

dedicated their lives to the military service of our country.

I am extremely proud of the overwhelming bipartisan support of H.R. 3573, the Promises Act, that I had the honor of introducing with my friend from the other side of the aisle, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. SHOWS). I am confident that we will soon have over 300 cosponsors, because most of my colleagues realize that this is the right thing to do.

However, Mr. Speaker, one thing that disturbs me greatly is the red herring that opponents of this bill keep throwing up with costs. How much will it cost? Where will the money come from? Will it break the caps? Well, that is not the point. The point is that we made a promise to these men and women and we have a moral obligation to keep that promise.

We have our priorities backwards in this country sometimes. We should not be scrounging leftovers to find the money to fund health care for the men and women who dedicated their lives in the defense of this country. We should fund that first, then decide what to do with whatever is left over. That is the right and the honorable thing to do.

That is what we should be doing as a Congress. However, Mr. Speaker, if my colleagues want offsets, I will give them offsets. Our own Committee on the Budget released a report saying that we waste \$19 billion annually on major government programs. Mr. Speaker, cut that in half and we could pay for all the health care we need for our military retirees, and then some.

Furthermore, the projected surplus over the next 10 years may be \$10 trillion. This bill would cost less than 5 percent of that amount. Mr. Speaker, the money is out there; we just have to make a commitment to make it happen. Do not tell me it cannot be done. Of course it can be done. These men and women are dying at the rate of 1,000 per day, and it must be done and done soon.

I urge the House and Senate leadership, the Committee on the Budget, the Committee on Ways and Means, Committee on Appropriations, Committee on Government Reform, and the Armed Services Committee to put their heads together and pass this bill this year.

Mr. Speaker, during World War II the famous Big Red One had a motto: "The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes just a little longer."

We need some of that can-do attitude here and now in this Congress. We need to buckle down and do the right thing and keep our promises to the patriots of this country. We ask a lot from our veterans and our retirees. The least we can do is do for them what we told them we would do.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor of the House this evening to salute the women of this country on the first day of National Women's History Month. This year is particularly special because it marks the 20th anniversary of the National Women's History Project.

In my heart and in my mind this occasion is unique because Sonoma County, in my district, is the birthplace of the National Women's History Project, the organization responsible for the establishment of Women's History Month. This year's theme is "An Extraordinary Century for Women—Now Imagine the Future."

The Project, as it is known, is a non-profit educational organization founded in 1980 and committed to providing education and resources to recognize and celebrate women's diverse lives and historic contributions to society.

The Project is repeatedly cited by educators, publishers, and journalists as the national resource for information on United States women's history. Thanks to the Project's efforts, every March, boys and girls across the country recognize and learn about women's struggles and contributions in science, in literature, business, politics, and in every other endeavor.

As recently as the 1970s, however, Mr. Speaker, women's history was virtually unknown, left out of school books, left out of classroom curriculum.

In 1978, I was the Chair of the Sonoma County Commission on the Status of Women. At that time all of us involved in the commission were astounded by the lack of focus on women. Because of that, we worked together with local women to push for awareness. Under the leadership of the chair of the commission that followed right after me, Mary Ruthsdotter, a group of hard-working women in Sonoma County put together a celebration of International Women's Day. That has since expanded through the Congress to National Women's History Week and now National Women's History Month.

Together, the women in my district and the Project succeeded in nationalizing awareness of women's history. As word of the celebration's success spread across the country, State Departments of Education honored women's history week, and within a few years, thousands of schools and communities nationwide celebrated National Women's History Week during the month of March.

In 1987, the Project first petitioned Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. Due to their efforts, Congress issued a resolution declaring the month of March to be Women's History Month. Today is the first day of March, the first day of the Women's History Month for the year 2000.

Each year since, nationwide programs and activities in schools, workplaces, and communities have been developed to commemorate women's his-

tory in the national and international arena.

In honor of Women's History Month, I want to praise Mary Ruthsdotter, Molly MacGregor, and Bonnie Eisenberg who are the birth mothers for this very notion. And I want to acknowledge Cindy Burnham, Donna Kuhn, Sunny Bristol, Denise Dawe, Lisa McLean, Molly Henrikson and Kathryn Rankin, the women now at the Women's History Project Office. All of these women serve as leaders to educate Americans of all ages about the contributions of women in our society.

Mr. Speaker, to pay tribute to these women's achievements, I have reserved Statuary Hall on Wednesday, March 22. Proud mothers and daughters, educators, activists, historians, and other women across the country are invited to come to the Capitol to celebrate the 20th anniversary of women's history.

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Further, the project has been recognized for outstanding contributions to women's and girls' education by the National Education Association for Diversity and Education, by the National Association for Multicultural Education, and for scholarship service and advocacy by the Center for Women's Policy Studies.

I am truly grateful to all the devoted women at the Women's History Project for their continued commitment and for making an indelible mark on our country. However, Mr. Speaker, we still have a long way to go on women's issues. Sadly, America is also poised to cede its position as a world leader in the international fight against discrimination against women. We need to pass CEDAW, the Convention to End Discrimination Against All Women.

DRUG SMUGGLING ALONG THE BORDER

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

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of Alfredo De La Torre. Alfredo has served as the police chief of Tijuana-Baja California for the last few years. But this Sunday, after leaving church services with his family, Alfredo decided to do what he always does, to drive down to the police station to see how the operation was working. On the way to the police station, Mr. Speaker, Alfredo was attacked and was killed by professional hit people that fired almost 100 rounds into his car and inflicted 57 bullet wounds into his body.

Now, Alfredo is just one of many in Tijuana that have died over the last few years. This brutal murder, which occurred just a few miles from where I live in South San Diego in the Pearl Beach area is a reminder to all Americans of the sacrifices that are going on right now in the drug war.