

have made to this country's history, and to its future.

Any Missourian can name George Washington Carver's most famous invention, peanut butter, but few realize the role Carver played in the agricultural revolution that went on in the South in the early 1900s—Carver's work to wean the South from its single-crop cultivation of cotton. His development of commercial uses for alternate crops like peanuts and sweet potatoes helped modernize Southern agriculture, paving the way for a better life for the entire South.

Scott Joplin led a revolution of a different kind. While living in Sedalia, Missouri he created a blend of classical and folk music that took America by storm. Ragtime, as his style came to be called, has become America's unique contribution to classical music and a prelude to jazz.

In literature, Missourians are proud of the heritage of Langston Hughes of Joplin, MO. A poet of international renown, Hughes' poetry helped to create the Harlem Renaissance, the artistic and cultural awakening among African-Americans in the 1920's and early 1930's. His first two books of poetry daringly fused jazz and blues with traditional verse. Also an advocate for children, Hughes wrote over a dozen still popular children's books on jazz, Africa and the West Indies.

Another Missourian became famous not only as an inventor but also as the most outstanding jockey of his time. Tom Bass, of Mexico, MO, trained some of the finest race and show horses of his day. At the peak of his career he rode in the Inauguration of President Grover Cleveland and gave a command performance before Queen Victoria. In addition to being a famous jockey, he invented the "Bass bit" which is still used today.

Missouri has borne some notable civil rights leaders as well. Perhaps the most prominent of them is Roy Wilkins, who served as executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People from 1955–1977. Appointed during the most turbulent era in the civil rights movement, Wilkins kept the NAACP on the path of nonviolence and rejected racism in all forms. His leadership and devotion to the principle of nonviolence earned him the reputation of a senior statesman in the civil rights movement.

All of these great Missourians, and others history may have forgotten, struggled against bigotry and violence, but all showed—through their natural talents—that racism was not just wrong, but un-American. So it is fitting that we take this month to learn more about the history of African-Americans in this country, to ensure that these Americans are recognized, and to celebrate their contributions to our great nation.

#### TRIBUTE TO THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS—NFL CHAMPIONS

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the Robert Kraft Family, Coach Bill Belichick and the New England Patriots team on their achievement as victors of Super Bowl XXXVI.

The people of New Hampshire and the entire New England region are proud of the exemplary accomplishments of the Patriots organization. The talented players and coaches of the team have demonstrated that hard work, perseverance and unity are the foundation of success.

I commend the New England Patriots for the benchmark that they have created for all Americans who seek to achieve the highest of standards in their lives. Each player on the team cast aside ego and self promotion for the good of the team realizing the best talents individually transformed into a power house of skill and sense of purpose.

I applaud the contributions of the New England Patriots organization including the team owners, the Robert Kraft Family who have steadfastly stood by the Patriots since the origination of the franchise in 1962. I congratulate Robert Kraft and his family for this tremendous achievement and wish them well as the franchise grows and flourishes.

On behalf of the citizens of New Hampshire, I want to sincerely thank the players and coaches of the New England Patriots for providing sports fans with some of the best football competition seen in the United States in years. We will not easily forget the excitement of the talented skill and ability of kicker Adam Vinatieri during game winning field goals at the Oakland Raiders snow bowl game nor the thrill of his dramatic kick more recently as the clock ticked down to 7 seconds at Super Bowl XXXVI.

I commend the efforts of the mastermind of the operation, Coach Bill Belichick and the National Football League Champion team for their efforts, accomplishments and contributions to the New England region. We are all very proud of you and thank you for being the best of the best in a very competitive and talented industry. It is truly an honor and a privilege to represent you in the United States Senate.

#### MORE EVIDENCE THAT BACKGROUND CHECKS WORK

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, in 1994, the Congress passed the Brady Law, which requires Federal Firearm Licensees to perform criminal background checks on gun buyers. However, a loophole in this law allows unlicensed private gun sellers to sell firearms at gun shows without conducting a background check.

In April of last year, Senator REED introduced the Gun Show Background

Check Act which would close this loophole in the law. The Reed bill, which is supported by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, extends the Brady Bill background check requirement to all sellers of firearms at gun shows. I cosponsored that bill because I believe it is critical that we do all we can to prevent guns from getting into the hands of criminals and terrorists. A recent report from Americans for Gun Safety demonstrates how successful the Brady law has been in this regard and why it is important to extend its provisions to firearms sales at gun shows.

According to Bureau of Justice Statistics numbers cited in the AGS report, in 2000 alone, Brady bill background checks blocked more than 153,000 felons and other illegal firearms purchasers from buying a gun. In addition, these checks were typically conducted without placing unreasonable burdens on gun buyers. According to the study, 72 percent of background checks were completed within minutes and 95 percent were completed within two hours. The study provides yet further evidence in support of common sense legislation to close the gun show loophole.

#### EXTENDING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS TO WORKERS

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, in past recessions Congress has been quick to extend benefits for the unemployed. Every recession over the past thirty years resulted in an extension of unemployment benefits. Helping unemployed workers has never been a partisan issue, both Democrats and Republicans have worked to help unemployed workers in times of economic difficulty. During the recession of the early 1990's we extended a total of 33 weeks of additional benefits. Current data shows this recession started last March, and we are only now taking steps to finally extend unemployment benefits. We have waited too long, but I am glad the day for action has come at last. I hope the other body will be able to quickly pass this legislation so that this delayed assistance will not be delayed any longer.

While I am relieved the Senate has acted, I was disappointed we were not able to do more for workers. Helping people maintain health coverage while out of work would have gone a long way to making working families feel more secure. Covering part-time workers and the newly hired, and providing the States with the necessary funds to make those reforms, also would have helped this country on the road to economic recovery.

While some of my colleagues believe that what we have done today will have little or no positive effect on the economy, I disagree. Extending benefits puts money into the hands of people who really need it, and people who will be forced to spend it. The money we send out will be spent on groceries,