

Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1374

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1374, a bill to provide health care professionals with immediate relief from increased medical malpractice insurance costs and to deal with the root causes of the current medical malpractice insurance crisis.

S. 1379

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1379, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of veterans who became disabled for life while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.

S. 1380

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1380, a bill to distribute universal service support equitably throughout rural America, and for other purposes.

S. 1396

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1396, a bill to require equitable coverage of prescription contraceptive drugs and devices, and contraceptive services under health plans.

S. 1409

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. DAYTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1409, a bill to provide funding for infrastructure investment to restore the United States economy and to enhance the security of transportation and environmental facilities throughout the United States.

S. RES. 167

At the request of Mr. CAMPBELL, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 167, a resolution recognizing the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Harley-Davidson Motor Company, which has been a significant part of the social, economic, and cultural heritage of the United States and many other nations and a leading force for product and manufacturing innovation throughout the 20th century.

AMENDMENT NO. 1379

At the request of Mr. BAYH, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1379 proposed to H.R. 2555, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. CANTWELL:

S. 1455. A bill to regulate international marriage broker activity in the United States, to provide for certain protections for individuals who utilize services of international marriage brokers, and for other services; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Ms. CANTWELL. I rise today to introduce the International Marriage Broker Regulation Act of 2003. This legislation will provide much needed protections for the thousands of foreign women who meet their American husbands through for-profit Internet sites and catalogs.

While mail order bride catalogs may seem like a relic from the past, the use of marriage broker services has exploded in recent years with the growth of the Internet. While many of these matches result in happy, long unions, there is a growing epidemic of domestic abuse among couples who meet via international marriage brokers. Immigrant and women's advocacy groups across the country report seeing an increase in the number of these wives seeking to escape a physically abusive husband they met through an IMB. In several cases, the abuse has progressed to murder.

A 1999 study found there were over 200 Internet sites marketing foreign women primarily from Eastern Europe and Asia seeking American husbands. Recent studies suggest that there are now as many as 400 currently operating in this country. These sites feature pictures of hundreds of women who, according to the Web sites, are looking to meet and marry an American man. The international marriage brokers operating these sites promise a wife with "traditional values," who will honor her husband.

Unfortunately, women meeting their husbands in this manner frequently have little opportunity to get to know their prospective spouses or assess their potential for violence. They also have little knowledge of their rights as victims of domestic violence in our country even if they are not yet citizens or permanent residents.

In my State of Washington alone there have been three cases of serious domestic violence including two murders of women who met their husbands through an Internet-based international marriage broker. Susanna Blackwell met her husband through an IMB and, in 1994, left her native Philippines to move to Washington to marry him. During their short marriage, Timothy Blackwell physically abused his wife regularly. Within a few months, she had left him and begun divorce proceedings. The Blackwells had been separated for more than a year when Timothy Blackwell learned Susanna was eight months pregnant with another man's child. On the last day of the divorce proceedings, Timothy Blackwell shot and killed Susanna, her unborn child, and two friends who were waiting outside of the Seattle courtroom.

In 1999, 18-year-old Anastasia Solovyova married Indle King, a man

she met through an IMB. Entries from Anastasia's diary detail the abuse she suffered and the fear she had of her husband who threatened her with death if she were to leave him. In December 2000, Anastasia was found strangled to death and buried in a shallow grave in Washington. King's accomplice later told police that he strangled Anastasia with a necktie while King lay on her chest to keep her from moving. At trial, it was discovered that Indle King had previously married another woman he met through an internet IMB, who later got a domestic violence protection order against him before divorcing him in 1997. It was also discovered that he was seeking his third wife through an IMB when he and his accomplice developed the plot to kill Anastasia.

Unfortunately, there are similar examples across the country of women who have met their American spouses through an Internet IMB only to be seriously injured or killed by an American spouse with a preexisting history of violence against women.

My legislation is modeled on a groundbreaking Washington State law, the first State effort to regulate the international matchmaking industry. The Washington Legislature took action on this important issue after the Blackwell and King cases, and multiple States are currently looking at enacting similar legislation.

The primary goal of my legislation is to better inform women entering this country as fiancées and prospective spouses about the past history of their prospective spouse and to better inform them of their rights as residents of the United States if they become victims of domestic violence.

The bill would first of all halt the current practice of allowing Americans to simultaneously seek visas for multiple fiancées, by requiring that only one fiancée visa may be sought per applicant each year. Currently, multiple request for fiancée visas can be simultaneously filed with the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration, and the American requesting the visa will simply choose to marry the first woman who is approved.

Second, my bill would require that, before an IMB may release the contact information of a foreign national client, it must first obtain her consent to the release of that information and second, provide her with information on the rights of victims of domestic violence in this country in her own language.

Third, the IMB would be required to ask American clients to provide information on any previous arrest, conviction or court-ordered restriction relating to crimes of violence along with their previous marital history. This information would also be made available to the foreign national.

Finally, it would require a U.S. citizen seeking a foreign fiancée visa to undergo a criminal background check, a check that is already performed for the fiancées entering the country