

change and personal triumph often against incredible odds. As scientists, writers, doctors, teachers, and mothers, they have shaped our world and guided us down the road to prosperity and peace. For far too long, however, their contributions to the strength and character of our society went unrecognized and undervalued.

It is also important to recognize the countless American women whose names and great works are known only to their families. They too have played critical roles in the development of our State and National heritage.

Women have led efforts to secure not only their own rights, but have also been the guiding force behind many of the other major social movements of our time—the abolitionist movement, the industrial labor movement, and the civil rights movement, to name a few. We also have women to thank for the establishment of many of our early charitable, philanthropic, and cultural institutions.

I am proud of the many women from Maryland whose bravery, hard work, and dedication have earned them a place in our Nation's history. They include Margaret Brent, America's first woman lawyer and landholder. In 1648, she went before the Maryland General Assembly demanding the right to vote. Another brave Maryland woman was Harriet Tubman, hero of the Underground Railroad, who was personally responsible for freeing over 300 slaves. Dr. Helen Taussig, another great Marylander, in 1945, developed the first successful medical procedure to save "blue babies" by repairing heart birth defects in children whose blood was starved of oxygen, turning their skin a bluish hue. This breakthrough laid the foundation for modern heart surgery.

I would also like to recognize my colleague, another great Maryland woman, Senator BARBARA A. MIKULSKI. One of only nine female Members of the Senate, she has forged a path for women legislators into the Federal political arena and has tirelessly fought for recognition of the right of women to equal treatment and opportunities in our society. Through her leadership, the effort to designate March as Women's History Month has been a resounding success.

Other Maryland women leaders include Dr. Lillie Jackson and Enolia McMillan, two great champions of the Civil Rights Movement, and Henrietta Szold, the founder of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America. Hattie Alexander, a native of Baltimore, was a microbiologist and pediatrician who won international recognition for deriving a serum to combat influenzal meningitis. Rachel Carson, founder of the environmental movement, Billie Holiday, the renowned jazz singer, and Elizabeth Seton, the first American canonized as a saint were also all from Maryland. The achievements and dedication of these women are a source of inspiration to us all.

Now more than ever, women are a guiding force in Maryland and a major

presence in our business sector. As of 1996, there were over 167,000 women-owned businesses in our State—that amounts to 39 percent of all firms in Maryland. Maryland's women-owned businesses employ over 301,000 people and generate over \$39 billion in sales. Between 1987 and 1996, the number of women-owned firms in Maryland is estimated to have increased by 88 percent.

During Women's History month we have the opportunity to remember and praise great women leaders who have opened doors for today's young women in ways that are often overlooked. Their legacy has enriched our lives and deserves prominence in the annals of American history.

With this in mind, I have co-sponsored legislation again this Congress to establish a National Museum of Women's History Advisory Committee. This Committee would be charged with identifying a site for the National Museum of Women's History and developing strategies for raising private funding for the development and maintenance of the museum. Ultimately, the museum will enlighten the young and old about the key roles women have played in our Nation's history and the many contributions they have made to our culture.

However, we must do more than merely recognize the outstanding accomplishments women have made. Women's History Month also is a time to recognize that women still face substantial obstacles and inequities. At every age, women are more likely than their male contemporaries to be poor. A working woman still earns on average only 74 cents for every dollar earned by a man. A female physician only earns about 58 cents to her male counterpart's dollar, and female business executives earn about 65 cents for every dollar paid to a male executive. The average personal income of men over 65 is nearly double that of their female peers. Access to capital for female entrepreneurs is still a significant stumbling block, and women business owners of color are even less likely than white women entrepreneurs to have financial backing from a bank.

To address some of these discrepancies, I have co-sponsored the Paycheck Fairness Act which would provide more effective remedies to victims of wage discrimination on the basis of sex. It would enhance enforcement of the existing Equal Pay Act and protect employees who discuss wages with co-workers from employer retaliation.

On the other hand, we have made great strides toward ensuring a fairer place for women in our society. The college-educated proportion of women, although still smaller than the comparable proportion of men, has been increasing rapidly. In 1995, women represented 55 percent of the people awarded bachelor's degrees, 55 percent of people awarded masters', 39 percent of the doctorates, 39 percent of the M.D.'s, and 43 percent of the law de-

grees. As recently as the early 1970s, the respective percentages were 43 percent, 40 percent, 14 percent, 8 percent, and 5 percent. Women are now the majority in some professional and managerial occupations that were largely male until relatively recently.

The future does not look so bright for women in many other countries where women not only lack access to equal opportunities, but even worse are subject to dehumanizing social practices and abominable human rights violations. For this reason, I have added my name to a resolution calling on the Senate to act on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Mr. President, in the dawn of this new millennium, we must renew our efforts to ensure that gender no longer predetermines a person's opportunities or station in life. It is my hope that we can accelerate our progress in securing women's rights. As we celebrate Women's History Month, let us reaffirm our commitment to the women of this Nation and to insuring full equality for all of our citizens.

A PARENT'S PLEA

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, a week ago, Veronica McQueen didn't have the slightest idea she would be the latest parent thrust into a tragic spotlight. Now, the mother of Kayla Rolland, the six-year-old girl who was shot and killed in Mount Morris Township, Michigan, is very much the focus of public attention and empathy.

Kayla's mother and parents across the country are heartsick. Parents too often fear sending their children to school in the morning. They are joining the fight against gun violence and demanding that Congress make this country safer for their own children and the nation's children. As Kayla's mother said, "I just don't want to see another parent have to bury another baby over this, over something that is preventable, something that is very, very preventable."

I would like to share some of the thoughts and feelings of mothers across the country. They have written to the Million Mom March, an organization fighting for commonsense gun legislation, asking Congress to listen to their pleas for safety. I urge Congress to stop listening to the NRA and heed the words of parents: pass legislation before more children's voices are silenced by gunshots.

Victoria of Pittsburgh, PA writes: "It is 4 a.m. and my daughter had that terrifying dream again—the one about the man with the gun—he'd already shot you and Dad, Mom—and now he's coming for me.' Was my daughter affected by Columbine? I was!"

Cindy of Bridgewater, NJ: "Our children look to their parents for protection. What are we suppose to tell them when we can't? Who are we suppose to go to for help? It is the job of EVERY citizen in this country and EVERY

government official to make sure our children are safe. Stricter gun laws are only meant to do ONE thing. . . . PROTECT OUR CHILDREN! I am asking the government to please step up to the plate and protect them . . . after all aren't some of you parents too?"

Julie of Hamilton, VA: "I want to protect my two remaining children and grandchild from the horror of gun violence. I was not able to protect my precious son Jesse, who was a victim of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head on June 11, 1999."

Leslie of Philadelphia, PA: "On February 2, 2000, my son, Songha Thomas Willis, was fatally shot in a holdup while visiting me in Philadelphia . . . Needless to say, this has been a very difficult time for me and my family over the past few weeks. We are still in shock, and as a family of law enforcers, we are doubly affected by this event . . . I support not only changing gun control laws but changing the hearts of those who are against our efforts, because the heart is the fountainhead of all things moral."

Deborah of Walled Lake, MI: ". . . A few months ago someone I love lost a child to violence and a hand gun. His son who had just turned 17 a few weeks before was shot sitting on his own front porch. Someone thought he was someone else and walked up to him and ended his life his dreams his families dreams for him in an instant. He is gone and the world is a sadder place because of that loss. We have to stop this senseless killing the loss of our children. Our best chance of making Washington listen to us is if our voices are one. I will be with those who march in Washington on Mothers day. We have to stop the killing of our children."

B. Adams of Littleton, CO: "My daughter survived Columbine, but looking into the faces of the parents that night who had not found their children was the hardest thing I've ever done. Although guns were not the only equation, how can we not do what we can to prevent this from happening again?! How can gun commerce be more important than the lives and safety of our children? How can we face them and not say that we have done all we can to protect them?"

Eileen of Palm Beach Gardens, FL: "My 19 yr. old son Michael was murdered on March 21, 1996 along with his best friend. Both were shot in the head execution style by two teens who had been involved in an attempted murder 13 hours before using a hand gun. These last four years have been a living hell and if I can stop just one mother from living the nightmare I have had to live, then I will be happy."

Suzy of Raleigh, NC: "Last April, my growing lanky 10 yr. old sat on my lap the day after Columbine and asked me—'Why?' I had no answer. I simply held him and cried with him. I still have no answer. But I don't ever want him to ask me why I didn't do something. I will link hands with all of you on Mothers Day. Its time to take back our precious babies' childhoods."

Lori of Troy, MI: "I am scared and outraged for our children. In Michigan there is an effort to allow concealed weapons. I have had enough of the NRA and the pro gun lobby. They say the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world. I hope we can change it."

Angelique of Imperial Beach, CA: "A close friend of mine once found a little boy that had been accidentally shot in the head by a friends' dads' gun. To this day she will never in a million years forget what it felt like to have that little boy tug and pull at her shirt during his last few moments alive. Had there been a trigger-lock on that firearm his life could've been saved . . . As well as so many others . . ."

RECOGNIZING THE FIRST BUY BACK OF NATIONAL DEBT IN 70 YEARS

Mr. ROBB. Mr. President, I take a moment to recognize a milestone we reached today that was simply unthinkable eight short years ago. While it has gone largely unnoticed, in my view it represents real hope for our children's future.

Today, for the first time in 70 years, we bought back part of our Nation's debt. It was a relatively small amount—\$1 billion—compared to our \$5.7 trillion debt. But at least it shows that we are willing to pay down the mortgage the federal government took out on our children's future over the last 30 years.

We hear a great deal about wasteful spending, and we need to remain vigilant to root out wasted taxpayer dollars. But in my view, the most wasteful federal spending is the money we are forced to spend on interest to support our publicly held debt—debt which represents all the tough choices we did not make. Last year, we spent nearly \$230 billion on interest payments on the debt. That compares with the roughly \$38 billion the federal government spent last year on education.

Those of us who care deeply about keeping government from spending more than it takes in need to continue to make fiscally responsible choices so we can remove the millstone of debt from the necks of our children as quickly and responsibly as possible.

THE AFFORDABLE EDUCATION ACT

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, I rise today as a proud cosponsor of "The Public Education Reinvestment, Reinvention, and Responsibility Act of 2000"—better known as "Three R's." I have been pleased to work with the education community in Wisconsin, as well as Senator LIEBERMAN and our other cosponsors, on this important piece of legislation. I believe that this bill represents a realistic, effective approach to improving public education—where 90% of students are educated.

We have made great strides in the past six years toward improving public

education. Nearly all States now have academic standards in place. More students are taking more challenging courses. Test scores have risen slightly. Dropout rates have decreased.

In Wisconsin, educators have worked hard to help students achieve. Fourth-graders and eighth-graders are showing continued improvement on State tests in nearly every subject, particularly in science and math. Third-graders are scoring higher on reading tests. Test results show some improvement across all groups, including African American, disabled, and economically disadvantaged groups.

Unfortunately, despite all of our best efforts, we still face huge challenges in improving public schools. The most recent TIMSS study of students from 41 different countries found that many American students score far behind those in other countries. In Wisconsin, scores in math, science and writing are getting better but still need improvement. And test scores of students from low-income families, while showing some improvement, are still too low.

I strongly support the notion that the Federal government must continue to be a partner with States and local educators as we strive to improve public schools. As a nation, it is in all of our best interests to ensure that our children receive the best education possible. It is vital to their future success, and the success of our country.

However, addressing problems in education is going to take more than cosmetic reform. We are going to have to take a fresh look at the structure of Federal education programs. We need to let go of the tired partisan fighting over more spending versus block grants and take a middle ground approach that will truly help our States, school districts—and most importantly, our students.

Our "Three R's" bill does just that. It makes raising student achievement for all students—and eliminating the achievement gap between low-income and more affluent students—our top priorities. To accomplish this, our bill centers around three principles.

First, we believe that we must continue to make a stronger investment in education, and that Federal dollars must be targeted to the neediest students. A recent GAO study found that Federal education dollars are significantly more targeted to poor districts than money spent by States. Although Federal funds make up only 6-7% of all money spent on education, it is essential that we target those funds where they are needed the most.

Second, we believe that States and local school districts are in the best position to know what their educational needs are. They should be given more flexibility to determine how they will use Federal dollars to meet those needs.

Finally—and I believe this is the key component of our approach—we believe that in exchange for this increased flexibility, there must also be accountability for results. These principles are