlier, Senator MURRAY this morning in commemorating International Women's Day. It is a day observed around the world, and it celebrates the economic, political, and social achievement of women—past, present, and future. It is a day that recognizes the obstacles women still face in the struggle for equal rights and equal opportunities.

One year ago today, I, along with a group of bipartisan Senators, introduced and passed a resolution in the Senate recognizing the significance of

the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. Today is the 101st anniversary and, as is the centennial milestone before it, it is a testament to the dedication and determination of women and men around the world to address gender inequality for the good of all people.

There are more than 3.3 billion women in the world today. Across the globe, women are participating in the political, social, and economic life of their communities in an unprecedented fashion, playing a critical role in providing and caring for their families, contributing substantially to the growth of economies, and advancing food security for their communities.

Yesterday I had the wonderful, humbling, and inspiring opportunity to recognize and celebrate the 10 recipients of the 2012 State Department International Women of Courage Award. This prestigious award, which is the only award in the State Department given only to women, annually recognizes women who have shown exceptional courage and leadership in advocating for women's rights and empowerment around the globe, often at significant risk to themselves. These award winners, including activists in the Sudan and Saudi Arabia, politicians in Turkey and Afghanistan, and representatives from six other countries, are truly remarkable and inspirational women.

I ask unanimous consent to have all of their names and brief bios printed in the RECORD so that they are properly recognized by the Senate.

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

AFGHANISTAN

Maryam Durani—Director, Khadija Kubra Women's Association for Culture, Kandahar Provincial Council Member.

Award Citation: "For striving to give a voice to women through the power of the media, government, and civil society, despite innumerable security and societal challenges."

Bio: Kandahar Province is among Afghanistan's most conservative and most dangerous—but that has not stopped Maryam Durani from speaking out for the rights of Afghan women and girls. As a member of Kandahar's Provincial Council, director of the non-profit Khadija Kubra Women's Association for Culture, and owner and manager of the only local, female-focused radio station, she is both a leader and a role model for women throughout Afghanistan. A true woman of courage, Ms. Durani has survived multiple attacks on her life, including a suicide attack in 2009 that resulted in serious injury. Although she continues to face regular threats, she is undeterred in her mission to promote basic civil rights for all Afghans.

BRAZIL

Major Pricilla de Oliveira Azevedo—General Coordinator for Strategic Programs, Rio de Janeiro State Secretariat of Public Security, and Major of Rio State Military Police.

Award Citation: "For courageous and dedicated service to Rio State's innovative "Favela Pacification Program" as the first female commander of a Pacification Police Unit (community police station), and as co-

ordinator of UPPs in the State Security Secretariat, where she is integrating previously marginalized populations into the larger Rio de Janeiro community."

Bio: Pricilla de Oliveira Azevedo is a military police officer, currently working as General Coordinator of Strategic Programs for the "Police Pacification Units" (UPPs), Rio de Janeiro State Secretariat of Public Security's renowned "favela" (slum) pacification program. Major Azevedo joined the Rio de Janeiro Military Police in 1998 and, following her graduation in 2000, started working in police battalions and street repression operations. In 2007, Major Azevedo demonstrated extreme courage and commitment to her duties by successfully arresting a gang of criminals who had kidnapped her.

As a result of her courage and success, the Rio de Janeiro State Secretary for Security invited her to head the first UPP in Rio de Janeiro, in the "favela" of Santa Marta, a position she occupied between 2008 to 2010. In this capacity, she commanded 125 military police officers in an area with 9,000 inhabitants and a very low human development index. During her two years in Santa Marta, Major Azevedo shut down drug dealing operations in the favela, established conflict mediation models, worked with state and local government institutions to improve garbage collection and health care, broadened education and technical training opportunities, and developed a successful community arts and crafts fair.

In 2009, Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes invited Major Pricilla to become a member of the Brazilian delegation in the 2016 Olympics Announcement in Copenhagen. In the same year she completed training on Koban community policing techniques, and participated in a citizen safety training in Israel. Major Azevedo is currently completing her law degree in Estácio de Sá University.

Major Azevedo is the most senior female officer in the UPP program, and the first woman to occupy a strategic position in the Rio de Janeiro State Secretariat of Security's Superintendence of Operational Planning. She has received honor awards from the city councils of Rio de Janeiro, Tanguá and Itaboraí. She is also a recipient of the United Nations Brazilian Force's 50th Anniversary Medal. In 2009, *Veja Magazine* gave Major Pricilla Azevedo the Rio de Janeiro Personality of the Year Award, with the title of "Defender of the City".

BURMA

Zin Mar Aung—Democracy Activist.

Award Citation: "For championing democracy, strengthening civil society, and empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to the political transformation of Burma."

Bio: Zin Mar Aung is a former political prisoner, imprisoned for eleven years because of her political activism. She has dedicated her life to promoting democracy, women's empowerment, and conflict resolution in Burma. Following her involvement in the 1996 and 1998 pro-democracy student uprisings and subsequent imprisonment, Zin Mar Aung established a cultural impact studies group to promote the idea that democracy is compatible with Asian culture. She also created and leads a self-help association for female ex-political prisoners and a school of political science in Rangoon, all of which teach and empower others in Burma's changing but still challenging environment for civil society and democracy activists. She is co-founder of RAINFALL, a women's empowerment group; and is currently spearheading an organization to raise awareness of issues affecting ethnic minorities in conflict areas.

COLOMBIA

Jineth Bedoya Lima—Journalist and Spokeswoman of the “Rape and Other Violence: Take my Body Out of the War” Campaign.

Award Citation: “For her unfailing courage, determination, and perseverance fighting for justice and speaking out on behalf of victims of sexual violence in Colombia.”

Bio: Throughout her 15-year career as an investigative journalist, Jineth Bedoya has consistently sought out tough assignments, despite knowing the risks it could entail. In 2000, she began to uncover an arms smuggling network between government security forces and imprisoned paramilitaries in a maximum security prison. On May 25, 2000, as she arrived at the prison to interview a key paramilitary member, unknown men grabbed Jineth, threw her into a vehicle, drugged her, and drove her to a farm several hours outside Bogota. There, the men repeatedly raped her, bound her, and left her in a garbage dump at the side of a road where a taxi driver discovered her later that evening. As the men raped her, they told her, “Pay attention. We are sending a message to the press in Colombia.” Since this horrifying incident nearly 12 years ago, Jineth has continued her work as an investigative journalist while pushing for justice in her own case and other unsolved cases of sexual violence. Jineth has become an inspiration not only for female journalists, but for all women who are demanding justice in their own cases. Since September 2009, she has served as spokeswoman of Oxfam’s campaign, “Rape and Other Violence: Take my Body out of the War.” She now appears in TV ads denouncing sexual violence as part of the campaign and has used her journalistic influence to draw more attention to the issues of sexual violence and impunity.

LIBYA

Hana Elhebshi—Freelance Activist.

Award Citation: “For courageous advancement of the cause of freedom of expression and promotion of women’s rights during times of conflict and transition in Libya.”

Bio: Ms. Hana El Hebshi is a 26-year-old Libyan architect who, during the long months of the Libyan revolution, became a symbol of solidarity and a model of courage to many across the country. Working under the pseudonym “Numidia,” a reference to the ancient Berber kingdom and to her own Berber heritage, Hana contributed greatly to proper documentation of the violence and tumult of the revolution. She also became a symbol of hope to the Libyan people that the world was aware of the suffering they were enduring and that hope was on the way.

Thanks to her contribution to freedom of expression and advancing women’s rights, she became a real symbol for the Libyan women’s contribution to the revolution.

Post revolution, Hana, in addition to her work as an architect, will continue to play a leadership role in women’s empowerment in Libya.

MALDIVES

Aneesa Ahmed—Founder Member and Chairperson, Hope for Women NGO.

Award Citation: “For courageous advocacy for women’s rights and protection from domestic violence.”

Bio: Aneesa Ahmed stands out as a staunch advocate for ending gender-based violence in Maldives. While serving as Deputy Minister of Women’s Affairs, Ms. Ahmed raised the issue of domestic violence at a time when the subject was taboo in Maldives. As a member of the National Women’s Council, she held focus group discussions and worked with a local NGO to produce a series of short

documentary films on domestic violence that had a profound impact on altering public views of domestic violence. In 2009, Ms. Ahmed played an instrumental role in organizing a coalition of NGOs and individuals who are advocating pioneering legislation on domestic violence that is currently before the Maldivian parliament. After leaving government service, she founded the NGO “Hope for Women” and began conducting interactive sessions on gender-based violence with high school students, Maldives Police Services, and other frontline workers. When religious scholars began identifying female circumcision as a Sunnah in Islam on national radio, Ms. Ahmed asked the government to intervene, and gave an interview to a local news channel about the harmful effects of female circumcision. By openly discussing issues like domestic violence and female circumcision, and conducting awareness workshops through Hope for Women NGO, Ms. Ahmed plays a key role in bringing these issues into the public discourse and pressing the government to take action.

PAKISTAN

Shad Begum—Executive Director, Anjuman Behbood-e-Khawateen Talash.

Award Citation: “For fearlessly championing Pakistani women’s political and economic rights and empowering the disadvantaged and oppressed.”

Bio: Shad Begum is a courageous human rights activist and leader who has changed the political context for women in the extremely conservative district of Dir, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As founder and executive director of Anjuman Behbood-e-Khawateen Talash (the Union of Women’s Welfare), Ms. Shad provides political training, microcredit, primary education, and health services to women in the most conservative areas of Pakistan. Ms. Shad not only empowered the women of Dir to vote and run for office, but she herself ran and won local District Councilor seats in the 2001 and 2005 elections, going against local conservatives who tried to ban female participation. Despite numerous direct threats to her life and her family, including recent calls for suicide attacks against her by local extremists, Ms. Shad continues to work out of Peshawar to improve the lives of women in the communities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

SAUDI ARABIA

Samar Badawi—Human Rights Activist, Monitor of Human Rights in Saudi Arabia.

Award Citation: “For demonstrating significant courage in her activism while becoming a champion in the struggle for women’s suffrage and legal rights in Saudi Arabia.”

Bio: In one of the world’s most restrictive environments for women, Samar Badawi is a powerful voice for two of the most significant issues facing Saudi women: women’s suffrage and the guardianship system, under which women cannot marry, work, or travel outside the country without the permission of a guardian (male relative). In a landmark case, Badawi was the first woman to sue her guardian (her father) for abusing the legal system and preventing her from marrying the suitor of her choice. Badawi is also the first woman to file a lawsuit against the government demanding the right for women to vote and participate in municipal elections. She launched an online campaign to encourage other Saudi women to file similar suits. The efforts of activists like Badawi helped encourage a royal decree allowing women to vote and run for office in future municipal elections, and to be appointed to the Consultative Council.

SUDAN

Hawa Abdallah Mohammed Salih—Human Rights Activist.

Award Citation: “For giving a voice to the women and children of Darfur and her fearless advocacy for the rights of all marginalized Darfuris.”

Bio: Hailing from North Darfur, Hawa and her family were forced to flee their home village in 2003 due to fighting between Darfuri rebels and govt forces. As a result, she spent much of her young adult life in Abu Shouk internally displaced persons (IDP) camp in El Fasher, North Darfur, where she emerged as a prominent human rights activist. After graduating from the University of El Fasher, she worked on issues of human rights, rule of law, and governance with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and assisted various NGOs working on human rights. Hawa became a voice for the IDPs, speaking out about human rights abuses and advocating for women’s and children’s rights in the IDP camps. For her advocacy, Hawa has been persecuted and detained on multiple occasions by the Government of Sudan. As a result, she was forced to flee Sudan in 2011. In spite of the personal harassment and political challenges that she has faced, Hawa hopes to return to her homeland to continue defending the rights of Darfuris, and in particular the rights of women and children.

TURKEY

Safak Pavey—Member of Parliament, Turkish General National Assembly.

Award Citation: “For her personal dignity and courage not only in overcoming physical disabilities, but also emerging as an effective local and global champion of the rights of women, minority groups, refugees and disabled persons.”

Bio: Safak Pavey, the first disabled woman elected to the Turkish Parliament, has demonstrated great personal dignity in overcoming physical obstacles each and every day, while locally and globally championing the rights of vulnerable populations, including refugees and disabled persons. Whether working in extreme conditions for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) in the Middle East, South Asia and Africa, or acting as a lightning rod to spark the UN Interagency Support Group for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Pavey has sought to turn her disability into strength on a global level. Undaunted by her own challenges, she is also an agent of change at home. Pavey endeavored to foster acceptance for the Armenian community in Turkey, and is one of a small number of non-Armenians who wrote for the Armenian Turkish newspaper, Agos. After winning a seat in the Turkish parliament in June 2011, Pavey is continuing to empower and give voice to disabled persons, women, and minority populations.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. This morning I wish to pick just one of these amazing women and tell her story.

Shad Begum is the executive director of the Union of Women’s Welfare in one of the most extremely conservative districts in all of Pakistan. As the founder and executive director of the program the Union of Women’s Welfare, she provides political training, microcredit, primary education, and health services to women throughout her community. She not only encouraged others to run for office, she herself ran for a district counselor seat in 2001 and 2005, winning the seat against local conservatives who tried to ban

women from participating. Despite numerous threats to her life and her family, including calls for suicide attacks against her by local extremists, she continues to work to improve the lives of women throughout Pakistan.

Ms. Shad is one of 10 remarkable women the State Department honored this year. Every one of these 10 stories is inspirational, but they also represent literally millions of women around the globe who are out there fighting and suffering to be heard. There are countless women who don't receive the recognition they deserve and who continue to be silenced by persecution and harassment. Today we recognize, honor, and celebrate all of those nameless, faceless women around the world who are continuing the fight.

Far too many women remain excluded from full participation in society, to the detriment of their communities, their countries, and the world. Although strides have been made in recent decades, women across the globe continue to face significant obstacles in all aspects of their lives, including the denial of basic human rights, discrimination, and gender-based violence. According to the World Bank, women make up 70 percent of all individuals living in poverty. Women account for 64 percent of the adults worldwide who lack basic literacy skills. Women continue to remain vastly underrepresented in national and local governments around the world.

So there is no doubt that we have a lot of work to do, but all of society benefits when women are more fully integrated into their communities and their villages around the world. In the words of President Obama, "Our common prosperity will be advanced by allowing all humanity—men and women—to reach their full potential."

As we reflect on the past, present, and future achievements of women, I believe it is important to recognize the vital and untapped resource that women represent for our world. The ability of women to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a nation to achieve strong and lasting economic growth, political and social stability, and enhanced security for all its people.

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I would also like to ask the permission of the Chair to display this box during my remarks.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ISAKSON. Thank you, Mr. President.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GIRL SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I am proud to stand here today on International Women's Day, the 8th day of March, 2012, to pay tribute to women around the world but also to acknowledge that women around the world, on Monday, March 12, will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Girl Scouts of America, founded in Savannah, GA, a beautiful town, by a wonderful Georgia lady, Juliette Gordon Low. Girl Scouts around the world will be celebrating the founding of that great organization, which has had a positive effect on women around the world.

Each of us right now is well aware of the Girl Scouts because of boxes like this box the Acting President pro tempore gave me permission to display, which is what is left of a box of Thin Mints. The Girl Scouts sell boxes of cookies this time of year to raise money for their operations around the world. I eat far too many of them. They are good. They are good for me, they are good for America, and they are good for the Girl Scouts and the fundraising they do.

The Girl Scouts is an organization of leadership, developing women for the future. While only 17 percent of this body are women, almost all of them were Girl Scouts. Almost all women of business were Girl Scouts. And almost all women who were in Girl Scouts pay tribute to the Girl Scouts of America and the contribution they have made to their lives. There are 3.2 million active Girl Scouts in America today, and there are 50 million Girl Scout alumni in America. That has a tremendous impact on all that is right about America.

The Girl Scouts have been pacesetters. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a native of my city of Atlanta and a native of our State that Juliette Low was from, cited the Girl Scouts of America as "a force for desegregation" during the troubled times of the 1950s and 1960s. The Girl Scouts were at the forefront of integration and leadership for youth.

The Girl Scouts of America also pledge themselves and they make a promise, which I would like to read.

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout law.

Which reads:

I will do my best to be honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

That is not a motto just for the Girl Scouts but one that would serve us all well in this body.

So on this International Women's Day on March 8, I would like to acknowledge that on Monday, when we are not here, around the world women will celebrate the founding of the Girl Scouts of America, and the 3.2 million Girl Scouts in America today will be building for the future the Acting President pro tempore and I work for today in this body, the U.S. Senate.

I yield back the remainder of my time and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, later today I will be down on the floor to offer a budget point of order on the highway bill. I have been down here several times over the course of the last several days.

I think most in this body—a large majority of people in this body—have been a part of encouraging us to, in a very bipartisan way, solve the budget problems we have in this country. There were 64 of us—32 on each side of the aisle—who signed a letter to the President encouraging him to really adopt some of the principles that were laid out in Bowles-Simpson. After that, there was a very large number of Senators on both sides of the aisle who signed a letter to the supercommittee asking them to go big and really deal in a serious way with the budget issues, the deficit issues with which our country is dealing.

I have been down here multiple times talking about the various oddities in this bill. What is getting ready to happen in this bill is that we are actually, over the next 2 years, going to create a \$10 billion to \$11 billion deficit. Because of the various gimmickry we use, we are figuring out ways to get around that. One of the budget gimmicks we are using in the bill is that we are going to spend the money over a 2-year period but pay for it over a 10-year period—2 years worth of spending, 10 years worth of revenues.

I think the Acting President pro tempore was here during the period of time we had the health care debate in our Nation, and many of the folks on my side of the aisle, rightfully so, were concerned about the health care bill because there were 6 years' worth of costs and 10 years' worth of revenues, and a lot of people thought that was a budget gimmick. Candidly, many of my friends on the other side of the aisle, while they may have supported the