

National Day of Prayer on the first Thursday of every May. Now, each year, the President signs a proclamation encouraging all Americans to pray on this day.

The theme for this year's National Day of Prayer is "PRAY2K: America's Hope for the New Millennium." During the times of both triumph and adversity that surely lie ahead, I know prayer will help America's leaders and citizens to direct our country on the right path for the new millennium.

In the 1st Century A.D., the apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, telling them, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

It is my hope the citizens of my home state of Minnesota, and people across this Nation, will take that advice and present the concerns of the country in prayer not only on May 4, but every day of the year. I know many thousands of students will gather today at the State Capitol in Minnesota, to pray for their leaders and their peers in an event entitled "Share the Light 2000." I applaud their efforts and commend them in their commitment to this important day.

I thank everyone involved in making this day possible year after year and all those who will take part in the National Day of Prayer. May the spirit that fills our hearts this day remain strong always.

Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, today we celebrate the National Day of Prayer, set aside as a day to humbly come before God, seeking His guidance for our leaders and His grace upon us as a people. I would like to take this occasion to implore my fellow Americans to remember why it is that prayer is so important for our nation.

Since the earliest days of America's heritage, we have been richly blessed by God. We have been granted liberty, prosperity, and a measure of peace unknown to most nations throughout history. Even during periods of hardship, God has given us strength to endure, and has used our tribulations to mold us into a better nation.

While we daily enjoy God's bountiful provisions, we need only look at our nation's history to realize that His blessing has not been granted to us by accident. America has been blessed as a result of our historic reliance upon Him. From the moment that Christopher Columbus first set foot in the New World until today, Americans have trusted God and sought to follow His direction. Columbus prayed to God for strength and guidance to help his companions endure the difficult voyage to the New World. Our founding fathers looked to God in prayer for wisdom to create a government that would ensure freedom and liberty. Through war and depression, America called out to God for strength and courage. In times of prosperity, we praised God for his many blessings.

God's blessing does not come without expectations, however. God commands

us to obey Him and follow His laws. When calling for a day of national humiliation, fasting and prayer in 1863, President Abraham Lincoln admonished our nation in the following statement:

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power as no other nation has ever grown.

But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.

Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us!

It behooves us then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

Those words are as true today as they were when spoken by Abraham Lincoln many years ago. God has given us commands to follow so that we might be able to fully enjoy His creation and receive the benefit of His blessing. When our nation has turned our back on God's commands, we have been plagued by such tragedies as slavery, crime, drug abuse, and abortion. If our nation is to continue to be blessed by God, we must renew our commitment to God daily through prayer.

President Ronald Reagan designated the first Thursday in May to celebrate the National Day of Prayer. My challenge is to make every day a day of prayer, so that we might follow God's will and continue to receive His blessing into the 21st century and beyond.

#### SAFE SCHOOLS AND SENSIBLE GUN LAWS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, the year that has passed since the tragic events at Columbine High School has been a time of soul searching for many Americans. We have had to ask ourselves some troubling questions. How did we let this happen? Why have we failed to pass sensible gun safety measures? Why doesn't the safety of our children count as much in Congress as the lobbying muscle of the National Rifle Association, NRA? Why did it take 15 deaths at Columbine to get us to take notice? Why wasn't a single death of a school child enough to make us realize the danger to which we have exposed our children in schools across the land?

Speeches alone will not turn the tide in the battle over sensible gun laws. But those of us who believe we must do more to close the loopholes in the law which give minors access to guns have to match the single-mindedness of a single issue group like the NRA with our own focused determination.

Just a few weeks ago, knowing that Congress was about to recess after again failing to take action on gun safety legislation, I offered these words:

For the students of Columbine, every day is a struggle, every day takes another act of courage. There is nothing we can do in Congress to change that, but there is something we can do to protect other students from the nightmares, the anger, and the pain, as told by these students. Congress owes it to Columbine and to the American people to try to end school shootings and reduce access to guns among young people. As of the one-year anniversary, Congress has failed to do so.

Over the last year, many Americans have decided to speak out on this issue. They are fed up with the intolerable level of gun violence in this country. They are outraged by the sight of a chain of preschoolers fleeing hand-in-hand from a deranged gunman. And, they are disheartened by the thought of a first grader shooting another first grader.

On Mothers' Day, May 14, they will bring a powerful message to Washington and to 30 communities across the Nation, including Lansing: it is time for Congress to pass commonsense gun legislation. What began 9 months ago, with two mothers and unparalleled dedication, has become the Million Mom March, the first-ever national march for gun safety. As a Dad who supports this march, I plan to walk along side Michigan mothers, future mothers, and all those willing to be "honorary mothers" calling for sensible gun laws and safe kids.

In a few weeks, another school year will come to an end, but the push to enact sensible gun legislation will continue during this Congress, and every one thereafter, until we get it done. And, because of the efforts of the Million Mom Marchers and other Americans who are speaking out on this issue, I believe we will prevail.

#### INCREASING FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I wanted to bring to the attention of my colleagues an important letter dated March 22, 2000 sent to our Senate leadership by forty-seven leaders of our high technology companies, universities and labor organizations who are members of the highly-respected Council on Competitiveness. The letter argues for a significant increase in federal Research and Development funding as key to our economic future. It also points out that much of the current technology talent shortage Congress has been spending so much time on could be alleviated through increased R&D support, since that funding supports our technology education and training system. It is frankly unique in my Senate experience to see a letter signed by such a significant segment of our nation's technology leaders and I hope the Senate will heed its counsel.

This letter comes to us in the context of the recently passed Budget Resolution which calls for a small increase in federal investments in science and technology over last year's levels. I believe that a strong bipartisan majority