

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. SHOWS. Mr. Speaker, on October 30, 2001, I missed roll call votes 408, 409, 410, and 411 because I was in my congressional district on official business and to attend the funeral of a lifelong friend.

Had I been present, I would have voted yea on all four votes.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2001, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

INTRODUCING THE LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF DATING VIOLENCE ACT DURING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month and to introduce the Legal Assistance for Victims of Dating Violence Act, which will turn that recognition into action.

In recent weeks, much attention has been focused on humanitarian issues in Afghanistan, particularly the cruel treatment of women under the Taliban and their struggle with domestic violence.

While conditions for women in the United States are light years ahead of those for the women of Afghanistan, domestic violence has too long been a problem in our country, as well. The Justice Department reports that there were over 791,000 domestic violence victims in 1999, with 85 percent of these attacks occurring against women.

Over half of domestic violent crimes against both men and women from 1993 to 1999 were committed by a current boyfriend or girlfriend, and almost one-third of women murdered annually are murdered by their current or former partners.

Most troubling for me is that dating violence most often affects our youth. The age group of 16 to 24, which is the group most likely to be in dating relationships, experiences the highest rates of dating violence. These statistics are alarming.

Dating violence crimes are not restricted to any one racial, cultural, or socioeconomic group. Dating violence could happen to anyone in a dating relationship. These acts occur everywhere, and are committed not by a stranger in a dark alley but by people known and trusted by the victims.

These heinous crimes not only violate the victims, but can destroy their

ability to trust their friends and loved ones. Dating violence affects every aspect of a victim's life, from his or her relationship to their performance at school or work. We must act now to help the victims of dating violence, these men and women who are attacked by the very people in their lives who they trust the most.

In the last Congress I was proud to cosponsor the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act. I was more than pleased that the overwhelming majority of my colleagues agreed with me on the value of this legislation. With 239 cosponsors, VAWA passed overwhelmingly by a vote of 371 to 1 in the House and 95 to 0 in the Senate.

VAWA went a long way in addressing the problem of domestic violence in the United States. Unfortunately, however, VAWA omitted critical protections for victims of dating violence. When VAWA took the much needed step of creating a first-ever legal definition of dating violence, as well as authorized a new grant program to provide civil legal assistance to domestic violence victims, dating violence victims were not covered under the new grants.

Many domestic violence and dating violence victims do not have the money or resources necessary to regain control over their lives. These grants go to nonprofit organizations that then collaborate with domestic violence and sexual assault service agencies to provide civil legal assistance to victims of violence. Access to the legal system can make the difference in these victims' power to break the cycle of oppressive abuse and regain control over their lives.

Mr. Speaker, my legislation addresses this omission within the VAWA legislation. My bill will address this inconsistency by allowing grant recipients to use their funding to assist victims of dating violence. This legislation does not cost anything. It simply allows grant recipients to help dating violence victims in the same way they currently help domestic violence victims. The victims of dating violence deserve the same legal assistance given to other victims of domestic violence.

The ability to obtain a legal protection order or pursue other legal remedies is just as important for victims of dating violence as it is for domestic violence victims. We must ensure that all of these victims receive the assistance they need to get their lives back in order.

I would like to thank our former colleague, Mr. Hutchinson, who is now the administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration, for introducing this important legislation before he left Congress. He recognized that it is only right that dating violence victims have access to the same services as domestic violence victims, and I wish him the best of luck in his new post.

I would also like to thank my friend and neighbor, Senator MIKE CRAPO, who has introduced this bill in the Senate.

As we recognize Domestic Violence Awareness Month, I can think of no better way to show victims we care than to pass this legislation. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important bill and help make a difference in the lives of so many men and women in our country.

CONCERNS REGARDING THE FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS BILL

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

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, tonight I would like to talk briefly about some concerns I have in the foreign operations appropriations bill, about some rumors that are circulating.

The bill has passed the House and it has passed the Senate. As we go to conference, it is important that we address some of these concerns and we do not retreat on our anti-narcotics efforts.

□ 1745

I know Americans are deeply concerned about the anti-terrorism as I am, but in the process of focusing on the terrorism question, we should not retreat from our war on drugs. As my friend and the Democratic ranking member of the Committee on Government Reform, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), has said, we are in a chemical war in the United States. They have distributed illegal narcotics throughout our country. We are watching the Taliban to see if their heroin makes it over from Europe. They dominate the Europe and Asia markets, but clearly we have thousands of Americans dying of illegal drugs, which is a consistent problem.

I want to talk first about an understanding that the Senate has been pushing to drop a drug certification. First, I do not think it should be dropped. I know countries do not like it. I met with our leaders and presidents in Mexico and throughout South America and in the Summit of the Americas. I know they do not like it. They do not like that it seems judgmental. But the truth is we have certification on human rights and we have certification on terrorism. Are we saying that we will drop all criteria for foreign aid and standards, including human rights and terrorism? We should not.

It is important that we have an idea of which countries in the world are cooperating in our efforts against illegal narcotics, human rights and terrorism. And if we drop one because of judgment, all will be dropped. If we have