

Peace since 1993 has really made a difference in communication, most especially with young people. They have brought together people like Indians and Pakistanis and Israelis and Arabs, as well as teenagers from Cyprus, Afghanistan and the U.S. to understand that peace really is possible. They have helped young people from all conflict areas see each other as human beings, not as the enemy. They have helped them to break down the barriers of hatred and distrust.

□ 1130

In March of 2003, two Seeds of Peace students joined me in a peace dialogue that I had here at the Capitol. The Israeli student said when she joined Seeds of Peace, she felt she was doing something significant. The change was not aimed to change the world right away. It started out small, giving her an opportunity to change her own personal world. It gave her the opportunity to talk about the other side in terms of friends instead of saying "those Palestinians."

The Palestinian student said she first participated in a Seeds of Peace camp in 1999. She said 4 years have passed since then and she cannot recognize the person she was before. She also said that at Seeds of Peace, you get to open up, actually listen to each other, listen to different views and points of view and not toward just rebutting their argument, but to understand and eventually find respect for the argument.

We must voice our support for grassroots institutions that are mobilizing for peace. It might start small, but when young people in this number begin to speak about peace and trying to understand each other around the world, we will see the impact in the future. Institutions like Seeds of Peace can be instrumental in changing this world. They have helped the world to remember one thing, that peace begins with each of us.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, as a proud original cosponsor of this resolution, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 288, honoring Seeds of Peace for its promotion of understanding, reconciliation, acceptance, coexistence, and peace among youth from the Middle East and other regions of conflict.

Since 1993, Seeds of Peace has brought children from war torn areas to the Seeds of Peace International Camp in my district in Maine.

It is a source of great pride to have such a noble mission based in my state.

That mission is to sow the seeds of peace in children who have grown up in the horrors of war.

Seeds of Peace helps teenagers from the war torn regions of the Middle East, the Balkans, Cyprus, and South Asia, learn to respect and understand those they would call their enemy.

In so many of these conflicts building trust between the youth of the opposing sides is the only hope for ending the cycle of violence.

The work performed by Seeds of Peace goes to the heart of our war on terrorism, and

it goes to the heart of our goal to bring peace and prosperity to the world because it goes to the hearts of children to show them that violence is not the answer.

I thank my good friend and fellow representative from Maine for introducing this legislation and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 288 which honors the Seeds of Peace Program for its efforts to promote understanding and peace among young people from areas of conflict.

John Wallach, a constituent of mine and a true visionary, founded the program in 1993 to bring youths together from around the world to break down barriers and learn more about each other.

The organization plays a vital role in promoting many of our foreign policy goals and has been recognized by American leaders for its outstanding work.

By instilling understanding and open-mindedness in the world's children, we can help to put an end to long-standing conflicts and bring hope to these regions.

Seeds of Peace is a wonderful program that I hope will continue to produce more thoughtful, understanding leaders of the future.

At a time when there is so much hate in the world, the Seeds of Peace participants are an inspiration, and I admire their courage and determination.

I join my colleagues in paying tribute to this great organization and its founder John Wallach.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEACH. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. LEACH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 288.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

COMMENDING AFGHAN WOMEN FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN AFGHAN GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 393) commending Afghan women for their participation in Afghan government and civil society, encouraging the inclusion of Afghan women in the political and economic life of Afghanistan, and advocating the protection of Afghan women's human rights in the Afghanistan Constitution, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 393

Whereas the women of Afghanistan suffered horrible tragedies under the Taliban regime;

Whereas the Afghan people have rejected the Taliban and are in the process of building a free and democratic republic and repairing the damage inflicted upon Afghan society by the Taliban;

Whereas those efforts have improved the daily lives of Afghan women, children, and refugees;

Whereas more Afghan girls are attending school than ever before in the history of Afghanistan and, in addition, many millions more adult women are either returning to school to make up for the time they were not allowed to attend school during the Taliban regime or taking vocational training classes to prepare for the job market;

Whereas women in Afghanistan now are able to work outside the home and hold positions in all levels of government and in private sector organizations, as they did before the Taliban regime;

Whereas the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the writing of the Afghanistan Constitution provide a unique opportunity to continue this success and to affirm women's human rights under the law;

Whereas, in order for women to fully participate in Afghan society, they must have the right to vote, the right to run for office, equality of opportunity, and access to health care, education, and employment;

Whereas women's human rights must be guaranteed in the Afghanistan Constitution; and

Whereas the United States, through its diplomatic activities, is actively involved in encouraging the full inclusion and participation of Afghan women in the political and economic life of their country, and must continue to do so throughout the reconstruction process: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) commends the participation of Afghan women in Afghanistan's government and civil society;

(2) proclaims its ongoing commitment to encouraging the full inclusion of women, and indeed all members of Afghan society, in the political and economic life of their country; and

(3) advocates the protection of the human rights of all Afghans, particularly women, in the Afghanistan Constitution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN).

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In 1996, a heavy shroud was placed on the people of Afghanistan when the Taliban captured Kabul. But the Taliban's brutality and blatant disregard for the lives and the well-being

of the Afghan people was perhaps most clearly evident among half of its population, the women of Afghanistan. They had been made destitute, sick and marginalized. They were banned from receiving any education past the age of 8. They were denied proper medical treatment. Throughout, the strong will and courage of the Afghan women helped them endure these most deplorable of circumstances.

Today, the Afghan people are free. Women are enjoying freedoms and opportunities previously denied to them under the Taliban. The new Afghan Ministry of Education estimates that over 5 million children are in school, and 42 percent of these are girls. A Ministry of Women's Affairs has been created for the sole purpose of advocating for the rights of women and ensuring their access to, and participation in, all sectors of Afghan society. The current head of the Human Rights Commission is an Afghan woman, Dr. Sima Simar. Afghan women are playing an active role in the political and economic reconstruction of their nation, including as members of the commission responsible for the drafting of the Afghan Constitution. Their contributions can already be seen in this draft document. Articles 44, 83 and 84 of the Constitution mandate the promotion of women's education and the elimination of illiteracy while also establishing requirements that seek to ensure female representation throughout the government. After suffering unspeakable oppression, persecution and violations of their most basic freedoms, the women of Afghanistan, as the women's minister recently stated, "can have our position in the society, and our people in Afghanistan can be under one Constitution."

All of these developments, Mr. Speaker, as the International Crisis Group has described it, "heralded a new day for women in Afghanistan." However, this would not have been possible without the support of the international community and, in particular, the unwavering commitment of our United States. One of the many ways in which we have demonstrated our commitment to the full participation of women in Afghanistan's political and economic reconstruction has been through programs such as the U.S. Agency for International Development, AID, and its contribution of \$2.5 million for the creation of women's resource centers in various provinces throughout Afghanistan.

The resolution before us details the developments that have taken place since the end of the Taliban regime and the progress made in improving the daily lives of Afghan women. Further, it notes the efforts of the United States in encouraging the full inclusion and participation of Afghan women in the political and economic arena and proclaims our ongoing commitment on this front. House Resolution 393 is a straightforward resolution that commends the participation of Afghan

women in civil society and underscores the will of the U.S. House of Representatives that the protection of the human rights of all Afghans, particularly women, be protected in the constitution of Afghanistan.

I ask my colleagues to support this measure.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of this resolution. First I would like to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for their important contribution in bringing this issue to our attention.

Mr. Speaker, Afghanistan is entering a crucial phase in its efforts to leave behind the legacy of two decades of nightmare, civil war, narco-terrorism, the Taliban, and the appalling abuse of women and girls. Over the coming year, the Afghans will be approving a new constitution and a new Afghan government hopes to hold free and fair elections. These acts will determine Afghanistan's course for decades to come.

The role of women and girls in this process remains, unfortunately, unclear. After suffering for so long under the brutal Taliban regime, Afghan women are finally participating in Afghan society, including the political process in that country. But despite progress being made, the threat still remains that Afghan women will once again become the subject of both discrimination and violence. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, girls' education is coming increasingly under attack, with the burning of schools dedicated for that purpose. And there are disturbing reports of abuses of women's rights by local warlords in spite of the efforts of the Afghan transitional authority to protect them.

Our resolution commends the participation of Afghan women in the government of Afghanistan and in civil society, and it encourages the full inclusion of women in all sectors of Afghan society, particularly the political, economic and educational sectors. As the key decisions on the Afghan Constitution draw near, the United States and the international community must continue to press the Afghan government to allow the full inclusion of women in Afghan society at all levels and to provide for the full protection of women's human rights in the Constitution of Afghanistan.

I urge all of my colleagues to support H. Res. 393.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), the sponsor of the resolution.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this

time and for her very helpful input on this resolution. Her commitment to protecting human rights is well-known, and I am honored to work with her to support the women of Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of this very important resolution. I am honored to sponsor it and I thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) for introducing it with me. I also want to thank my neighbor, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) along with the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS) and the staff on the Committee on International Relations for helping to bring this resolution to the floor.

Frankly, it is no secret that Afghan women had a very, very hard time under Taliban rule. Women were frequently beaten, raped, kidnapped and killed. They had no access to education or health care. For 5 years, they were told that the only place for them was at home with their husbands or in the grave. Women were systematically and routinely singled out for abuse simply because they were women. In short, they lived in nightmarish conditions that few of us could even imagine.

Two years after the fall of the Taliban, the women of Afghanistan are making tremendous progress in reclaiming their rightful place in society. Women are returning to positions they held in pre-Taliban times, working as doctors, lawyers, teachers, civil servants and in numerous other professions. Most girls are attending school, which was not true ever before in the history of this country. They are no longer forced to wear the burdensome burqa, although many of them do, and hopefully they are no longer living in fear of being brutalized simply because they are female.

These women have overcome unimaginable obstacles and they deserve our ongoing support as they work to build a new democracy. I have been involved in several meetings here in the United States and a video conference with women leaders in Afghanistan through the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council. It is encouraging to see that the country is transforming itself into a democracy and the Afghan women are participating, working towards elections, and some of these women will be candidates. All of this is good news, but there is still so much more that must be accomplished.

As part of the rebuilding process, the people of Afghanistan are drafting a constitution that will define the principles of their new democratic government. Under the Bonn agreement, the final draft will be finished in a few short months. As the drafters continue the hard work of crafting that important document, we must continue to encourage the inclusion of women and the protection of their most basic rights. The creation of a permanent Afghan government marks an important

transition in the history of that country. It also provides a unique opportunity to commend the women of Afghanistan for overcoming the monumental challenges they have faced and to reiterate the U.S. commitment to protecting the human rights of all. This is what the resolution does.

The United States has a vested interest in promoting a democratic regime in Afghanistan. As President Bush put it, women will be the backbone of a new Afghanistan. It is critical, therefore, that women be assured of their right to participate in the civic life of their country. It is encouraging to note that women have been involved in the drafting of the constitution. However, in order for women to continue participating in public life, this right must be protected.

I am pleased that the U.S. has taken such an active role in aiding the women of Afghanistan. In the last Congress, we passed and the President signed into law the Afghan Women and Children's Relief Act. This much-needed legislation provided educational and health care assistance for women and children living in Afghanistan and as refugees in neighboring countries. This was an important first step that provided immediate assistance. Now, however, it is time to look beyond the short term and provide long-term assurance that the women of Afghanistan will never again be targeted for abuse by their government and forced to live under such horrific conditions.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important and timely resolution. In order to promote true democracy in Afghanistan, we must do all we can to encourage the inclusion of women in the civic life of their country. I am honored to support this resolution, and I encourage my colleagues to do so as well.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) who has been an indefatigable fighter for all human rights issues and without whom we would not be considering this resolution.

□ 1145

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time and acknowledge the tremendous role that he and the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE) had in the passage of this resolution.

I rise in strong support of this resolution which commends Afghan women and supports their participation in government and the inclusion of women's rights in the Afghan constitution. The gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), my good friend, and I co-authored this resolution to acknowledge the struggles that Afghan women have faced and to show the support of this Congress for winning the battles that remain.

Women under the Taliban were denied their basic rights to work, education, and health care; and they suffered greatly over the course of 23

years of war. The end of the Taliban regime, appointment of women to the cabinet, and the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the participation of over 200 women delegates in the June, 2002, Loya Jirga gave women hope. Yet many women continue to wear the burka out of fear of attack from fundamentalist extremists, and there are extremely disturbing reports of discrimination and the burning of over 30 girls' schools.

Earlier this Congress showed their support not only in words but with financial support. Our amendment to the fiscal year 2004 emergency supplemental appropriations legislation directed \$5 million to the Independent Human Rights Commission in Afghanistan and \$60 million in direct funding for the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Afghan women-led governmental organizations which is necessary to build permanent institutions to safeguard women's rights in Afghanistan.

For women to advance in Afghanistan, they must have equal rights under the law, they must have the right to vote and the right to run for office and the equality of opportunity and access to health care, education, and employment. These rights will not be possible in Afghanistan without their inclusion in the constitution and without the ability of delegates to the December Loya Jirga to speak out for women's rights and human rights without fear of reprisal.

I deeply thank this Congress and the leadership of this Congress for being committed to helping the women in Afghanistan, for their support of the passage of this important resolution, and their earlier support for direct appropriations to help the women in Afghanistan. I particularly thank the leadership of the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HYDE), and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), a staunch defender of human rights worldwide.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and commend those who were involved with bringing it to the floor today.

About 5 months ago, I traveled across Afghanistan. Just actually my wife and I decided to travel by car, and we were told that it was rather risky and that it was a precarious situation; but we wanted to see exactly what was happening on the scene, and I would like to report a little incident that happened.

As we were traveling between Kabul and Mazar Sharif, we saw the devastation throughout the countryside, burned-out Russian tanks and buildings that had been destroyed. We noticed some young people, hundreds of people, gathered at this old building that seemed like a bombed-out relic from World War II; and we had our driver stop, and we walked over and we

had an interpreter with us. And there we found, I guess, about 100 young Afghan children all about 8, 9, 10 years old, sitting in this burned-out building where they had piled rocks together and formed little desks, trying to teach each other how to read and to write. There was never a symbol of a people who were more committed to moving ahead and to bringing themselves out of the ashes of this horrible catastrophe that has befallen their country for these last 25 years than these young children; and what was most important is they were not just a bunch of boys. There were young boys and young girls who were there being taught to read and to write and to improve themselves and thus bring up their country, and it was one of the most inspiring sights I had seen.

The United States has a special burden here in Afghanistan. We turned away from the Afghans before, and it led to another era of crises after the Soviets left; and let me just note that I am afraid to offer this to my colleagues: I think we need to pay more attention to Afghanistan. This resolution is an important step, but we need to pay more attention. Things are sliding back in the wrong direction if we do not pay attention.

And I think we have a message today to the people of Afghanistan, and that is democracy is sometimes slow to move, but we are committed to helping them rebuild their country and to build those institutions that provide for human dignity. We respect their religion, we respect their faith, but we also know that the persecution of women is not required by Islam, that this Taliban extremism and Islamic extremism that we see in various parts of the world does not reflect the broad cross-section of Muslims who would grant women their rights and have little children who happen to be girls educated and treated equally and with due respect. But today we have to work with the Afghan people to make sure that the Taliban does not come back, and that threat still exists. And to the people of Afghanistan we say today do not give in to these evil people again. The Americans have not left. We will not leave until they are secure from the return of the Taliban and al Qaeda and the terrorists that held them in bondage.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend my friend from California for his powerful statement.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. LOFGREN).

(Ms. LOFGREN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support this resolution, but I must note that it is not enough. We need to make every effort to assist the women of Afghanistan to become full and participating members of society as so many women there wish.

Inside the Beltway it may seem that we are doing enough, but we have continually appropriated money to help Afghan women and children, 5 million in 2003, 25 million in 2004, 60 million in the recent supplemental appropriations bill. But unfortunately the money is not necessarily getting to the women themselves, and Members of Congress have written to our President about that, but we have not actually made the difference that we would want.

Last week when I returned to my district, I met an Afghan women's advocate, Afifa Azim, who was full of hope but has been let down by this administration. She had come all the way to America to search for support from private organizations in California. Imagine, she had to travel here to find private help when we have appropriated millions of dollars for women's programs and the President has told us he is committed to administering the money in the best possible way. Other Afghan women advocates are telling me the same.

The problem is not that the women of Afghanistan are not full of hope, nor is the problem with Congress who has appropriated funds. The problem is that the administration has not tracked the resources to make sure that they get to the Afghan women who need these funds; and I would like to read from the San Francisco Chronicle a story about Ms. Azim. She said, "What's most unfortunate is that in the beginning, the international community was promising to first help the women, but that has not happened. For almost 2 years, they were promising to open women's centers in different provinces, but it hasn't happened, all because of a lack of resources, not desire."

If the President is serious about winning the war on terror, he must not forget that a great key to our success lies in the women of Afghanistan. I support this resolution, but I would be happier if we were actually directing the President to send the resources necessary to the women of Afghanistan. And I include in the RECORD the article from the San Francisco Chronicle about Ms. Azim's visit.

[From the San Francisco Chronicle, Nov. 17, 2003]

AFGHAN WOMAN SOLDIER ON BAY AREA VISIT TO RAISE SUPPORT FOR FREEDOMS NOT YET REALIZED

(By Anastasia Hendrix)

Standing just 5 feet tall, even in heels, Afifa Azim may appear diminutive but her ambition to improve the lives of women in Afghanistan is enormous, and she is visiting the Bay Area to get some help.

Though the world's attention has shifted to the conflict in Iraq and the repressive Taliban regime has been chased out of Afghanistan, women there have not been able to enjoy the freedoms they had decades ago, she said.

"Most of the women outside of Kabul, in the villages, are still oppressed, still wearing burkas and still are afraid," she said. "I am saying please be patient and pay attention to Afghanistan. We still desperately need it."

Azim is the director of the Afghan Women's Network, an umbrella organization com-

prised of 65 nonprofit, nongovernmental groups designed to support, train and employ women.

Born in Kabul, the 49-year-old mother of two daughters and three sons oversees the agency's headquarters in Peshawar, Pakistan, as well as two offices in Afghanistan. The agency has yet to get a working fax machine, she said, but has received grants for several computers.

She is meeting with native Afghans and women's rights advocates as part of a program developed by the San Francisco-based Women's Intercultural Network (WIN), which strives to create a network of women's organizations around the world for "collective action on mutual concerns."

"A lot of people are going into Afghanistan now doing refugee work, doing work on housing, food and infrastructure, but nobody's really working directly with the women to build the capacity of their organizations," said Marilyn Fowler, president and chief executive officer of the network. "It's not just about money, but also the training and technology that is so badly needed."

Azim is one of nine women on a committee participating in the drafting of Afghanistan's new constitution, which will be important to legally protect women's rights, she said.

It is a more daunting task than it may seem, said Rona Popal, executive director of the Fremont-based Afghan Women Association International, who recently returned from a trip to Kabul.

"For example, the Ministry of Women's Affairs is one of the poorest ministries (in the Afghan government). Many programs have been closed, and a lot of women have had to be laid off," she said. "What's most unfortunate is that in the beginning, the international community was promising to first help the women, but that had not happened. For almost two years they were promising to open women's centers in different provinces, but it hasn't happened—all because of a lack of resources, not desire."

If anyone is up to the challenge of fighting for the emerging women's rights movement in Afghanistan, it is Azim, said Irene Lu, a senior at Stanford University who spent six months this year working for the Afghan Women's Network in Kabul.

"It's amazing how much she really loves her country. She works day and night thinking of specific projects," Lu said. "She's often at the office until 1 or 12 at night, and she even came to the office at 3 a.m. to talk to me about one of the projects we were working on."

With Azim, Lu created a national directory of nonprofit women's groups in and around Afghanistan, surveyed women in refugee camps and created a paid internship program for female students at Kabul University.

Azim said there are setbacks and times of sadness and frustration, but that she relies on the strength of other women's rights advocates for motivation and her family for inspiration.

Her three sons, ages 18, 19, and 20, all volunteer for her organization. Her daughters, ages 8 and 22, are constant reminder of her goals, she said.

"I want them to have a bright future, to be able to have a good and happy life," she said.

Her husband, Azim, is also supportive of her efforts, it not necessarily her frequent trips to Kabul, she said. The family fled Afghanistan in 1985 but plans to move back by new year, she said.

Today, Azim is headed back to Pakistan. She said she will travel and work as much as necessary to broaden awareness about the struggles still facing Afghan women.

"We know that American women are strong and have the power to do something

to help our women, even if the government can't or won't" she said. "Of this, I am confident."

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), a strong leader in our Committee on International Relations.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill commending the participation of Afghan women in that society. But let me share with the Members that I had an opportunity to travel in Afghanistan, and there is a small orphanage that I have supported. I have been a board member for a number of years on this particular board for this school that attempts to teach orphans in Afghanistan. And I wanted to see about the work that they were conducting. So when I was there, I actually had an opportunity to talk not only to the students, several of whom spoke English, but also with the teachers.

One of the teachers showed me, by the way, the scars on his legs and arms. He was caught by the former regime. He was not teaching jihad. He was teaching mathematics. He was teaching science. And that was considered verboten. That was forbidden by that government. And as a consequence, he was tortured for that. But the school continued its work clandestinely, and today that work continues. And I asked the young students there what they intended to be when they grew up, and we got different answers from different students. But one young woman stood up and she said, "When I grow up, I want to go to the University of Kabul because I am going to be a physician."

And I asked her, "Why do you want to become a doctor?"

She said, "I want to become a doctor because I want to help my people."

We forget that two thirds of the physicians in Afghanistan before the Taliban, two thirds of physicians, were women. But, in fact, when that society was hijacked by the Taliban and that brutal regime began the process of excluding women not only from education but from the workforce and from riding a bus or from visiting a doctor, we forget just how brutal that regime was.

I have got a great deal of respect for what the new government is trying to do. The new Afghan government has established a Ministry of Women's Affairs dedicated to improving women's rights, but in the meantime the reality continues, that at the hands of regional warlords and brigands and religious fanatics, women are still beaten and they are still raped and they are still abducted.

However, as this is happening, women are playing a role in the political reconstruction of Afghanistan. Seven women are members of the constitutional drafting commission. That is 20 percent of the commission. Under the released draft constitution, Afghanistan's president can nominate

women to hold up to 50 percent of the seats of the upper house of parliament.

For the first time in years, Afghans are hearing the voice of women on the air because the broadcasts of Radio Free Afghanistan air commentary from both the women in the Afghan ministries and the men and women that are interviewed on the streets, in the towns. And it is important to remember again that before 1978 women were very influential in this society. Not only were they two-thirds of teachers, as I mentioned, but they played a role throughout the society, throughout the workforce, and they must play a vital role in helping Afghanistan become a stable state.

There is so much work to be done, and there is so much more attention that we as a Congress, not just the administration, but we as a Congress need to pay to this problem.

But Afghanistan has made tremendous strides, at least in Kabul, in the liberation from the Taliban; and we have to remember that the Taliban is still rooted in parts of that country. And I ask my colleagues to support this resolution and to continue to focus in their own time and in their own ways on ideas of how we can expand some measure of progress beyond the capital into the regional areas of Afghanistan.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), my good friend. It is always a real honor and a pleasure to work with him. He is a man of integrity, great intelligence, and I consider him one of my mentors. It is always a pleasure to handle a bill on the floor with him.

□ 1200

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would merely like to underscore the stark contrast between the Afghanistan that we had under the Taliban and the free Afghanistan that today is working to rebuild from the ruins of over 20 years of war and oppression. But all is not perfect, as we heard from many speakers here today. The road ahead will not be an easy task, but nothing that is worth doing and having usually comes easy.

The Afghan people and especially the women of Afghanistan need our support. They need our steadfast commitment to stay with them, to remain engaged for the long haul. This resolution before us reiterates that commitment, a commitment that was articulated by President Bush just this morning, and I ask my colleagues to support the resolution of the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY).

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the resolution

commending Afghan women for their participation in the Afghan government. Overcoming a history of suppression under Taliban rule, the women of Afghanistan have worked to strengthen women's rights in Afghanistan's new democracy.

Prior to Taliban rule, Afghanistan had a Constitutional democracy that affirmed women's rights, including the right to vote and equal pay provisions. However, under control of the Taliban, women were silenced and denied basic-fundamental rights to healthcare, education and employment. Today, Afghan women have emerged to help build a brighter and more stable future for Afghanistan.

Afghan women are more involved than ever in the Afghanistan government. Currently, there are two women holding high-ranking positions in Afghanistan's transitional government. Additionally, on September 5, 2003, the third annual conference of Women for Afghan Women (WAW) met in Kandahar to draft an Afghan Women's Bill of Rights to present to President Hamid Karzai. These rights include mandatory education for all women, protection and security from gender abuse, freedom to vote and the ability to run for all elections.

Afghanistan is at a crucial transition point and it is imperative that the United States continue its support in promoting democracy and equality for both men and women of Afghanistan. I urge all of my fellow Members to vote with me in support of H. Res. 393 and commend the women of Afghanistan for their contributions and involvement in the Afghan government.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHAW). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 393, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

MUTUAL FUNDS INTEGRITY AND FEE TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2003

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2420) to improve transparency relating to the fees and costs that mutual fund investors incur and to improve corporate governance of mutual funds, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2420

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Mutual Funds Integrity and Fee Transparency Act of 2003".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—

Sec. 1. Short title.

TITLE I—INTEGRITY AND FEE TRANSPARENCY

Sec. 101. Improved transparency of mutual fund costs.

Sec. 102. Obligations regarding certain distribution and soft dollar arrangements.

Sec. 103. Mutual fund governance.

Sec. 104. Audit committee requirements for investment companies.

Sec. 105. Trading restrictions.

Sec. 106. Definition of no-load mutual fund.

Sec. 107. Informing directors of significant deficiencies.

Sec. 108. Exemption from in person meeting requirements.

Sec. 109. Proxy voting disclosure.

Sec. 110. Incentive compensation and mutual fund sales.

Sec. 111. Commission study and report regulating soft dollar arrangements.

Sec. 112. Study of arbitration claims.

TITLE II—PREVENTION OF ABUSIVE MUTUAL FUND PRACTICES

Sec. 201. Prevention of fraud; internal compliance and control procedures.

Sec. 202. Ban on joint management of mutual funds and hedge funds.

Sec. 203. Short term trading by interested persons prohibited.

Sec. 204. Elimination of stale prices.

Sec. 205. Prevention of unfair after-hours trading.

Sec. 206. Report on adequacy of remedial actions.

TITLE I—INTEGRITY AND FEE TRANSPARENCY

SEC. 101. IMPROVED TRANSPARENCY OF MUTUAL FUND COSTS.

(a) REGULATION REVISION REQUIRED.—Within 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Securities and Exchange Commission shall revise regulations under the Securities Act of 1933, the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, or the Investment Company Act of 1940, or any combination thereof, to require, consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest, improved disclosure with respect to an open-end management investment company, in the quarterly statement or other periodic report to shareholders or other appropriate disclosure document, of the following:

(1) The estimated amount, in dollars for each \$1,000 of investment in the company, of the operating expenses of the company that are borne by shareholders.

(2) The structure of, or method used to determine, the compensation of individuals employed by the investment adviser of the company to manage the portfolio of the company, and the ownership interest of such individuals in the securities of the company.

(3) The portfolio turnover rate of the company, set forth in a manner that facilitates comparison among investment companies, and a description of the implications of a high turnover rate for portfolio transaction costs and performance.

(4) Information concerning the company's policies and practices with respect to the payment of commissions for effecting securities transactions to a member of an exchange, broker, or dealer who—

(A) furnishes advice, either directly or through publications or writings, as to the value of securities, the advisability of investing in, purchasing, or selling securities, and the availability of securities or purchasers or sellers of securities;

(B) furnishes analyses and reports concerning issuers, industries, securities, economic factors and trends, portfolio strategy, and the performance of accounts; or