

would finally give women full and equal protection under the Constitution. It reads as follows:

Section 1. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

It is that simple. When Congress passed the ERA in 1972, it provided that the measure had to be ratified by three-fourths of the States, 38 States, within 7 years. This deadline was later extended to 10 years by a joint resolution enacted by Congress, but ultimately only 35 out of 38 States had ratified the ERA when the deadline expired in 1982. To put that in context, in 1992, the 27th Amendment to the Constitution prohibiting immediate Congressional pay raises was ratified after 203 years.

Article V of the Constitution contains no time limits for ratification of constitutional amendments, and the ERA time limit was contained in a joint resolution, not the actual text of the amendment. The Senate could pass my legislation removing the 10-year deadline right now. I hope that the majority leader will bring this legislation up for a vote because American women deserve to know that their most fundamental rights are explicitly protected by our Nation's most venerated document.

I would like to take a moment to discuss some issues that apply more to women outside of the United States but still affect every American.

I serve as the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In that position, I have seen firsthand how the relatively small amount of money allocated for foreign assistance saves both lives and American tax dollars over time. At less than 1 percent of the Federal budget, foreign assistance helps us rely less on costly military operations and prevent international catastrophes before they happen.

As I previously stated, the way a nation treats its women is very much a barometer as to how well that nation is doing. And just as in the United States, giving women outside United States the tools they need to succeed uplifts families, communities and nations. The millennium development goals, MDGs, were some of the most aggressive and successful attempts to combat global poverty and improve the quality of life for millions of women and families in the developing world.

The millennium development goals, first established in 2000, brought together nations, businesses, international organizations, and foundations in a focused and coordinated effort to reduce poverty and disease by 2015. Over the last two decades, the number of people worldwide living in extreme poverty has been cut in half, from about one in every six people in 1990 to 836 million in 2015. We have made progress in global education, with a 20 percent increase in primary school enrollment in sub-Saharan Afri-

ca and a nearly 50 percent decrease in the number of out-of-school children of primary school age.

In terms of gender equality, we still have a long way to go, but today we can cheer the fact that women have gained more parliamentary representation in ninety percent of the countries of the world than twenty years ago. The rate of maternal mortality has declined by forty-five percent worldwide, including by sixty-four percent in Southern Asia and forty-nine percent in sub-Saharan Africa.

When it comes to combating HIV/AIDS, we have made truly incredible strides over the past fifteen years. New HIV infections dropped by forty percent between 2000 and 2013, and the number of people living with HIV that were receiving anti-retroviral therapy increased seventeenfold from 2003 to 2014.

Behind these impressive numbers are countless women who are alive and strengthening their families and communities because of the millennium development goals, but there are still many areas where we need to make more progress.

In September 2015, more than 150 world leaders gathered at the United Nations General Assembly to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 sustainable development goals, SDGs. The SDGs aim to build on the successes of the millennium development goals and catalyze further progress.

One area where there is still much work to be done concerns child marriages. I am pleased the sustainable development goal 5 includes a target to eliminate child, early and forced marriages.

According to the United States Agency for International Development, USAID, each year, 14.2 million girls are married before their 18th birthday. Some of these girls are as young as 9 years old. Childhood marriage robs girls of their adolescence, denies them an education, greatly increases the risk of maternal mortality, and decreases their chance of becoming economically independent. Pregnancy and childbirth are the leading causes of death for young girls in low- to middle-income countries. And children of young mothers have higher rates of infant mortality and malnutrition compared to children of mothers older than 18.

Terrorist groups often use forced marriages to sustain their efforts. Last April, for instance, Boko Haram kidnapped over 250 girls in Nigeria. Some of those girls were later forced to marry their kidnappers. The so-called Islamic State is also notorious for forcing local women and girls to marry its fighters. Forced marriage is deplorable for many reasons, not the least of which is that it is used as a weapon of war.

The women and girls being forced into these marriages are the very same women and girls who could be leaders, business owners, teachers, and doctors if given the chance. It is in the best in-

terest of these girls and of the United States that the international community speak with a united voice against this practice. As ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I invite all members of Congress to work together to find a way to address this pressing human rights issue.

I am an original co-sponsor of S. Res. 97, a bipartisan resolution supporting the goals of International Women's Day. After seeing the impacts that the MDGs have had on vulnerable populations around the world, I have no doubt that the goals contained in this resolution can be accomplished if the United States is willing to take the lead in organizing the international community.

I have mentioned only a small portion of legislative priorities the Senate could act on right now.

As we move through Women's History Month, let us remember that strong and empowered women have gotten us to this point in history and will help lead us to a brighter future.

BLACK WOMEN'S HISTORY WEEK

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I wish to request that, for the second year in a row, the U.S. Government officially recognize the last week in March as Black Women's History Week. During the week of March 28, 2016, as part of Women's History Month and in honor of the second year of the United Nation's International Decade for People of African Descent, several leading social justice organizations will be holding their second annual week of events to honor Black women and recognize their current struggles in American society. This week will shed light on the reality that Black women confront many intersectional challenges in American society, yet their concerns are often pushed to the margins of public attention and intervention. This week marks the perfect occasion to attend to the often hidden experiences of Black women and to generate attention to address the challenges they face.

Black women have traditionally gone above and beyond the call of duty in their contributions to American society. Black women have been inspirational symbols of strength and perseverance through their high voter turnout and historic leadership of racial justice movements. Even in the face of grave oppression throughout our Nation's history, Black women have continued to stand strong and contribute to the well-being of their families, their communities, and our country as a whole; yet at the same time, Black women continue to face undue burdens and obstacles to their own well-being. Acknowledging both the centrality of Black women in our history and social fabric as well as the unique inequalities they face is critical in our efforts

to build a society that ensures equality and justice for all.

In conjunction with the congressional declaration, a coalition of organizations advocating for the well-being of women and communities of color will partner to elevate the stories, histories, and realities of Black women's lives, building off the momentum generated by Black Women's History Week in 2015. Our charge is to ensure that the lives of Black women and girls are not overlooked and that efforts to generate information about their well-being is widely shared across public agencies and partner institutions.

Thank you.

BLEEDING DISORDERS AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, today is St. Patrick's Day. It is a great day for those of us in this country whose ancestors came here to find a better life. And today, like many of us here, I got up and put on a green tie, but I switched it out for this one, a red one, to highlight support for those who suffer from serious conditions that many Americans don't speak much about or know much about.

This March is the first Bleeding Disorders Awareness Month. It also marks the 30th anniversary of President Ronald Reagan's one-time declaration of March as Hemophilia Awareness Month.

Tens of thousands of Americans have been diagnosed with bleeding disorders, including more than 100 Alaskan families. These families are spread all across my State, in Anchorage and Fairbanks, but also in rural communities like Chevak, Elim, Tuntutuliak, Kodiak, and Klawock. These Alaskans face serious health challenges with strength and grace and form a vibrant tight-knit community, and I want to thank those communities for supporting their fellow Alaskans.

Hemophilia is the most expensive chronic condition to treat. There are Alaskan children whose daily dose of medication exceeds \$1,800 per day. The good news is there is treatment that continues to improve.

I want to highlight the work done by the Alaska Hemophilia Association, a chapter of the National Hemophilia Foundation, which provides services and support for the Alaskan bleeding disorder community. They work to provide access to care and insurance and support our youth by hosting an annual summer camp for Alaskan children with bleeding disorders and their siblings. Camp Frozen Chosen allows these youth to interact with others with similar bleeding disorders. They are also able to learn to manage and take ownership of their condition and their lives, enabling them to be leaders of their generation.

The Alaska Hemophilia Association and the Alaska bleeding disorder community are the epitome of Alaskan grit and determination and are part of what makes Alaska such a wonderful place.

I would ask that we think of those this month who are suffering from

these disorders and that we continue to work together to find solutions and to offer support.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING TAMARA D. GRIGSBY

• Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the life and legacy of Tamara D. Grigsby, whose untimely passing at the age of 41 has left Wisconsin without one of its greatest champions for equality and justice. Tamara committed her life to public service and making a difference in the lives of others. She was known for her honesty, dedication, and ability to see beyond partisan posturing to become a voice for those too often forgotten.

Growing up in Madison, WI, Tamara's path in life was shaped by her experiences confronting economic disparity and racial bias as a student in what is considered Wisconsin's most liberal city. When asked about the apparent dichotomy of this circumstance, she simply responded: "I'm a liberal. But liberal doesn't mean enlightened, and it doesn't mean informed." That statement embodies the essence of who Tamara was.

After earning a bachelor's degree at Howard University and a master's degree at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Tamara put her energy and skills to work as a social worker in the Milwaukee office of the Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. Upon seeing the impact she could have on individual lives, she became convinced of the need for effective advocacy on a larger scale.

In 2004, she successfully ran for the Wisconsin Legislature. Her drive and passion to change the world around her led to her success in a three-way primary and an unopposed general election to represent the 18th Assembly District in Milwaukee. During her tenure in the assembly, Tamara was a strong advocate for disadvantaged families and at-risk children, who were too often overlooked and marginalized.

Tamara quickly gained the respect of her colleagues as a passionate, strong voice for equity, fairness, and the expansion of opportunity. She immersed herself in the legislative process as a member of the joint finance committee and as chair of the assembly committee on children and families. She was an outspoken and effective advocate on critical issues such as access to scientifically based sex education and birth control, expansion of transitional jobs to connect unemployed individuals with work, examination of the State's disproportionate Black incarceration rate, and the collection of racial data in police traffic stops. She stood fast against opposition to low-income tax credits and quality health care for low-income Wisconsin residents.

Although an unexpected illness ended her 8 years as a State representative in 2012, her public service continued. She worked in the Milwaukee Public School system and was tapped to lead

Dane County's Department of Equity and Inclusion. It is in this role that Tamara's life came full circle. She was once again in Madison challenging the status quo on the issues that inspired her to become a fierce advocate for the poor and underrepresented.

Although Tamara's time with us was too short, she leaves behind a legacy for future leaders to emulate. She will always be remembered for having the courage to speak for those who didn't have a voice.●

TRIBUTE TO JUDGE ELLEN M. HELLER

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor the career of Judge Ellen M. Heller. Judge Heller has served the people of Baltimore and Maryland in several capacities for many decades. She is well known and well respected in the legal and nonprofit and communities across our State. In 2010, Judge Heller brought her considerable talents to the Weinberg Foundation, one of Baltimore's most effective nonprofit organizations. After 6 years, Judge Heller will be concluding her role as chair of the board on March 1, 2016, and she will come to the end of her current term as a trustee of the Weinberg Foundation on May 16, 2016.

Judge Heller has helped change lives while she has served at the Weinberg Foundation. Her commitment to service and her steadfastness have made her an incredibly effective chairwoman. For my colleagues who may be unfamiliar with the Weinberg Foundation, the organization does incredible work on behalf of low-income and vulnerable people from Maryland to Hawaii and from the former Soviet Union to Israel and beyond. The responsibility of chairing the board at the Weinberg Foundation is significant; we are fortunate Judge Heller's personal and professional experiences helped make her uniquely suited for the job.

Judge Heller is no stranger to hard work. She graduated from the Johns Hopkins University, cum laude. She also graduated from my alma mater, the University of Maryland School of Law, cum laude. She earned both degrees while raising two sons. Judge Heller's accomplished legal career began as an assistant attorney general. She soon became an associate judge in the Baltimore City Circuit Court, the eighth judicial circuit, and would spend 6 years as the judge in charge of the civil docket.

In 1999, Judge Heller became the first woman to serve as a circuit administrative judge on the eighth circuit. She championed numerous reforms, including the practice of alternative dispute resolution, ADR, in circuit court cases and the introduction of court-ordered mediation in certain civil cases. She also directed the establishment of a new pretrial discovery process, including the appointment of two felony discovery judges. Her dedication not only