As many of my colleagues have pointed out to me in the course of developing this bill, the President's budget barely scratches the surface or infrastructure needs.

The requests that Senator BURNS and I have received this year address compelling needs throughout the services, and I wish that we had the resources to fund more of them.

Senator BURNS and his staff deserve a great deal of credit for their dedicated and thoughtful approach in drafting this bill.

As always, they have worked very hard to produce a balanced, bipartisan product that takes into account both the concerns of the Senate and the needs of the military.

In particular, they have done a superb job of continuing to shine the spotlight on the quality of life projects that are so important to our men and women in uniform, and to their families.

At a time when military enlistment and retention are declining—and the services are unable to match the financial incentives of the private sector—quality of life issues are amplified in importance.

Quality of life issues do not diminish the importance of readiness projects, but we must not dismiss their role in recruiting and retaining our military personnel.

Within the budget constraints that we are all forced to operate this year, this bill attempts to meet the most urgent and timely military construction needs with very limited resources.

All of the major construction projects that we have funded have been authorized.

In addition, we have ensured adequate funding for family housing and barracks construction.

However, I remain concerned that the nation's overall investment in military infrastructure continues to lag, and I hope we will see a more robust effort in future budgets.

This is an extremely important bill for our nation and our military forces.

I again commend Senator BURNS, and I thank the staff of the Appropriations Committee, including Sid Ashworth, Christina Evans, and Sonia King, as well as Mark Borreson, a fellow on my staff, for their excellent work in producing the bill.

Mr. President, I look forward to completing action on this important piece of legislation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate go into a period of morning business for the Senator from New Jersey to speak.

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

Under the previous order, the Senator from New Jersey is recognized for 30 minutes.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I am going to continue discussing the issue we were talking about earlier. In my earlier remarks, while talking about trade, we talked about the value of trade with the sub-Saharan nations, whose economic subjugation created all kinds of problems. We talked about the economic strangulation that presents so many problems and creates violence and corruption and lawlessness in some of these countries. We are hoping that this trade can suppress those differences and that violence.

I was making the point that we in this country have a problem of our own regarding gun violence, which is very detrimental to the harmonious functioning within our society. We have these huge differences between those who think that ''guns unlimited'' ought to be the rule. I had the opportunity to hear a brilliant author, Gary Wills, talk about why it is that people distrust Government. One of the issues he brings up—and I am paraphrasing some here—is that when people see that violence pervades our society, we have to have some sense of a regulation. He pointed out that if we didn't have regulations on our highways, highway safety programs, our system would be rendered useless because people would be afraid to go out on the highways because of the mayhem it would create.

I think it is a fairly simple thing to understand that if you were able to drive as fast as you wanted on either side of the road, we would be killing and maiming one another. I don't understand why it is that we can't have some sensible gun violence control in this country, some regulation. Why is this one part of our society so exempt from any kind of sensible regulation that says a person who wants to buy a gun ought to be qualified physically and emotionally to do so, and that if they want to buy a gun they ought not have any history of violent behavior?

I wrote legislation regarding spousal abuse. I said anybody convicted of a misdemeanor for spousal abuse ought not to be able to own a gun. I had terrific resistance in this place. I could not get it through, really. Finally, we got it through as a piece of legislation on a budget.

What has happened in 3½ years? Well, 33,000 people who are not qualified by virtue of violence against a spouse or their children—domestic abusers—have been prevented from getting guns, where maybe they pointed a gun at somebody and said, ''If you don't listen to me, I will blow your brains out.'' I think it was a positive measure.

The Brady bill was fought tooth and nail before it was passed. The Brady bill gave Government time to check out these individuals who are applying for guns or gun ownership at such a prolific rate that we ought to have some measure of control. Well, after a long debate and a lot of suffering, had Jim Brady, who was shot while an attempt was made on the life of President Reagan, not wheeled himself around the Capitol, it never would have passed.

What was the effect of the Brady bill—the thing the gun lobby was so afraid of that would ''impair freedom''? Baloney, as we say. Well, 500,000 people were prevented from getting guns, thank the Lord. What would have happened? Those 500,000 people who were not qualified either by virtue of personal characteristics, background, a tendency toward violence, or trouble, could have gotten guns. Thank goodness they were not able to get guns.

We wonder whether or not, with a Million Moms March imminent on Mother's Day, anybody thinks mothers are clamoring to leave their homes and march in protest because they have nothing better to do on Mother's Day. That is the most revered holiday, next to Christmas, that we have in our society. It is when people flock to see moms. I know my children want to see their mother. My grandchildren want to see their mother. A lot of them in my family will be out there marching because they are sick and tired of worrying about whether or not their children, when they go to school to learn, to sing, to play, to make friends, are going to get shot, are going to get assaulted, are going to get killed or wounded in such a way that they never recover. That doesn't only mean those who were hit with a bullet. It means friends who saw their classmates at Columbine lying down and trying to crawl out windows to get away from the madness, in fear for their lives.

What was the impact of that throughout the school? Did the wounding stop with those hit with a bullet? Or do those wounds go on forever? Some lost friends who were 16 and 17 years old—kids in the prime of life. Those wounds will last forever. So it is not only those who are involved in the fracas; it is everybody—all of us across the country.

Look at the physical cost: metal detectors, guards, cameras, rigid processes for transportation. It costs a fortune. Frankly, I think we should just put a lid on this proliferation of guns and stop the unlicensed gun dealers from selling guns and not asking any questions of the buyer—''buyers anonymous''—at gun shows across the country. If you want to buy guns, just put your money down, brother, and you can have all the guns you want and walk away. You could be one of the 10 most wanted criminals in the United States on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted list. Even if they recognize you, they have no obligation in the States that don't