

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, in honor of International Women's Day on March 8, 68 of my House colleagues and I sent a letter to the Secretary of State urging the Bush administration to support U.S. ratification of CEDAW, the U.N. convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Ratified by 166 other nations, CEDAW establishes a universal definition of discrimination against women and provides international standards for equality in education, health care, employment, commercial transactions and public life.

This Congress, I have reintroduced House Resolution 18, and I ask my colleagues to become cosponsors. Let us send a message loud and clear to women in this Nation and all over the world that the United States is truly committed to protecting women's rights.

A CASE OF SELECTIVE INSANITY?

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, this morning we had a guest chaplain who opened our session with prayer. We have a full-time chaplain. So does our Senate. So do a lot of athletic teams and our military services each have a large number of chaplains.

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And our schools have condoms.

Mr. Speaker, I wish that you could help me and at least 150 million other Americans understand why chaplains and prayers are good for our House of Representatives, good for our Senate, good for our athletic teams and good for our soldiers and sailors and marines and airmen. And condoms are good for our kids. Is this a case of selective insanity?

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

(Ms. CARSON of Indiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, historically domestic violence has been a silent epidemic. According to a recent study conducted by the Commonwealth Fund, almost 4 million women are physically abused each year in the United States.

Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women in this country, where they are more likely to be assaulted, injured, raped or killed by a male partner than any other type of assailant.

However many politicians, intentionally or unintentionally, have not dealt with this serious and destructive epidemic. In my district alone, judicial

levels have been totally insensitive to the plight of victims of domestic violence to the extent of sending perpetrators home on home monitors, with ankle bracelets; and they eventually go out and kill the victim without being noticed by the system until it is way too late.

We need to expand the Call to Protect program, continue funding through VAWA and demand that the Violence Against Women Office in the Department of Justice becomes permanent.

We can tackle the undiagnosed treatment of women before it matures into violence by conducting early prevention to teach young people the importance of supporting and respecting one another.

TAX RELIEF AND A BUDGET FOR EVERY FAMILY

(Mr. STEARNS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, this week the House Committee on the Budget will take the first step towards passing the budget for fiscal year 2002. Our budget is a bold and responsible statement that places the concerns of hard-working American families ahead of the concerns of the Washington bureaucracy.

With budget surpluses in Washington, we have an opportunity to shore up Social Security, protect Medicare, pay down our record amount of debt, and provide relief from enormously high tax burdens.

Federal taxes are the highest they have ever been since World War II. When you combine the overall tax burden of local, State, and Federal governments, plus the cost of regulations, folks are giving almost half of what they make back to their government. This is unacceptable and needs to be changed.

Without a doubt, working Americans need a break. This is not the time for politicians in Washington to point fingers of blame at the current state of the economy. We must rise above the partisan bickering and pass legislation that will provide immediate and meaningful relief to hard-working American families.

DANGERS OF ARSENIC LEVELS IN DRINKING WATER

(Mr. HINCHEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I want to call to the attention of the Members of the House an issue of great public concern because it affects public health.

In 1997, this Congress directed the Environmental Protection Agency to

upgrade standards for arsenic across the country. The standards that we have today have been in effect since 1942. They are 50 parts per billion of arsenic in drinking water. All around the world, countries have raised the standards to 10 parts per billion, because arsenic in drinking water is known to cause cancer of the bladder, the urinary tract, lung cancer, and other ailments.

The backtracking on this rule that took place earlier this week is of great concern to all of us. The Bush administration has announced that it will not follow through on reducing arsenic in drinking water. This is a threat to the health and safety of more than 31 million Americans who now drink water with elevated levels of arsenic. Most of these people live in the southwestern portion of our country.

I call upon the Bush administration and this Congress to stick by the raising of these standards for arsenic in drinking water. This is a matter of grave concern for public health and safety.

WELCOMING COACH RICK PITINO BACK TO KENTUCKY

(Mrs. NORTHUP asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, when the people around this country think about Louisville, Kentucky, a number of positive images come to mind. We are known as the hometown of sports legends Muhammad Ali, Pee Wee Reese, Denny Crum, and Paul Hornung. We are known as the home of the greatest 2 minutes in sports, the running of the Kentucky Derby. And, of course, we are home to the world-famous Louisville Slugger baseball bat.

Mr. Speaker, another sports legend, Rick Pitino, has returned home to Kentucky, this time as head basketball coach at the University of Louisville. Coach Pitino is no stranger to our State. He led the University of Kentucky Wildcats to a national championship in 1996.

We are thrilled to have Coach Pitino back where he belongs, in the Bluegrass State. No one likes to win basketball games more than Coach Pitino. But more importantly, he will set a great example for our children and young adults, inspiring them to set high goals and then work hard to achieve success.

Coach, welcome back to Kentucky and to the University of Louisville.

URGING CONGRESS TO LIMIT TRASH IMPORTATION

(Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, news came last week that the Fresh Kills landfill on Staten Island that has taken municipal waste from New York City is scheduled to be closed in a couple of weeks, a few months ahead of what was expected. Now that Fresh Kills will soon be closing, the problem of municipal waste being hauled interstate becomes all the more acute.

Virginians are certainly not fond of the trash trucks coming down I-95, bringing out-of-state garbage through their communities to dump sites in the State. Not only is the trash unwanted, but the added large-truck traffic has made many local rural roads unsafe.

State legislative efforts to stem this invasion of garbage into the Commonwealth have been frustrated by Federal courts labeling trash as "commerce," and thus subject to only Congress' regulation pursuant to the commerce clause of the Constitution.

This morning I am urging my colleagues in Congress to pass tough legislation that will empower States to limit the amount of trash being brought within their borders. The closing of Fresh Kills makes this legislation all the more urgent, since New York is apparently counting on exporting even more of their trash. Virginians do not want this garbage coming into their communities, and I ask Congress' help in getting action on this problem.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BASS). Pursuant to clause 8, rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings on today's motion to suspend the rules if a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or if the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken later today.

PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER MEDAL OF VALOR ACT OF 2001

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 802) to authorize the Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 802

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Public Safety Officer Medal of Valor Act of 2001".

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF MEDAL.

After September 1, 2001, the President may award, and present in the name of Congress, a Medal of Valor of appropriate design, with ribbons and appurtenances, to a public safety officer who is cited by the Attorney General,

upon the recommendation of the Medal of Valor Review Board, for extraordinary valor above and beyond the call of duty. The Public Safety Medal of Valor shall be the highest national award for valor by a public safety officer.

SEC. 3. MEDAL OF VALOR BOARD.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF BOARD.—There is established a Medal of Valor Review Board (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the "Board"), which shall be composed of 11 members appointed in accordance with subsection (b) and shall conduct its business in accordance with this Act.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) MEMBERS.—The members of the Board shall be individuals with knowledge or expertise, whether by experience or training, in the field of public safety, of which—

(A) two shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(B) two shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate;

(C) two shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(D) two shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(E) three shall be appointed by the President, including one with experience in firefighting, one with experience in law enforcement, and one with experience in emergency services.

(2) TERM.—The term of a Board member shall be 4 years.

(3) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the membership of the Board shall not affect the powers of the Board and shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(4) OPERATION OF THE BOARD.—

(A) CHAIRMAN.—The Chairman of the Board shall be elected by the members of the Board from among the members of the Board.

(B) MEETINGS.—The Board shall conduct its first meeting not later than 90 days after the appointment of the last member appointed to the Board. Thereafter, the Board shall meet at the call of the Chairman of the Board. The Board shall meet not less often than twice each year.

(C) VOTING AND RULES.—A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum to conduct business, but the Board may establish a lesser quorum for conducting hearings scheduled by the Board. The Board may establish by majority vote any other rules for the conduct of the Board's business, if such rules are not inconsistent with this Act or other applicable law.

(c) DUTIES.—The Board shall select candidates as recipients of the Medal of Valor from among those applications received by the National Medal of Valor Office. Not more often than once each year, the Board shall present to the Attorney General the name or names of those it recommends as Medal of Valor recipients. In a given year, the Board shall not be required to select any recipients but may not select more than 5 recipients. The Attorney General may in extraordinary cases increase the number of recipients in a given year. The Board shall set an annual timetable for fulfilling its duties under this Act.

(d) HEARINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board may hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, administer such oaths, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Board considers advisable to carry out its duties.

(2) WITNESS EXPENSES.—Witnesses requested to appear before the Board may be paid the same fees as are paid to witnesses

under section 1821 of title 28, United States Code. The per diem and mileage allowances for witnesses shall be paid from funds appropriated to the Board.

(e) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Board may secure directly from any Federal department or agency such information as the Board considers necessary to carry out its duties. Upon the request of the Board, the head of such department or agency may furnish such information to the Board.

(f) INFORMATION TO BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.—The Board shall not disclose any information which may compromise an ongoing law enforcement investigation or is otherwise required by law to be kept confidential.

SEC. 4. BOARD PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), each member of the Board shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which such member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Board.

(2) All members of the Board who serve as officers or employees of the United States, a State, or a local government, shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for those services.

(b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Board shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of service for the Board.

SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER.—The term "public safety officer" means a person serving a public agency, with or without compensation, as a firefighter, law enforcement officer, or emergency services officer, as determined by the Attorney General. For the purposes of this paragraph, the term "law enforcement officer" includes a person who is a corrections or court officer or a civil defense officer.

(2) STATE.—The term "State" means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Attorney General such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

SEC. 7. NATIONAL MEDAL OF VALOR OFFICE.

There is established within the Department of Justice a National Medal of Valor Office. The Office shall provide staff support to the Board to establish criteria and procedures for the submission of recommendations of nominees for the Medal of Valor and for the final design of the Medal of Valor.

SEC. 8. CONFORMING REPEAL.

Section 15 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2214) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the following new subsection (a):

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established an honorary award for the recognition of outstanding and distinguished service by public safety officers to be known as the Director's Award For Distinguished Public Safety Service ("Director's Award").";