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Women of Congress Lay Out “Must Pass” Agenda for 2010

House Members at March 3 Gala Discuss Issues Affecting Women in the Economy, Health Care, the Military and Globally

Washington, DC – Each of the 76 women currently serving in the U.S. House of Representatives is a member of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues, and were celebrated on March 3, 2010 at a gala hosted by Women’s Policy, Inc. held in Washington Union Station’s East Hall. This annual event, which takes place during Women’s History Month, acknowledges pioneering women in politics, past and current leadership of the Caucus and features updates on its current activities.

“It’s a pleasure to have all of you with us tonight to share the Caucus’ work and priorities for this second session of Congress. It’s called our “must pass” agenda,” said Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Co-Chair of the Caucus. Schakowsky told the 400-plus guests the Caucus would continue to work to improve the lives, health and safety of women here at home and internationally. “We will continue our work to reduce maternal deaths and combat sex trafficking and violence against women and girls,” she said. Adding that “the economy is front-and-center for all of us,” Schakowsky focused on the importance of supporting women, who make up 50 percent of the workforce and own 8 million businesses nationwide, in these challenging economic times. “The Caucus is working to ensure that Congress...eliminates barriers faced by female workers and business owners,” concluded Schakowsky.

“Moving into 2010, it’s clear we have a lot on our plate, but if anyone can get it done, it’s the Women’s Caucus,” said Rep. Gwen Moore (D-WI), Vice-Chair of the Caucus. Moore highlighted other Caucus priorities. “Over 471,000 women now serve in our active military and reserves. Many are currently in Iraq or Afghanistan,” she said. “Looking out for our women in the Armed Services, and helping address their unique needs, is a commitment—and a duty—we all share.” Moore also reminded the audience, “Health disparities persist in this country, particularly among women of color. The Women’s Caucus will continue its focus on women’s health – including legislation by our colleagues, Lois Capps and Mary Bono Mack, on women and heart disease.” Moore also praised the House of Representatives for passing the National Women’s History Museum Act for a privately funded women’s history museum in Washington, D.C., and said the Caucus “will be working to ensure that the Senate approves it this year.”

Co-chairs and representatives of the following seven Caucus task forces elaborated on the Caucus’ agenda for the second session of the 111th Congress: Women and the Economy/Business, Women’s Health, Women in the Military/Veterans, Violence Against Women, Young Women, International Women’s Issues, and Education.

The bipartisan Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues (CCWI) was founded on April 19, 1977, when fifteen Congresswomen held the first meeting of the Congresswomen’s Caucus in a small room in the Capitol, known then as the Congresswomen’s Reading Room. With past legislative accomplishments such as the Women’s Business Ownership Act, Family and Medical Leave Act and Violence Against Women Act, the Caucus continues its bipartisan work to advance legislation and policy to improve the lives of women in the U.S. and around the world. CCWI is a Congressional Member Organization (CMO) registered with the House Administration Committee.

Women’s Policy, Inc. (WPI), which hosts this annual event, is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization formed after the House of Representatives voted to eliminate the staff and funding of all caucus organizations, including the Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues, in 1995. WPI is a public policy organization whose sole focus is to help ensure that the most informed decisions on key women’s issues are made by policymakers. WPI achieves and shares its rare quality of insight into relevant issues by researching and producing the best available information in the form of compelling and unbiased legislative analyses, issue summaries, impact assessments, and educational briefings on the Hill (www.womenspolicy.org).