

women are physically assaulted or raped by their partners every year.

Women who suffer from violence depend on local services and health care providers to help them through their physical and emotional pain. Nationally battered women's shelters serve more than 300,000 women and their families, even though there is a far greater number who seek this assistance. These shelters and health care services are critical for women, victims of violence.

In the year 2000, the Violence Against Women Act mandated that the Attorney General conduct a national study of discrimination against domestic violence victims when they try to sign up for health insurance. This report would offer new insight into better ways that our Nation can serve domestic violence victims and help us understand the many struggles that women victims face day-to-day. This report, by the way, was due back in October of 2001 and here it is now, June of 2004. Where is the report?

I would also like to bring attention to the fact that the administration's healthy marriage proposal for the welfare reauthorization bill failed to include important protections for battered women in marriage protection programs.

In addition, \$1.8 billion in Federal and State funds that were allocated for these healthy marriage programs targeted at low income couples would come out of funds already squeezed from child care, job training, and transportation services. These services are especially critical for low income women.

But this is not the first time low income women's rights have been targeted by this administration. The new reports by women advocates also clearly demonstrate how the Bush administration's tax policy failed women in order to pay for tax cuts for the very wealthy.

The administration's budget proposes over \$191 billion in new tax cuts over the next 5 years, primarily for the benefit of the wealthiest in our country. These benefits for the rich come at the mercy of deep cuts in domestic programs.

Just look at the cuts in housing, for example. Affordable housing is essential to ensuring that women have equal opportunity in our society and have stable homes in which to raise their children. Currently 28 percent of women-headed families have critical housing problems. Yet because of the Bush administration's policy, next year 250,000 families, most of whom are headed by women raising children, will lose important housing vouchers. Within 5 years, 800,000 families could lose their housing vouchers.

We also cannot forget that the administration excluded millions of low income working families from the increase in the child tax credit of 2003. Over 7 million families with incomes between \$10,500 and \$26,500 were denied

in the 2003 increase in the child tax credit signed by President Bush. Two-thirds of those parents were hurt by this exclusion, in particular, women, disproportionately single mothers, women of color, and married women who were out of work.

It is clear that the Bush administration does not enforce policies that help women make economic strides. Women deserve better treatment by this administration. After all, we represent well over 50 percent of the population. And it is time that we stand up against these policies and politics that are eroding our rights as women.

DEGRADATION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker and distinguished Members of Congress present, I come before you to celebrate the millions of working American women who are blazing a bright path for young women to successfully contribute to the American economy and, most importantly, to the future of our Nation. Women are the backbone of America's homes and of America's economy. Our presence and career fields such as science, business, and politics, has only brought improvement to these areas where women have traditionally been underrepresented.

Though women have made tremendous gains in closing the gender gap in the workplace in the past, the current status of women in the workplace has become stagnant and on a decline.

Instead of full and equal pay, women are still hitting the glass ceiling. In the year 2002, data from the AFL/CIO stated that women are paid 77 cents for every dollar men received.

□ 1845

Of course, before that it was 76. Nationwide, working families lose \$200 billion of income annually to the wage gap. In addition to loss of wages, working American women have experienced a loss of jobs during the last 3 years. Following the 2001 recession, women workers lost over 300,000 jobs between the start of the recession and March of 2004. The 2001 recession marked the only period of sustained job loss for women in the last 40 years in the United States.

With startling facts like these, I ask, What is this administration doing to ensure equality in the workplace for working American women? Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to report that this administration has taken regressive actions to address the problems facing women in the workplace.

The Bush administration has made 25 publications on the Department of Labor's Women's Bureau Web site unavailable. This administration has disbanded and underfunded government

offices that were established to address women, such as the Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach in the White House and the President's Interagency Council on Women.

Mr. Speaker, these actions are really unacceptable, and Congress should lead the charge for procuring equality for women in the workplace by writing and passing bills that call for equal pay of both men and women employees for equal work, restoring the funding to government offices dedicated to women issues and reinstating the publications that have been removed from the Department of Labor's Web site regarding women in the workplace.

In the future, the majority of the workplace will continue to be female. What is this saying to our young people?

The Bush administration prides itself on being a champion of the economy and an administration that has taken action to stimulate our economy with tax cuts. However, this administration has failed to include women in this process for stimulating the economy. Women are 51 percent of the population in our country and growing, and over half of the working population is not being utilized to contribute to the growth of the American economy.

I urge my colleagues to take a stand against the degradation of the status of women in the workplace of this Bush administration.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time that the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GERLACH). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

EX-PRISONERS OF WAR NOT RECEIVING JUST COMPENSATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STRICKLAND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about yet one more example of how the Bush administration seems to put the needs of Iraq and Iraqis over the needs of America and Americans.

We all know that during the first Gulf War there were a significant number of American soldiers who were taken prisoner of war. Under the law passed by this House, we have given permission for those who have been tortured to take legal action against a terrorist state that was responsible for that torture. So 17 American prisoners of war, who were prisoner during the time of Saddam Hussein's regime, brought legal action; and the courts determined that they were, in fact, entitled to just compensation and granted them compensation.