

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Madam Speaker, today I rise in support of H. Res. 852, joining the strong bipartisan effort to raise awareness in the toll that stalking takes on our society. Every year, stalking affects approximately 1.4 million Americans of both genders, all races, ages, sexual orientation, disabilities, and economic status.

The consequences of stalking are serious. Stalking can paralyze the victim with fear, which is well founded, because stalking often leads to physical attacks from the victim. Indeed, the overwhelming majority of States, the District of Columbia, and the Federal Government not only recognize stalking as a crime, but categorize it as a felony.

Stalkers cause their victims severe emotional distress, including anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction and depression, all of which can affect all aspects on a person's life, including family, social activities and work. In fact, the emotional distress is so disabling that 11 percent of stalking victims have been forced to relocate their homes, 30 percent report seeking psychological counseling, and 74 percent report being stalked in a way that interferes with their employment.

Of course, the ultimate threat of stalking is to the victim's very life.

Over 75 percent of women murdered by an intimate partner had been stalked by that partner, and 54 percent of female murder victims had reported being stalked to police before being killed by their stalkers. With the rapid advancements in technology, stalkers have ever-increasing access to personal information of their victims, raising their victims' vulnerability to an all-time high.

For these reasons, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H. Res. 852 and recognizing January 2008 as National Stalking Awareness Month.