

concerned that the bill falls short from meeting consumer protection needs and reducing bank fees.

#### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, but it is also Domestic Violence Awareness Month. This is the issue I want to briefly address.

It was 35 years ago when Congress passed the landmark Violence Against Women Act, and it has changed the way that we as a Nation address the crimes of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Today, there are more investigations and prosecutions and stiffer penalties, including life sentences for those who cross State lines to commit domestic violence. Millions of dollars in Federal funds have been provided to States to help them reshape the way police officers respond to domestic violence.

For example, the COPS program, that is the Community Oriented Policing Services, helps local police departments apply the principles of community policing methods to domestic violence. There is increased funding for shelter and a national domestic violence hotline, which receives an estimated 11,000 calls per month. America's dirty little secret is a secret no longer.

But the 1994 Violence Against Women Act, or VAWA I, as we called it, could not and did not cover every issue with violence against women. With the response to the domestic violence outreach programs including hotlines and shelters, we have seen an increase in the number of victims who come forward and seek help.

This increase necessitates further action on our part. The programs under the Violence Against Women Act just begin our fight against domestic violence, and the programs funded under that act lead the way.

This epidemic crosses all racial and socio-economic barriers. The National Domestic Violence hotline reports that 90 percent of the callers were female and 57 percent were white. Every State and every district has some domestic violence, unfortunately, with victims in cities and on farms across the country.

In my State of Maryland, reports have shown an estimated 26,000 cases of domestic violence crimes in 1997. This number is said to reflect only about 10 percent of the actual attacks. And last year the Crime in Maryland Uniform Report stated that 72 individuals died from domestic violence attacks. That is approximately one person every 5 days who dies as a result of domestic

violence in one small State, Maryland, alone.

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence has demonstrated how VAWA funds have made a critical difference in the lives of victims and their children in the State of Maryland.

For instance, in areas of prosecution, nine jurisdictions in Maryland use VAWA funds to increase staffing and to designate domestic violence units. Others offer legal assistance through court advocates who accompany victims to trial and who assist with private legal fees to establish protective orders.

Also funded is the Pro-prosecution Project. It trains law enforcement officers, court commissioners, and State's attorneys on pro-arrest policies when violent situations cannot be overcome inside the home.

It also funds parole and probation advocates who act as liaisons between the department agents and victims. This program has had tremendous success in shortening the length of time between a violation and a violation hearing.

Four local police departments are using funds to implement programs that focus on both prevention and intervention and with regard to victims services. One jurisdiction uses the VAWA money to support their local hotline. Others use this area to fund a program that addresses victims who also have a mental illness or addiction.

In Maryland, VAWA funds are also used for the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault and 10 local coalitions that bring together educators, program providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, health care professionals, clergy and community groups, all of that coalition that should be working together.

Maryland, which currently has 21 programs and 19 shelters, has used a multilevel approach that includes local, grassroots projects to meet the immediate needs of individuals and families, as well as statewide initiatives that provide education, training, and advocacy that addresses institutional and systemic issues.

I use Maryland as one of the examples, but this is the case throughout our 50 states and indicates that VAWA works. That is the Violence Against Women Act. I want to point out that nationally nearly one in every three adult women will experience a physical assault by a partner or a significant other and almost half the women who are taken to a hospital emergency room are treated for injuries inflicted by a partner or spouse.

The Violence Against Women Act needs to be reauthorized and a new version adding more, Violence Against Women Act II, also needs to be passed.

These statistics, including the reports from shelters all over the country that they are overwhelmed with victims seeking safety and counseling, reinforce the need to expand domestic violence programs. Many of these ex-

pansions are addressed within the Violence Against Women Act II—HR 357.

Among the issues that VAWA I did not tackle, for example, were domestic violence and child custody, issues that have traditionally been handled by state and local courts but are issues that demand a national response.

What is domestic violence and what happens to children raised in homes where domestic violence occurs?

Domestic violence or battering is a means of establishing control over another person through fear and intimidation. Generally, battering is physical, but it also includes emotional, economic, and sexual abuse, and the kind of isolation experienced by hostages and prisoners of war.

Domestic violence is a brutal crime, mostly, but not always, committed by men against women. The shocking reality is that an estimated 3 to 4 million American women are assaulted each year by their husbands or partners, and every year 3.3 million children witness these attacks.

There are many theories about batterers and why they resort to violence. These include career and economic stress, violence on TV and in movies, poor socialization, and sexism in our society. Whatever the cause, battering continues because too many people look the other way. Our judicial system has been guilty of ignorance about domestic violence and negligence. For many victims of domestic violence the courts are their adversaries, not their allies.

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#### SOCIAL SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of ensuring the solvency of the Social Security program. Today, there are 44.4 million Americans who receive Social Security benefits. Over 4 million of these individuals reside in the State of California. Americans all over our Nation depend on this retirement benefit as a source of major income. This program is the principal source of retirement income for two-thirds of our elderly. For about one-third of all seniors over the age of 65, it represents 90 percent of their income. In fact, Social Security benefits lifted approximately 15 million senior citizens out of poverty last year.

Now, Social Security is not just a retirement program for our seniors. It provides badly needed survivor benefits, also. One out of every five Social Security beneficiaries receives survivor or disability benefits. This program also provides for disability benefits to our Nation's workers. For three out of four workers, Social Security represents their only form of disability coverage.

The Republican budget does absolutely nothing to extend the life of the Social Security program. Democrats