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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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DEAN, NEW JERSEY DELEGATION

*Excerpts of the Statement by Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs Markup
May 20, 2009*

My amendment authorizes an Office for Global Women's Issues—led by an Ambassador-at-Large—designed to coordinate and advise on activities, policies, programs and funding related to women's empowerment, internationally.

The Office would promote activities designed to expand educational opportunities and job training for women; push equal pay for equal work for women; push microfinancing and microenterprise programs for women; push property and inheritance rights for women; improve maternal health and expand pregnancy care centers; combat forced abortions, forced sterilization, sex and labor trafficking and other forms of violence against women; seek an end to genital mutilation; stop child marriage; and promote changes in male attitudes and behavior that are detrimental to women.

Consistent with a **core** human rights norm that all human life is precious and sacred, and worthy of protection regardless of age, sex, race, color, creed, disability, wantedness or condition of dependency, my amendment seeks to protect unborn children and their mothers from the violence of abortion.

Dr. Alveda King, niece of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has had two abortions, but now boldly and compassionately speaks out for both victims—mother and baby. She is part of a group of courageous post-abortive women called the Silent No More Awareness Campaign, and works tirelessly to help women deal with the emotional pain, find peace and a sense of reconciliation following an abortion. In discussing Dr. King's remarkable dream of inclusion and justice, Alveda King recently said in a speech, "How can the dream of my Uncle survive if we murder the children?"

Her words ought not be dismissed lightly.

Mr. Chairman, it is absolutely imperative that women never be regarded or reduced to the status of objects or second class citizens. The same is true, I would respectfully submit to my colleagues, of unborn children. They are human and alive. They are not objects or throwaways and today, like never before, they are in need of friends.

Abortion is child abuse.

Abortion methods dismember, chemically poison, starve to death, suction to death or puncture to death—with ultra sharp surgical knives—the fragile body of young girls and boys. Human rights, especially the right to life, must be for all, including the weakest and most vulnerable.

Sex-selection abortion kills millions of baby girls around the world, singled out for destruction, simply because they are girls. Like genocide, gendercide is based on extreme prejudice enabled by indifference.

As a part of a humane and consistent agenda for women, the Office of Global Women's Issues ought to be first in line affirming the inherent value and innate dignity of mothers and their babies both before and after birth. Like newborns, unborn babies are a class of human beings that need care, nurturing, love and, as the littlest patients, medical interventions designed to mitigate disability or disease.

The preamble to the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “the child, by reason of his (or her) physical and mental immaturity needs special safeguards and care including appropriate legal protection, **before as well as after birth.**”

Abortion is the antithesis of protection. It is abandonment of both mother and child. It is violence. If abortion is promoted by the Office for Global Women's Issues, it will profoundly undermine both the mission and message of what would otherwise be a truly noble initiative.

My amendment ensures that won't be the case.

The amendment was blocked by a vote of 17 for and 22 against.