

credit that can be carried forward for 5 years. It is that simple.

Another problem lies in the fact that the current tax credit for nonspecial needs children is due to sunset in December of 2001. Hoping to ensure the credit was well designed and necessary, the drafters of the original bill agreed to reevaluate it after 5 years. We have done that and have included that in our bill. It permanently extends the \$5,000 tax credit for adoption and almost doubles the adoption tax credit for special needs.

Because of this assistance, many families, who might not otherwise have been financially able to do so, have been able to build a family through adoption. Last week, in fact, I had the great honor of attending a ceremony when 17 children from 14 different countries became citizens of the United States. All of these children were brought here to be adopted into loving and wonderful homes of Americans from all parts of our country.

At that gathering, one of the mothers who had adopted two children came up to me and said: Senator, please let them know in Congress how much we appreciate the adoption tax credit. It made all the difference to me and my husband as we decided to adopt our second child.

So we know that tax credit works. We know it has a positive impact, and part of our bill today extends that permanently so families can count on it.

With the cost of adoption still on the rise, this tax credit is an important factor, as I have mentioned. It has been estimated that adoptions can range anywhere from \$10,000 to \$20,000, whether done privately or through an agency domestically or internationally.

Another figure to keep in mind is one that was released recently by a national adoptive parent organization. They estimate that using specialized foster or adoptive parents instead of what we do now, which is congregate care facilities for drug-exposed children, could save—and I believe the Senator from Texas, Mr. GRAMM, will be interested in this as he continues to fight for ways the Federal Government can save our money—they estimate we can save as much as \$550 million a year by relying on adoptive parents instead of keeping many of these children in the “system,” for which the taxpayers pay. Anything we can do to encourage adoption will not only be the right thing, the moral thing, the wonderful thing, and the family values thing to do, but it is smart for the taxpayers of the United States.

In addition, in case people are interested, there are more than 100,000 children in this country today waiting to be adopted—children who have had termination with their biological parents. They are waiting for someone to claim them as their own and to be adopted. There are 550,000 children in foster care. About 450,000 of those are in the process of either being returned to their families or they, too, can be eligi-

ble for adoption. Clearly, there is a need to promote adoption in this country that works for the benefit of birth parents, adoptive parents, and the children.

Finally, for parents to raise a child in their home, the estimates for a middle-class family are about \$140,000. That is not including college tuition or vocational education. That is just an estimate. The least we can do is help in a small way with a \$5,000 or \$10,000 tax credit to encourage families to be their partner in this adoption effort.

I believe not only does it simplify the Tax Code, but there is a great need, and the need has been demonstrated. The results have been terrific. We have had testimony after testimony about how important the current system has been, so anything we can do to improve it I am sure will be welcomed by so many. It is a step in the right direction.

I close by saying, as we debate which tax credits to pursue, which are worthy, this adoption tax credit should be on the top of every list. We need to continue to be bold enough to take these steps because every time we do, children such as Serina, for whom people have given up hope, have found families on which to rely and with whom to grow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURNS). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. GRAMM. I commend our colleague from Louisiana. Today we have 130 million people who work outside the home and earn income. We have some 260 million Americans. About 30 million of them get some form of public assistance. You might ask yourself: Who takes care of the other 100 million Americans? They are taken care of by families. And the driving force is love.

So not only is the distinguished Senator from Louisiana talking about saving money, but what adoptive parents will add to the equation is love and care. The whole world benefits from it. So I commend her.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. CRAIG. I, too, thank the Senator from Louisiana for her leadership on this issue. We are fortunate enough to work together on this marvelous issue of adoption, chairing the adoption coalition here on the Senate side.

Both Senator LANDRIEU and I this week have helped host two delightful young ladies who are on the hill, Miss USA and Miss Teen USA, both adopted, both coming from adoptive families. They were in my office this morning speaking about the wonderful families they were allowed to be a part of who have granted them all of this charm and talent that can only come from a loving environment, that has allowed them to become national leaders, as they now are, as Miss USA and Miss Teen USA.

I say thank you to the Senator for her leadership on this issue. It is critically important to America and America's families.

PROJECT EXILE: THE SAFE STREETS AND NEIGHBORHOODS ACT OF 2000

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, today, I rise in support of S. 2390, “Project Exile: The Safe Streets and Neighborhoods Act of 2000”, which establishes a grant program to provide incentives for states to enact mandatory minimum sentences for certain firearms offenses. I commend Senator DEWINE for his leadership and appreciate the opportunity to join with him and other colleagues working together on this important legislation. The time has come to restore our commitment to aggressively prosecuting gun crimes around this country. In states and cities around the country where aggressive prosecution of gun crimes is coupled with tough prison sentences, violent crime has gone down. Tough law enforcement saves lives.

This legislation provides \$100 million of additional resources over five years as incentives for efforts like Project Exile. To qualify for the grant program, states must have a mandatory minimum of 5 years without parole for convictions of violent crimes and serious drug trafficking offenses where a firearm is used during or in relation to the crime. In the alternative, the state can have a federal prosecution agreement which would refer those arrested for federal prosecution of the alleged gun crime in a collaborative effort between law enforcement.

Project Exile started in Richmond, Virginia as an attempt to reduce violent crime by aggressive enforcement of gun laws and improved law enforcement coordination. Since the program began in 1997, violent crimes involving handguns have decreased 65 percent and overall crime has been reduced by 35 percent. 385 guns were taken off of the street. In 1999, Project Exile was adopted statewide in Virginia. It has given prosecutors the ability to choose within which courts they will try offenders and created tougher penalties for people committing crimes with guns.

I have also worked to help expand this approach to Philadelphia in 1999, where “Operation Cease Fire” also adopts a zero tolerance policy for federal gun crimes. Project Exile has already proven that present laws can work if enforced properly. Federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutors work side by side to expedite prosecution of every federal firearms violation. In 1999, over 200 federal gun-related indictments were issued in Philadelphia and the surrounding counties. This is a 70 percent increase in indictments in only one year.

The bill authorizes \$10 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2001, \$15 million in FY02, \$20 million in FY03, \$25 million in FY04, and \$30 million in FY05. States must provide at least a 10 percent match and must also at least maintain current funding levels to qualify. Funds can be used for public awareness campaigns, law enforcement agencies,

prosecutors, courts, probation and correctional officers, case management, coordination of criminal history records, and the juvenile justice system. Representative BILL MCCOLLUM introduced similar legislation in the House of Representatives as H.R. 4051. This legislation passed the House yesterday by a 358-60 vote margin.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this important initiative to collaborate with local efforts to prosecute and prevent the criminal use of guns in our schools and neighborhoods.

RAPE AND SEXUAL TORTURE IN SIERRA LEONE

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, in all too many places and in all too many conflicts in recent years we have witnessed the use of rape and sexual torture as instruments of war. I am sad to say, some incidence of rape has always accompanied war and turmoil in human history, but the record of the past few years, with the use of organized, systematic campaigns of rape to terrorize civilian populations, suggests a new chapter in the barbarity of human history has been opened.

It was disturbing to learn there are serious and credible allegations that rebel forces used systematic rape as an instrument of terror in the eight-year civil war in Sierra Leone.

While statistics are not yet available, there is clear and credible evidence that thousands of girls and women, ranging from ages 5 to 75, were abducted during the civil war and gang raped. Many were used as sex slaves and forced labor. And it is possible many are still being held captive, subject to the deprivations of their inhuman captors.

This horrific story was detailed in an article in yesterday's Washington Post. I ask unanimous consent to have the article, entitled "A War Against Women" from the April 11, 2000, Washington Post printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD following my remarks.

The civilized world must send a strong, unambiguous message that rape and sexual torture are not acceptable under any circumstances and will not be tolerated. The United States must be at the forefront of efforts to help the Government of Sierra Leone bring to justice those responsible for the systematic rape and sexual torture that took place during the civil war.

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 11, 2000]

A WAR AGAINST WOMEN—SIERRA LEONE
REBELS PRACTICED SYSTEMATIC SEXUAL
TERROR

(By Douglas Farah)

BLAMA CAMP, SIERRA LEONE—The women slip one at a time into a bamboo hut in this displaced persons camp, and most begin to cry quietly as they tell of being gang-raped and held as sex slaves by rebels who had sought to overthrow the government of Sierra Leone.

One 25-year-old woman said she had delivered a still-born baby the day before rebels of the Revolutionary United Front attacked her village in 1998. She was unable to flee

with most of the other villagers, and five rebels took turns raping her, she said. When her husband tried to intervene, they killed him.

"I thought at first I was dealing with human beings, so I said I was sad and confused because I had just delivered a dead baby, I was bloody and weak," she said between sobs. "But they were not human beings. After they left I gave up, and I wanted to die. I had no reason to live anymore."

Human rights workers says the woman, who was rescued by a patrol of government troops, is one of thousands who were raped by insurgent forces and other armed gangs during the nation's eight-year civil war. While statistics are not yet available, rights workers said the rebels' rape campaign was as widespread and systematic as similar assaults in the 1992-1995 Bosnian war but has received far less attention.

Unlike at least some of the perpetrators in Bosnia, those responsible here likely will never be tried because of a blanket amnesty that was part of the accord that ended the conflict last July. Even more worrisome, U.N. officials and government officials say, is that the rebels may still hold thousands of women in remote strongholds despite the fact that the peace accord required them to free all captive civilians.

"The [rebels] perpetrated systematic, organized and widespread sexual violence against girls and women," the New York-based group Human Rights Watch said in a recent report. "The rebels planned and launched operations in which they rounded up girls and women, brought them to rebel command centers and then subjected them to individual and gang rape. Young girls under 17, and particularly those deemed to be virgins were specifically targeted. While some were released or managed to escape, hundreds continue to be held in sexual slavery after being 'married' to rebel combatants."

Rose Luz, a physician with the International Rescue Committee, said that what is most shocking about the hundreds of rape cases she is documenting is the ages of the victims. Most were under 14 or over 45—many of whom were too slow or too infirm to flee. Luz said the youngest victim documented so far was 5; the oldest was 75.

"It is the ones who could not get away," Luz said. "They raped whomever they stumbled across."

With the consent of the women involved, Rescue Committee officials arranged for a reporter to be present during some interviews. It was agreed that no names would be used or photographs taken. The interviews were conducted at this camp—about 160 miles southeast of the capital, Freetown—which shelters 22,500 people who were driven from their homes in eastern Sierra Leone by insurgent forces.

If the rebels considered a woman attractive or physically fit enough to work, she would likely be taken along with them—not just to be a sex slave, but a domestic servant as well, Luz and other aid workers said. Often, they said, a captive woman would try to attach herself to one leader to avoid repeated gang rape. In a culture in which rape victims are often ostracized, such wholesale assaults were effective not only in spreading terror, but in breaking apart communities, social workers said.

The first victims began telling their stories to the Rescue Committee when the aid group started reproductive health classes here several months ago, said counselor Dolly Williams. Last month, in an effort to refer the women for urgently needed medical attention and help them cope with their shame and humiliation, the Rescue Committee began documenting their stories. As word of the program spread, hundreds of

women have come forward, waiting their turn patiently while Williams and Luz record the accounts of other victims.

"Child and women abductees and victims of gender violence are far too numerous, and we do not yet even have a clear picture as to how many there really are," said U.S. Ambassador Joseph H. Melrose Jr., who is trying to arrange for U.S. funds to help the victims. "What is clear is that these victims and their injuries, both physical and psychological, must not be ignored. If these injuries do not heal, they will have implications for future generations of Sierra Leoneans and the success of the peace process."

Williams said the rate of sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis and gonorrhea among the women is extremely high, a reflection of the 92 percent infection rate found among demobilized rebels. Neither the combatants nor the women are tested for AIDS or HIV infection because the cost is too great and there are no resources to treat anyone who tests positive.

The first woman to arrive at the palm-thatched interview room one day last week was a 60-year-old who came to tell how she was grabbed in her village by a group of raiders because she was unable to outrun them. When they could not find any other women, she said, they raped her.

"I begged them not to," she said. I told them I was old. I could be their grandmother," but they did not listen; they just laughed at me. Afterward they let me go because I was old and useless. Now I have pain when I urinate. I have sores; I can't sleep."

A 35-year-old woman said she had been abducted and raped by four rebels in 1997. When they had finished, she said, they took her to their commander, who decided to keep her. She finally escaped three years later, during a firefight between the rebel unit and government troops.

"I can't have a man again," she told the interviewer. "I have lost my life."

CASH BALANCE PENSION PLANS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I join Senators JEFFORDS, HARKIN and ROCKEFELLER in calling on the Senate to strengthen our Nation's pension laws. This amendment reaffirms the value of defined benefit pension plans for workers, and our commitment to protecting workers from age discrimination in the provision of pension benefits.

Too many American workers have discovered that the pension promises made to them by their employers are virtually worthless. It is disturbing in this period of unprecedented economic prosperity and rising profits that major corporations are shortchanging their older and longer serving workers. These companies have changed the rules unfairly, by converting traditional defined benefit pension plans to so-called "cash balance" plans.

Companies have made these conversions quietly, without informing workers of the impact of the changes on their retirement security. When workers ask for an explanation, all too often they are given devious responses. Some employers have done the right thing and allowed older and longer service workers to remain covered under the original plan, but other employers have not.

In addition, many cash balance plans deny benefits to older workers for a period of time after the conversion, using