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June 13, 2000, Tuesday RACING FINAL EDITION

SECTION: NEWS; Pg. 30 POLITICS 2000

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HEADLINE: BATTERED WOMEN'S LAW IN DANGER, HIL SAYS

BYLINE: By JOE MAHONEY and KENNETH R. BAZINET DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

BODY:

WASHINGTON - There's new evidence a federal law that protects battered **women** is working, but First Lady **Hillary** Rodham **Clinton** warned yesterday that if Congress doesn't reauthorize the measure, it will be a dangerous step backward.

"We know that **violence** against **women** is an equal-opportunity destroyer," Clinton said on a day of activities that straddled her role as First Lady and New York Senate candidate.

A campaign operative working for her Senate race opponent, Rep. Rick Lazio (R-Suffolk), this weekend accused the First Lady of using her position at the White House to manufacture a record while she runs for office.

But yesterday, Lazio simply said he backs extending the **Violence** Against **Women** Act. He noted that when it originally passed in 1994, he helped develop support for it.

The First Lady also hosted an event on sea and space exploration and was honored by the Orphan Foundation of America, along with House GOP Whip Tom DeLay (R-Tex.), a longtime Clinton nemesis.

She was joined at the White House by about a half-dozen cops, a dozen members of Congress and several **women's** rights advocates, who joined in the call to renew the act.

The five-year, \$2.6 billion law is expected to come up before Congress in the next month.

Under the law, more than a half-million **women** have used a national domestic abuse hotline and more than 300,000 battered **women** have been provided shelter, according to a study released yesterday by the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services.

"Every eight seconds, a child is born in this country. . . . Every 15 seconds a woman is beaten in this country," said Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.).

There was concern among Democrats that the reauthorization could be jeopardized if it emerges as a campaign issue.

"With this Republican Congress, the last thing this bill needs is Mrs. Clinton's and Vice President Gore's campaigns making it an election issue," said a Capitol Hill source.

Clinton clings to a slight lead over her GOP opponent, according to a CBS/New York Times poll released yesterday. The survey gave the First Lady a 44%-to-39% edge over Lazio, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

The poll suggests that Clinton may face a tighter race against Lazio than she would have had against Mayor Giuliani, who dropped out May 19. The same poll gave Clinton a 49%-to-41% lead in April.

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June 13, 2000, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: A SECTION; Pg. A11

LENGTH: 561 words

HEADLINE: WASHINGTON IN BRIEF

BODY:

Backing for Domestic Violence Aid

First lady **Hillary** Rodham **Clinton** yesterday urged Congress to reauthorize legislation aimed at preventing violence against women and helping victims of domestic violence.

Clinton, flanked by domestic-violence law enforcement officers at a **White House** event, said that since its 1994 enactment, the Violence Against Women Act has provided \$ 1.5 billion to help communities develop programs to protect victims of domestic violence and provide shelters. It also provided for a national toll-free hot line for victims and helped finance counseling and prevention programs, she said.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Constance A. Morella, a Maryland Republican, would authorize another \$ 2.6 billion for community programs over five years. The legislation has 195 co-sponsors, Morella said. The current program expires at the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30.

Lott in No Rush on China Vote

Senate Republican Leader Trent Lott said he will not "rush" to schedule a vote on a landmark China trade bill, despite calls by the **White House** and the business community for swift passage. Permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) for China has already won House approval and Senate passage is virtually assured whenever a vote is scheduled.

"I know that there's broad support for this legislation," Lott, of Mississippi, told a news conference. But he said, "On a trade bill . . . senators have strong feelings on all sides, and some of them are going to insist on offering amendments. And I just think if we rush to it, we could take something that probably is going to pass overwhelmingly and get it tangled up in a way that would be counterproductive."

New Mandates on Campus Security

Universities would be required to notify parents and students of the presence of any students or campus employees charged with or convicted of rape or other violent sex crimes under a bill that passed the House.

The legislation, which was approved by voice vote, takes other steps to improve campus safety and security, including requiring schools to make known their policies on investigating and notifying parents about missing students. Universities receiving public funds also would have to notify students and parents about the status of fire alarms and sprinklers in dorms.

The new security measures were attached to a bill that makes mostly technical changes to a 1998 law that made it easier for lower-income students to attend institutions of higher learning.

Locking In College Loan Rates

With interest rates on college loans about to go up, the federal government is letting students and families lock in current rates if they consolidate their borrowing.

The move by the Education Department gives people with student loans until June 30 to take advantage of current rates if they combine their outstanding government or private lender loans into one.

The government calculates that a student who owes \$ 20,000 could save \$ 1,500 in interest on a 10-year repayment plan by consolidating this month.

As of July 1, Stafford loan rates, currently between 6.32 percent and 7.72 percent, will rise to between 7.59 percent and 8.99 percent. Rates on PLUS loans for parents with dependent undergraduates--now 7.72 percent to 7.98 percent--will jump to between 8.99 percent and 9.48 percent.

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