have found substantial pay differences between men and women even when these factors are held constant. In fact, women now surpass men in the percentage of those earning a college or advanced degree, but college-educated women working full-time earn almost $28,000 less annually than college-educated men. An African American woman with a master’s degree earns $29,000 less annually than a college-educated white male. An Hispanic female with a bachelor’s degree makes only $872 more than a white male with only a high school degree.

Pay discrimination is not just a women’s problem, it’s a family problem. The wage gap costs America’s families $230 billion a year. Nearly two-thirds of working women report that they provide half or more of their family income. In addition, nearly one in five U.S. families is headed by a single woman, yet these women continue to earn the lowest average rate of pay. Women are paid less to do the same work. Equal pay is valued by more than 500,000 working families as they maintain their same paychecks as those who work for their male colleagues who are paid the same or comparable work. Without pay equality, women are less able to provide an economic safety net for themselves and their families. If married women were paid fairly, their family incomes would rise by nearly six percent, and their families’ poverty rates would fall from 21 percent to 17 percent. If single working mothers were paid fairly, their incomes would rise by 17 percent, and their poverty rates would be reduced from 25.3 percent to 12.6 percent. These figures demonstrate the staggering effects of these unfair pay disparities on the lives of women and their families.

The equal pay provisions of the Democratic leadership bill would toughen the Equal Pay Act by providing more effective remedies for women who were paid less for the same work, allowing prevailing plaintiffs to recover compensatory and punitive damages. It also eliminates loopholes that employers use to evade the law, authorizes additional training for enforcement agencies to better handle wage disputes, and provides for the study of pay dynamics in the U.S. labor market to better understand the pay inequity problem. Finally, the bill forbids employers from prohibiting employees from disclosing their wages to co-workers, thereby making it easier for workers to evaluate whether their rights are being violated.

Congress should pass these equal pay provisions unconditionally. Women and people of color to work hard and yet be denied fair compensation. These disparities are particularly alarming, because they persist 37 years after the Equal Pay Act was first enacted and at a time when our nation has been enjoying unprecedented prosperity. It’s the right thing to do, and the fair thing to do, for working families.

VIOLENCE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the Josephson Institute of Ethics, a non-partisan, nonprofit organization, recently released its survey on violence and substance abuse in the United States. The survey finds that a disturbing number of young people have easy access to guns and have brought those guns and other weapons to school in the past year.

According to those surveyed, 47 percent of all high school students and 22 percent of all middle school students reported having easy access to guns. Of those students who reported drinking at school in the past 12 months, those with easy access to guns jumped to an astonishing 71 percent for high school students and 59 percent for middle school students.

Furthermore, 14 percent of high school students and 11 percent of middle school students admitted that they brought weapons to school in the past 12 months. Again, those numbers increased dramatically among students who also reported drinking at school at some point in the last year to 48 percent for high school students and 57 percent for middle school students.

Easy access to guns among our young people is dangerous, but access to guns is paired with access to alcohol or drugs and is repeatedly dangerous. And while the vast majority of students will be safe in their classrooms, our youth’s easy access to firearms makes 36 percent of high school students and 39 percent of middle school students feel unsafe at school. Unfortunately, unless Congress acts to curb youth access to guns, in some cases, that fear may become a reality for more and more students.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay my respects to the memory of my dear friend, Congresswoman Norman Sisisky. Like many of my colleagues, I was shocked and saddened at hearing the news of his sudden passing last Friday. We have lost a respected and treasured colleague; the people of Virginia have lost one of the most committed and effective leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives; and America has lost a distinguished member of what Tom Brokaw has called “the greatest generation.”

Norm Sisisky was a classic example of the devoted public official our foundries of government need in “the people’s house.” For Norm was a man of the people, someone who worked hard, played by the rules and maintained a steadfast commitment to his family and community.

But he did take his job seriously. He was an aggressive advocate for his constituents in Virginia’s 4th Congressional district for the past 18 years. He never forgot his roots, and never waivered in his commitment to fighting for the little guy, and he never lost sight of his role as their voice in our great system.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, as we welcome the blooms of spring this April, we should also take a moment to focus on the well-being of our most precious resource, our children. Since 1983, April has been nationally recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Since then, organizations like Prevent Child Abuse America have been passionate advocates for our children and have raised awareness of this egregious problem. In my own state of Wisconsin, the local chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America in Madison has been an effective leader in the fight against child abuse.

Child abuse is an urgent national problem. According to Prevent Child Abuse America, more than three million children were reported to child protective service agencies as alleged victims of child abuse or neglect in 1998, and about one million of these reports were confirmed. And these numbers just reflect those cases that were reported. Undoubtedly, many more cases go unreported.

Child abuse is not only physical harm, but it can also include emotional abuse and mental damage resulting from physical abuse. The documented physical and emotional harm to children includes chronic health problems, low self-esteem, physical disabilities, and the inability to form healthy relationships with others.
Protecting our children should be a national priority. I urge my colleagues and others to support child abuse prevention efforts to protect our nation’s greatest resource, our children. Working together, we can help end child abuse.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, April 2, 2001, the Federal debt stood at $5,745,399,258,826.83. Five trillion, seven hundred forty-five billion, three hundred ninety-nine million, two hundred fifty-eight thousand, eight hundred twenty-six dollars and eighty-three cents.

Five years ago, April 2, 1996, the Federal debt stood at $5,146,108,258,826.83. Five trillion, seven hundred forty-six billion, five hundred sixty-three million.

Ten years ago, April 2, 1991, the Federal debt stood at $3,464,021,000,000. Three trillion, four hundred sixty-four billion, twenty-one million.

Fifteen years ago, April 2, 1986, the Federal debt stood at $2,05,753,000,000. Two trillion, five billion, seven hundred fifty-three million.

Twenty-five years ago, April 2, 1976, the Federal debt stood at $599,291,000,000. Five hundred ninety-nine billion, two hundred ninety-one million.

Outpatient Services to our veterans in the Aberdeen area. This is good news for veterans because they will be able to receive many medical services at the clinic without having to drive several hours to the Sioux Falls veterans hospital.

Congratulations also need to go to Avera St. Lukes Hospital, Dr. Steve Redmond, Physicians Assistant Kevin Vaughan, Clinic Administrator Leonard Severson, the clinic’s support staff, and CR Associates on their new partnership with the VA.

Veterans are our country’s heroes, and their selfless actions will inspire generations of Americans yet to come. Our country must honor its commitments to veterans, not only because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is the smart thing to do.

I will continue to lead efforts to ensure that our nation’s military retirees and veterans receive the benefits they were promised years ago. While I am pleased with some improvements in military health care funding passed into law last year, I am concerned that more needs to be done. Assuredly, I will continue to fight for military retirees and veterans programs throughout this session of Congress.

HONORING THE CENTRAL BUCKS EAST CHOIR OF BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to recognize an outstanding group of young people from Bucks County, PA. The Central Bucks East High School Choirs, under the direction of E. Scott Teachner and the String Orchestra, under the direction of Ellen Telly, traveled to Washington, DC and Virginia to be adjudicated in Music Festivals throughout the weekend of March 30, 2001.

The 25-member String Orchestra performed at Lanier Middle School in Fairfax, VA on Saturday, March 31, and the choirs sang at W.T. Woodson High School, also in Fairfax. These choirs include a 165-voice Concert Choir, 16-voice Varsity Singers, 16-voice Men’s Ensemble and 27-voice Women’s Ensemble. These talented students celebrated at an awards banquet and dance, and on Sunday, April 1, 2001, they traveled to the West Terrace of the United States Capitol for a public performance.

This group of students has been recognized for their outstanding choral abilities in Washington, Williamsburg, Orlando, Boston, and Montreal. In addition, they have been recognized since 1981 as the “Outstanding Choral Program” in every festival in which they have participated. Performances are judged according to National Standards of Excellence by college choral professors, and the Central Bucks East Choirs consistently earn “Superior” ratings.

In addition to their musical accomplishments, the Central Bucks East Choirs have been recognized for their community involvement. They have been active in numerous community service projects, including a recent trip to the Delaware River Basin to clean up the waterways. Their dedication to service and excellence has earned them the respect and admiration of their peers and community leaders.

IN RECOGNITION OF MRS. ARBELIA GREER PENNINGTON WOOD

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I am delighted to rise today to acknowledge and congratulate Mrs. Arbelia Greer Pennington Wood, a resident from my home State of Michigan, who will be celebrating her 116th birthday on Friday, April 6, 2001.

The child of a sharecropper, Mrs. Wood, who is affectionately called “Ma” by her nephews and nieces, was born in Caledonia, MS in 1885. Raised in Alabama, she moved to Detroit in 1934. Throughout her life, she has been guided by devotion to her family and a deep and abiding faith. Though widowed twice, Mrs. Wood has never been one to sit on the sidelines. She has been active in the lives of her extended family, which includes not only her nieces and nephews, but also children in her neighborhood. Family members and friends have all commented on her cooking abilities and her ability to teach families about cooking, grammar and even carpentry.

In addition to a multitude of nephews and nieces, Mrs. Wood has been blessed to be part of a family noted for its longevity. Her mother lived to be ninety-three years old. A brother of hers lived to be eighty-nine, and many of her younger siblings are currently in their eighties and nineties. One of her nieces has designed a website dedicated to her beloved “Ma.” On that website is posted a verse from the Book of Genesis: “Sarah lived to be 127 years old.” I cannot help but think that this verse has not only been an inspiration but also a challenge to Ardelia’s family.

Mrs. Wood has seen the turn of two centuries. She has also displayed immense courage throughout her life. Twice she has successfully battled breast cancer. In addition, she has participated as a civil rights activist. As a