

SENATOR JOE BIDEN STANDS UP FOR WOMEN

“What I’m most proud of in my entire career is the Violence Against Women Act. It showed we can change people’s lives, but the change is always one person at a time. There are many more laws and attitudes that need changing so women are treated with equal opportunities at work, in the classroom, and in our health care system.” – Senator Joe Biden

HELPING WOMEN TAKE CHARGE

Ending Violence Against Women: Senator Biden wrote the ground-breaking Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) in the 1990s that set the national agenda on criminalizing violence against women and holding batterers truly accountable. It encouraged states to set up coordinated community responses to domestic violence and rape; was the catalyst for passage of hundreds of state laws prohibiting family violence; and provided resources to set up shelters so battered women abused by husbands and boyfriends had a place to go. The law also established the national hotline that over 1.5 million abused women have called for help. By empowering women to make changes in their lives, and by training police and prosecutors to arrest and convict abusive husbands instead of telling them to take a walk around the block, domestic violence is down 50 percent and rape is down 60 percent nationwide. But sadly more work remains. In 2007, the Senator introduced the National Domestic Violence Volunteer Attorney Network Act, an innovative initiative that would recruit volunteer lawyers and match them with domestic violence victims.

Fairness in the Workplace: Throughout his career Senator Biden has supported efforts to level the playing field for women at work whether it is through legislation punishing sexual harassment or deterring pay inequity. Today, with women still earning 77 cents for every dollar a man makes doing the same work, the Senator is a strong supporter of the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Fair Pay Restoration Act. This legislation helps prevent pay discrimination by strengthening penalties should it occur and fixing a Supreme Court decision that makes it more difficult for women to bring pay discrimination cases. Senator Biden also supported increasing the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour from \$5.15, where it had been stuck for 10 years. This gave more than 7 million women a pay raise in 2007.

Balancing Work and Family: As a father who parented small children on his own, Senator Biden knows first-hand the problems of balancing work and family. He recognizes that it can be especially challenging for women, who often make the health-care decisions, take the kids or elderly parents to see the doctor, or stay at home when someone is sick. Senator Biden was a strong supporter of the Family and Medical Leave Act that has given 50 million workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to look out for a sick family member. Knowing there are many more workers who cannot afford

unpaid leave, he is co-sponsoring the Healthy Families Act, which would require employers with 15 or more workers to provide seven paid sick days to care for their own or their families' medical needs.

Attracting More Teachers and Nurses: About seven million women serve in two professions – teaching and nursing – and both are facing shortages. We lose 250,000 teachers every year, half are leaving within five years of entering the profession. The Senator would provide mentoring to all beginning teachers, and give those who commit to teaching in high-needs schools scholarships to defray their college costs. He believes reducing class size and paying teachers more – as they do in many countries – are steps America should be taking. Senator Biden also was an early supporter of the Nurse Reinvestment Act, to provide scholarships for nursing students, and promote public information programs to encourage people to enter the nursing profession.

Creating Opportunities for Girls In Sports: Today 150,000 women participate in intercollegiate sports teams, thanks to Title IX, which guarantees that women have equal opportunities in college athletics. Senator Biden has been a strong defender of recent efforts to chip away at Title IX protections, and remains committed to fairness on the sports field.

Ending the War In Iraq: Today 10,000 women are serving in Iraq, and Senator Biden has a plan to honorably bring home the troops, without leaving chaos behind. He wants to bring most forces home by 2008.

Judging the Judges: Senator Biden has been a major voice of opposition to the Reagan and two Bush Administrations' attempts to pack the federal courts with judges committed to a narrow view of the Constitution that denies women equal protection under the law.

MOMS AND KIDS COME FIRST

Helping New Moms: Senator Biden knows raising healthy and happy children takes help. He wants to make two years of pre-school available to all parents. Currently, 900,000 students are served by Head Start, and he would double that to 2 million; currently, 60,000 toddlers are served by Early Head Start, and he would quadruple that to nearly a quarter of a million. He has advocated for more resources for the Women, Infants, and Children program that provides food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services to pregnant women, new mothers, and their infants.

Stopping Deadbeat Dads: For two decades, Senator Biden has fought to crack-down on deadbeat dads. The federal government cannot ensure that children have a father at home, but it can help ensure those children have their father's financial support. As Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, he helped steer two major child support initiatives into law – one, makes it a federal crime to cross state lines to avoid paying child support; the other ensures state courts honor the child support order of other states.

Helping Parents Keep Their Kids Safe: A series of laws the Senator authored in the last two decades have increasingly helped America's parents protect their kids from sexual predators. In 1994, he required every state to establish a registry for convicted sexual offenders; in 1996, he helped create the national registry of sexual predators, so these criminals could not move from state to state to avoid being tracked. In 2003, he authored the Victims of Child Abuse Act, increasing funding for Child Advocacy Centers. And in 2006, he authored the Adam Walsh Act, which establishes registration requirements to ensure convicted sex offenders can't slip through the cracks and harm our children.

PROTECTING WOMEN'S HEALTH

Fighting Breast Cancer: Senator Biden has been a leader in efforts to detect, treat, and prevent breast cancer that afflicts more than 200,000 women every year. This has included:

- ✓ Helping to enact and continue breast and cervical cancer prevention programs to ensure mammograms are available to low-income women and those without health insurance and then expanding the program beyond screening to one that also offers reliable treatment.
- ✓ Originating legislation passed in the Senate each year since 1993 recognizing National Mammography Day every October to encourage women to have mammograms.
- ✓ Supporting authorization of a special postage stamp to raise additional money for breast cancer research.
- ✓ Sponsoring legislation to expand Medicare to include coverage of mammograms.
- ✓ Fighting to guarantee insurance companies do not deprive breast cancer survivors of reconstructive surgery.

Protecting Roe v Wade: Senator Biden supports the Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade that protects a woman's right to choose to terminate a pregnancy. Believing family planning could help prevent many unwanted pregnancies, Senator Biden has consistently supported Title X – the nation's family planning program -- that provides information, services, support, and research for family planning.