

year old child was able to gain access to an illegal firearm. How many more of our children must die before we, as a Congress, band together on a bipartisan basis to pass comprehensive gun legislation?

In this month of March, let us not only pay tribute to those women who have pioneered and inspired all of us, let us remember the young lives we have failed to protect by failing to pass commonsense gun control legislation. Let us also remember, their mothers, teachers, neighbors and friends, who helped shape these young lives but will never know the full potential of their joyous labor. And let us also remember our own mothers, sisters, and aunts who, although unknown to most, continue to shape our lives and our nation's future.

CONVENTION TO ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I commend my colleague, Senator BOXER, for bringing this important treaty before the Senate. I am proud to be a sponsor of Senate Resolution 237, which expresses the sense of the Senate that hearings should be held by the Foreign Relations Committee on the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The treaty establishes international standards and definitions to protect women against discrimination. The treaty also calls for action in the areas of education, health care, and domestic relations, and creates a process to monitor the status of women and their progress toward equity. The standards are fully consistent with existing U.S. protections against discrimination. In countries that do not have such protections, this treaty is an effective tool to combat violence against women, reform unfair inheritance and property rights, and strengthen women's access to fair employment and economic opportunity.

165 countries have not ratified the treaty. As the country that consistently leads the way in the battle for human rights and human dignity, and that took an active role in drafting the treaty, it is past time for the United States to ratify it as well.

U.S. support for women's equality at home and abroad requires that we promptly consider and ratify this treaty. I urge the Senate to pass this resolution and to do all we can to expedite the ratification of this important treaty.

To move our country in that direction, the Foreign Relations Committee should hold a hearing.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Tuesday,

March 7, 2000, the Federal debt stood at \$5,747,932,431,376.73 (Five trillion, seven hundred forty-seven billion, nine hundred thirty-two million, four hundred thirty-one thousand, three hundred seventy-six dollars and seventy-three cents).

Fifteen years ago, March 7, 1995, the Federal debt stood at \$4,851,012,000,000 (Four trillion, eight hundred fifty-one billion, twelve million).

Ten years ago, March 7, 1990, the Federal debt stood at \$3,027,086,000,000 (Three trillion, twenty-seven billion, eighty-six million).

Fifteen years ago, March 7, 1985, the Federal debt stood at \$1,708,698,000,000 (One trillion, seven hundred eight billion, six hundred ninety-eight million).

Twenty-five years ago, March 7, 1975, the Federal debt stood at \$499,218,000,000 (Four hundred ninety-nine billion, two hundred eighteen million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,248,714,431,376.73 (Five trillion, two hundred forty-eight billion, seven hundred fourteen million, four hundred thirty-one thousand, three hundred seventy-six dollars and seventy-three cents) during the past 25 years.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE TO THE COMMUNITY OF JEWISH FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES ON THEIR 150TH ANNIVERSARY

• Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the great service that Jewish Family and Children's Services has provided the people of San Francisco and the Bay Area for 150 years.

Since its founding in 1850, Jewish Family and Children's Services has been dedicated to alleviating suffering and helping people realize their potential. It has grown into one of the region's largest social service organizations, with more than 2,100 volunteers helping more than 40,000 people a year.

Jewish Family and Children's Services provides a wide range of services from adoption services and child mentoring programs, to programs aimed at helping seniors. They also have many programs designed to help people with special needs such as AIDS counseling and care management, and alcohol and substance abuse programs.

Over the past 150 years, Jewish Family and Children's Services has improved the quality of life for thousands of people. Please join me in honoring this outstanding organization. •

TRIBUTE TO WOMENS RURAL ENTREPRENEURIAL NETWORK

• Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the

Womens Rural Entrepreneurial Network (WREN) of Bethlehem for receiving the Home Loan Bank of Boston's 1999 Community Development Award. The award recognizes the top project in the state undertaken by a nonprofit community group and a local bank. WREN's hard work has made a real difference in the lives of the women of Northern New Hampshire, and the accomplishments of its members are to be commended.

With the assistance of Passumpsic Bank, WREN developed a program to help women in Northern New Hampshire start their own businesses. The program initially offered training in areas such as business plan development, marketing, financial management and computer literacy, but quickly expanded to include other crucial skills such as networking and technology training. As a result of the success of those programs, WREN is currently developing a community center that will house a retail store to sell the products of the program's participants, a community art studio and an expanded meeting and teaching space. The sky is the limit for this program, and its future certainly looks bright.

The achievements of the program are remarkable, and they serve as a shining example of what can be accomplished when local banks and community-oriented groups work together. It is truly an honor to serve such a hard-working organization in the United States Senate. •

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: TRIBUTE TO ALICE WALKER

• Mr. CLELAND. Mr. President, 20 years ago, my friends and colleagues Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland and Senator ORRIN HATCH from Utah joined to create a National Women's History Week. Since that time, the commemoration has expanded into an entire month of celebration and recognition of the many contributions and accomplishments of American women. I am proud to use this occasion to highlight the many accomplishments of one of Georgia's own, author and teacher Alice Walker.

Alice Walker has become one of the leading voices among African-American writers. She has published poetry, novels, short stories, essays, and criticism, the most famous probably being "The Color Purple", for which she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1983. Her portrayal of the struggle of African-Americans throughout history, especially the experiences of black women in the American South, has earned her praise around the world. Ms. Walker's insightful and riveting portraits of poor, rural life display human resourcefulness, strength and endurance in confronting oppression.

Alice Walker was born on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia, the eighth