

Soviet-dominated Government of Romania took away virtually every right he had.

He started to try to figure out a way to immigrate to Israel. In the early 1970s, at a time when some Eastern European Jews were allowed to immigrate to Israel, Liviu Librescu finally escaped Soviet-dominated communism after having survived the Holocaust and moved to Israel. It was his dream.

Liviu Librescu was teaching at the Technion in Israel, one of the premier scientific engineering institutions in the world. He got an offer after a few years to come be a visiting professor in Blacksburg, VA, at Virginia Tech for 1 year. He came in 1958. This Romanian Jew, professor at an Israeli technical university, came to Blacksburg, VA, in the mountains of Appalachia, for 1 year, and he fell in love with Blacksburg. He stayed in Blacksburg, at Virginia Tech, for the rest of his career.

On April 16, 2007, Liviu Librescu—now 22 years in Blacksburg—was teaching an engineering class in one of the two buildings that were the subject of the attack by the shooter, Seung-Hui Cho. On the morning of April 16, 2007, he had undergraduates and graduates in the class. When he heard shooting start in the classroom, he instinctively knew he should protect his students. Liviu Librescu was now over 70 years old, this Holocaust survivor.

He stood in front of the classroom door on the second floor of this building and told the students: You have to jump out the window. I am going to do everything I can to protect your life. Jump out the window.

He stood there in front of the classroom door and absorbed bullet after bullet. Every student of Liviu Librescu's was able to escape from that building, save one. There was one student who couldn't get out in time and who had let others go first. Liviu Librescu was killed, and one student in his class was killed, but he saved the lives of all of these other young people.

April 16, 2007, was a day that was a very special day in Liviu Librescu's life. Most in the classroom wouldn't have known it. That day was Yom HaShoah, which is a day that occurs every year on the Hebrew calendar and is a day that is celebrated and commemorated in Israel. It is a day to commemorate, remember, and never forget the Holocaust. That is what Yom HaShoah was. Liviu Librescu, a Holocaust survivor, knew what that day was. He knew what it meant. He made a choice.

The commemoration of the Holocaust is not just about remembering the violent perpetrators and is not just about remembering the victims; it is also about remembering that there wouldn't have been millions of victims had there not been so many bystanders. That is what Yom HaShoah is about. It is about victims, perpetrators, and also about bystanders in that the Holocaust would never have hap-

pened had there not been so many bystanders. What Liviu Librescu decided to do that day was not to be a bystander. As violence was occurring around him, he decided: I will not be a bystander. I will try to take an action to save someone's life.

Think about it. He survived the Holocaust. Think about it. He survived the Soviet takeover of his country. Then he came to this Nation and loved it, but he could not survive the carnage of American gun violence. He did, at least, decide he wouldn't be a bystander.

That is what we are called to do in the Senate of the United States—not to be bystanders. We do not have to demonstrate the courage of a Liviu Librescu and place our bodies in front of a classroom door and absorb bullet after bullet to save somebody else's life. I don't think I would have the courage to do that. I don't know how many of us would have. We are not called to make a sacrifice of that magnitude, but I do think we are called to make some sacrifices, and I do think we are called not to be bystanders. If we are going to be true to that calling, we have to be willing to take up and debate and to vote on commonsense measures to keep Americans safe from gun violence.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH

Mr. BRAUN. Mr. President, I rise to honor those who lost their lives tragically 18 years ago and to make sure that we never forget what happened then.

I vividly remember that morning. I was in my own office in Jasper, IN. I didn't have a TV. Somebody there brought it up on the internet. The second plane flew into the building. I will never forget that image because we didn't know what had happened with the first one. We knew what had happened with the second.

Over the summer break, Senator RICK SCOTT and I took a trip to Israel and saw all of that which goes into its preparedness against the evil that lurks around the world. I saw it again up close, and it always makes me wonder: How can they live like that? How can they be prepared when they know there are always individuals and countries out there just like in 1941 and just like in 2001? Imagine living in a country in which your entire border is surrounded by a fence or a wall in order to keep people out—where, in the tough places, there is another barrier and where, in the really tough places, there is a dirt berm.

That drove home again how important it is to be prepared and to always be strong when it comes to defending this country and the liberty and freedoms we all enjoy every day. I never thought it could happen in 1941, and I didn't think it could happen in 2001. It can happen again because that is the world we live in.

When I came here as a U.S. Senator, I always knew the most important thing this body should do was foster the defense and the security of this country. When you see it has slipped so precariously over the last few years—and thank goodness that we have built it back up to a level that makes sense—it is because we always need to be prepared. If we are going to truly honor all of the lives that were lost in 1941 and 2001 and will be inevitably lost down the road, we need to be strong; we need to be prepared. We always need to be aware of the fact that we are blessed just as the State of Israel is blessed—despite all of that—with a thriving economy. They live with that danger every day, and they find a way to get through it. Let us never let our guard down or drop our defenses here. Our freedom and our liberty depend upon it. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, as my friend from Indiana and others have pointed out today, this is a day that Americans remember as a day of unique tragedy. Earlier today, on the Senate floor, we had a moment of silence in the middle of a series of votes. The Senate floor was full of Members who paused to think about what had happened on that day.

I think almost every American alive knows where he was that morning. Just like this morning, it was beautiful and clear. If you were too young to remember where you were that morning—and there is a real likelihood that your parents told you where you were—it was a seminal moment. It changed how we look at so many things in our country. We reflect today where we were and the changes that occurred after that.

I was working on the other side of the building as a Member of the House 18 years ago, and I shared with the Capitol Police today my appreciation for what they do every day. On this day every year, I remember being one of the last people to leave this building. The Capitol Police were working hard to get people out as there was a sense that a plane was coming here and was going to either hit the White House or the Capitol. I remember walking out the door—I really was among the last to leave the building that day—and I remember looking into the eyes of a Capitol Police Officer who was still at the door and thinking and realizing that I was going to be out. If the building were a target, I was quickly going to be somewhere else, and she was still going to be here until those who work to protect us every day were sure that everybody who could possibly be found and gotten out of the building was already gone.

We clearly understand the world is a dangerous place. We just had a foreign policy discussion this week about the country that had served as really the haven for al-Qaida and what would happen if we were to totally leave that

country and it were to go back to the Taliban. Would it become a haven again? Almost certainly, I think it would.

We really need to think about a number of things. One is that so many people do so much to protect us all the time. We have thousands of Americans who are in uniform and in the intelligence community who spend their time every day being sure that we are as safe as we can be and that our freedoms are secure. They are deployed overseas. They are fighting terrorist groups like ISIS or the remnants of al-Qaida. They are working here to spot homegrown terrorists. They are doing what they can to find what somebody may be talking about or what somebody may be bringing across the border that would be of danger.

Senator CAPITO and I were just at the border last week. Some of the things we talked about were not only the drugs coming over the border but the other things coming over the border that are designed to harm us—who we are and how we live.

In St. Louis, MO, and Arnold, MO, we have the second biggest installation of the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency constantly looking at the information that is out there. It looks all over the world to see if there is activity in places in which there wouldn't be activity. Yet, if there were activity, it would likely be activity that would be designed to harm us or others in the world. We need to understand that.

We also need to understand that in the society in which we live, there is never perfect security and perfect freedom at the same time. We have worked really hard not to allow ourselves to lose the freedoms we cherish in return for the security we would like to have.

We also need to remember those people who responded. As for the first responders who ran toward the tragedy on 9/11 as others were able to run away from the tragedy—passing each other—many of those first responders were numbered among the 3,000 Americans who died on that day.

Just last month, the President signed into law the National Urban Search and Rescue Parity Act, which allows Federal employees to be active participants on urban search and rescue teams whether the disaster is natural or man-made.

The third thing we need to keep in mind is how important it is to honor and care for the victims and heroes among us—those who ran toward the tragedy, those they left behind, and the people who still suffer today because of what happened to them on that day. As likely as not, those people to benefit from the Victim Compensation Fund are the people who stayed behind to help others or who rushed forward to help others.

We don't want to become afraid to be the great, diverse society we have become; we don't want to become a society in which we allow the terrorists to win by taking our freedoms away. Yet

this is an important time for us to think of those freedoms, of those who defend those freedoms, of those who rush to the scenes of danger when we have danger, and of those who try to do everything they can to minimize that.

We grieve, we pray, we remember, and we resolve today that we will continue to be vigilant against attack and unafraid of defending who we are.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote series begin following the remarks of Senators DAINES, COLLINS, LANKFORD, and COTTON.

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

REMEMBERING SEPTEMBER 11TH

Ms. ERNST. Mr. President, 18 years ago, on a bright, clear-skied, September morning, without warning, our Nation was attacked. Many of us probably remember where we were on that horrible day.

I had that morning off. I was at home with my nearly 2-year-old daughter. We didn't have the TV on. We had a couple of gentlemen at the house. I was getting a brandnew furnace on that day. What would normally be a couple-of-hours-long installation turned into an all-day event as those men would take time off from installing our new furnace to run into the other room so we could see what was going on on the television.

I had two phone calls that morning. The first was early. It was from a neighbor.

She said: JONI, do you have the TV on?

I said: Well, no, Wanda. I don't. What's going on?

She said: JONI, you just need to turn the TV on.

So I did, and I saw the horrible events unfolding right in front of us.

The second phone call I got was from my Iowa Army National Guard unit: Captain ERNST, we are doing a 100-percent accountability check. We need you to stay by the phone all day so we know how we can get ahold of you—100 percent accountability.

It was an experience many of us had never felt before—the terrifying shock of knowing that the country we love and our fellow Americans were under attack.

Our adversaries sought to tear us apart by their cowardly acts, but, instead, they brought us together as Americans, for in those terrible moments, we also saw the very, very best of our country—the firefighters, the police officers, the first responders, and the ordinary citizens who courageously put their lives on the line to save countless others.

On that day, as individuals and as a Nation, we came together in a unique way, and we also made a pledge to never forget—to never forget the nearly 3,000 victims and the families they

left behind, to never forget the heroism of both our first responders and those everyday men and women who selflessly acted to save lives, and to never forget the importance of defending our homeland and the great democratic principles that we stand for.

It is a pledge I personally take very seriously, and it is why I have organized this event for my colleagues to come to the floor today and to share their memories and thoughts on today, this eighteenth anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks.

It is why I work so hard to make sure our Armed Forces have the technology, support, and resources they need to defend our Nation from threats both here at home and abroad.

It is why I cosponsored and helped to finally get signed into law a permanent reauthorization of the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund, keeping our Nation's promise to support the first responders who continue to sacrifice their health and even their lives from their work in the post-9/11 recovery efforts.

And it is why we should never ever take our Nation and our freedoms for granted.

I am one—just one—of the millions of Americans keeping that promise to never forget. In fact, today, back home in Iowa, there are countless folks who are honoring that vow in their own thoughtful way.

Many use today's anniversary as a day of service, performing acts of kindness throughout Iowa. Others come together with their communities to honor and remember those who were lost.

It is really wonderful to see all of the ways that folks are doing that, from walking in the 9/11 March to the Capitol in Des Moines to visiting the 9/11 Never Forget Mobile Exhibit, currently at the Clay County Fair, to participating in the annual 9/11 Moment of Silence Motorcycle Ride in Mason City.

For some of our fellow Iowans, today will be spent remembering loved ones lost in the attack—folks like Newton's Jean Cleere's husband, Jim, a loving, good-natured, good-humored, and God-fearing giant of a man, who never came home from a fateful business trip to the World Trade Center 18 years ago.

For nearly two decades now, Jean has been on a crusade to keep Jim's memory alive and well. She helped to raise funds for Newton's very own 9/11 memorial. She speaks to local students, educating them about the events of that day 18 years ago, and she has given her testimony all over Iowa. For folks in Iowa, they have probably seen her driving across the State. She has a pretty special license plate, which reads "NVR4GT"—never forget.

Today and every day, Iowans are keeping that sacred promise. We will always remember Jim Cleere and the nearly 3,000 others who lost their lives that tragic day. We will always honor the heroes who selflessly sacrificed and saved countless lives. We will always