

and Human Services Agency. The committee represents a broad range of interests, including parents, doctors, and researchers engaged with this disease. The NIH also created eight Centers of Excellence in autism research across the country to conduct basic clinical research into the cause, diagnosis, early detection, prevention, control, and treatment of autism. These eight centers have shown and demonstrated true success.

In 2001, NIH spent about \$56 million on autism-related research. Three years later, that number went up to \$100 million. What is especially remarkable is what the private sector, through philanthropy and organizations, has done in complementing and supplementing those funds. Unfortunately, we still don't know what causes autism, but we know that we must find a cure. It is time for us to reauthorize the autism provisions in the Children's Health Act. I look forward to working with my colleagues to do that. Children are our Nation's most precious resource. We must continue to push for a sustained investment and commitment to curing this heartbreaking disorder.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there be a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PRESIDENTIAL VISIT TO INDIA

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as I am sure all of my colleagues are aware, President Bush arrives today in India, where he will meet with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. As the President observed on February 22, "We have an ambitious agenda with India. Our agenda is also practical. It builds on a relationship that has never been better. India is a global leader, as well as a good friend, and I look forward to working with Prime Minister Singh to address other difficult problems such as HIV/AIDS, pandemic flu, and the challenge posed by Iran's nuclear ambitions. My trip will remind everybody about the strengthening of an important strategic partnership. We'll work together in practical ways to promote a hopeful future for citizens in both our nations."

One of the most important items of business between the United States and India is the agreement for these two great democracies to cooperate on civil nuclear energy, which President Bush and Prime Minister Singh announced this past July. I have previously spoken in support of this initiative. I am hopeful that we will soon reach an agreement on the details of the plan and look forward to the Senate's consideration of the legislation that will implement the agreement.

The civil nuclear agreement with India is important for a number of rea-

sons, ranging from improving global nonproliferation efforts to lessening India's demand on fossil fuels. I would like to emphasize that India and the United States have common interests in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials. Indeed, India has repeatedly made the hard decision to stand with the United States in seeking a peaceful solution to Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions.

However, it would be a mistake to confine the significance of the President's mission to India to nuclear issues. India is not only the world's largest democracy but a rapidly growing consumer market for American goods and services. Unlike some other developing economies, India's growth is not confined to heavy industry geared for the export market. Because India's economic dynamo is being driven from the bottom up, satisfying the needs of a rising middle class points to a balanced, healthy commercial relationship with the United States.

President Bush's visit to India is an opportunity to advance our partnership across the full range of issues: expanded cooperation on economic growth and development; mutual commercial opportunities, combating international terrorism; and a full field of cooperation on space, agriculture, energy and the environment, and high technology. I wish him the greatest success in all of these areas.

#### DAY IN AMERICAN HISTORY

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to reflect on a momentous day in American history. On this day in 1780, Pennsylvania became the first State in our Nation to abolish slavery. The Gradual Abolition Act was an important first step in our Nation's history toward greater equality for all Americans.

Last month, 226 years later, we celebrated Black History Month. And, we have much to celebrate since 1780. The accomplishments of African-Americans and their tremendous sacrifices have strengthened our great Nation and we recognize their enormous contributions to our diverse culture.

In 1870, the 15th amendment to the Constitution granted African-American men the right to vote by declaring that the "right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

It would be almost a century, however, for the true spirit of the 15th amendment to be fully realized. Through the use of literacy tests, poll taxes, and other means, African-Americans were effectively disenfranchised in many parts of the Nation. Significant numbers of Black Americans across the country were not registered to vote until the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was enacted.

Organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of

Colored People, NAACP, have continued the effort to gain true equality for African-Americans. In my home State of Oregon, the Portland chapter of the NAACP was founded in 1914. It remains the oldest continually chartered chapter west of the Mississippi River.

As we continue to make strides in the battle for equality, we remember the tremendous accomplishments of African-Americans. But the struggle is not over. We can always do better. We must continue to fight to fulfill the legacy of the civil rights movement and ensure that all Americans have equal rights and opportunities.

#### PROSECUTION IS NOT PREVENTION

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, it is sometimes argued that "prosecution is prevention" when it comes to gun violence. While I agree that our gun laws should be strictly enforced, prosecuting criminals is only part of the solution to our Nation's problems with guns. True prevention involves reducing the likelihood of death or injury before an incident occurs. In addition, it is important to recognize that prosecution has little or nothing to do with the thousands of accidental shootings and gun suicides that occur each year. Unfortunately, we have still not done enough to prevent dangerous guns from falling into the hands of potential criminals, children, and others who may intentionally or unintentionally use them to harm themselves or others.

Physicians for Social Responsibility, or PSR, is a leading public policy organization made up of more than 24,000 medical and public health professionals which has been active in the fight to solve the problem of gun violence in our Nation. PSR is one of many groups who view gun violence as a "preventable public health epidemic." As it states on its Web site:

Public health practice focuses resources on prevention, rather than a traditional criminal justice, "after the fact" method of reacting to violence through arrest, conviction and incarceration of violent offenders. Just as public health policy recognizes that immunizing a patient against the measles is far superior to treating a patient already infected, the same logic can be applied to guns.

If we are serious about preventing gun violence, we must first reduce the ability of criminals to acquire dangerous firearms. One way of doing this is by requiring background checks on all firearms sold in the United States, instead of only those that are sold by licensed dealers as is prescribed under current Federal law. According to the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, "two out of every five guns acquired in the United States, including guns bought at gun shows, through classified ads, and between individuals, change hands without a background check." The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence also estimates that "extending criminal background checks to all gun transactions

in the United States could prevent nearly 120,000 additional illegal gun sales every year."

Prevention of unintentional shooting and suicide by children requires that proactive steps be taken to reduce access to dangerous firearms. A study published last year in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that the risk of unintentional shooting or suicide by minors using a gun can be reduced by 61 percent when ammunition in the home is locked up. Simply storing ammunition separately from the gun reduces such occurrences by more than 50 percent.

Prosecution of gun violence perpetrators alone is not an effective means of preventing injury or death caused by guns, although opponents of common-sense gun safety legislation argue that it is. Unfortunately, our gun safety laws do not include many proactive measures that would reduce the likelihood that a gun is used to kill or injure. I hope my colleagues will join me in working to address this problem.

#### HONORING COACH EDWARD THOMAS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am proud to say that I have recently discovered, almost literally in my own backyard, an Iowan who has received an honor of national significance. Mr. Edward Thomas, the head football coach at Aplington-Parkersburg High School, is the recipient of the 2005 NFL High School Coach of the Year award. He was honored with tickets to Super Bowl XL as well as monetary awards for himself and his football program.

Coach Thomas has been coaching for 34 years, 31 of those at Aplington-Parkersburg. His overall record at Aplington-Parkersburg is 249 wins and 58 losses. He has guided his teams to the State playoffs 15 times, winning 2 State titles and has won 15 conference or district championships during that time. In his 34 years of coaching, he has won such awards as the National Federation High School Football Coach of the Year in 2004, Northeast Iowa Coach of the Year 5 times and was inducted into the Iowa High School Football Coaches' Association Hall of Fame in 1990. With an enrollment of almost 300 at Aplington-Parkersburg, Coach Thomas has produced 4 active NFL players—Detroit Lions defensive end Jared DeVries, Jacksonville Jaguars guard Brad Meester, Kansas City Chiefs center Casey Wiegmann and Green Bay Packers defensive end Aaron Kampman.

Coach Thomas also teaches life lessons and Christian principles while emphasizing the adversity and teamwork of football as a reflection of life in the real world. As Aaron Kampman put it, "He strives to make men better through the game of football." Kampman also stated, "You get goosebumps playing for the guy, the essence of playing under the lights on Friday night he brought that to the forefront."

While the Aplington-Parkersburg Falcons are rivals to my hometown team, the Dike-New Hartford Wolverines, I am very proud that an Iowan has been honored in this way. I offer my sincere congratulations to Coach Thomas on this most prestigious honor and wish him continued success.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### KIMMIE MEISSNER

• Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Kimmie Meissner, a great Olympian and the pride of Bel Air, MD. We in Maryland are so proud of Kimmie. Sixth at the Olympics at the age of 16 is a monumental achievement.

Like many of my colleagues, I was glued to the television set to watch our U.S. athletes in Torino. I was so impressed with Kimmie's performance, I only wish I could have been there to lead the applause for our hometown girl. She may have come in sixth in Torino, but she came in first in the hearts of the people of my great State.

But Kimmie's accomplishments didn't begin in Torino. She began her figure skating career 10 years ago at the age of 6. At the age of 6. She has been a true student athlete for almost her entire life, balancing her school work with her training. Kimmie goes to Fallston High School in Harford County every day, and when school is over she drives to Delaware to train for her second shift as a competitive figure skater.

Kimmie shows maturity far beyond her years, both on and off the ice. She supports the Leukemia Society and the Johns Hopkins Hospital Children's Center, taking time out of her life to visit with sick young people.

On the ice, Kimmie couldn't have a better attitude. She says her motto is, "enjoy what you do; do what you enjoy." I can think of few young people who have such a thoughtful approach to life. At 16 years old, she has the brightest future of anyone of our Olympic skaters, and I can't wait for the Vancouver Olympics in 2010.

March is Women's History Month and the time when we celebrate the achievements and struggles of women in America. Frequently, we point to those who have come before us and who have paved the way for current advances. But it is only right and proper that in this 2006 Women's History Month, we salute young women like Kimmie and the honor she brought the United States with her talent, skill, and sportsmanship.

Thank you, Kimmie, for making us so proud. Thank you for representing all that is good and true about America's young people. And though I cannot tell a salchow from an axel, let alone a loop from a lutz, even I could recognize your grit, grace, and promise of an even more glittering future.●

#### TRIBUTE TO REGINA RUSH-KITTLE

• Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a dedicated public servant and a groundbreaker in her field, Lieutenant Regina Rush-Kittle. On March 3, Lieutenant Rush-Kittle will receive the Officer of the Year award from the Connecticut Association of Women Police.

Regina Rush-Kittle's long and distinguished law enforcement career began in 1983. After graduating from the University of Connecticut with a degree in political science, Lieutenant Rush-Kittle served as a correctional officer at a high security correctional institution for 2 years. She then joined the Middletown Police Department, becoming the first African-American female police officer on the force. She served as a patrol officer for 2 years prior to being accepted into the Connecticut State Police Academy.

Regina Rush-Kittle has been a trailblazer for African-American women in Connecticut law enforcement. After serving as the first African-American woman on the Middletown police force, she went on to become the first African-American woman to attain the rank of sergeant in the Connecticut State Police Department. Most recently, after scoring number one on both the lieutenants exam and master sergeants exam, Regina Rush-Kittle was promoted to lieutenant, the first African-American female to attain that rank in the department's 100-year history. Her current assignment as commander of the Bethany barracks makes her the first African-American woman in State history to command a barracks.

Lieutenant Rush-Kittle's tireless commitment to her community, her State, and her country extends beyond her achievements in Connecticut law enforcement. She is a long-serving Marine and Army Reservist. In 2003, she was deployed to Kuwait for a year, serving with the 804th Medical Brigade out of Fort Devens, MA. Upon her return in February 2004, she attained the rank of sergeant major, taking on responsibilities far beyond the normal obligations to serve 1 weekend per month and 2 weeks in the summer. Despite being eligible for retirement from the Reserves, Lieutenant Rush-Kittle continues to serve.

Regina Rush-Kittle is an outstanding citizen who goes above and beyond to protect her fellow citizens, her State, and her country. I commend her for her continued dedication, and congratulate her, her husband William, and her two children Jorrell and Gianna on this wonderful occasion.●

#### MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:33 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hays, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, without amendment:

S. 449. An act to facilitate shareholder consideration of proposals to make Settlement