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2D SESSION

S. CON. RES. 66

To express the sense of the Congress that any welfare reform legislation enacted by the Congress should include provisions addressing domestic violence.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 27, 1996

Mr. WELLSTONE (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. SIMON, and Mr. SARBANES) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sense of the Congress that any welfare reform legislation enacted by the Congress should include provisions addressing domestic violence.

Whereas, in enacting the Violence Against Women Act, the Congress recognized the epidemic of violence that affects all aspects of women's lives;

Whereas violence against women is the leading cause of physical injury to women, and the Department of Justice estimates that every year more than 1,000,000 violent crimes against women, including assault, rape, and murder, are committed by intimate partners of the women;

Whereas the American Psychological Association has reported that violence against women is usually witnessed by the

children of the direct victims, and that such child witnesses suffer severe psychological, cognitive, and physical damage, and studies have shown that children residing in battered mothers' homes are 15 times more likely to be physically abused or neglected, and male children residing in such homes are 3 times more likely to be violent with their female partners when they reach adulthood;

Whereas violence against women dramatically affects women's workforce participation, insofar as $\frac{1}{4}$ of battered women surveyed reported that they had lost a job due, at least in part, to the effects of domestic violence, and that over $\frac{1}{2}$ of battered women reported that they had been harassed by their abuser at work;

Whereas violence against women is often exacerbated as women seek to gain economic independence, and often increases when women attend school or training programs, and batterers often prevent women from attending such programs, and often sabotage their efforts at self-improvement;

Whereas numerous studies have shown that at least 60 percent of battered women suffer from some or all of the following symptoms: terrifying flashbacks, sleep disorders, inability to concentrate, as well as other symptoms, all of which can impair a victim's ability to obtain and retain employment;

Whereas several recent studies indicate that over 50 percent of women in welfare-to-work programs have been or currently are victims of domestic violence, and a study by the State of Washington indicates that over 50 percent of recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in that State have been so victimized;

Whereas the availability of economic support is a critical factor in a woman's ability to leave abusive situations that threaten themselves and their children, and over 1/2 of battered women surveyed reported that they stayed with their batterers because they lacked resources to support themselves and their children;

Whereas proposals to restructure the AFDC program may impact the availability of the economic support and the safety net necessary to enable poor women to flee abuse without risking homelessness and starvation for their families; and

Whereas proposals to restructure the AFDC program by imposing time limits and increasing emphasis on work and job training should be evaluated in light of data demonstrating the extent to which domestic violence affects women's participation in such programs, and in light of the Congress' commitment to seriously address the issue of violence against women as evidenced by the enactment of the Violence Against Women Act: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring), That—*

3 (1) when the Congress considers proposed wel-
4 fare legislation, it should seriously evaluate whether
5 such welfare measure would exacerbate violence
6 against women, make it more difficult for women
7 and children to escape domestic violence, or would
8 unfairly penalize women and children victimized by
9 or at risk of violence;

11 (C) tolling time limits for recipients victim-
12 ized by domestic violence; and

13 (D) waiving, pursuant to a determination
14 of good cause, other program requirements such
15 as residency requirements, child support co-
16 operation requirements, and family cap provi-
17 sions, in cases where compliance with such re-
18 quirements would make it more difficult for the
19 recipients to escape domestic violence or un-
20 fairly penalize recipients victimized by or at risk
21 of further violence;

22 (3) any welfare legislation enacted by the Con-
23 gress should include a provision requiring that the
24 Comptroller General should develop and implement a
25 comprehensive study of the incidence and effect of

1 domestic violence on AFDC recipients, including a
2 study of the extent to which domestic violence both
3 precipitates and prolongs women's and children's
4 poverty and the need for AFDC; and

5 (4) any welfare reform legislation adopted by
6 the States that contains a welfare-to-work, edu-
7 cation, or job placement program should take do-
8 mestic violence into account, by providing, among
9 other things, mechanisms for—

10 (A) screening and identifying recipients
11 with a history of domestic violence;

12 (B) referring such recipients to counseling
13 and supportive services;

14 (C) tolling time limits for recipients victim-
15 ized by domestic violence; and

16 (D) waiving other program requirements,
17 pursuant to a determination of good cause,
18 such as residency requirements, child support
19 cooperation requirements, and family cap provi-
20 sions, in cases where compliance with such re-
21 quirements would make it more difficult for the
22 recipients and their children to escape domestic
23 violence or unfairly penalize recipients victim-
24 ized by or at risk of further violence.

