

our system. Violence against women is still all too prevalent in our country. Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury among women of child-bearing age. One out of every six American women has been a victim of a rape or an attempted rape. Many rapes go unreported. Only recently have States begun to recognize crimes such as stalking or marital rape.

Outside the United States, the situation for women is often far starker. Last year, the world came to understand the brutal treatment of Afghan women under the reign of the Taliban. Unfortunately, the Taliban regime was just an extreme example of the kinds of repression and denial of basic freedoms that women face in much of the developing world. Women in many places are denied such basic rights as owning property. They are more likely to live in poverty, suffer from malnutrition, and lack access to education. Despite the expansion of women's health care research and practices in the last two decades, women still have unequal access to these services.

Such policies are not only unjust, they are unwise. Numerous studies have shown that one of the best investments a developing society can make is educating its girls. In societies where women are literate, infant mortality is lower and children are healthier and better fed. "Women are critical players in ensuring household food security and nutrition," according to the International Fund for Agricultural Development. "Increasing the economic resilience of the poor is largely about enabling women to realize their socioeconomic potential more fully and improve the quality of their lives. To do so, women need access to assets, services, knowledge and technologies, and must be active in decision-making processes." This is important to keep in mind as we grapple this year with food crises in Africa and elsewhere.

As we contemplate going to war with Iraq, we should bear in mind that women often suffer more than men from armed conflict. Women and girls are among those most affected by the violence, economic instability, and displacement associated with warfare, and they frequently are threatened by rape and sexual exploitation, whether at home, in flight, or in refugee camps. Rape and sexual assault have often been used as weapons of war. The U.N. Security Council passed a resolution on Women, Peace and Security in 2000. Yet the deliberate killing, rape, mutilation, forced displacement, abduction, trafficking, and torture of women and girls continue unabated in contemporary armed conflicts, according to UNIFEM.

Although it is usually men who go off to war, women often bear much of the burden. It is therefore crucial that women be active and respected participants in peace-building and reconstruction.

In peacetime as well, women are often victims of domestic violence and

illegal trafficking for slavery and prostitution. In some countries, women fall victim to "honor killings," a deplorable practice whereby women are murdered by male relatives for actions that are perceived to bring dishonor to the family.

The Senate will likely soon be considering landmark legislation to deal with the global problem of HIV/AIDS, which I hope to be able to support. Here again, women must be at the center of our deliberations. Statistics compiled by UNAIDS show that both the spread and impact of HIV and AIDS disproportionately affect women and adolescent girls who are socially, culturally, biologically, and economically more vulnerable. In 1997, 41 percent of HIV-infected adults worldwide were women. In the latest report, they accounted for half. In North Africa and the Middle East, 54 percent of HIV-positive adults are women; in the Caribbean, 52 percent are. U.N. experts believe that women's empowerment is one of the only AIDS vaccines available today in most of the world, and that gender equality should be a guiding principle in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

I have had the opportunity to travel to numerous countries in Africa and see firsthand the devastating toll that HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases are taking on the people of that continent. Young women are especially at risk. The United Nations reports that in Africa girls aged 15 to 19 are infected with HIV at a rate of 15 to 23 percent, whereas infection rates among boys of the same age group are 3 to 4 percent.

Mr. President, the protection of women's rights is vital to the success of promoting fundamental human rights. The Senate can work towards protecting women's rights and improve the status of women domestically and internationally by acting upon the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, or CEDAW. CEDAW is the most comprehensive treaty on women's human rights, addressing almost all forms of discrimination in areas such as education, employment, marriage and family, health care, politics, and law. It has been over two decades since the United States signed this treaty, and it still awaits consideration before the Senate. Once again, I urge the Committee on Foreign Relations to take up this treaty and finally allow the Senate the opportunity to offer its advice and consent.

In conclusion, as we honor women everywhere and celebrate their accomplishments and contributions to history, we must recognize that there is still more to be done in the struggle for gender equity. Discrimination and violence against women still exist here at home and abroad. The United States and the rest of the international community must reaffirm their commitment to promote gender equality and human rights around the world.●

SHRM LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

● Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I welcome the members of the Society for Human Resource Management, SHRM, to Washington, D.C. for their 20th Annual Employment Law and Legislative Conference. Today, more than 200 SHRM members will visit Capitol Hill to share their views and experiences with issues such as the Fair Labor Standards Act, health care reform, and pension reform.

SHRM is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 170,000 individual members, the society serves the needs of human resource professionals by providing a comprehensive set of resources. As an influential voice, SHRM also seeks to advance the human resources profession by ensuring that human resources is an essential and effective partner in developing and executing organizational strategy.

As a legislator, as a human resources professional, and as a member of SHRM, I want to congratulate SHRM for recognizing the important role individuals can play in affecting the legislative process. Human resources professionals are crucial to the successful operation of our nation's businesses and organizations. Most importantly they understand the positive impact of meeting with their Senators and Representatives to discuss recent workplace trends, their policy implications, and suggested remedies.

Citizen participation is a crucial component of the legislative process, allowing legislators and their staff the opportunity to hear constituents explain personal experiences as they live and work within our nation's laws. Finally, legislators gain critical knowledge through these conversations, resulting in legislation that's clearly applicable to the workplace and effective for employees and employers.

I sincerely thank the members of SHRM for their commitment to provide value to employees and employers across the United States while contributing an essential component to the political process—practical real world experience.●

TRIBUTE TO JEANNIE BRIGHT

● Mr. BUNNING. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to Fort Knox civilian employee Jeannie Bright. As a technical publications editor with Fort Knox's Directorate of Training, Doctrine, and Combat Development, Ms. Bright was recently named the Training and Doctrine Command's Editor of the Year. She will be honored at the Secretary of the Army Awards ceremony in the Pentagon on March 14.

Ms. Bright began her civilian career with the Army in 1974. Over the past 22 years, she has poured over millions of words in search of errors and in pursuit of accuracy in Army publications for