

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