

When Rosa Parks died 4 months ago, all Americans mourned her passing. Fifty years ago, with a singular courageous act that in the words of the New York Times became a "mythic event," she galvanized the civil rights movement and helped to write a new and hopeful chapter in our history. As the Times put it, "(W)hat seems a simple gesture of defiance so many years later was in fact a dangerous, even reckless move" at the time. Her steadfastness in the face of harsh and unjust laws struck a chord in the nation's conscience and challenged us to build a society worthy of the principles on which it was founded. When Ms. Parks was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1999, I was honored to have an opportunity to meet her. At the time of her death I joined with my Senate colleagues in honoring her at her memorial service.

We lost a second courageous leader with the death more recently of Coretta Scott King. She was a student at the New England Conservatory of Music with plans for a musical career when she met her future husband, but she was from the beginning his steadfast partner in the arduous fight for civil rights and a more decent and humane society. After Dr. King's death she continued the fight with the quiet dignity and determination that were her hallmarks. It was a privilege to work with Mrs. King on the legislation establishing Martin Luther King day as a national holiday; I deeply regret that she could not live long enough to see the memorial to her husband built as well.

Last month we honored Dr. Martin Luther King and his legacy. If he were with us today, Dr. King would be deeply gratified by the national tributes paid to Ms. Parks and Mrs. King. In the 50 years since Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King and Rosa Parks first challenged the Nation to live up to its founding principles, we have come a long way. We have changed our laws fundamentally to assure the rights of all Americans. We have worked together—at the local, State and national level—to create hope and opportunity where there was none, and to guarantee respect for every person.

The role of the Black fraternal, social and civic institutions in bringing about these changes cannot be overstated. Over the years they have fought for justice in courts of law and in the court of public opinion, and worked tirelessly to promote equality and opportunity for all.

Still, much remains to be done. Working together we continue to build the society for which Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King stood, and fought. Success in this effort is the finest tribute we can pay to them.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Black History Month and pay tribute to the enormous and varied contributions African Americans have made to our Nation.

The other evening, on the final night of the Olympics, Tom Brokaw of NBC

News did a story about an American soldier named Vernon Baker who fought in Italy in World War II. Mr. Baker is now 86 years old. He was just a young man on the day in 1945 when he wiped out three Nazi machine gun nests and took out an enemy observation post.

Mr. Baker came home from the war without much fanfare. But like the 1.7 million other Black soldiers who served our Nation during World War II, he came home a changed man. After fighting on foreign soil against an enemy that claimed superiority to other races, these men could no longer accept second-class treatment in their own country.

World War II was the catalyst that finally convinced a significant portion of the American people that segregation was wrong. It was the beginning of the end of segregation in our Nation.

After World War II, 432 Americans were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Not one of them was African American. Finally, in 1997, the Government bestowed our Nation's highest medal on six Black veterans of World War II. Vernon Baker was the only one of those men still alive to accept his award.

Mr. Baker's story mirrors Black history in our Nation in the last half of the 20th century. It is a story of determination and hope. During World War II, African Americans fought to keep our Nation free, even when their own freedom was not fully enjoyed. In the same way, the ideas and talent of African Americans have always enriched American life, even as their own lives were impoverished by racism and the vestiges of slavery.

From the Nobel laureate Toni Morrison to the great composer Duke Ellington, from the brilliant jurist Thurgood Marshall to my old friend Larry Doby, the first Black baseball player in the American League, from the uplifting leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., to the heroism of Vernon Baker, African Americans have inspired and enlightened our Nation.

I join the people of New Jersey in celebrating the contributions of African American citizens during Black History Month.

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#### NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week to heighten awareness and emphasize prevention of eating disorders.

More than 10 million Americans today struggle with eating disorders, including anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, and compulsive eating. Not only do these serious illnesses afflict people of all races and socioeconomic groups, eating disorders are now striking more men and children. The harm to the victims and their families can be tragically devastating, yet too often they continue to suffer in silence.

This week, I hope that we can take an important step to reach out to them and let them know that help is available. Inadequate information, misunderstandings, or shame should never be a barrier to recovery.

For this reason, I proudly sponsored Eating Disorders Information and Education Act of 1997 and the very first Senate resolution, S. Res. 197, to designate a National Eating Disorders Awareness Day. And it is the same reason I rise today. I hope that my colleagues will join me in this effort to improve eating disorder awareness, prevention, and treatment.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter from Ms. Chelsey Cogil, a resident of Zephyr Cove, NV, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEAR SENATOR REID: Hello! My name is Chelsey Cogil and I am writing to inform you that National Eating Disorders Awareness Week is coming up next month starting on February 26th and lasting until March 4th.

Coming from a family where eating disorders run common, I know first hand the importance of spreading eating disorder awareness and prevention.

I would be absolutely delighted if you would make a statement, in support of National Eating Disorders Awareness Week, about the importance of spreading eating disorders awareness. Below are some statistics that I encourage you to read.

Thank you for your time and help!

Very Sincerely,

CHELSEY COGIL,  
Zephyr Cove, NV.

The Renfrew Center Foundation for Eating Disorders, "Eating Disorders 101 Guide: A Summary of Issues, Statistics and Resources," published September 2002, revised October 2003, <http://www.renfrew.org>: 1 in 5 women struggle with an eating disorder or disordered eating; Up to 24 million people suffer from an eating disorder in the United States; Up to 70 million people world wide struggle with an eating disorder; Nearly half of all Americans personally know someone with an eating disorder; Eating disorders have the highest mortality rate of any mental illness; The mortality rate associated with anorexia nervosa is 12 times higher than the death rate of ALL causes of death for females 15-24 years old. Anorexia is the 3rd most common chronic illness among adolescents; Eating disorders are higher among young women with type 1 diabetes than among young women in the general population.

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#### IN RECOGNITION OF AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, February is American Heart Month. As co-chair of the Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition, I rise today to urge my colleagues to commit to the fight against this devastating disease.

Heart disease remains the Nation's leading cause of death. Stroke is the No. 3 killer. More than 70 million adults in the United States suffer from heart disease, stroke, or other cardiovascular diseases. Cardiovascular diseases will cost our Nation an estimated \$403 billion in 2006, including more than \$250 billion in direct medical costs.