

Analysis of House Resolution 590

Prepared by:

RADAR: Respecting Accuracy in Domestic Abuse Reporting (www.mediaradar.org)

Critiques are indicated in **bold**. References are found at the end of the document. The Resolution can be seen by going to <http://thomas.loc.gov> and then entering "HRES 590" into the search box for the bill number.

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110th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. RES. 590

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should raise awareness of domestic violence in the United States and its devastating effects on families and communities.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

July 31, 2007

Mr. POE (for himself, Mr. COSTA, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MOORE of Kansas, Mr. COHEN, Mr. ORTIZ, Mr. HOLDEN, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mrs. TAUSCHER, Mr. FILNER, Mr. JEFFERSON, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. ELLISON, Mrs. DRAKE, Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. MICHAUD, Mrs. BIGGERT, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. NADLER, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. CARNEY, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. WYNN, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. MATSUI, Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California, Mr. RUPPERSBERGER, and Mr. SHAYS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month and expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should raise awareness of domestic violence in the United States and its devastating effects on families and communities.

Whereas one in four women will experience domestic violence sometime in her life; [**This statement is one-sided and misleading because it does not state that men experience partner abuse at similar rates as women. According to the most comprehensive review of this issue, "This bibliography examines 203 scholarly investigations: 156 empirical studies and 47 reviews and/or analyses, which demonstrate that women are as physically aggressive, or more aggressive, than men in their relationships with their spouses or male partners."**¹]

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Whereas domestic violence affects people of all ages, racial, ethnic, economic, and religious backgrounds; **[This statement is misleading because domestic violence is far more common in younger and lower income populations.²]**

Whereas women ages 16 to 24 experience the highest rates, per capita, of intimate partner violence; **[This statement is one-sided and misleading because it does not state that men in the same age range also experience the highest rates of partner violence.³]**

Whereas 13 percent of teenage girls who have been in a relationship report being hit or hurt by their partners **[This figure is both exaggerated and one-sided. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control, which is the most authoritative source of information on dating violence, reports the correct figure is 8.9 % for boys and 8.8% for girls.⁴]** and one in four teenage girls has been in a relationship in which she was pressured into performing sexual acts by her partner; **[The “one in four” statement is wrong. According to the CDC, the correct percentages are 11.9% of teenage girls and 6.1% of teenage boys.⁵]**

Whereas there is a need for middle schools, secondary schools, and post-secondary schools to educate students about the issues of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking;

Whereas the annual cost of lost productivity due to domestic violence is estimated as \$727,800,000 with over \$7,900,000 paid workdays lost per year; **[This statement is wrong because it falsely implies the lost productivity figure includes male DV victims. The report that is the source of this information did not analyze lost productivity for men.⁶]**

Whereas homicides were the second leading cause of death on the job for women, with 15 percent of the 119 workplace homicides of women in 2003 attributed to a current or former husband or boyfriend; **[This information is one-sided because it does not indicate the number of workplace homicides of men attributed to a current or former wife or girlfriend. The statement also fails to mention the fact that five times more men than women die from workplace homicides.⁷]**

Whereas landlords frequently deny housing to victims of domestic violence who have protection orders or evict victims of domestic violence for seeking help, such as by calling 911, after a domestic violence incident or who have other indications that they are domestic violence victims; **[This statement is vague and essentially meaningless because it does not explain what is meant by “frequently.” It is not possible to verify the accuracy of this statement.]**

Whereas 92 percent of homeless women experience severe physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lifetimes; **[This statement is one-sided and misleading for two reasons:**

- 1. It does not report the extent of physical or sexual abuse among homeless men, and it ignores the fact that homeless men far outnumber homeless women⁸.**
- 2. The 92% number comes from a single study done in Massachusetts⁹. You can't assume that information from one state is true for the rest of the country.]**

Whereas Americans suffer 2,200,000 medically treated injuries due to interpersonal violence annually, at a cost of \$37,000,000,000 (\$33,000,000,000 in productivity losses,

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\$4,000,000,000 in medical treatment); **[These statistics are confusing – and appear to contradict the statistics presented four paragraphs above -- because they apply to all forms of interpersonal violence between strangers, acquaintances, and intimate partners.¹⁰ Partner violence is only a small part of the overall problem of interpersonal violence.]**

Whereas people aged 15 to 44 years comprise 44 percent of the population, but account for nearly 75 percent of injuries and 83 percent of costs due to interpersonal violence; **[Again, these statistics are confusing. Interpersonal violence is a much broader issue than domestic violence.]**

Whereas 40 to 60 percent of men who abuse women also abuse children; **[This statement is extremely misleading. It doesn't define "abuse." The wide range of statistics makes the statement difficult to verify. And most importantly, women are more likely to physically abuse children than men.¹¹ Of all child fatalities, 30.5% are perpetrated by the mother alone and 18.2% by the father alone.¹²]**

Whereas male children exposed to domestic violence are twice as likely to abuse their own partners; **[This statement is one-sided and misleading. Female children exposed to domestic violence are also more likely to abuse their own partners.]**

Whereas children exposed to domestic violence are more likely to attempt suicide, abuse drugs and alcohol, run away from home, and engage in teenage prostitution;

Whereas adolescent girls who reported dating violence were 60 percent more likely to report one or more suicide attempts in the past year; **[This statement is extremely misleading because it ignores suicide attempts among adolescent boys. According to the Centers for Disease Control, boys who were subjected to dating violence were more likely to attempt suicide than girls who experienced dating violence.¹³]**

Whereas 13.7 percent of the victims of murder-suicide cases were the children of the perpetrator and 74.6 percent were female while 91.9 percent of the perpetrators were male; in 30 percent of those cases the male perpetrator also committed suicide; **[This statement is one-sided because it does not report on female perpetrators of murder-suicide and their male victims. Also, murder-suicides are rare occurrences.¹⁴]**

Whereas a 2001 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on homicide among intimate partners found that female intimate partners are more likely to be murdered with a firearm than all other means combined; **[This statement is one-sided because it does not report on the frequency with which male intimate partners are murdered with a firearm. It is also misleading because men are six times more likely to be murdered with a firearm than women.¹⁵]**

Whereas according to one study, during court ordered visitation, five percent of abusive fathers threaten to kill their spouses, 34 percent of abusive fathers threaten to kidnap their children, and 25 percent of abusive fathers threaten to physically hurt their children; **[These claims are pulled from two obscure reports:**

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1. The first was a 1995 paper written by Peter Jaffe for the Family Violence Prevention Fund¹⁶. But the report cannot be found on the FVPF website or anywhere else on the internet.
2. The second was a chapter in a book called *Battering and Family Therapy, a Feminist Perspective*¹⁷. This report has been criticized as factually-deficient and based on the unverified claims of a self-selected group of women¹⁸.

This Whereas is a good example of a “factoid from nowhere” that was never published in a reputable journal, has never been replicated, and is nearly impossible to verify.]

Whereas homicide is the third leading cause of death for Native American women and 75 percent of Native American women who are killed are killed by a family member or an acquaintance; **[This statement is misleading and one-sided because it does not report on the frequency of homicides among Native American men, which are three times more common than homicides of Native American women.¹⁹]**

Whereas 88 percent of men think that our society should do more to respect women and girls; **[This is unsourced statement is one-sided because it ignores the fact that some men do not feel respected by women.]**

Whereas men say that the entertainment industry, government leaders and elected officials, the sports industry, schools, colleges and universities, the news media and employers should be doing more to prevent intimate partner violence; **[This one-sided statement cannot be verified, nor does it report on the views of women.]**

Whereas there is a need to increase funding for programs carried out under the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005 (VAWA 2005), Public Law 109-162, aimed at intervening and preventing domestic violence in the United States; and

Whereas individuals and organizations that are dedicated to preventing and ending domestic violence should be recognized: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives--

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month; and

(2) expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that Congress should continue to raise awareness of domestic violence in the United States and its devastating effects on families and communities.

References

¹ Fiebert M. *References Examining Assaults by Women on Their Spouses or Male Partners: An Annotated Bibliography*. California State University, Long Beach. July 2007.

www.csulb.edu/~mfiebert/assault.htm

² Gelles RJ. *Intimate Violence in Families*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.

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³ Fiebert M. References Examining Assaults by Women on Their Spouses or Male Partners: An Annotated Bibliography. California State University, Long Beach. July 2007.
www.csulb.edu/~mfiebert/assault.htm

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physical Dating Violence Among High School Students --- United States, 2003. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, May 19, 2006. Table 1.
www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5519a3.htm

⁵ Centers for Disease Control. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance --- United States, 2003. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, May 21, 2004. Table 10.
www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss5302a1.htm

⁶ Centers for Disease Control. 2003. www.cdc.gov/ncipc/pub-res/ipv_cost/ipv.htm

⁷ In 2003, 761 men and 141 women died from workplace assaults and violent acts. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Fatal Occupational Injuries by Worker Characteristics and Event or Exposure, All United States, 2003. www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/foi/cftb0193.pdf

⁸ In 2005, 65.3% of the sheltered homeless were male, and 34.7% were female. Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress. February 2007, Exhibit 3-5. www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/ahar.pdf

⁹ National Center on Family Homelessness. Violence in the Lives of Homeless Women.
www.familyhomelessness.org/pdf/fact_violence.pdf

¹⁰ Corso P. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, June 2007.

¹¹ Administration for Children and Families. Who are the Perpetrators of Child Abuse and Neglect?
http://faq.acf.hhs.gov/cgi-bin/acfrighnow.cfg/php/enduser/std_adp.php?p_faqid=70

¹² Administration for Children and Families. Child Maltreatment 2003. Figure 4-2.
www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm03/figure4_2.htm

¹³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Physical Dating Violence Among High School Students --- United States, 2003. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, May 19, 2006. Table 2. Adjusted odds ratio for boys was 3.8 and for girls was 3.1.
www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5519a3.htm

¹⁴ Bossarte RM, Simon TR and Barker L. Characteristics of Homicide Followed by Suicide Incidents in Multiple States, 2003–04. National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, 2006.
http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/12/suppl_2/ii33

¹⁵ Centers for Disease Control. Health, United States, 2005. Table 47.
www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus05.pdf

¹⁶ Jaffe PG. Special Challenges in Custody and Visitation Dispute Resolution. Prepared for the Family Violence Prevention Fund. 1995. No URL could be located.

¹⁷ Liss MB and Stahly GB. Domestic Violence and Child Custody. In Hansen M and Harway M (eds.): Battering and Family Therapy, a Feminist Perspective. 1993. No URL could be located.

¹⁸ Hamel J. Domestic Violence and Child Custody. Pleasant Hill, CA.
www.nfvlrc.org/docs/DVchildcustody.pdf

¹⁹ Centers for Disease Control. Health, United States, 2005. Table 31.
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August 16, 2007