

Soon the Voting Rights Act will be up again before Congress for reauthorization. We should do it sooner rather than later. We should make it permanent, rather than for short periods, so we do not have to revisit the issue and debate its provisions. Surely there is enough common interest and bipartisan support to accomplish this.

Their cause 40 years ago this week still must be our cause to overcome today. For as long as the power of America's diversity is diminished by acts of discrimination and violence against people just because they are black, Hispanic, Asian, Jewish, Muslim or gay, we still must overcome.

As long as the gap between rich and poor continues to spread in our Nation, with some and not all having access to health care, we still must overcome.

As long as children of color are more likely to live in poverty, die sooner, and less likely to graduate high school and go on to college, we still must overcome.

As President Bush stated during his recent trip to Europe: "We cannot carry the message of freedom and the baggage of bigotry at the same time. All our nations must work to integrate minorities into the mainstream of society, and to teach the value of tolerance to each new generation."

President Clinton pointed out 5 years ago at the Pettus Bridge that these challenges already have existing bridges waiting to be crossed. He said: "These bridges stand on the strong foundations of our Constitution. They were built by our forebears through silent tears and weary years. They are waiting to take us to higher ground."

But there is still much work to be done. In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr.: "Human progress never rolls on the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts of people willing to be co-workers with God."

We remember the event of 40 years ago this week not only to honor the courage, sacrifice and accomplishments by those like the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS) and so many more, but also to rededicate ourselves to their unfinished work: the pursuit of justice, love, tolerance and human rights, in our country and throughout the world.

HONORING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, today is International Women's Day, a day we honor women and their contributions to the American way of life. American women, from the frontier era to the space age, have steadily blazed the trails and stayed the course to bring recognition of the accomplishments of

women not only in the United States but across the world and across the seas.

Each of us can identify at least one woman who forever marked our life in a positive way. My grandmother lived to her late nineties and was always the most influential person in my life. In the 1950s, after my grandfather was killed by a drunk driver, she went to work as a clerk in the ladies' ready-to-wear section of a department store; and while she would have continued to work there, they forced her to quit at the age of 75.

She taught me the values of public service, and this is why I have dedicated my life to public service. She was the most influential woman in my life. All of us have people like that, women who have influenced us in a positive way. Those American women, they are a rare breed.

In other countries, like Iraq, where I recently traveled on a fact-finding mission, women recount the decades of torture and execution and oppression they experienced under the tyrant and dictator Saddam Hussein. For most women it has only been since our toppling of that vicious and murderous tyrant that they have been allowed to pursue opportunities that we take for granted, like employment. On the historic election day, which I was privileged to observe this year, for many Iraqi women this was their first chance to ever vote.

Yet as encouraging as these illustrations are, millions of women are victims to a destructive force known as domestic violence. In fact, in the United States alone, according to the National Domestic Violence Hotline, nearly one-third of American women report being physically or sexually abused by a boyfriend or a husband at some point in their life. Moreover, the Department of Justice's statistics show that in 2003 alone 9 percent of all murder victims were killed by their spouse or their partners. Eighty percent of those victims were females.

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Mr. Speaker, this is a serious problem, not just for our Nation's women but also for our Nation's families. It is a serious problem for children, children that live in those homes with all of that serious, serious turmoil.

Domestic abuse scars children through the images of violence and fighting; the ramifications if they try to intervene; the emotional anguish they suffer for years. Domestic abuse in some cases results in withdrawal or unhealthy perfectionism, and in other cases they act it out.

The American Psychological Association Presidential Task Force on Violence and the Family concluded in 1996 that a child's exposure to the father abusing the mother is the strongest risk factor for transmitting violent be-

havior from one generation to the next. In addition, the American Medical Association has calculated that family violence costs taxpayers in the range of \$5 billion to \$10 billion a year in medical expenses.

It is not only a family problem and a criminal problem; it is a health issue. Domestic violence costs us in police and court costs, shelters, foster care, sick leave, and nonproductivity.

As a former judge and founder of the Congressional Victims' Rights Caucus, this epidemic is of great alarm to me. I believe we must work to eliminate this domestic abuse while protecting the victims that have already resulted from this trend.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that all of us on this day, as we recognize the worth of women, are determined to make sure that they live in a safe environment in their homes.

IN HONOR OF TILLIE FOWLER, FORMER MEMBER OF CONGRESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CRENSHAW) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, last Wednesday we announced on the floor of this House that our former colleague, Tillie Fowler, had passed away that day. She suffered a stroke on Monday and went to the hospital and never recovered from that. It was a sad day for all of us, and there were so many Members that served with Tillie that wanted to honor her life and her achievements that we asked for this time tonight to celebrate her life, to celebrate the contributions that she made not only to her community, not only to the State of Florida, but to the Nation as a whole; and so that is why we are here tonight.

Tillie Fowler was one of those unique individuals that could balance so many things in her life. I never had the chance to actually serve with Tillie because we were from the same hometown and while she served on the city council at the local level, I was serving in the State government; and when she left the Congress in 2000, I ran to take her seat. But I knew her as a friend for 35 years, and I watched her involve herself in the community, and I watched her get involved in local politics; I watched her become a United States