

this Joliet couple, this Joliet machinist and this Joliet public schoolteacher, has said that working families would welcome repeal of the marriage tax penalty.

The Daily Journal, another paper in the 11th Congressional District, says: "The marriage tax is an unfair imposition. The code should be rewritten to eliminate it.

"While we are all for simplicity in the Tax Code, the reality is that taxes drive social engineering."

The marriage tax should be eliminated and repealed today.

I have a letter here from Robert Eckert of Jacksonville, FL, a tax preparer. He says, "As a seasoned tax preparer and enrolled agent, I find the marriage penalty can be very significant, 12 percent of after tax income or 33-percent increase in tax liability."

My colleagues, group after group have endorsed the Marriage Tax Elimination Act. It should be the centerpiece. The bottom line is elimination of the marriage tax penalty should be the centerpiece of next year's budget agreement. I ask for bipartisan support and I ask for public support for our campaign to eliminate the marriage tax.

THE CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS FOR WOMEN'S ISSUES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands [Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN] is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Ms. CHRISTIAN-GREEN. Madam Speaker, I rise to salute the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues for 20 years of leadership and tenacity on legislation affecting the lives of women and all Americans.

Our founders, Representatives Elizabeth Holtzman and Margaret Heckler had the foresight to realize that women and their families required significantly more attention from our Nation's leaders.

The baton has been passed on to us and so I salute all of my colleagues, past and present, Democrat and Republican, and especially Representatives NORTON and JOHNSON for the direction and leadership they have provided to this distinguished caucus.

I hope that you have noticed that our famous women's intuition is alive and well. Just this past weekend in my district, the Virgin Islands, women were reenergized as they came together at the annual women's conference hosted by our Senate president, Senator Lorraine Berry and the local women's caucus. And this week, as we celebrate our anniversary, members of the Congressional Black Caucus and thousands of American African women are preparing to travel to Philadelphia for the million woman march on Saturday.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to have been given the wonderful opportunity to be one of the caucuses' 50 members

in the 105th Congress, and although some of us will not be in Philadelphia this weekend, we should all stand with the women who will be there in the Godly, creative, energetic, and loving spirit that has made this caucus what it is.

So Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to salute the past, the present, and, most importantly, the future of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues.

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO HELP STATES PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SEX OFFENDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Minnesota [Mr. GUTKNECHT] is recognized during morning hour debates for 2 minutes.

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Madam Speaker, I join my colleague today, the gentleman from Texas, Mr. NICK LAMPSON, and congratulate Texas law enforcement agents for identifying a prime suspect in the kidnapping and murder of young Laura Smither, but I also share his frustration that things might have turned out differently.

We need tougher mandatory sentences; we need more effective community notification programs. While every State now registers child sex offenders, many of their notification programs have been stalled by legal challenges and confusion. This is unacceptable.

To help the States, 31 of my colleagues have joined me in introducing a resolution which gives the States a model community notification program that they can follow, if they choose. This resolution is not a Federal mandate. Instead, it expresses the sense of Congress that States should enact a tier-based system, like nine States have already done successfully.

For example, a released sex offender posing a high risk of repeating his crimes moves into a community. Everyone, police officers, past victims, and, most importantly, neighborhood parents, are notified.

As someone who served in the State legislature for 12 years, I urge my colleagues to join me in helping the States to protect America's children. Cosponsor House Concurrent Resolution 125.

CELEBRATION OF 20 YEARS OF THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker, tonight we will honor the 20th anniversary of the Women's Caucus. President Clinton will join us as we celebrate the past, present, and future of the Women's Caucus.

Women have always faced extra hurdles as they served in Congress. Recognizing these extra challenges, Elizabeth Holtzman, from my home State of New York, along with Peggy Heckler of Massachusetts, organized 13 Members to join them in forming the Women's Caucus in 1977.

We have certainly expanded our numbers. The caucus is 53 members strong this year, but we still face many obstacles.

I would like to submit this copy of achievements of the Women's Caucus during its 20 years for the Record, and just note some of the achievements for the Record.

In 1978, the caucus was instrumental in the passage of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, guaranteeing employment rights to pregnant workers.

In 1979, Congress, at the pushing by the Women's Caucus, created the Office of Civil Rights at the Education Department to enforce the title IX ban against sex discrimination in education.

In 1984, the caucus' Economic Equity Act was the driving force behind enactment of important legislation in retirement equity and child support enforcement legislation.

That year, also, a caucus member, Geraldine Ferraro, from my home State of New York, was nominated for Vice President of the United States, the first time a woman ran for that office on a major party ticket.

In 1985, for the first time, legislation was introduced to provide temporary leave for parents of newborns and seriously ill children and for workers with serious health problems. This effort sparked an 8-year campaign that ended with the 1993 enactment of the Family and Medical Leave Act. That was the first bill that I voted for in Congress.

In 1992, the media called this year the "Year of the Woman" in politics as hundreds of women lined up to run for office. It was a year in which many people voted for women candidates, not as a slogan but as a force to be reckoned with. A record 48 women were elected to the House and 6 to the Senate. And our presence here truly did make a difference.

We passed many important bills: The Family and Medical Leave Act; we expanded the earned income tax credit; we passed the domestic violence bill; the Violence Against Women Act; we expanded coverage and funding for breast cancer and breast cancer research; and this year, in 1997, Congress passed landmark legislation to balance the Federal budget, and they included in it very important expansions for women's health provisions.

One bill that I am particularly proud of is one that I worked on since 1992 with my Republican colleague, Barbara Vucanovich, which expanded the coverage of mammograms in Medicare for women over 65 and bone mass measurement. And I note the very good work of my Republican colleague, the gentlewoman from Maryland [Mrs. CONNIE MORELLA], in this area.