

MILLION MOM MARCH

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks and include therein extraneous material.)

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Million Mom March and the tapestry of mothers across the Nation.

These dedicated mothers will be arriving in Washington, D.C. and over 60 cities to participate in the Million Mom March on Mother's Day, May 14.

The mothers here on the mall and around the Nation will be demonstrating their grassroots support for common sense gun safety legislation. Fathers, sons, daughters, their friends, and their relatives will be joining their moms. The cause of gun safety has united these marchers.

I commend the March's Founder, Donna Dees-Thomases, for organizing this massive event. To learn more about the March, my colleagues may access the Web site at www.millionmom.com. This Web site contains "Woven Words" stories. These are stories from the moms themselves on why they got involved in the March.

Mr. Speaker, I will introduce these stories in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

Gun safety is not a partisan issue. I will look forward to joining Donna and thousands of other mothers who will be participating in the Million Mom March across the country.

I urge all members to join the Million Mom March and to heed its message of adopting common sense gun safety legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the "Woven Words" stories that I referred to are as follows:

ADD YOUR VOICE TO OUR TAPESTRY—WOVEN WORDS

"MMM I support you in this effort. It is time we come together to make changes to the gun laws. It is time to make some common sense gun policies so no more children, Black or White, Baptist or Jewish has to die accidentally or because another child felt powerful enough to take another child's life. We must hold our lawmakers accountable to changing the waive of gun violence in our society. It is our right to call on lawmakers to help us save our children. Johnetta, another one in a million"—Johnetta, Washington, DC, AL

"This is long overdue . . . I have a 10 yr old daughter who I want to protect. I support this cause wholeheartedly. Way to go moms. . . ."—Lori C. Jefferson, Hayward, CA

"I am blessed to have 3 wonderful boys, all 5 and under. I am scared to death to send them out into this world . . . why must the youth of our nation be subjected to the violence that has become so "normal"? I WILL NOT sit by and allow this to happen to our most precious resources . . . it is up to US!!!!"—Tiffany, AZ

"We needed better gun control laws in this country. Twice I've had a gun pointed at me. Once a boyfriend used my father's gun to threaten me. He actually fired it. The second time was during an armed robbery. Funny how the person who was supposed to care about me fired the gun, but the robber who

I meant nothing to only waved it around. Regardless I never want my daughter to have to deal with any situation involving guns!"—Tracy, Palmdale, CA

"Thank-you to the organizers of the march and the movement. Every time I read something sponsored by the march I get goosebumps. This is my first Mother's Day, and I am so proud that someday my 10 month old will look back and know that I took a stand for something as important as sensible gun control. My husband is a cop, and is ready to quit because of the heart-breaking cruelty in our society. Simply, like the man said, you've got to stand for something or you'll fall for anything. Bless us all."—Colleen, Karnes City, TX

"Remind your gun-supporting family, friends and lawmakers: When the Constitution was written, citizens of our new country were in danger from the threat of armed British soldiers at many a turn. No wonder the framers gave our citizens the right to bear arms! The NRA and like-minded individuals and groups have somehow (?) failed to take into account that there are no longer armed soldiers, subjects of a foreign power in pursuit of political and economic control, threatening our citizenry. Nor are we blazing a new, untamed frontier. Times have changed. With the exception of those in service to our country, the people now "bearing arms" ARE the threat. What is their point? They're "defending" themselves? Against whom? The reality is that those who irresponsibly own and/or use hand guns and assault rifles (weapons of war—Why are they available to citizens?! \$\$\$). This is nuts!!) are now the aggressors and one thing these aggressors control, shamefully, is the lives of our defenseless citizens—particularly our children. THEY DO NOT HAVE THAT RIGHT and I am steadfastly behind paring their power play. Background checks, "cooling off" periods, licenses for ALL guns, safety locks . . . Why are these measures anathema? They make SENSE! It's at least 100 years past time to CHANGE THE LAW! I applaud all the organizers and intend to lend my support by swelling your numbers by one. See you in Washington!"—LC Kelly, Durham, NC

"The state of America saddens me on a regular basis. Whether I am watching TV, reading the paper, or surfing the net, I am inevitably going to run into a story of some child who was shot dead . . . today. I am 24 years old, I do not have any children, and I have no immediate plans of having any. Yet, every day, I hurt for these dead children and their families. I hurt for a bond that I have yet to understand. And then there are these people who have children, and have the nerve to tell me that my beliefs defy our Constitution. A Constitution which was written over 200 years ago by men who could not even fathom the notion of an AK47 or a sawed-off shot-gun. This is the reason why our Constitution is made up of Amendments, not Commandments. And to those who have children and who have the nerve to tell me that my belief system is wrong, let's look at the big picture. It's not right that I care about the well-being of your child more than you do."—Allison Kaplan, West Linn, OR

"Unfortunately, I will be unable to attend the march, but I would like to share the story of what happened to my 19-year-old daughter who was threatened by a 45-year-old man with a semi-automatic handgun 2 weeks ago. He pulled his car in front of hers, blocking her escape and got out of the vehicle, reached in the car for his gun (we later learned it was loaded) and threatened her.

After our first court appearance, I realized that this guy will probably walk away. We not only need serious legislation, but we need to enforce the laws! While we are thankful our daughter is alive, she has certainly been traumatized by this incident. My heart goes out to all who have lost loved ones to gun violence."—Madlon Glenn and Katie Glenn—madlon glenn, Winston-Salem, NC

"Heartbreaking stories, heartbreaking words. Is anyone listening? Are we preaching to the choir? Please, God, don't make us share more heartbreak, year after bloody, tragic year."—Jeanne Genova-Goldstein, Spring Lake, NJ

"Guns are bad. They hurt people. A gun killed our favorite singer 'Selena'. We don't go in houses that have guns. Guns are stupid." "(Mom Astrea Fall gives permission to print how her two children feel about guns)."—Chris 6 and Elizabeth Fall 5, Cherry Hill, New Jersey, NJ

"It is past time that our voices were heard . . . past time that the NRA and other lobbyists are stopped . . . past time that someone stand up for the safety of our children . . . past time that we show the politicians that WE are their constituents and we have a voice, loud enough to be heard across the land and into Congress . . . it is OUR time and the time is NOW. My sister and I will be at the march, with our seven-year-old daughters, marching to keep them safe."—Christine Bintz, Reston, VA

"When will enough be enough? I was outraged to learn that my 13-year-old God Daughter was afraid to go to school because she heard other 13-year olds talking about how they were going to "Shoot the place up". The child was in hysterical sobs and has had to endure counseling to help with her fear of GUNS. When will the powers that be realize that besides the senseless and AVOIDABLE loss of precious life of our loved ones, that we are also taking away the freedom that our constitution promises us when a child is afraid to go to school because of guns!?! I applaud the efforts of all the coordinators, sponsors and participants of the Million Mom March and pray with you all that Congress enacts laws that will help protect us, and our precious children."—Elaine Thompson, Columbia, MD

"Children are the world's most valuable asset and the only hope for our future. The most important thing a parent can do is to protect our children from harm or death. If we don't protect them, who will? They count on us for that! Let's do it!!!!"—Pat Barton, Aurora, CO

"I feel that it is time that the Government listen to the people. I have a 6-month son whom I can still protect from the violence that seems to be taking over our nations children. My biggest fear is what will happen when the day comes for me to release my child into society. I can educate my own child that guns are not toys—but what about other peoples children, especially those whose parents aren't educated about guns. I AM AFRAID!"—Jill Hamann, Whitmore Lake, MI

"My child isn't even born yet, and I have to worry about him or her getting hurt by a gun! I live in the country, and I don't oppose hunting. But I can't understand people who think trigger locks, background checks, and waiting periods are unreasonable. The NRA says that law abiding citizens will be hurt by these laws. I say, law abiding citizens have children; law abiding citizens can have accidents! More children are killed by gun accidents than by criminals. There will be no

guns in my house, but that's not good enough. I want sensible gun laws now!"—Andrea S. Colton, OR

"I will be present in Denver on May 14, along with many women from our Presbyterian church. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has declared July 2000–July 2001 as the year of the Child. What better organization to stand up for children than our churches/synagogues/places of worship, who offer "sanctuary" to our children and youth!! I encourage Presbyterians, Methodists, Catholics, Hindu, Pagan . . . all spiritual faiths, to put feet on your beliefs and join the Million Mom March!"—Holly Inglis, Arvada, CO

"What words can we use, to say how we feel? It is time, actually pass time to do something about the killings in our streets, schools, churches, etc. I am a city resident, and proud of it! I have raised my son and have been blessed that he is alive, in college and breathing each day!! It is a sin and a shame, that in this "land of opportunity" that so many individuals are fighting so hard to get into, that our children are dying violently every day. It is heartwrenching to have children base their dreams on statistics—my son informed me at the age of 13, that he was making no plans regarding, college or his future because the statistics show that he is unlikely to reach his 18th birthday. Once he celebrated his 17th, he decided to apply to colleges, just in case he lives that long—the tears flowed from my eyes uncontrollably!! Our children should not have to live like this! When will our representatives wake up! With all issues, most people don't care until it hits in their own backyards—haven't enough backyards been riddled with gunfire!! Haven't enough of our children sacrificed their lives for the "right to bear arms"?"

Will 7 children need to be injured or killed in the zoo everyday for the message to become clear that change is needed? Different gun laws are needed today, not tomorrow, not sometime in the future, today!! And even though the guns can not be fired without someones finger on the trigger, new laws are a start. While we are working to change those laws, we need to look within ourselves to see what "housecleaning" we need to do regarding, bigotry, hatred, oppression and make sure that we are not feeding the fires that instill beliefs/values in our young so that they assume violence is the answer! Amani & Baraka (peace & blessings)—Kipenzi-Baltimore Maryland"—Kipenzi, Baltimore, MD

"Accidental. Deliberate. Hunting. Protection. Legal and licensed. Illegal and hidden. Safety. Crime. It is all the same. The purpose of a gun is to stop a life from continuing. Whether or not this happens in a premeditated, controlled fashion or in a spontaneous manner with reckless abandon, the consequence is the same. A beating heart stops. A brain stops functioning. A soul is released from its body. Guns have a power that is to be respected and REGULATED. Mothers also have a power that must be acknowledged, exercised and focused on the safety of our fellow beating hearts and thinking brains. Thank you for giving us a place and a situation in which we can make our voices heard. I am a mom who has had enough of watching other mothers lose their children. I have lost friends and family members because of guns. I pray that we will have our eyes and hearts opened by this Million Mom March."—Jo-Jo T. Murphy, Westmont, IL

"It is long overdue but an incredible and worthwhile effort! Please join my family and millions of others this mother's day to take

a stand on these issues: improper gun access, mandatory safety locks, background checks and other common sense laws. Guns are deadly. We have restrictions on viewing movies, making safe toys and baby gear, child seats and seat belts . . . why not for guns. The "right to bear arms" does not mean the right to murder or the right to children accessing guns. Lets correct the misperceptions through educations and common sense gun laws and stop ignoring this epidemic!"—M. Rait, Portland, OR

"One week ago, my children were home for spring break. A neighbor had ordered a rifle and UPS tried to deliver it to their home. My neighbors were not there so the UPS driver brought the rifle to my home and my 13 year old signed for the gun. It took several phone calls and going to the local media to get a response from UPS. I never ordered this gun and did not expect it to be in my home. What if my child opened the package? I was told by the gun company that this was not the first time UPS delivered a gun to a minor. What can we do?"—Fran Wilson, Memphis, TN

"Power to the Mothers! We are the majority, and we know what we want—sensible gun control laws. Now, many children's deaths are caused by gun available in the home. Well, there's nothing politicians can do about that. So, before you leave for the March, as I will, make sure you scour YOUR OWN HOME for weapons of any kind. Confront your husband if you have to, and make very clear that you will not tolerate weapons in your home, and that's not negotiable. Before we scream for others to do their part, we have to do ours. Also, guns are only one of the instruments of violence. We also have to address the motivations that lead to these crimes: bigotry, desperate poverty, peer pressure at school. These are the issues, and they are completely out of hand, and demand our attention and action. Let's empower ourselves, and make our voices heard both in the home and out. See you at the March!"—L. M., Pittsburgh, PA

"Please, please, please do not make this a Dems vs GOP issue. There are MANY of us in the GOP who feel as strongly if not more strongly about this issue. (Jim Brady worked for Reagan) If you polarize this issue and make only Democrats the heroes of this worthwhile effort you will dilute this vital effort. For the children's sake, do NOT make this political!"—Alan Kiefer, Wooster, OH

"In January of this year, my Aunt was shot to death she answered her door, by a 17 year old 9th grader. This shouldn't have happened. I have a 3 year old son and I want him to live in a safe environment. Life is too unstable anyway, without having to worry about guns being in the wrong hands. Let's get safer gun laws, NOW."—Lori Martin, Lafayette, CO

"You've inspired me! This march is long overdue, and I must take part in it because I feel passionately about gun control. Let's need a strong message to Congress and defeat the NRA. Together we can do it!"—Marilyn M. Wayne, PA

"There is a war going on this country and the government is ignoring it. Big money and the NRA have stolen our safety and security. It is a truly sad day when you cannot send your children to school in safety. It is a sad statement on our society that the right to own a gun outweighs the rights of our children. I think that everyone knows of someone who has been killed by a gun. If guns aren't the problem, then what is? It would be very difficult for someone to walk into a zoo and hurt several people without a

gun. I will not be at the march in body, but I will be in spirit."—Phoebe, Omaha, NE

"I am a mother of a three year old son, he and all children deserve a view of life without the violence that we now see everyday, in every walk of life. When I was seventeen, I witnessed the murder of my boyfriend/fiance', he died in my arms, I never want my child, or any other child to go through the trauma that I endured then. EVERY SINGLE CHILD not only in the USA but THE WORLD deserves a life with out fear. Do we, as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles . . . want our children to go to school, play, church, or anywhere in fear. I truly think not. This MILLION MOM MARCH is the one step in the right direction to ensure our children (our future) a happy and safe childhood, and life."—Christine, Baltimore, MD

"Almost every day the news media reports on another shooting of innocent people. Guns do kill. It's a fact. Let's get some tough laws enacted to stop this senseless violence."—Sharon Ward-Fore, Oak Park, IL

"I am not yet a mom but I do have 4 beautiful nephews who I worry about everytime I hear about another shooting involving a child. My husband was an avid hunter growing up. His fondest memories are hunting trips he went on with his father. But he and I agree that sensible gun control is needed. We want to have children and would like to start in a few years. Everytime I turn on the news, however, and I hear about more gun violence in our schools and neighborhoods, it makes me afraid to have a family of my own. How can I possibly keep them safe? Do I need to move to another country because our supposed "representatives" are governed more by the NRA than by their constituents? I'm so glad that the millions of us who support sensible gun control are organizing and becoming a unified force to be reckoned with! Together, we can have greater influence than the NRA and make a change for the better! Let's make America something to be proud of again!"—Deb Duffy, Baltimore, MD

"Who would have believed that this country would come to a place in time when people would worry that the person sitting next to them, or meeting them on the street, or driving by in a car might decide to shoot them? What on earth are we thinking of? Is this "freedom?" I am so proud of the organizers of this march and I will do my best to be a participant. Thank you all."—Mary Kjos, Marine on St. Croix, MN

"I will be marching in DC on March 14, in memories of my son who was killed on October 10, 1999, only 19 years old. The killer is still out there somewhere."—Sally McKee, Fort Washington, MD

"The Million Mom March is truly an idea whose time has come. I've wondered many times if we women could stop a nation in it's tracks with a peaceful assembly in the name of our children on a given day. We owe it ourselves, our children, and in the memory of all who have died at the hands of someone holding a gun to show our concern for any lives lost due to gun violence. If I can't make it to Washington, I will try to organize a local march in the Poconos of Pennsylvania. Just a couple of hours to show your concern for all humanity is not too much to ask when you consider the alternative of being sorry you did not take a public stand against violence and support those of us who live everyday with the empty rooms and heavy hearts from the memories of murdered children and adults."—Maria Coqueran-Belk, Broadheadsville, PA

"My husband's name is Robert Ott. He is 30 years old. Nine years ago, he was shot at

point blank by a stranger in a bar. The stranger went to prison for 8 years—he was released last year. My husband lost his sight—for life. The bar was uninsured. My husband was awarded \$10 million by a judge. He has never seen a dime”—Kimberly Ott, Seattle, WA

“I live just outside our Nation’s capital and am still reeling from the shock of the recent shootings at the National Zoo. The mere fact that an 11-yr old child is fighting for his life after what should have been an innocent day at the zoo should be enough of a wake-up call for everyone. I will never understand why a 16-year old felt the need to bring a gun to the zoo, or why, based on this and other tragedies there are still those who oppose gun control.”—LeeAnn, Waldorf, MD

“Without our children there is no future. It isn’t only because of my 2 children that I am coming to Washington for the Million Mom March, it is for the future of all of us. Let there be Peace on Earth, and let it begin with me.”—Debbye, Coral Springs, FL

“I will never forget the day my 16-year-old daughter learned her close friend, Hans Hummel, also 16, had been murdered by gunshot. I phoned the police in Arizona where the murder of Hans and another young man occurred, sure I would be told it was just a vicious rumor. How could that little boy wearing a soccer uniform in the photos my daughter kept displayed in her room possibly have been shot in the head? How could anyone do that to a kid? Why would anyone take a handgun to Walmart with them? Walmart was a place for Hans to work after school to earn money, not a place for his murderer to show up. Hans’ murder took more than his life. The people who knew and loved Hans will never be the same. They will never trust like they did before his murder. They will never feel as safe as they should be able to. They will never be relieved of the anguish of losing their friend and all the wondrous things that should have come from his life. Hans’ friends remember him each time they see a rainbow. He will live on in their memories as the teenager he was, as each Valentine’s Day, his birthday, they bake a cake and sing happy birthday to a perpetual 16-year-old who, because of someone else’s selfishness will never have the privilege of growing old.”—Diane Puckett, Manassas, VA

“I think this march is a wonderful opportunity to show our Congress and our country that we are saying ‘NO MORE’ to the senseless violence and loss that guns can bring. I don’t wish to outlaw all guns, but to simply regulate and wisely control the industry. It is time that we make a stand to show our lawmakers how we feel. Washington, be aware—we are watching you, and our votes count!”—Kim Smith, Carl Junction, MO

“My hope is that we, as fellow humans inhabiting this Earth, start placing a higher value on life than we do on money or power, so that no more children will needlessly die.”—Kelly Stanford, Hulmeville, PA

“I moved from my home state of California, which I thought I would never do, because of the violence was coming to close. Being in the mist of the roits, I thought what can do to stop the violence? Well, we moved across the country to a small southern town, where a week ago my son’s friend’s Mother found 9mm Gun in his room. Which was stolen and only cost him 2 weeks allowance. There is no Price large enough to put on a child’s, or for that fact anyone’s life. When I got the call (early) to pick my son up I knew something was wrong in his voice. He told me what happened and I cried. “I move across the country to get away from this,

and here it is in my face”. Thank God my son turned and ran. The first thing that came out of his mouth was “Columbine and Hitler’s birthday, what was he thinking?” He is now torn between helping a friend see the right way and someone being killed, even himself. I can no longer keep asking myself what can I do. I am so glad that we as Mothers can finally make a stand and be heard. I realize that I am one of the lucky Mothers that still have a living child. My heart goes out to all those others that have lost. These guns need to be taken off the streets, and out of the hands of children and if the government won’t take them off the street then they need to be in a controlled environment. One lucky Mom, Portia McRill, Alpharetta, GA.”

“As I sat and read through all the postings on the tapestry, my first thoughts were of my 8-month-old son. As a new mother, how could I NOT do something to help protect him and his generation, in addition to the future generations in the years to come?? My following thoughts were memories of how guns played a role in my life . . . when my grandmother passed away when I was 10 years old, there was a young man whose family was having his funeral in the same place as my grandma. He was 20 years old. He had shot himself in the head playing Russian Roulette. Or, when I was in Junior High and a young man, upset about his girlfriend breaking up with him, shot himself in the head. Outside the high school. Just a bus loads of other children were pulling up. It is a memory I will never forget. Or, in high school when my cousin’s best friend committed suicide with a handgun (after numerous other attempts had failed). Flash ahead to Columbine, and the rest of the school/company/random shootings that have begun to happen on a fairly regular basis. No, I have never been DIRECTLY affected by guns . . . so far. And, that’s what terrifies me and spurs myself and my husband into action. As many people have said, “it will never happen to me. . .” Well, it might. And, I want to do everything I can to prevent it from occurring. I march in memory of the boy who played Russian Roulette, the boy in front of the high school, and my cousin’s friend. And we march in honor of all of the children and others who should NEVER have died in such a senseless way. Lastly, for my son and the children of his and future generations. We will not be in Washington, but will be supporting the rally in Chicago. God Bless us, Everyone, in our fight to keep guns under control. And let this not be the only step. . . let us continue to march for those who can’t.”—Jamie Littlefield, Bensenville, IL

“On Easter Monday, April 24, at the National Zoo in DC seven children were shot by a 16-year old boy. He used a 9mm gun. We all know he couldn’t buy the gun, so how did he get it. Something has to be done when children can’t go to an Easter egg hunt at the zoo and feel safe.”—Patricia, Temple Hills, MD

“AT LAST!!! A LARGE GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO AGREE THAT EASY ACCESS TO GUNS IS INSANE!! Why does this country recall toys that have hurt a few children, but we haven’t been able (YET!) to have sensible control and licensing of guns which kill 12 CHILDREN per day?!?!? MY SPIRIT AND THE SPIRITS OF MY BEAUTIFUL 7 YEAR-OLD SON, MY MOTHER, SISTER, AND AUNTS ARE WITH YOU!!! YOU GO WOMEN!!!”—Lynne Harkness, Edwardsville, IL

“I have a 6 year old daughter & We are so excited to be participating in “The Million

Mom March”, it’s about time our voices are being heard & that we will not tolerate the violence any longer! As mothers, We are tired of our beautiful children being slaughtered like worthless animals!! God has given us the gift of being Mothers, and did NOT intend on them to be ripped from our arms in this way!! No matter how young or how old!! They are still our Babies!! So precious and pure! Come and join us Mother’s Day 2000, and help us in this fight against the Violence being plagued upon our Children!! Let these foolish people know we will not sit and wait for our children to die painful and senseless deaths in our schools and in everyday life. I look forward to walking down the streets of DC in support of this worthy cause. Remember, our children are our only hope for a better future!! Love them and teach them that violence is wrong!! Love them enough to save them!!!! Eileen, Waldorf, MD”—Eileen E., Waldorf, MD

“It is very inspiring to see and read about so many people who care about this issue. I am the mother of a Columbine student who survived the shooting last year; however, my daughter attended 3 funerals for victims. April 20, 1999 was the worst day of my life. It was a nightmare for many of us parents—even if we didn’t lose a child. I have written to my state legislators to ask them to support reasonable gun controls proposed by our governor, but they did not feel it was important enough to support these proposals. I will be attending the local march in Denver along with other Mothers and people who care about this issue. We must do more than just attend the March, however; remember how your legislators voted and unless they support our desire for reasonable gun control—don’t vote for them again. Support those legislators who agree with many of us that reasonable gun control measures will make a difference!”—Tina Campbell, Littleton, CO

“LET’S MAKE OUR CITIES, STATES & COUNTRY A SAFER PLACE FOR OUR CHILDREN! WE DEMAND GUN CONTROL!!!” MARLA BENTON, CHAPEL HILL, NC

“As an EMT and employee at Children’s Hospital, there are too many children transported to our hospital due to gun shot wounds. I am a mother of three children and would feel a lot more comfortable with the fact that we are moving closer in the fight for gun control and easy gun accessibility. Guns are meant for one thing and one thing only, to kill!! When a 6-year-old can obtain a gun, the time is overdue for the strictest gun control measures.”—Tracy Staton, Bowie, MD

“In 1994, the 12-year-old son of a friend accidentally shot himself with a 22-caliber handgun and died. Why do we hide our car keys so our five-year-olds can’t drive the family car, and yet allow something as deadly as a gun to lay around within reach? How many dead children will we need before we take parental responsibility? Normally I am a proponent of minimal government intervention, but if we’re not willing to take responsibility for the safety of our families, then let the laws fall where they may.”—Susan Richmond, Gig Harbor, WA

“About 8 years ago my father was the victim of a car jacking, he was shot twice. He survived, although it was very touch and go for a while, but he will never physically be the same again. I thought at that time this was the worst thing that could happen to my family . . . But I couldn’t have been further from the truth. On Thursday, December 17, 1998, my life changed forever. I came home

from work with my 4-year-old daughter by my side and tried to enter my home. I was unsuccessful in doing so and I started knocking on the door. No one answered, I knew someone was home. I went around to the back of the house and saw that the balcony door was ajar. I thought maybe one of my two older boys might have forgotten to close the balcony door and maybe fell asleep or something. I then put my 4-year-old daughter over the balcony so she could go inside and let me in. When she opened the door I noticed my eldest son, who was 17-years-old, was lying on the floor. At that moment I still didn't realize the extent of what was wrong. I leaned over my son's body and that's when I saw that he had been shot in the head. That image of my son lying on the floor is as vivid and painful today as it was then. It was as if someone ripped my heart out. My immediate reaction was who, what, why, how, and also why I wasn't there to protect my son. After all it was my job as a mother to protect him from all harm. I couldn't save my baby. Your not even safe in your own home. Maybe by getting these laws passed we will be able to spare another mother, father, sister or brother the pain of losing a loved one to gun violence. My son was a very fun person, very artistic, and he loved basketball. He was looking forward to getting his first real paycheck from his new job. I miss him so much. I miss his face, his laughter. Just hearing him call my name. The young man that killed by son was 19 years old. I still have not really dealt with his death. The trial will begin soon. I often ask myself: How in the world did this happen?"—Faye Hicks, E. Elmhurst, NY

"We women need to remember that we are the swing voting bloc this year. We have the power to overcome the NRA and their pro-gun cohorts. We must stand resolute in our belief that sensible gun control reforms are necessary not only for the safety of our children, but for the safety of all children. We must write our Representatives, our Congresspersons, our Senators and Governors and urge them to pass common-sense gun control legislation. Most politicians have an email address . . . sending an email only takes five minutes! This is our responsibility. We must speak and vote for our children. They are worth the effort."—Wendy, Lima, OH

"As a society, we need to get a grip on what is really important. We need to remember that children are children, not small adults, and they need protection. We are a country that educates parents to keep medicine and cleaning products out of reach or locked up, yet there is free and easy access to weapons. How are we to keep our children safe? We must speak out and demand meaningful gun controls."—Joanne P., Farmingdale, NY

"I hope that someone plans to distribute this tapestry to all of our Representatives and Senators—along with the message that we are paying attention to how THEY vote—and that we will cast OUR votes accordingly. By the way, my daughter and I plan to attend the march, instead of our usual Mother's Day movie and dinner."—Elaine, Pasadena, MD

"Growing up as part of a family of avid hunters in rural Wisconsin, guns were an everyday part of my life. My father took great care to educate us on the uses as well as the dangers of firearms. I feel blessed to have been raised in an environment where a healthy respect for weapons of any sort was imparted. Unfortunately, not everyone has that opportunity. Today, as a mother of 3

year old twins, I am still pro-hunting; however, a time has come for change. I feel handguns and assault weapons serve no purpose but to kill people and therefore should be outlawed. Rifles and shotguns used for the purpose of legal hunting should be allowed but only after extensive hunter education course completion and installation of safety equipment. Severe penalties for illegal possession and sale of firearms should be implemented. Minimum jail time requirements, in federal penitentiaries, with no chance of parole is a good start, but still not enough. Waiting times, background checks and possession limits need to be put in place immediately. I have cried my last tear over a child killed through irresponsible and reckless firearm use. I am now angry and choose to use that anger to make a change in my child's world. Nothing else in the world is so powerful as an idea whose time has come. Now is our time. Good luck and God Bless. KSK"—Kristin K, Burlington, NJ

"I am the mother of three and like most moms out there I am afraid every time they leave my house. What will happen when they go to school? What will happen when they are walking down the street? Etc. I know all mothers worry naturally, but in today's world it's not just worry, it's panic. I've never been a victim of gun violence nor have I known anyone personally. But just watching it on the news and reading it in magazines and newspapers is enough to make me sick. Some people in my family don't agree with the way I feel about guns. I do not allow any type of gun in my house. I don't care if it is "just" a water gun. There have been family members who have bought my children toy guns and said, "It's just a toy, it won't hurt anyone." I don't believe that to be true. Maybe like my family says I am overreacting, but I feel a child should in no way know how to hold, handle, or fire a gun, Toy or Real. I don't have the means to get to the march this Mother's Day, but I will be there in spirit. Someone has to put a stop to all of this violence and it seems like Mothers are the obvious choice. After all who else cares as much as Mothers do?"—Sue, Philadelphia, PA

"If there is any group that can change the course of history and its events it's "Mothers". How appropriate that this march is scheduled for Mothers Day. As women we have changed the course of history and battled for our rights in every court in this nation. We will succeed and for all the right reasons "safety for our children, grandchildren and every child that follows. We will make this a safer world for them."—Paul L. Hayes, Stroudsburg, PA

"In October 1994, just two months after my first son had been born, I got a call from the hospital that my older brother had shot himself. He had been diagnosed for years with paranoid schizophrenia and I could not believe how he was able to get a hold of a gun. Although he survived a gunshot to the head, it tore our family apart. We had always been taught to stay away from guns. We grew up in one of the most violent neighborhoods in San Diego. I saw the violence of guns time and time again throughout my childhood. I had a dear friend who was shot and killed when he was only 17 years old. I vowed to never allow a gun, real or fake, into my home. And now, almost six years later, another gun-related tragedy has torn my life apart. My 19 year old nephew was shot and killed at a party on April 1, 2000 in Arizona. The 21 year old host of the party was toting around a gun. He had a history of violence and had used the gun several times before to

threaten other young men in the community. He claims it was "accidental." What is so "accidental" about a man that carries around a lethal weapon, cocked and ready to fire, while at a party with "friends" and then uses it to kill and shoot another? Why are these weapons so readily available? What is their use if only to kill? My nephew was a loving, sweet young man who could unarm you with his smile. We only have the memory of that wonderful smile left with us. I cannot begin to feel the pain my sister-in-law feels to have lost such a wonderful son. My husband is devastated. My son is now five years old and we have another one on the way. I want to fight so their lives will not end or be affected by the tragedies gun cause. We must fight together and let our voices be heard loud and clear. My husband and I will participate in the Million Mom March in San Diego. Thank you for taking a stand and organizing us moms. I hope this can begin to heal our wounds."—Layla Smith, San Diego, CA.

"Thank you to the Million Moms that will march nationwide on May 14th. Let us be strong and determined that we will not stop pushing this issue until there are sensible gun laws on the books. I will proudly be marching in D.C. on Mother's Day with my one year old daughter, my mother and my eighty year old grandmother. Four generations of women that are committed to make a difference!"—Lisa Hyle Marts, Baltimore, MD

"With all the violence involving young people, my mother always comments that she would never want to have kids now and have to raise them in this society. That is a very sad comment. I have two small children (ages 18 months and 7 weeks) and I am also worried about what will happen in society while I am raising them. I am glad that there are groups that are trying to better things for our kids and their future. Good luck with the march. Since I live on the other side of the country, I cannot be there in person. I will be there in spirit!"—Traci, Phoenix, AZ

"When I was 11 years old, my 21-year-old sister committed suicide in the kitchen while the rest of the family was getting ready for night on the second floor. She used my father's revolver to shoot herself in the heart. I will never forget the "Ouch, Ouch" and then the thud of her body falling on the floor. It was 39 years ago; it still as vivid as if it happened yesterday. If she had not had easy access to my father's gun that night, she probably would be alive today. When I was 15, I went through deep depression, and I, too, attempted suicide. I didn't have access to a gun. I took pills. I was found in time, and my life was saved. After therapy and confronting the demons of my past, one of which was my sister's suicide, I became a well-adjusted, functioning adult. My point is that guns do make a difference. Not having them save lives."—Carole, AZ

"As a prospective Harvard Postgrad student, I can only say that I will feel a lot safer heading off to the US for that postgrad degree when gun control is introduced."—Student, London, MA

"On February 4, 1999 my life changed forever when two detectives came to my home and told me that my son, Larry was shot and killed tonight. Those words ring in my ears daily. I cried, "How could this be? I saw him 4 hours earlier". He was just going over his girlfriend's house. A trip he made numerous times for over a year. At 6:30 in the evening as he walked from the bus towards his girlfriend's house he was shot multiple times

and was pronounced dead at the scene. Larry was twenty-one and had just accepted a job as a bank teller. I remember how happy he was when he came home and told me he passed the test and that he was waiting for the company to find a bank near our home. His years of confusion, not knowing what to do with his life was finally headed toward a goal. The person(s) who killed my child took away someone I loved (still love) and someone I miss daily. I miss what we shared. I miss what we were suppose to share. I miss all the simple things I took for granted that was to come. I will never know the joy seeing him get married, the joy of holding my grandchildren. This was all taken from me that night. I cry when I hear of someone's child being killed. I live their pain, through my own. I cry for how that mother must now feel now and the difficult days to come without her child. I want the senseless pain to end. I can't bring back my child, but if my participating in the march can help save the lives of other children, then I am very thankful to be part of this march."—Katherine Lewis, Columbia, MD.

"Selecting Mother's Day for this March is both appropriate and quite in keeping with its original intent. Julia Ward Howe urged the creation of Mother's Day as a day for women to speak out for peace. Although it has changed over the years to become a day to honor mothers, Howe's Mother's Day Proclamation supports the goal of this year's march. She wanted all people to be safe from the horrors of war. I hope you will honor her and the history of Mother's Day by making her words an official part of your day. Mothers have, for a long time, spoken out against the madnesses that hurt our children. We should all keep our forefathers in mind as we continue the struggle."—Cynthia Lehman-Budd, Cleveland, OH.

"The first thing we need to do is PRAY. These folks in charge of changing the laws are procrastinating until one of their kin is killed or hurt. If the presidents family were shot, I'm sure the law would be passed. Don't give special treatment to the higher ups. And leave us little people to be hurt. Do something now. Exactly how many children will have to die in vain because of ignorance of the gun use. This is supposed to be the best city to live in but it seems to be on the list to stay away from. Please do something with the gun laws."—Margaret Shields, Clinton, MD.

"I like so many other moms out there wish that that sensible gun control laws had been in effect a long time ago. About 5 years ago, my 14 year old cousin put a gun to his head because he couldn't take being dumped by his girlfriend. Well he live but not the way that he would like to, in a wheelchair, paralyzed on his right side and not being able to speak. Then 2 years ago, my Uncle, depressed for so many years and not have a way out put a gun to his and died, alone. Everytime I see Charlton Heston speak I get a huge knot in my stomach, because it seems like everytime he does speak another breaking story comes on the tv talking about another school shooting. Mr Heston needs to "think" before he "speaks".—Tammy Towk, Lemoore, CA.

"as i read these tapestries i cry for all these lost children. i can't imagine the feeling of losing a child, my three sons are my world and the glue that holds me together. i will be at the march no matter what. and like someone else said earlier i will walk for every child lost to senseless acts of violence involving guns. we need tougher gun laws and we need to enforce the laws that we have

now also. may GOD bless all of you,"—schwartz, ashley, IN.

"I almost lost my father to gun violence when he was shot in the arm and side by a drug-addicted criminal while acting in the line of duty (he's a retired police officer). At 18, I got that long-feared knock on the door and was told that he had been shot and was in critical condition in the hospital. He died, was revived, and survived. But, his life (and mine) was never quite the same. Reading the stories in this Tapestry makes it all too clear why we need stricter gun control legislation (while also working together on resolving the underlying social/economic issues which give rise to violence—accidental and intended). I am confused, disgusted and angry when certain pro-gun advocates seem to believe the issue of "the right to bear arms" is an all or nothing issue. The aims of the majority of people (as the words in this Tapestry make clear) is not to make guns illegal, but to regulate and control them in a sensible manner, much as we do many other activities and products. While it's true that "guns don't kill people, people kill people," there's no reason we should make this any easier. With rights come responsibilities. It's time we make our voices heard. In this election year, let's make our votes really count for something. See you at the MMM."—Nike Carstarphen, Takoma Park, MD.

"I pushed the gun away from my brothers feet, afraid to touch it, but wanting to get it away. It was too late, it had already done what it was intended for. I found him lying on the floor and if Tom Delay and Charlton Heston could see and feel what many of us have to live with they would agree, wouldn't they? Let us try . . . No, let us do it! My brothers name was Joe DiPaul and he had a wife and two children, and he would still be here if not for an easily accessible GUN!!"—Theresa Cass, King of Prussia, PA.

"Yesterday 6 kids were shot near the national zoo—apparently by another child. Yet our representatives waste their time and our money to investigate the "violence" of armed law enforcement personnel rescuing a child to be returned to his parent. Just who is supposed to be carrying guns in this society and what is "violence?" How many children have to be shot before these self-righteous legislators realize that a heavily armed society requires even more heavily armed law enforcement personnel, and that the excess supply of guns will end up in the hands of children. These are the same legislators that think we need to have a great excess of nuclear arms as a deterrent for war."—Sue Hauser, Beltsville, MD.

"My daughter and I will proudly march in the Million Mom March. Our participation is not only an effort to demand sensible gun laws but to remember those moms and children that have been indelibly scarred by the use of guns in the wrong hands. I am a Registered Nurse. I have worked closely with children that have been traumatized by life's painful events. Many of these are the result of the ruthless use of handguns. I ask that we Million Moms remember these innocent children in our purpose and in our prayer. For the frail 9 y.o. whose leg and mind were scarred when he was used as a human shield in crossfire when his dad's drug deal went bad. For the beautiful 12 y.o. whose guilt and shame overtook her; never knowing if she killed the young target in the driveby shooting, a rite of gang induction. For the dependent 16 y.o. who witnessed his mothers being shot in the street. His pain has tempted him to find a handgun to take his own

life. For the 15 y.o. who returned home to find his mother's bullet ridden body on the floor of his room. He is tormented by the flashbacks. We ask that these children be kept in mind as well as the staggering statistics. There were 32,436 people killed by guns in the US in 1997. Hopefully, this strong message will be heard by Congress and action will be taken to pass sensible gun laws."—M.J. Ferrone, Hillsdale, NJ.

"I am the mother of two very young boys (17 months and 7 months). I believe that the only purpose for hand guns is to kill. I have been writing to my Congressmen asking them to pass stricter legislation for gun laws. Recently I actually received a response back, it was from Spencer Abraham from Michigan who expressed his concern re: stricter legislation fearing that that would punish law biding citizens. I feel that law biding citizens would and should support smart guns and mandatory safety locks. I am hoping that the million mom march will show Congress that us moms mean business. Thank you for organizing this."—Patricia, Harrison TWP, MI

"I was 17 when I got the phone call that my 15 yr. old brother was shot and killed playing with a "unloaded gun". It was the worst night of my life. Now I am a mom of two children and my husband and myself have made the choice not to have a gun in our home. If it isn't there then nobody can be hurt or killed. All we are asking for are minor things, gun control. Locks on guns, time between the sales of guns to one person, if only one person has had to die because we didn't do any of these things then it is one too many. I would bet if any of the members of the "NRA" have every lost a child or family member that they would be with us and not against what we are doing. They say it is their right. But what about our rights as parents to keep our kids safe from gun violence. We have to worry when we send them to school, or let them play outside. It isn't right and it isn't fair to us or them. We are not saying that they can not have their guns, but please think if you don't keep them locked up what can happen when they are at hand's reach of a child. Children only do what they learn and are allowed to do. So it is up to us to make a change. Hundreds of years ago guns were meant for hunting, but now some of these guns are meant for one thing and that is to kill another human being."—Tonia day, Hampstead, MD

"I need some clarification—many of our congressmen have begun yelling and screaming because there was a loaded gun near a small child. They are all over the TV calling for hearings. "The boy could have hurt and at the very least he was traumatized! This shouldn't happen." Odd, gentlemen, we've been saying that for ages and you've turned your back. Either back up those words or you show yourselves for what you are."—JR. KY

On June 5th, 1988 my 15 year old son was shot and killed by a 44 magnum. The only good thing is he died instantly and did not suffer, but for the past 17 yrs I and my family suffer everyday. He was the baby of the family and the only boy. I only hope that this will help change the laws on guns, so nobody will ever go through what my family has. The loss of a child is the greatest tragedy every known"—Rita McKinney, Ridgecrest, CA

"What a beautiful tapestry of words, woven with love and hope and true energy, about such an urgent issue. I and my children will be at the march—I want our legislators to know that they must speak for us.

to do that, they must hear our voice. Stop the gun violence!—Cathleen Barnes, Silver Spring, MD

It's a fact of life that family members are forever lost to us due to illnesses that cannot be cured. I remember, as a little girl, overhearing my grandmother tell someone that the greatest tragedy in life was to bury a child. It simply was not what God intended. Many years later I stood with my grandmother at a memorial service for my mother who had died of cancer. The anguish she felt was clear. Now that I have a 7½ yo daughter, all I want is for her to be safe. As I accompany her to/from school I am reminded daily that there are people out there that may look sane but do not always act accordingly. In a city where mentally ill individuals push total strangers in front of subways cars, I am always aware, and every vigilant, of the people around us as we travel. Unfortunately I cannot tell if the person next to us has a gun. The laws must change! Both my daughter and I will attend the March in Washington because we are part of a community that needs to be heard, that will change gun control laws, and must demand that safety be restored to our lives. The safety of our families must be an inalienable right!"—Lorraine Ashman, New York, NY

"The young's gun violence is so serious—some news I've read in newspaper is so shocked. But many statemen don't do any action. Tonight I heard about a great action of moms. What an amazing courage! Yes, Moms are powerful. I'm sure Moms can protect our children and make a safe country. Cheer up! Now I live in Pusan, Korea. I heard about your march from my principal in the institute of opportunity: leadership developing center for volunteer."—hee kim, pusan, AL "October 11, 1998, Hans Hummel was shot and killed in Arizona. He was 17, a senior in high school with a bright future. He was working at Walmart, and he and a security guard were pursuing a man that had tried to steal a television. The man shot both of them, both were killed. Hans was a very good friend of mine for years, but we had recently lost contact. Everyday I am haunted knowing that I am denied the opportunity to let him know how much I cared. Guns are unnecessary and intolerable. Why should we let them destroy us? Where can the beauty be found in a gun that can be found in a life? Can we look Hans' mother in the face and tell her that man deserved to carry a gun with him? That it was his legal right? Didn't Hans have a legal right to live? To succeed? I am marching, along with my mother and best friend for Hans' sake, that others may be saved as a result of the pain that has been suffered. tkokayde@yahoo.com"—Kayde Puckett, Manassas, VA

"Yesterday, 6 children were shot at the National Zoo in Washington. The fight between teens could have ended in cuts and bruises, instead children were shot and a young boy is brain dead. Although stricter gun laws will not put an end to violence in our country, it will go far in saving precious lives. Every day more children are shot and killed. Most cases don't even make national news. I have lived in Washington, DC for eight months. During this time, local news has highlighted the violent deaths of several children. Senseless deaths . . . Voters make your voices heard across this country . . . Sensible Gun Laws?"—Kimberly, Ketchum, ID

"We all need to be involved with gun education and control. Mothers shouldn't have

to be the only ones concerned—everyone needs to care about our children and the future of guns in this country as well as all over the world. I have not personally been affected by the tragedies, but I have cried for those who have and I want to keep my children safe. March on?"—Shelli Seaton, Marble Falls, TX

"As an American expatriate now living in gun-free Singapore, and one who is soon returning to live in gun-happy Texas, I cannot express the great sense of safety parents feel here knowing their children will not be gunned down in school, at the zoo, and traveling about town in the evenings. Singapore has tough laws, but there is a great sense of freedom in safety that makes small sacrifices well worthwhile? Nearly every parent returning to the US expresses fears about their children's security there due to gun violence. Without strict Federal gun control laws American children will never feel the wonderful freedom and security that the children of Singapore and other gun-free societies enjoy and take for granted."—Barbara Johnston, Corpus Christi, TX

"On January 29, 2000 my 12 Year old son was sitting on the sofa and was shot in the back of the neck with a nine mil. bullet and one grazed his shoulder. Thank god he is alive and ok. This was senseless and made me realize how much I hate guns. I wish there were no such thing as guns, especially for those who have lost loved ones this way."—Tammy Baughman, Detroit, MI

"Once I rote a letter to my local Congressman asking him to support sensible gun control and he sent me back a 3 page letter upholding the 2nd amendment as if it were the Bible. But this had no effect on me, as in my life I have lost my father, an uncle and a nephew by marriage to guns. One was murdered, one a suicide and one was accidently. Had guns not been around and easy to get, none of these untimely and sad deaths would have occurred."—Gael Ralph, Alpine, CA

"Together we can change our laws to provide sensible gun legislation which will protect our families from senseless violence. The MMM is about benevolent change for those we love and cherish."—Rebecca Angel, Albany, CA

"I support much greater control over the access to guns. There should be true background checks on all firearm purchasers at all gun shows, banning of the import of large ammunition clips, keeping handguns and assault weapons out of the hands of anyone under age 21 (unless appropriately supervised) and ensuring that all guns are equipped with safety devices such as trigger locks."—Carla Seyler, New Orleans, LA

"I think its about time for something like this to happen! I plan to participate on behalf of my own children, grandchildren, and all the other precious children that belong to US! they most certainly are OUR future!"—Elizabeth C., Yellow Springs, OH

"Tonight (4/24) on the NBC Nightly News, in response to the Elian raid, George W. Bush declared this to be a "nation of laws, not guns". I am sure you can imagine my disbelief. Mr. Bush, I am going to hold you to that statement. Not only is this a nation of laws, it is a nation of children and parents and sons and daughters and brothers and sisters. All of whom deserve never to be witnesses to violence. I am marching so that I can say that I live in a nation of laws, not guns."—Melissa Foutz, Washington, DC

"My 19 year old son, Ryan was sold a gun illegally by K-Mart & committed suicide on May 23, 1996. He couldn't buy cigarettes in the store that sold him a gun! Ryan was

schizophrenic but had a heart of gold! I have a lot of respect for Rosie for dropping representation of K-Mart! Ryans is not an isolated case! This is happening time & time again! I hope to make a difference in my lifetime in helping keep guns out of the hands of people that should not have them. No Mother should have to live with the constant pain of losing a child because of irresponsible Gun Control! I will be participating in the MMM with a broken ankle in Jacksonville, Florida on Mothers Day! Sandra Eslinger (pslinger@earthlink.net)"—Sandra Eslinger, Park City, UT

"I have always been appalled at the control that the NRA maintains on our lawmakers. Thank you for making the voice of the many concerned parents of this country heard. The life of one more child is too high a price to pay for the failure to pass this common sense legislation."—Becky Adams, Marietta, GA

"I am the mother of two boys, ages 3 and 6. For years, I have been very upset about the gun violence in America. Our country appears to be a war zone with over 10,000 people dying every year from guns—many of these innocent children. If you look at any other country in the world, you wouldn't find anything near that number. IT MUST STOP NOW! The Million Mom March is an excellent way to get everyone involved in order to stop gun violence. Thank you to the organizers of this wonderful organization. Thank you for saving our children."—Andrea Price, Auburn, NY

"I'm a dad, a husband, and Director of an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) department. I've seen far too much violence and trauma that came out of the barrel of a gun. I support this March (and all of the regional gatherings) with my heart & soul. Be well. Practice big medicine. Hal Newman, Montreal, Qc."—Hal Newman, Montreal, Quebec, AL

"YES!!!! It's about time we mothers weighed into this issue. We nurture the life that guns make so easy to destroy. But don't stop with marching; write your senators and congress people, write letters to the editor of your local newspaper, ask you women's groups to take a public position on the issue, support and express your appreciation to those who champion gun control, and vote! Together, we are stronger than the Tom DeLays of the world."—Pamela Behan, Jonesboro, AR

"June 29, 1993, I lost my oldest son to gun violence. It was just two weeks after his high school graduation. Everyday since that night, I re-live the whole thing over and over in my head. I hope the Million Mom March can do something for about the gun laws, I have three more young children and I don't every want to go through the same situation again, nor do I wish anyone else to. I will be marching in Chicago with my family. Thank you."—Olmedo, Chicago, IL

"I am the mother of a perfect, beautiful 9 year old girl. I am saddened by the seemingly endless stories of innocent children being killed by handguns, ether by accidents in the home, or by the hands of intentional users. I live in constant fear that someday this tragedy may become my own. I am outraged by the lawmakers that continue to defend the so called right of "law abiding" citizens to bear arms in the form of semi-automatics and handguns. I applaud and support the efforts of the MMM. I pray that this will be a wake up call to legislators who continue to have the NRA in their back pockets. I am tired of those who say gun control efforts are in vain. I view gun violence as any other disease which threatens our children and our

society, and step by step . . . effort by effort . . . God listens to a mother's prayers."—Julie Townsend, Davenport, IA

"I think it is wonderful that we moms are speaking up for our children and am glad to see dad's doing it too. How many more children need to die before we see a need for licensing, safety locks and background checks? When the Constitution was written, the guns they were referring to were too heavy to be held by a child, and could not be concealed in a over coat. We need a reality check here. We have the right to bear arms according to the Constitution in order to protect ourselves and loved ones. It does not say we have the right to bear arms and take away someone else's life who is defenseless. I guess it would be mothers that would have the love for their children to stand up to the politicians and the NRA and all it's money and say, "we are not going to allow this senseless killing anymore!"—Anie Lyne-Both, Wailuku, HI

"I am not a Mother, but I am a Father and Grandfather. I am also a longtime long gun and Handgun owner. But I totally agree with everything your group is striving for in the area of Gun Control. This Gun Madness must end! No one is asking me to give up my Guns! I believe in Handgun registration and licensing of Handgun owners. I also believe in the "Cooling off period" for purchasing long guns. I also believe in responsible gun ownership. Good luck and keep up the good work."—David G. Warner, Utica, NY

"I wish I could say that I do not personally know anyone that has been adversely affected by a gun. I just heard about the Million Mom March this morning, Easter, while checking my email. I will be in the local Tampa march. I can't think of a better way to celebrate Mother's Day, for both myself and my daughter, Jasmine. I cannot imagine what it is like to have to lose a child to such an act of cowardly violence. We do not and will never allow guns, either fake or real, in our home. Children are hurt and abused every day, and we cannot stop most of this. This is an opportunity to the Mothers of the United States to take a stand and shout "Enough!" and remove one huge way of abusing our children, who are, after all, are our future."—Deb Carter, St. Petersburg, FL

"This should be the first step in promoting gun control. The next step is that each mother at the rally contact five others who, in turn, contact five others to vote for legislation that ensures the safety of our children and ourselves. We have the power to make a difference if we focus our demands at the voting booth."—Sandra Pressman Weissfisch, Ridgewood, NY

"Look into the eyes of a child, yours or any other child. See their smiles. Touch their tiny fingers and kiss that tiny little nose. Imagine their future, a blank canvas that society gets to paint, a blank sheet of music that we get to write. What colors will we use? What notes will we choose? Now look into those eyes again . . . how will YOU make a difference? How will YOU ensure those eyes still shine bright tomorrow and the next day? Or does it even matter to you? My children matter to me. Your children matter to me. I will do whatever I can so that our children can grow together, I hope you will too."—Sheri Seehorn, Milpitas, CA

"In January of last year a mentally ill person purchased a handgun. She then walked into the Triad Center in downtown SLC, took the elevator to the office of AT&T where she shot Anne Sleater. Anne died a few days later. She was a beautiful mother of a 6-month-old daughter and had only that

month returned from maternity leave. Anne and her husband Chris were school mates of my son all through elementary, junior and senior high school. We must not let tragedies like this happen in this country again. We must have background checks for purchasing guns to protect all Americans."—Kay Jones, Murray, UT

"My youngest son Kevin was shot and killed instantly on January 1, 1990, he was 20 years young. I can't express strongly enough how this insanity has got to STOP. The children of this world are being taken from us. I have 22 grandchildren and 11 great children, I pray for their safety every night, and worry constantly about who will be next? Not only for my own family, but for all innocents. My two daughters wrote in the Tapestry and one of my Granddaughters. It breaks my heart to know the sadness that is still with them and will never go away. God bless all you mothers, Grandmothers, and caring people that will march on Mother's Day. We must win this one, good luck."—Gloria Coohill, Moscow, PA

"On May 16, 1994, my husband Edward was shot and killed in front of our three daughters. It was over a dumb baseball game. It has been a nightmare since. God willing, myself and the girls will attend the March. God Bless."—Iris, Staten Island, NY

"Yesterday I was reading an "Arthur" book with my daughter, Julia and in the book Arthur has to write an essay on what would help make America great. I asked my daughter what she thought would help make America great and she replied "to have programs to help families and to stop guns." I was shocked to hear such a well-thought-out response from my 6 year old. When I asked about this she said she remembered Columbine and didn't want any more kids to die. As a nurse for the last 13 years, I know that all too many do die—every day. I would say to the NRA: you say you want to promote "family togetherness". Well the real way to promote family togetherness is to STOP KILLING OUR KIDS. Way to go moms, see you on May 14 in D.C."—Rebecca Stern, Havertown, PA

"Even back in the days of the "wild wild west", strangers were required to check their guns when entering a town. We've gotten so far from the basic civility of gun control that now, instead of gangsters and robbers getting killed, it's our children—the most fundamental building blocks of our society. What's even scarier is the number of children who have access to guns, before they've even had the chance to learn what a wonderful gift life is. Thank you to the organizers of this long-overdue stand for gun control. Count me and my family in. See you May 14."—Cathie Batavia, McLean, VA

"Reading this tapestry has made me so emotional. As a social worker, I know how just one person can make a difference. I'm also a mother of a two-year-old. I don't want to worry about my daughter's safety when she becomes school age. In our society, we feel that the social problems that exist don't exist in our backyard, but they do. I feel very compelled also to make legislators hear "our voices". It's time we end this nightmare."—Kelly D'Onofrio, New Haven, CT

"I am thrilled that the women especially the Moms of this country are standing up and saying, "That's it. Enough." and being pro-active about this critical issue of guns in this country. I send blessings to each and every one of you and know that we will be successful."—Susan McGuire, Studio City, CA

"I only heard about the Million Mom March today: the anniversary of the Little-

ton, Colorado shooting. I am appalled that nothing has changed in the last year. I am even more incensed that I have stood by and done nothing, assuming that someone else would make America safer for our children—for my child. That isn't going to happen. I must get involved for Ellie's sake. She deserves a life with less gun violence."—Kathryn Kerr, Chandler, AZ

"Thirty years ago I lost a wonderful friend to the handgun he had purchased for his own protection. Raising my children near an urban area, having police officers in our family, I know many sides of the gun issue. All I know for certain is that guns are killers, and that sensible laws cannot and should not be opposed by sensible people. I have raised my kids to act on their convictions, and my daughter and I will be there on Mothers Day."—Peg Williams, Ambler, PA

"I will be marching in DC with my mother in memory of my brother. Trevor was shot and killed April 8, 1993. No one knows the who or whys. Seven years later my heart is still broken and will never heal from losing him. To most people it was just another "random shooting" on the city streets of Buffalo, NY, but now my and my families lives will be forever ruined. Thanks to everyone who is taking their time to express their concern about gun violence."—Rich, Dillon, CO

"When I was 14, my 11-year-old sister was shot by a school buddy. Yes, it was an accident, however, if she had died, would that have mattered? As a Canadian, I am also an avid supporter of this cause and want to commend your organization for bringing such an important issue to the eyes and ears of the world. Recently, Charlton Heston was in British Columbia denouncing Canada's gun laws and trying to raise supporters for the NRA in our country. This frightens me greatly. I would like to show MY SUPPORT to the Million Mom March in some way on May 14, not only for the citizens of the United States but all citizens against gun violence. Do you know of any marches or demonstrations being held in Canada? Thank you, Leisa Nason, Winnipeg, Manitoba (lnason@home.com)"—Leisa Nason, Winnipeg, CN

"Heartfelt gratitude I feel for all who take part in this March. My emotions have never been the same since I lost my 20-year-old brother to a single gun shot on New Year's eve 1989/1990. I weep with so many others . . . I have a son who is 11 years old. I am trying my best to raise a sensitive and caring man. I worry about the future for our children. This march is a wonderful thing to do. Thanks again. Peace to all . . . Mo Giandinoto"—Maurine Giandinoto, Mtn. View, Ca.

"Several months ago after another senseless gun death, I said to my husband, "This will only stop when women take to the streets to put an end to it to protect their children." Little did I know it was already underway. I can't be in Washington, but I can and will be in Chicago. Let's not forget another important thing—that is to show up at the ballot box. If you are not registered to vote—do it today. Here we come, ready or not!"—Julie Iacqua, Clarendon Hills, IL

"Question for the NRA—What part of "Well regulated" do you not understand?"—JR, KY.

"I am an intern with Texans Against Gun Violence, a Social Worker, an aunt and a mother to be. I will be at the march in DC with my husband to demand that Congress clean up this mess. I will be marching in memory of all those who have died senselessly and specifically for my high school

friend David Beatrous, who, at 18, shot himself in the head at our school. He had a promising future as a scholar and actor, but his depression made him desperate to end his pain. He used his father's unsecured gun to do so. David's death was a wake up call to me to get my own life together and to someday work with suffering teens to heal their lives. A gun in the home makes it 5x more likely that someone in the home will use it to commit suicide (and 3x more likely to commit a homicide). I am committed to doing my part for this cause. But our elected leaders better do theirs."—Jessica Hartog Smith, Houston, TX.

"I lost a brother and a nephew to gang violence in Chicago. Both were under 17 years old. I fled with my only son to Silver Spring to keep him alive. He is now 28 . . . I had to leave friends and family because of the gun violence in Chicago . . . I will march on Mother's Day in hopes that someone else does not have to leave everything to give her child a chance at living! Rest in Peace Thomas Anthony (1973) and Dujan Miller (1982)!"—Katie Johnson, Silver Spring, MD.

"While I was reading the tapestry I came across my mother's letter about her 20 year old brother (my uncle) that was killed by a single bullet 10 years ago. As I read that I began to cry . . . even though it has been years since his tragic death I cry often when I think of what he could have been and how sad that my son Jacob will never meet the uncle I loved so much. I will not be walking in the March in Washington, DC but I will join the forces of many mom's in Seattle, Washington. I walk for Kevin, my 4 year old son Jacob, and my beautiful nephews. Yet every step I take during that walk will be for every tear that my mother and grandmother have let fall from there saddened eyes. We as mothers need to make a difference in our children's future. They need our strength and support to guide them through life and I believe this march is the beginning of our strengths shining through. I thank you as a mother for caring for my son's future, and his precious life. I can never repay all of you for taking a stand for my son. You are right it is not called the Jacob march but in my eyes it is because it is his future and other children's that we are fighting for. Thank you Tara D Rios!"—Tara Rios, Bremerton, WA.

"There is no place for guns in a civilized society, and no civilized society would allow its children—our future—to be silenced, whether by design or accident, by the bullet. The time has come to bring the senseless massacre of reason and humanity to an end. Just how many more must perish by that bullet before we, as those whom we elect to represent us, say, "No more?"—Seth D. Bykofsky, West Hempstead, Long Island, NY.

"I plan to march locally in LA on Mother's Day in support of stricter gun laws. As I watch the news coverage of the tragic events happening all over the country my heart breaks over families torn apart by gun violence. I feel almost ashamed to be an American and sometimes wonder how I can justify raising my son in such a violent society. I am angry that while more children are killed by guns our lawmakers sit on their hands and bow down to Charlton Heston and the NRA. When I heard of the march my heart leapt because that's exactly what's needed—the Mom's of America need to unite and speak out (loudly) to our Government—**STRICTER GUN CONTROL NOW!** You Go Mom's!"—Pam Edwards, Los Angeles, CA.

"I believe in this march because if we don't make a move to stop the senseless killings

we will continue to watch the news everyday and see another senseless shooting or worse suffer a loss within our own families. We cannot continue to allow the proliferation of guns in our homes and streets just because there are those in our society who wish to gain a profit for the sale of guns."—Wanda Reid Wilson, Southfield, MI.

"I WITNESSED the senseless SHOOTING DEATH of my 13yr old nephew 6/8/98. He was KILLED while PLAYING basket ball IN HIS OWN YARD, by a 12yr old PLAYING SNIPER. No, I'm not a mom, but I couldn't have loved him more or hurt any less than my sister. WE CAN ALL SAVE THE CHILDREN IF WE WORK TOGETHER AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY."—Claudette, Richmond, CA.

"My youngest brother Kevin was shot and killed on New Years Day 1990 in New York City. The memory of that phone call and the violent way he died will never leave my heart. I thank you for this march and I am going to get things together so I can be there. Kevin was 20 years old!"—Kathie Riera, Hawley, PA.

"It seems so natural to try to end all of this senseless gun violence on Mother's Day. There is no stronger bond of love than a mother and her child. I have three sons; Tony (20), Mitchell (18), and Jared (9) who deserve a world of peace and I am going to do anything and everything I can to make sure that happens! My heart and prayers go to all of the moms out there who lost their children to this evil. And because those in Washington don't pay that much attention to the "common man", it is up to us to make those in Washington sit back, take a hard look at what THEY have and have not done! God's grace be with us all!"—Patti Moy, Indianapolis, IN

"I am a mother and a grandmother. I had the good fortune to be blessed with two beautiful, wonderful sons, Mead and Brad. Brad will be 30 on May 7th. Mead would have been 33 on June 11th. Mead Jeffrey passed away on December 28, 1999. No, he didn't die of a gunshot wound. He died of leukemia. However, I know the unbearable pain and anguish of losing a child. It is the worst possible tragedy that could befall a mother. The pain of mothers who have lost children to senseless violence is also my pain. No mother should have to bury her own child—it's just not right or natural. We pray for long lives for our children, and when these lives are needlessly and senselessly cut short, we wonder what kind of a world we live in where children are allowed to die—whether it be through illness or violence—it is WRONG! My heart goes out to all the families who have lost loved ones because the power of the NRA has become so great that it seems to have overtaken and paralyzed our government. It's time for someone to take a stand, and who would be better at doing so than the mothers of our country! I cannot attend the march in Washington, but hope to do something on a local level to show my support for the MMM. My mourning is still so intense. I will never be the same. I, too, cry every time another child becomes the victim of a senseless shooting. The shooting of the 6 year old by a seven year old was such a shock! How did our great nation come to this??? We must end this violence NOW. I will be with you all in spirit on May 14th. I know my son Mead will be watching from wherever he is. He has two beautiful little girls, age 2 and 6. I am scared for them. Can they survive their school years? Who would have ever thought it would come to this—that parents and grandparents have to worry about sending

their children to school every day!?! Here's to the mothers of the world—together we can and WILL make a difference! Our voices must and WILL be heard! Beverly Himelstein, Bloomfield, CT"

"I am the proud mother of two wonderful children, ages 10 & 2½. I am so thankful for this opportunity to speak out against the gun lobby and those politicians who are so firmly wedged in its pocket. There must be some common sense used in the selling and manufacturing of guns. When the assault weapon ban was repealed a few years ago, I was sickened. I am ashamed to say that one of the representatives of my state played a major part in that repeal. He is now running for governor in our state and seems very proud of his pro-gun record. This is a very pro-gun state, but please know that not all of us are like that. Growing up, I even heard the minister of my church declare that the government would take away our guns, and thus, our freedom. Why would this be included in a church sermon? Christ taught peace and love of your fellow man. I am sorry to say that a lot of my family still feels this way. I will probably take a lot of flak for this march. Thank goodness my husband supports me 100%. I pray that we can make a difference, and that my children and their children can grow up in a society that is not so saturated with violence."—Sandi Young, Charleston, WV

"I had a brother 3 years older than me. He was a typical big brother, often teasing me and my little sister to tears but also always ready to play with us and as we got older, there to listen and be a friend. My brother had a way of making people love him. He was charming and thoughtful and caring. Most of all he would go out of his way to help people, they couldn't stay angry with him. He would win them over with his smile and because of his determination to be friendly. He was a nonviolent man. When he was drafted for the Vietnam war, he became a conscientious objector. He didn't run away, he was determined to do his part if he had to, but he couldn't kill others and sought a nonviolent way of helping. Three years ago my brother in typical fashion stepped in to help a colleague. He was due a vacation. His children, then aged 6 and 8, had never been on a real family vacation and they planned to camp up through California and end up at my Uncle's ranch in Oregon. But Preston's colleague was sick with cancer and he asked my brother a favor—would he be part of a panel hearing a student's Master's thesis defense? My brother changed his plans, shortened his vacation and came back to hear the student's work. On August 15, 1996 that student ambushed three professors in a small room, firing over 40 rounds in less than 2 minutes, from a 9mm police type semi automatic hand gun he had concealed in the room. My brother and two colleagues died, leaving 3 young widows and 5 orphaned children. The irony is, if he had known the student and known of his fears and worries, he would have gone out of his way to help him. The student held a license for his gun and practiced regularly at a gun club. Please tell me why an ordinary citizen needs such a weapon? He had a family history of mental illness and was ex-military training, which apparently is a typical profile for 'cagers' according to recent research. If that is the case, why is it he and others like him can obtain a license? We need to protect the rights of all our citizens. I have heard much talk about our 'constitutional rights'. If you read the constitution, you will know that the right to bear arms is in an organized militia, not in a classroom. My

brother's constitutional rights died with him in a hail of bullets. Please let us move into a new century with a better understanding and respect for what other rights are and should be—that is to feel safe in our work environments and to know that our children will come home from school at night.”—Mary Rose, Hebron, CT

“I am the very proud mother of an almost 2 year old boy. He is my hope, my future, and the pride and joy of his family. Our children—the nations children—are the hope of the future. Thank you for starting this march, thank you for doing what you can to keep guns out of their hands. I am HONORED to be a part of this tremendous effort! If we can help prevent one senseless death of an innocent child by this march, then it is well worth it. God Bless!”—Kris M. Koehler, Overland Park, KS

“Please keep guns away from children—they are our hope for the future, the most precious resource this country has.”—Marta Settles, Burke, VA

“My husband has been a reserve police officer for over a decade working in a northern California city with a high violent crime rate. He has been in situations where he has had to draw his weapon more times than some officers will in an entire career. He has seen so much death and sadness as the result of guns in the hands of criminals, teens, substance abusers, and emotionally desperate people. Early in his career he saw the middle-aged parents of one of his partners on the force, make the nightmare decision to disconnect their adult son (and my husband's co-worker) from life support and watch him die from devastating brain damage—the result of being shot in the line of duty by a criminal—a 19 year old who got his hands on a “Saturday Night Special”, and used it. My husband, a witness to the events leading up to the shooting, testified at the trial of this young man, who had been raised in a violent family where guns were as everyday as a loaf of bread, and saw the jury lock him up for life. Two young lives destroyed, albeit in different ways, because guns were available. I watch parents in toy stores buying their children plastic guns—pistols, machine guns, “Star War” space guns, and see the parents laugh as their kids aim at each other and shoot. If they could see and understand what my husband sees and experiences they might come to believe that guns are not playtoys, that guns in the wrong hands kill and maim. My daughter knows that my husband uses a gun in his police work. She has been taught to respect his weapon, and to understand the awesome and powerful aspects of guns. His service weapon is kept in a locked gunbox and never removed until he leaves the house for a shift. I support the Million Mom March with all my heart. It is time that this country and our elected officials respond to the needs of our citizens for sensible gun-control laws and law enforcement, and not cater to the lobbying of special interest groups and firearms manufacturers.”—Terry Clark, Los Gatos, CA

“As the mother of a police officer killed in the line of duty, I have long been aware of the need for some kind of gun control. I am so glad to see SOMEONE finally take a stand. I no longer feel alone in my views on this important issue.”—Billie Hurst, Roseland, VA

“Although the state of Georgia is very pro gun, I want all to realize we're not all that way. Stop this insanity of guns, guns available to children. Stop children killing children.”—Sherry Roak, Nashville, GA

“My husband and I have three children. My husband is a hunter. We lock are guns up and

have taught our 5 year old about gun safety. She is not allowed to touch or even shoot. I just talked to her about what do do if someone points a gun at her. My daughter cried right alone with me that little 6 year old girl died. I can't understand the madness. I will be there mother's day. God bless everyone who has lost someone they loved to guns.”—Sheila, Angola, NY.

“When we lose our children due to illness or natural disaster, it's a tragedy. When we lose our children due to gun violence, it's a reflection of our own stupidity, laxity, and arrogance. It's time to hold onto and protect our children, our most precious resources, by standing up to be counted. Each one of us has a voice that matters, and it's time to use that voice and our brains to protect those we love and value so much. A choir of thousands of women chanting their demands for tight gun control is better than a choir of a thousand moms singing songs of lamentation at church funerals. Believe, think, act!—Kathy Kelly, Ann Arbor, MI

“My son Nick was 16yrs old when he was shot, by another 17 yrs old in May 1977. He was not killed Thank God, but he is maimed for life. He was shot in the spine and the bullet still remains there. The Doctors can't do anything for him, because his nerves has been severed from his spine, he is in constant pain everyday and has to live on pain meds. I feel for the children and families that have been killed by guns, but what about the ones that have been maimed, what is the stats on them? I'm in support of the Mom's in the Million Moms March, and planning on being there and hoping to take my Son with me.”—Susan Woytasik, Mesa, AZ

“When I remember the pains of giving child birth I can't help but wonder how anyone could deal with the pain of losing that priceless child in a shooting death. We are each someones child, no matter what age we are. Life is precious and we must protect it with conscious efforts like this Million Mom March.”—LeAnn Crawford, Caldwell, ID

“On April 1st, 1986 my only son, 19 yrs old, was killed by a “friend” who was just showing him a gun that was “not” loaded. Irresponsible people and irresponsible use of a gun has taken away someone so very precious to me and our family. We are losing our children by the thousands to this. It is insane. If only they could hear us crying or feel our pain at our losses, but God forbid, they ever walk in our shoes.”—Judy B., Peoria, IL

“All gun purchases should require a complete background check, state and federal database registration, trigger locks and a personal insurance policy, (just as you must have auto insurance in case of accident/injury). Handguns should be severely controlled, as their purpose is to kill/injure humans. Congressional members, please listen to us, not the NRA.”—Sharon & Martin McGladdery, Farming ton Hills, MI

“The hand that rocks the cradle truly rules the world. We will end gun violence and soothe the anger and hatred that feed it by joining together to show our children and the rest of the country our love and our resolve to take control. Thanks to those moms who have taken the steps to make this march possible. This will truly be a Mothers Day worth celebrating!”—Allison Leopold, Falls Church, VA

“There are a lot more moms out there than members of the NRA and it's time to make our voices heard, I am making this a personal goal—that the Million Mom March is the starting point for a new grassroots movement to end gun violence. So, the next

question is . . . What are we doing after the March????”—Holly Spiegel, Calabasas, CA

“Though I will be unable to join the march, my heart and thoughts will be with you all. I applaud every single mother who participates. I feel the NRA's anti-gun control arguments are totally antiquated; no one needs semi-automatic weapons to protect their rights, or to use for hunting. Even if someone wants a handgun, why is it unreasonable to require a waiting period or a trigger lock? No one, child or adult, should have to die violently from a bullet. We must convince Congress to take action once and for all.”—Susan Turgeon, Norridgewock, ME

“In November of 1999, my son walked into a sporting goods store in Atlanta and walked out with a gun. He used the gun to end his life. If he had not had such easy access to that gun, I believe he would be alive today. Our grief is indescribable, our pain hard to endure, our lives will never be the same. All who knew my son have been affected by this tragedy I am so glad that this first Mother's Day without my son, I will be able to do SOMETHING. I have always been pro-gun control but now I am passionate about it.”—Judy, Tampa, FL

“On May 11, 1999 my life changed forever with the phone call every parent dreads. My son was dead, shot with a gun belonging to this father. I will never know what happened to my precious 14 year old, but because of a gun left carelessly accessible, Kit will never have an opportunity to grow up. I will never feel “safe” again. My family has been torn apart, not just by violence, but by poor judgment and poor decision making. How many other lives must be ruined by this same lack of initiative? We must protect our children, and we must find a way to reach our legislators I don't want my child to be a statistic. He was more than a number to me. How do we communicate this sense of loss to Congress?”—Dru Fentem, Tifton, GA

“February 22, 1999 my son who was only 4 years old was at a close friend of ours playing with there 6 year old daughter, who got hold of a 22 rifle and accidentally shot my son above the right eye. He is now blind in that eye, paralyzed in his left hand and cannot walk without a brace on his left foot. He was a perfectly healthy 4 year old before this happened. Even to this day the doctors say he is a miracle, they tell me he was not supposed to survive and even though he did, with the injuries he had he should have been brain dead. My son was a lucky child to survive this. The story is the gun was sitting beside a chair in the living room, loaded and ready to go. My son will always have to work harder than others, take criticism in a cruel world because he's different, and may always have to use a wheelchair when he's too tired to walk because of someone else's stupidity. I want my son's accident to be a lesson to all. I tell my story to people that have guns and children because what my husband and I have been through and are still going through is a parents worst nightmare. Our son with the help of millions of prayers and the grace of God made it. Even though he made it, it's still heartbreaking to see him suffer through hard times. I am a mother who is a full believer in making stronger gun laws. If anyone would like to e-mail me with their comments, please do. My e-mail address is dkstepp@altavist.com”—Kristi Stepp, Dumfries, VA

“I would just like to say that I think that the march is a wonderful idea, and its about time this sort of thing took place. I'm the co-founder and president of a club at my high school, S.A.Y.V., Students Against

Youth Violence, and because we live right near the District, a big group of kids are planning on attending. It's not just adults who worry about gun legislature and things like that, but also people who are just children themselves. The response from the student body has been overwhelming. I have no doubt that a great deal of the next generation in America is planning to make the difference."—Leigh, Springfield, VA

"Me Conmovi mucho el saber que como mujeres y madres nos podemos unir en esta gran causa, como madre me preocupa el bien de mis dos niños son lo mas importante en mi vida y en la de mi esposo ellos son la razon por la que me levanto en las mananas y me moriria de la tristeza el saber que uno de ellos me le paso algo o que alguien me los lastime asi que por eso quiero participar en esta marcha y aunque no pueda ir a Wa. D.C. ire a la marcha de mi estado de Wa. Pienso que es bien importante porque mis niños son el futuro de este pais. Denise Trimble."—Denise Trimble, Gig Harbor, WA

"This madness has to stop and we need to be heard. I plan to be in Washington, D.C. on May 14, 2000 fighting for stricter gun laws to help protect our children. I have 2 boys, ages 5 and 3 and I do not want them to be exposed to guns, especially at school, which unfortunately, is where kids seem to be getting killed by them more and more. A place where they are supposed to be, and more importantly feel safe. We are their protectors and I would not be doing my job if I did not support this issue and got involved in this March. I will see all of you there on May 14, 2000. In the meantime, I will continue to say prayers that our children can stay protected. God Bless."—Kelly Borbely, Belford, NJ

"By our readiness to allow arms to be purchased at will and fired at whim. We have created an atmosphere in which violence and hatred have become popular pastimes."—Martin Luther King, Jr. It's amazing with all the advancement this country has made from the time this man was alive, that this statement still rings true today. I don't want to leave this world knowing that I complained about this violence, but did nothing to curtail it. We must all be leaders from here on out, getting involved in our communities, until gun violence is a thing of the distant past. It can be done. "Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person."—Mother Teresa. I will see you in Washington."—Manzo Speight, DC

"I am so thankful that someone has found a way for those of us who believe in this cause to show and voice our support. The people elected to represent our interests are out of control and so obligated to special interest groups that it's unbelievable. No group is more dangerous than the NRA. We don't have the money the NRA has or an over-the-hill actor spouting propaganda but I think we can make a difference. Our elected officials need to know that there are a lot of us here and we're fed up. "Common sense" is an unknown term to those in the pocket of the NRA. If they won't listen, we can make a difference on election day!"—LH, Broken Arrow, OK.

"I AM A SOLE SURVIVOR OF A SHOOTING. My best friend was killed and I was shot when a 19 year old wanted to see what it was like to kill someone. It was random and it changed my life, my family's life, my friend's life and his family's life. I will walk with the Million Mom March in hopes that when I have children, they won't ever have to know the pain I know and I won't have to know the pain my best friend's mom knows. We are all in this together. We can make a

difference. I honestly believe that."—Yvette Evans, Layton, UT.

"I am the mother of 3 and I am an Emergency Medicine doctor. I have seen the carnage of gun violence first hand for years—a high school student shot dead while mowing his lawn by a mentally ill person. A man who shot his brother to death in an argument over the TV remote. We are not safe. Our kids are not safe. I'll be at the march to add my voice to all of yours."—Kerry Foley, Chevy Chase, MD.

"I am a new mother now of about 3 months. Unfortunately these news broadcasts are just now starting to affect me, but now I am afraid to send my new son to school. Just the thought of sending him to school in 5 years where he could be shot and killed terrifies me. I saw a Dateline episode where one of the gun companies tried to make the "Smart Guns" and were boycotted by the American Rifle Association. That company went out of business. Doesn't that make you think? Those guns can only be used by their owners, and they were boycotted. Now, a person buys a gun and gets the license so that THEY can use it, not so that everyone else can use it, so why does it matter if they are "Smart Guns" or not? Does the American Rifle Association want our kids to die?"—Heather R. Spann, Wabash, IN.

"Three years ago this May, my 13-year-old nephew Jim used a loaded, unsecured handgun to end his life. Because he had this weapon readily accessible to him while home alone, a bad day at school turned into the last day of his life. I am certain that without easy access to loaded gun, Jim could have survived his academic crisis. Now he is lost forever to those who love him; he will never grow up, never go to college, never fall in love, never raise a family of his own. I wish and hope that we can help prevent this horrible experience from happening to others."—Katherine Toyer, Earlsyville, VA.

"Years ago at my cousin's ranch the kids were PLAYING around, showing off, swinging around a rifle and BANG! Dead cousin. The boy who held the gun was a nice kid. Living on a ranch he was familiar with firearms. He knew not to PLAY with guns, not to point them at people, to check if they are loaded. But he was an IMPULSIVE teenager who acted, as do most kids, without thinking through the possible consequences. It is our responsibility as adults to protect our children from their own naturally impulsive, thoughtless behavior. Safety locks, registration, purchase time-limits, these do not restrict our second amendment. I'll be at the Seattle Center in Seattle Washington on March 13th to rally for gun control. Hope we can get the government's attention."—Jan H. Renton, WA.

"I have 12 children the oldest one is 34 years old the youngest one is 9 years old and not one of them have ever had a need for a gun, if our country was at war than ok we may need a gun in the home but I haven't seen a redcoat or a Indian trieng to brake down my door latley? We have given so much to our kids over the years in this country maybe it's time we took something away from them and give the parents back the right to see there babys grow up and become parents to a parent should never have to be afraid to sent there babys to school or to sunday school and we should give them the freedom to live a long and happy life and not be afraid of other children in there schools? There is a song that says I believe I can flie, and we need to give our kids the chance to do that. Thank you. Theresa J. McNurlin"—Theresa J. McNurlin, Filer, ID.

At the age of thirteen I walked into my mom and dad's bedroom to find my fifteen year old brother with his brains across the room due to a freak accident with a shotgun. . . That image is in my mind today as strong as it was that day! I now have to live with the fear in the back of my mind that one day my daughter will be in school . . . looking down the barrel of a shotgun. . . Years ago with my brother gun safety was not as widely talked about and spread out to people. . . Today it is there and they don't seem to listen and they just don't seem to care. They act as though adding safety for our children will infringe on their right to go hunting, or to offer up defense, etc. So they fight against any form of gun control. And as long as the killing doesn't infiltrate their life they think that they are right to fight this. Yet the day is does they will be out raged that it happened and nothing was done sooner! It took my brothers death to awaken my family on these issues. . . I don't want it to take my children's to awaken the world!!! There's been to much senseless dying due to lack of support on simple gun laws. I think it is time that our Government and ALL gunmakers to stand up and help save our youth!!! I for one thank Smith and Wesson for putting locks on all guns they make from now on. My only wish is that it had been done sooner."—Brenda Kliebenstein, Jacksonville, FL.

"I have no problem with those who own appropriate weapons for hunting and keep them locked appropriately when not hunting. However, those of you that own guns for self-protection and have concealed weapons permits, please tell us the circumstances that will provoke you to shoot another human being. I've tried to think of incidents on my own but cannot come up with any that would be appropriate. Please don't say "another human may threaten me with a gun, therefore, I must be ready to shoot him/her first." Shouldn't the goal be the reduction, not the proliferation, of guns on the streets in the hands of non-law enforcement people."—Marilyn, Fairfax, VA

"My nineteen-year-old son, Jonathan, was shot with an unlicensed handgun on Friday, October 13, 1995. He was attending a party for a friend that was entering the Navy when a guy who had been drinking came with a gun. Supposedly, the killer had forgotten that he had loaded the gun and put it to my sweet boy's left temple and pulled the trigger. My boy hadn't been gone from our house 30 minutes when we received a call that he had been shot. We rushed to the hospital but he was non-responsive. Jonathan Stephen McGowan was declared brain-dead at 2:30 the next day. We were able to donate his organs, which would have made him glad. This senseless act with a gun, killed one of the sweetest boys any mother could want. Nine months later, my husband died very suddenly from a brain aneurysm at the age of 48. I have no doubt that my husband's death is directly related to the emotional stress suffered as a result of the loss of this boy he loved more than life. In essence, that gun killed my two favorite men and left my daughter and me with the knowledge that the remainder of our lives would always be tinged with varying degrees of sadness. I've written a great deal since my boys died. One short piece follows: WHEN The months and years drift by. The heartache lingers. Many say "Time will heal". I question "When"? The longer they're gone, The deeper I miss them. The cycle remains unbroken. . . Unlike my heart. Since my sweet Jon died, Mother's Day has been difficult for me.

Hopefully, this march will assist in soothing a wound that will never heal and at the same time enlighten those who haven't experienced first-hand the horror that guns perpetuate."—Chris McGowan, Philadelphia, AL

"On October 29, 1999, one of my daughters 14 year old friends was killed by a 9mm hand gun. He was killed by another friend who was playing around with the gun and supposedly (accidentally) shot him in the back with the gun while playing around with it. The boy who shot him has been charged with reckless homicide. He doesn't go to trial until August of this year. My daughter's friend died needlessly. His name was Jeffery Alan Cole, who had his whole life in front of him. He was an excellent student and excelled in sports. Jeff is Loved and missed by all. There is not a day that goes by that we don't think of him and how he should have not died that October night. We still don't know who the gun belonged to or how the other boy got it. The other boy was 19 at the time of the shooting. Don't you have to be 21 to have a hand gun? He was not even charged with illegal possession of a hand gun. We live in a county that is known for the police not doing their job or a very good job. So now we all wonder what will really happen at the trial. The boy should not have even had the hand gun, but did. And as a result, another life was taken. My daughter was there when the shooting happened and has to live with that night for the rest of her life. She is very much against hand guns just as I am. You have mine and my daughters support!"—Caryn B. Harpring, Hymera, IN

"I found out about the Million Mom March watching Rosie O'Donnell. Then there was an article in our local newspaper. The article ended with Margaret from MI saying she didn't have a story and wanted to keep it that way. Those are my feelings exactly. I'm horrified and saddened by the loss of innocence every time I hear that a child's life is lost or destroyed by a gun. I have been lucky so far but will my luck continue? That's the question I ask every time I hear another story. The saddest to me is that we hear these heart wrenching stories and then we continue on with our lives as usual but that MOM has to continue to live with it every day. I don't want to be one of those MOMs!"—Donna Robb, Memphis, TN

"Ten years ago my beautiful son, Andrew, killed himself with a bullet to his brain. He was mentally ill and never should have been able to buy a gun. I have been reading the tapestry today, in tears over the stories by so many grieving mothers who have also lost children or other loved ones. I will be at the March with one of my daughters (also a mother), because something has to bring Congress to its senses. I have three beautiful granddaughters (3, 3 & 1½) and I cannot bear the thought of them being exposed to a society filled with guns—and the needless destruction they cause."—Glennys Christie, El Cerrito, CA

"On March 22, 2000, my son, Mark Allan Tilley, age 31, was murdered in his apartment by an intruder that caught him coming out of the shower. My son had just been released from the hospital for an operation that he had on March 21st. I believe that we must stop illegal gun sales. We must give mandatory minimums to individuals that sell guns without the transfer being known to local police—if that weapon is later used in a crime. Buying guns for others should be outlawed and that person should pay the price if the weapon is used in a crime. My son was scheduled to marry his wife in a traditional ceremony in her native country,

Kenya in September. And, his 11 year old son, Aaron, no longer has his father. This ordeal has devastated my family and I do not want these incidents to happen to any other family. "Spread Love, no guns!"—Emily Tilley, Orlando, FL

"I'm lucky enough to never have lost someone to gun violence. I'd like to keep it that way. It's time we stood up to the gun lobby and to those cowards in Congress—the people who are SUPPOSED to represent us but don't have the backbone it takes to turn down the NRA's money and do what they know is right. Get rid of the guns once and for all! We can make a difference—together we can stop this horror."—Karen, Washington, DC

"As an employee at the Texas School for the Blind, I am horrified at the alarming number of students we serve that are blind and have suffered traumatic brain injury as a result of gun shot wounds. The majority are either gang-related or accidental. I strongly support common sense gun legislation and I am thrilled for the opportunity to be heard at the march in Washington."—Danna Wisnia, Austin, TX

"I would ask those people in the Gun Lobby who are opposed to any reasonable gun legislation to watch the tapes of the children of Columbine the day of their tragedy. Watch the tapes of those small children being led out of the day care center. Now as you watch, put your children's faces in those videos. I cry to think of those beautiful angels having to lose their innocence and their childhood. I cry for all of us, because some of us are so busy protecting their right to have guns they have forgotten about our children's rights to be children. I will march for my children, my nieces and nephews and their children to come."—Diane Scheidt, Dumont, NJ

"In March of 1978 my brother Dan Sweeney was shot to death while on a business trip in Costa Massa CA. Dan and I were raised in a small, safe town where gun violence was unheard of. Nothing in my background prepared me for dealing with his murder. Afterwards I helped pass a 7 day waiting period for the purpose of a handgun in RI. I can't begin to tell you how I was harassed by the NRA. These people do not care about the safety of their fellow citizens. I was at one rally where they tried to shout down Sarah Brady and Senator Claiborne Pell. For people who claim to be so concerned about the 2nd Amendment they showed little concern about the 1st. I am so glad that this march has been organized. I will be marching in memory of my big brother, Dan."—Jane Sweeney, Warwick, RI

"Mothers are a voice to be listened to. We need to use that voice to make our country safe for our children and their children. We need to raise that voice as one on Mother's Day!"—Genevieve Lemire, Brownsville, VT

"My husband is a licensed gun owner and we are not anti-gun, but there must be gun control in America. It seems that in the legislature only money talks. I am ashamed to be from Tom DeLay's District here in Texas. He has no common sense when it comes to guns. Why are there more controls on automobiles than on guns. It's baffling."—Katherine R. Tizravesh, Sugar Land, TX

"This is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference, the gun—control issue is one we have felt passionately about for a long time, but we haven't found a way to really voice our support and I feel this MARCH will strengthen our beliefs, and help us to unify our feelings and our country—and let our elected officials realize this is a serious issue

and as parents—it is our moral obligation to protect our children—all children—We have a five year old daughter and a two-week old son and we not only march for these children but for the children of our community, our state, our country and our world.—thank you."—Stephen and Renee Branham, Lexington, KY

"I would have liked to have protected my mom too except she committed suicide with a gun last year. It's too late for her but not for my son. I would like to think she might have been willing to get counseling if the "easy way out" had not been available. I miss you, Mom, and will honor you on Mother's Day this year by trying to stop this from happening to anyone else."—Cindy, Burke, VA

"The new poll that was just conducted is frightening . . . 35% of Americans with children have guns in their home, 48% have them unlocked. What are we thinking! This march is a necessity and people need to stand up for tougher gun laws! I look forward to the march and look forward to doing any part in protecting our children."—Jocelyn Witt, Bethesda, MD

"As a Mom and an ER Nurse, who works in Baltimore City, with one of the highest murder rates in the nation, I cannot sit back and wait for someone else to do something, for the sake for ALL our children, yours and mine, I challenge every Mom and every ER nurse to gather together a few Moms and/or ER nurses to March or support this effort in anyway they can, see you in D.C.! United we stand!"—Pat Sullens, Joppatowne, MD

"I am the grandmother of two. My grandchildren are very young and not aware of the violent society that awaits them as they get older. I am praying that rallies like this will bring about positive change in our society. I ask myself how we let things get so out of control. I applaud your efforts to bring about change. It is never too late. Our elected officials will hear our voices in Washington. Remind them that we voted them in, we can, and will vote them out!!"—Gina, Randall, IA

"I do not have any children, however, I feel it is EXTREMELY important to regulate guns. How many more children and adults have to die before we demand the end of the NRA's stronghold on Washington? I think all firearms should be banned, but short of a miracle, reasonable gun laws must be enacted."—Whitney, Los Angeles, CA

"Finally—something to march about that should appeal to all thinking, feeling Americans. What makes more sense than the intelligent control of weapons in our homes, streets and nation. We can respect our Constitution and show our common sense at the same time. Let's go!"—Barbara, North Attleboro, MA

"I cannot tell you how outraged I am that access to guns is continually given precedence over savings children's (and adults'!) lives. All people of conscience must stand together to stop the NRA and those in the congress who vote with them and thereby put all of our children at risk for their lives. Enough. For the sake of my son, and other mother's sons, I will not vote for anyone unable to provide gun control leadership and I will contribute to defeat those who vote against our kids. I take comfort in the fact that I am not alone. Moms, it seems are hard to rouse, but we are many, and, once roused, are a powerful force. Time to march.—Karen Lawley, Lexington, MA."—Karen R. Lawley, Lexington, MA

"When I was in the fifth grade, a student in my father's Sunday School class was killed by a self-inflicted gunshot during a "game"

of russian roulette at his friends home. I want my Dad's student to know I remember him. When I was in high school, a friend was killed by another friend who was showing her his father's gun. I want Mary to know I remember her. I am now 42 and am a mother of a beautiful daughter. Many times I watch her experience joy, I remember my two friends and their families. On Mother's Day, my daughter will walk with me and we will remember my friends and their families every step of the way. After almost thirty years, I have found a way to remember and honor my friends. I also have a way to feel like I can do something so my daughter and her friends will be safe."—annemarie, Ithaca, NY

"Dear mothers of America, my love and support are with you on Mother's Day in Washington. As Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."—Susan McLoughlin, Peachland, CN

"It only happens to other people, right? But then there was the early morning phone call telling me my younger brother, the delight of our family, had been killed, one week after he graduated from high school. He was shot with a gun which his best friend kept loaded to protect himself as he housesat. The "killer" was a 14-year-old girl who picked up the gun to look at it. My brother, his friend, my family, the girl and her family; the list of victims of that one gun goes on. This march matters. Now that I'm a mom myself, it matters even more. Thank you."—Patty, Vienna, VA

"On January 29, 1998, I lost my father to suicide. We never even had a gun in the house growing up, and I'm sure a moment of insanity put that gun into his hands. We never learned where he got the gun. I can never bring back my father, but I can help others think twice about what they do with the guns they have and who they choose to sell them to. Guns rob us of what is most near and dear to us. Enough is enough."—Tara Hlavinka, Severn, MD

"My brother was murdered by a man who had just been released from a mental hospital with a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenic, but was able to buy a shotgun because no background checks are necessary in our state for the purchase of a shotgun. If a background check had been done on this man, my brother, David, may still be alive today. David died at the age of 6. The man who murdered him was my father, who also killed himself. So my mother and I will be there on Mother's Day to honor my brother's memory by trying to prevent this tragedy from happening again."—Jessica, PA

"I am a survivor. In 1975, at the age of 13, I was shot by a 14 year old neighbor from his bedroom window. In the suburbs, seemingly protected from violence, I almost died and it is by a miracle of God that I can walk as the bullet chipped my spine after going through several organs. Even at 13 years of age and even in 1975, it seemed clear to me that owning a gun in one's home was asking for trouble. This boy took his father's dismantled gun, put it together, and loaded it for his use. I happened to be the victim. Today in 2000, the violence has grown but the message is as clear as it was to me and my family back in 1975. Guns are dangerous and should, in no way, be made accessible to children.... and in most instances, adults."—Belle, Park Ridge, NJ

"Although I have not lost a child to violence, I am tremendously affected by the loss of any child, of any race, religion, or ethnic

background. As a mom myself, I support wholeheartedly this attempt to WAKE UP OUR NATION and to TAKE A FIRM STAND AGAINST VIOLENCE. We are tired of being ruled by those who tell us that we no longer have the authority to teach our children RESPECT. We have lost the ability to parent effectively—to teach our children to respect life itself—to respect US...That is why guns are sought at such early ages as the solution to problems. We want the responsibility of raising our children brought back into the home INSTEAD OF THE GOVERNMENT. We want to teach our children the sanctity of love, life, and God without being afraid of 'upsetting' them."—Jacquelyn E. Berry, Atlanta, GA

"I march to honor my children on the day they honor me. I must add my voice with other mothers of this nation to embrace peace and end the senseless fear of a young one at the mercy of a gun as victim or perpetrator. May our voices be heard!"—Mary Harger, Cleveland, OH

"I am a retired public school teacher and a mother of 2 twenty-something young adults. There are so many children I care about. Finally, a way to express my concern about the gun violence and what it is doing to our children. "Thou shalt not kill" is not just some pretty phrase to be framed on the wall! Life in the US gets more dangerous daily, if we do not protect our children from those who value guns more than children we are one sick society. Count me in!"—Cyndy, Warwick, RI

"ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! How many more innocent children have to die before the politicians get the message?! We gave life to our children and now it's time to give life to change. We have the courage and we have the right!"—Giselle, Seattle, WA

"Grant those who wish to exercise it—the right to bear the arms that our forefathers intended. Single shooter, musket loaders, NOT guns which did not exist. FIRST, grant all of us the rights in the First Amendment. Those rights supersede what comes second. Our first right is the right to Life (w/o being murdered with a gun), Liberty (the right to safe passage on any street w/o being threatened w/ a gun) and the pursuit of happiness (that which a Mom can do ONLY when she knows her children are safe). Gun control NOW!"—Lauren Pepersack, Santa Fe, NM

"Our neighbor's 12 year old son killed himself with a gun upstairs in his bedroom after the family finished dinner. He had just gotten in small trouble and was sent to him room. In a fit of teenage mad, which we all have experienced, he made the rash decision to kill himself. The family was and is still devastated. I believe if the current gun laws were enforced we would see less death with guns. Instead, we are forced to demand even more!"—Kathy Frasier, Yelm, WA

"When the shooting occurred in Littleton, Co last year, my then-9 year old came to me and asked, Mom, what can I do if that happens in my school? What's the answer? Moms, we CAN make the difference and protect our children. Certainly Congress won't."—Laurie Jerin, Madison, WI

"My daughter, who is 27, has just given me the best Mother's Day gift—her company at the Moms' March in Washington, D.C. My steps will be for all the children who have died or been hurt by senseless gunfire, for their parents and for the children whose lives will be safer when this country finally lays down its weapons—or at least keeps them away from children. If the gun-lovers in our midst think they know anger because they are being asked to store and handle

guns safely, they should talk to a mother who has been forced to bury her innocent child."—Betsy Shea-Taylor, Providence, RI

"There are so many interwoven issues, but one fact remains true: WE ALL LOVE AND WANT TO KEEP OUR CHILDREN ALIVE!!! Let's stop the killing of our loved ones."—Michelle, N. Huntingdon, PA

"NRA. * * * We ARE coming and we WILL defeat you. * * * Smith and Wesson was only the first domino. The power belongs to the people, not the gun lobby"—Joyce Baird, Chapel Hill, NC

"When I was child, we were at our grandparents house for a family get together. My cousin, who was probably only 2 or 3 years of age, went into my grandparents room and grabbed a hand pistol from the night stand on my grandfather's side of the bed. We were fortunate * * * it was not loaded. How many close calls does it take? A good friend of mine from high school took his own life by shooting himself in the head while sitting in the kitchen of his parents house talking to his girlfriend on the phone. How many friends must die? I am now a mother of 2 boys a 2 yr old and an 8 week old. I cringe at the thought of sending them off to school, because even though they will know it is never bad enough to take a life * * * who is to know if the others will be taught the same."—Kristin Vance, Omaha, NE

"The chain of preschool children walking across the street in Los Angeles brought tears to a room full of people. This scene did it for me. The craziness of the gun lobby has got to stop and people with good common sense need to prevail. We must have more controls on guns and their owners, NOW!"—Roxanne Hallquist, Protland, OR

"There can no better way to celebrate Mother's Day than by marching to show our love for our children. I thank God each day that I am blessed with two beautiful Boys!"—Mary Schwander, New Hope, PA

"I've just finished reading Tapestry and I am deeply saddened because I didn't think so many people felt the same pain that my family did six years ago. My 19 year old nephew was murdered, leaving behind a newborn daughter who will grow up never knowing her father. Sure she'll see pictures of him and hopefully understand what she's told about him, but it won't be the same. Helen Ready sings, "I am woman hear me roar, in numbers too big to ignore," well the roar will be deafening on May 14th when a million moms come together and I intend to be one of them!"—C, Chicago, IL

"Finally, an organization which is not motivated by political pandering and that is willing to step forward and to let their voices be heard and to mobilize for sensible common sense gun laws—The Million Mom March. I live in New York City and have a teenage daughter who attended public high school in the City. Additionally, I spent 7 years working in the Dept. of Juvenile Justice setting and know only too well the horrible toll that guns are taking on our children. Now I am in law school and as a mom and a concerned citizen and a student at a law school that is profoundly motivated by the public interest, I think my duty is clear. We see you on May 14th."—Colleen Richman—Colleen Richman, Bronx, NY

"Thank you for finally giving me a voice to ask our leaders in Congress to please enact stricter gun control laws. I ask on behalf of a 12 year old boy named Bill McGuire who was accidentally shot and killed by his 16 year old brother in 1962. Bill was one of my best friends in elementary school here in Washington, D.C. I was only 12 myself and

never know how his brother had gotten the gun. His brother thought he had taken all the bullets out of the gun. The two boys were playing around when his brother aimed the gun point blank at Bill and pulled the trigger. Bill was shot in the chest and died. I have mourned this friend ever since that terrible day in 1962. I have one picture of him that I keep to this day. I feel it keeps him alive somehow. I wonder how he would have turned out, who he would have become, if his life had not been taken so tragically. My message to our President and Congressional leaders is simply this: Please make it your number one priority to enact and enforce stricter gun laws. The American people don't care about campaign finance reform. We care about the violence on our streets, in our schools and in our homes. The time has come for you to take action and get the guns out of the hands of criminal repeat offenders and out of easy reach of our nation's children. There is no more urgent problem facing America today."—Rebecca Lambert, Bowie, MD

"My cousin was killed by a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head when he was 16 years old. His mother still defends the right to have a gun in her house although 'no one knows where they are'. This was the first thing that came to mind as I heard about the Million Mom March. My aunt and I agree to disagree but I cannot understand how anyone after having lost a child in such a tragic way would still want them in her house. There were other circumstances regarding the shooting because he was in an altered state at the time of the shooting but if the gun had not been in the house, he would most likely still be here today, possibly raising a family as I am right now."—Heather, South Jersey, NJ

"Like Millions of other Moms. I have felt so helpless in the face or relentless news stories relating yet another . . . and another . . . senseless incident of violence involving guns. As the anniversary of Columbine approaches and we reflect on that bitter day—and on all the killings in between—let us all renew our commitment to mobilize for common sense gun laws in this beloved country of ours. And THANK YOU, Million Mom March, for giving us an avenue of hope in which to channel our energies. Another "Mom"—Kathleen Brahney, Arlington, VA

"Despite the validity of our constitution as the backbone of our great democracy, the patriots who wrote it would burn their words if they knew that 200+ years later innocent children would be dying because of the second amendment. We must honor the spirit of the constitution which was written to protect citizens against outdated, tyrannical laws."—Barbara Raphael, Haddonfield, NJ

"IF SOMEBODY DRIVES A CAR, EVEN PERFECTLY, BUT WITHOUT A DRIVING LICENSE WILL BE ARRESTED. IF SOMEBODY CARRY HIS GUN IN PUBLIC, EVEN WITHOUT KNOWING HOW TO USE IT, WILL BE FREE. WHAT AN ABSURD WAY OF THINKING. YOU NEED SCHOOL AND EXAMS TO DRIVE BUT YOU DON'T NEED NEITHER LICENSE NOR TESTS TO CARRY A GUN. IS A CAR MORE DANGEROUS THAN A GUN?—MILLO MAZZOLENI, NEW YORK, NY

"I feel so empowered where I once felt I had no power. We can make a difference now, before it is too late. We have to end this today, so there is no tomorrow of tears and questions of "WHY?". I applaud the organizers of Million Mom March and I will continue to play an active part to protect our children."—Donna Pappé, Louisville, KY

"The Million Mom March is the first organization that I have seen to protect the children of our nation against accidental murder. I would like to see guns banned from every home that a child lives in."—Elizabeth Battle, Missouri City, TX

"Today in our local newspaper I read these disturbing statistics: in one year firearms killed NO children in Japan, 19 in Great Britain, 57 in Germany, 109 in France, 153 in Canada and 5,285 in our UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. There is a gun store within 2 blocks of my affluent neighborhoods, and every time I pass it I become angry. It is time for the NRA to stop hiding behind the United States Constitution and realize that times have changed. We have created an atmosphere in this Country where our children have been desensitized to the horror of violence. These children have felt the reality of violence. That is why the horrified looks on their faces as we see them run from the schools, churches and other "safe places" disturb us so. I have banned my children who are 15 and 14 from bringing any violent video game into our home, which up to the recent shooting of a six year old first grader was allowed. I will take a stand to try to teach my children that killing is not a game, guns are dangerous in the wrong hands, and I ask all you parents reading this to do the same. Our children are OUR responsibility, and it's time to take a stand."—Kathy Halbeisen, Reading, PA

"I have just read all of Tapestry & will never be the same. But please, PLEASE DO NOT LET THIS ENERGY END WITH THE MARCH. VOTE!! We must get the Tom Delay's out of office. We must keep working until the House and the Senate again belong to us!! Please, when you return to your home, don't stop the fight, don't let the energy end . . ."—PJ Bowling, Las Vegas, NV

"In 1954 my father was seriously wounded on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives by a terrorist with a hand gun. I was quite young then, but I do remember that both houses of congress voted pretty quickly to create very strong security measures to protect themselves and to ensure that that kind of incident would not happen again. Why would they not do the same for the innocent children and others? I am happy to be a part of the Million Mom March and will certainly do what I can to spread the word among my community. See you all on Mothers' Day, 2000."—Helen Bentley, Strasburg, VA

"I am a mother of 3 boys, ages 15, 11 and 2. I cannot believe that the NRA won't budget on the simplest law of having a waiting period for registering for guns. If most of the people buying guns were getting them for legitimate reasons why would they mind having background checks or waiting periods? I fully believe in child locks also. Are the members so lazy and dumb that they cannot figure them out? There are too many children being killed by guns that have been stolen or that careless people leave around loaded. There needs to be changes in the laws. How would an NRA member feel if this happened to one of their children? I worry about my children and everyone else's everyday with this violent society. Let's all make a difference in Washington!"—Lisa, Kresgeville, PA

"I am a 42 year old mother with 2 sons ages 11 and 14. My husband is a big hunter and my boys have been involved in some sort of "hunting activity" from the time they were 6 or 7 years old. When our 14 year was 12 he took a "Hunter's Education" class where he had to pass a test before he could be issued

a license to hunt. My husband said this would help him to be a safe hunter. The actual thought of him having a rifle in his possession really bothers me. My husband wants to buy our son his own rifle. I told him no way!! One day last year my 11 year old was playing in our bedroom while I was on the phone. I heard him say "Mommy look!!" and when I turned around he had the rifle barrel pointed straight at my face and cocked the gun to shoot. I had never been so sick and frightened in my entire life. Thank God that there was no shell in that rifle. I can not even imagine what my child's life would be like today had that rifle gone off. I have asked my husband to take all the rifles out of our home and he did for a few months and now they're right back in our bedroom. I respect the fact that my husband loves to hunt but I feel that he does not respect the boys and me for not taking the rifles and danger out of our home. I want to be a part of this March and would like different Mom's from San Antonio to get together if they would like to start a March here in S.A. It is very important to me that gun control is enforced in an extreme way!!! Isn't that the way of this Millennium, that everything is EXTREME? Why are we not totally extreme about our children's safety? There is something seriously wrong here and we need to be heard!!!! I work in a High School and the other day a co-worker gave me this e-mail she had received from someone and I would like to share it with you, it says volumes . . . Student: Dear God, Why weren't you at Columbine the day of the shootings and stop all the terror? God: Because they won't let me in. LET'S BE HEARD!!!! Cathy Aschbacher, San Antonio, Texas"—Cathy Aschbacher, San Antonio, TX

"As a responsible gun owner, I applaud all that you stand for. I cringe when I hear any news from the extreme minds at the NRA standing in the way of any sensible legislation. I firmly believe that if someone is willing to lay down hundreds of dollars, they can also spend the \$5 that a simple trigger lock costs. That \$5 investment can save the lives of our kids. Trigger locks should be mandatory, and there is no logical reason not to use one."—Mark Thoms, Hoffman Estates, IL

"I'm a lifelong outdoor enthusiast, having hunted and fished for more than 40 years. I want something done to stop this madness. Please help people understand that handguns are good for nothing but killing PEOPLE. I have two precious grandchildren. I want something better for them. I'm obviously not a mom, but my thoughts will be with you."—Dave Gilmore, Shawnee, OK

"Five years ago, my daughter was 10 and the only witness to a shooting!!! Your simple changes in handgun control are needed NOW!!! As a Mom, a woman, a person—I am sick of all the senseless shootings!! Hoorah for the MARCH!!"—Cheryl, Omaha, NE

"I am so tired of the politicians and the excuses. Stop it now. If you want to hunt . . . ok, but an AD-47 or a handgun? These are weapons that are used for one purpose. To kill humans. As a principal of a elementary school the fight to stop the violence is very difficult. The hands of the NRA are covered in the blood of children"—Mike, Philadelphia, PA

"Bobby Kennedy's most famous phrase was "Some people see things as they are and ask why, I dream things that never were and ask why not?" John F. Kennedy said "ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country, let the word go forth from this time and place to friend and

foe alike that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans born in this century proud of our heritage and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights etc." well we as mothers are responsible for the next generation and if we don't do something now we will not have another generation. We can do it on May 14, 2000."—Diana Barrowcliff, Claymont, DE

"I can't describe the feeling inside as I sat and nursed my son while watching the horror of Columbine on the TV. I kept saying to myself as I held my son a little tighter, "something has got to be done . . . I've got to get involved . . ." I read about the MMM in Parenting Magazine and decided this was something I really wanted to be a part of, for the sake of my son and the rest of my family. Without hesitation, my mother joined me as we make plans for a Mother's Day like no other . . . one we will never forget . . . one when we stand up and say we are one of a million!"—Karie, Virginia Beach, VA

"I am a mother and middle school counselor. I live in a community where poverty and violence is all too prevalent. There are many issues to deal with in preventing the problems we are experiencing today . . . children must learn how to handle conflict peacefully; they must be taught to be tolerant and respect the differences of others; they must be flooded with opportunities to be involved in positive activities. However, to keep our children safe, until the societal issues are tackled, we MUST have comprehensive gun-control reform . . . including mandatory on-site checks and child safety locks for ALL guns!"—Karen Faircloth, Cordele, GA

"Your organization is the answer to my prayers. My husband, a Chicago police officer was shot and killed with a semi automatic equipped with a lazer site. I sure you already know that the March coincides with National Police Week in Washington. My entire family will be there to honor my husband and we want to join your March. Please let us know where and when."—Joan Knight, Chicago, IL

"My cousin Christopher was killed by a friend while playing cops and robbers. His friend went into the house, grabbed his father's gun, and not knowing it was loaded, shot and killed Christopher. I was young when it happened, but it has made a profound impact on my life. I am a mom now also and I fear for my son everyday he goes to school or plays at someone else's home. We need to be sensible about our guns America! Our children are the ones we are killing."—Jennifer, Milwaukee, WI

"I have been angry long enough without doing something about it. Charlton Heston's latest ads for the NRA are the final straw. I am not only a mother, but due to become a grandmother in May. I can think of no better way to spend Mother's Day this year!"—Christine E. Gaithersburg, MD

"It makes me sick that in this country we "love" our guns more than we love our children!"—Peg McCabe-Ashlevitz, Walled Lake, MI

"I am so thrilled that this is happening and that so many people with common sense will be coming together to collectively tell Congress "We have had it—our children deserve more from us". Thank you to the folks that have worked to make this event possible. I am going to make sure all my neighbors and friends know—I found out through a friend—you can't beat word of mouth. Lets all tell the NRA what we really think of them and their antiquated notions that put

our children in danger every single day. Enough is Enough!"—G. Perez, Annandale, VA

"It is so long over due that we, as Moms fight back against the likes of the NRA. They have been the bullies on the block for far too long. We need to show our children how to stand-up and make a difference."—Elaine Covert, Toledo, OH

"I got angry when I heard that triggers can be made to work with only the owners fingerprint! The gun manufacturers have the technology to make smarter guns and they will not make safer, SMARTER guns until we force them to through legislation. As an RN, I feel gun violence is a national health care crisis. SEE YOU IN D.C."—sue ann sullivan, nashua, NH

"As a native Coloradan, an Air Force Family Child Care provider, and most importantly a mother, I feel a tremendous responsibility to participate in the Million Mom March. With every mass shooting that occurs in this country—a fire burns within me and now I have the opportunity to make a difference with an incredible group of woman. I can no longer sit and wait for the "pro-gun" population to come to their senses—I will make the march with my fellow mothers and we will be heard from every pawn shop to Capitol Hill."—Tillie Sanchez Elvrum, Cheyenne, WY

"It is difficult-to-impossible to reason with NRA supporters, or to out-spend the NRA lobbyists. BUT THERE IS STRENGTH, and HOPE, in NUMBERS. YOU GO!!!!"—William K., Edina, MN

"What does it say about our country when we have to hold a march to save our children? To some it says we are a country of non-caring people. On the contrary, we must care deeply. To say that our children are not worth the effort is a slap in the face to every one of them. They are our future, our whole reason for being. If we do not care for them, who will care for us?"—Gwen Neiderheiser, Tampa, FL

"I am saddened by the political rhetoric of our current election candidates . . . men running scared from the NRA. I am tremendously thankful that in the last sentence of an NPR (National Public Radio) broadcast on gun control this past week, I heard of the Million Mom March . . . count me in! Let's make a difference ladies, our lives and our children's futures depend on getting our society under control. No where in the world are there greater freedoms than here in the US. Unfortunately they are abused and misused by the political machine of our times. Common sense and passion for life and safety should be our watchwords. Let's all work together to make the difference we so desire!"—Sue Hill, Issaquah, WA

"I thought with the coming election if I just voted on the right candidate new gun laws would come into effect. I now realize that getting votes is more important to them than a child's life. It's our turn to stand up to Congress and tell them to protect the future of America!"—Amanda, Portland, OR

"CONGRESS . . . SHAME ON YOU!!! Do what you were put in office to do or you will be voted out! We are WATCHING you and know how you vote . . . AND this one issue (for the first time in my life) will be the deciding factor on how I vote in EVERY ELECTION FROM THIS POINT ON. Have the GUTS to take a stand AGAINST the NRA and anyone else because this is the BEST thing to do for the future of American children. Where is your personal "line in the sand"??? I hold each and every one of you

RESPONSIBLE for every child that is killed. If you cannot do your job . . . then LEAVE. I am ashamed of you all!!!!"—Karen Gordon, Livonia, MI

"If only for the politics and the fear of losing a job over doing what is right could be overcome, I continue to pray for this. Too bad the fathers of our nation can't get as passionate about this issue. I offer my prayers for every single mother who has lost a loved one to this kind of violence, regardless of age. I also dedicate time to pray for the safe trip, and return, to their families during your speaking out. Since this is for mothers, I still want to show my support."—Greg, Redford, MI

"Mothers need to stand up to the greedy legislators beholden to the NRA. It's time to say "No More" to the senseless slaughter of our children and our nation. We are far from powerless. They don't get elected without the woman's vote. We are the nurturers that give life, not take it away. Whether a mother is a Christian Conservative Republican or a Liberal Democrat, she cannot be worthy of that most revered title unless her first priority is to protect America's children."—Patti DiTuri, Marietta, GA

"I do not understand why legislators, who have their own children and grandchildren, are reluctant to require safety locks on guns! Think how many lives that would save when unwitting children find guns in the house! I will carefully scrutinize all candidates in this election year 2000 to determine their stand on safety and guns. I urge everyone who reads this site to do so too! If we can save just one child from being killed by another child, we will have accomplished much!"—Ina Burwasser, Elkins Park, PA

"My husband is a gun owner and a member of the NRA, but even he agrees that there is nothing unreasonable about trigger locks and background checks. My daughter is 2 years old and I fear for the day that I have to send her off to school. I'm sick and tired of being afraid. Even though I won't be at the March in DC, I will be contributing generously to the cause. It is a darn good one."—Dawn N., Lake Villa, IL

"With the Presidential election coming soon, please choose very carefully which candidate you select. The position that each candidate takes on the issue of gun control will affect us and our children for the next years. My child is the most important thing in my life and I want her to have a happy worry-free childhood. Guns and violence are taking away any innocence left in our children. Please stand up for the children. Please protect the most precious things in our lives."—Jennifer, Apex, NC

"Our legislators "care" enough about children to make vaccinations for chicken pox mandatory for entry to daycares or public schools. Yet they don't care enough about our children or our families to spend the same amount of energy to address gun violence which kills far more people. Astounding isn't it?"—Jeanne, Mansfield, MA

"I was 10 years old when I watched my 12 year old brother inspect my dad's LOCKED UP gun. Three days later, I watched my brother's funeral. We MUST do something to stop this. I now have a son who is 11. I am very scared for him to even go to school. I know first hand that it CAN happen to you. In Memory of my brother and best Friend, Tim Polhamus."—Kathy Polhamus Wolak, Troy, MI

"The argument that we have a "right" to bear arms seems to be that we need these guns to "protect" ourselves, yet, the vast majority of law abiding citizens are not protected by this "right". They are, quite simply, endangered by it. The silent majority in

this country needs to get loud on this one! Protect our 6 year olds! Protect all our children! We need gun control NOW."—Geneva Bosak, Charlotte, NC

"Our elected officials will listen to only one thing—votes. Women have to vote for the candidates (at the state and national level) that commit to support legislation that meets our goals. For me this is an issue for which I'm willing to become a single-issue voter!"—Jennifer, Bethesda, MD

"Today the news of a young child killing another arrived at the same time as an appeal for money from the NRA! I can't say which made me sicker. I will go to Denver and march there for safe, sane gun control! COMBINED our voices will mean something!"—Vanessa Woodford, Dillon, CO

"How many children must die before this country decides to take action?? I think it is in the hands of mothers to take up this cause and protect our children. Look at the changes that MADD was able to bring about! Let's do the same with gun control!"—Karen, Simsbury, CT

"I thought for a long time about all the reasons that I'm involved in the MMM. But the one that resonates the loudest is GRATITUDE. My son and daughter both graduated from High School in 95'. And although I in no way believe that they are free from the dangers of gun violence, I am profoundly grateful that they survived that stage of their lives. I recently read a quote by Anne Morrow Lindbergh that says, "One can never pay in gratitude; one can only pay in kind somewhere else in life." I moved to Littleton almost two years ago and this is my "somewhere else in life".—Carmelita Garcia-Konrad, Littleton, CO

"Our children look to their parents for protection. What are we suppose to tell them when we can't? Who are we suppose to go to for help? It is the job of EVERY citizen in this country and EVERY government official to make sure our children are safe. Stricter gun laws are only meant to do ONE thing....PROTECT OUR CHILDREN! I am asking the government to please step up to the plate and protect them...after all aren't some of you parents too?"—Cindy Leberman, Bridgewater, NJ

"The message to congress is this—we want tight gun control, NOW, or you will be voted out of office. Vote with your bodies on Mothers' Day, and inundate congress with letters, e-mails, and phone calls today. Tell them—change the laws or we'll change the law-makers."—Kate Beyselance, Arlington, VA

"We must make common sense gun policy a populist mandate. The cynical federal and state legislators would rather reach into the deep pockets than protect our children. We can make enough of a commotion that they cannot continue to flaunt our will. See you at the Million Mom March!"—Catherine J. Moynihan, McLean, VA

"It is 4 a.m. and my daughter had that terrifying dream again...the one about the man with the gun...he'd already shot you and Dad, Mom...and now he's coming for me". Was my daughter affected by Columbine? I was! Sydney and I will be there in DC to march on Mother's Day. DAD too! PEACE."—Victoria Dym, Pittsburgh, PA

"My daughter survived Columbine, but looking into the faces of the parents that night who had not found their children was the hardest thing I've ever done. Although guns were not the only equation, how can we not do what we can to prevent this from happening again? How can gun commerce be more important than the lives and safety of our children? How can we face them and not

say that we have done all we can to protect them?"—B. Adams, Littleton, CO

"I have been a midwife for 25 years and have been privileged to be at the births of over one thousand babies. I am outraged that these precious children can be shot in the streets of our country while members of Congress turn their backs on families, extend their hands to the gun lobby for money and espouse "family values." Together we will finally end this violence."—Marion McCartney, Washington, DC

"I think that this is really great! I am in full support of this. My nephew was killed by gun violence two years ago leaving behind a little brother and now its time for me to stand up and protect him and keep him safe. Not just him but all the children of the world! A change has to be made right NOW!"—Lisa Southern, Temple Hills, MD

"Come on ladies, put your money where your mouth is, and support this cause. Every Body counts in DC. Make the decision to get to there, no matter what it takes, instead of thinking about it."—My kid's Mom, Montclair, NJ

"My father was murdered outside his place of business last January. Everyday I look at my two-year-old son and wonder how someday I will try to explain to him the horror that stole away my innocence about gun violence forever. It's time to raise our voices against this insanity. . . . NOW!"—Rabbi Joel Mosbacher, Atlanta, GA

"How many children have to die in this country before congress takes action? I sincerely believe that if the majority of this body of elected representatives were women that this problem would have been addressed long, long ago."—Melanie Fernandez, Duneedin, FL

"On November 30th, 1999 the husband of my cousin Barbara shot and killed her and their 13-year-old daughter in cold blood, with a legally owned handgun. Enough is enough. No more deaths. Take the toys away from the boys."—Nicole Whitman, Queens, NYC, NY

"A persons right to own a gun does not supercede a childs right to live."—Gloria Michalski, Hammond, IN

"My 8 month old son has become my life's inspiration. When he was born, my mother said to me "Los quieren tantos que ni quierens que el viento les pegue." *Translation: You love them so much that you don't even want the wind to hit them.*" She was right. On Mother's Day 2000 I will march with my mother and my three sisters, along with our husbands and children to say to Congress "Ya Basta! Enough is enough!" There is no love like that of a mother, and our passion will be our "weapon" against intransigent purveyors of violence and destruction."—Victoria R. Ballesteros, Los Angeles, CA

"This fight has been going on silently for far too long. The focus has gone away from childrens safety to politics. I am honored to be a part of the million mom march and do so because, as the mother of four children (ages 15 to 1) it is my responsibility to do everything within my power to ensure a safe future for them and their families. Millions of us will be unstoppable."—Jacquie Cofer, Jupiter, FL

"I am petrified every day that my children leave our home to go to school because in Louisiana EVERYONE (but us, it seems) has guns and hunts. My older son tells me that all of the kids in his 6th grade class hunt with guns. I am not ok with that as a mom or as an American.

Responsible gun laws means waiting periods, limits on sale AND limits on the ages of those using them. NO CHILD SHOULD USE

A GUN. Any parent who says they want to teach correct use of guns to a child is asking for trouble and putting my child at risk. I am with MMM 100% as a woman, mom, social worker, and human being!"—Barbara Pierce, Natchitoches, LA

"A close friend of mine once found a little boy that had been accidentally shot in the head by a friends' dads' gun. To this day she will never in a million years forget what it felt like to have that little boy tug and pull at her shirt during his last few moments alive. Had there been a trigger-lock on that firearm his life could've been saved. . . . As well as so many others . . ."—Angelique, Imperial Beach, CA

"As a physician assistant, I have had ample opportunity to see just what a bullet, fired by a gun, does to human flesh. Believe me, it is thoroughly disgusting, wholly obscene, sinful. Now, relate that description to the body of a child. Lastly, think of your own child . . .

Do you still want to do nothing?"—Patricia Hoppen, Saugerties, NY

"At 16 years old I was shot while baby-sitting and suffered permanent damage to my wrist. Now that I have a one month old son I want to insure that he, or any other child, doesn't suffer as I did."—Carol, Alpharetta, GA

"We have been quiet for too long. I'm tired of watching the NRA dictate arms control. I think there are more of us than them, and we need to get more vocal about it."—Stephanie, NY

"As a former ER nurse, never once did I see a robber shot by a home owner! All of the shootings were by people who knew each other."—Ivy, PA

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

INTRODUCTION OF THE U.S. CAPITOL FIRE PROTECTION ACT OF 2000

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, as the Twenty-first century dawns, fire remains a serious threat to life and property, especially for the U.S. Capitol, House and Senate office buildings, the Library of Congress, and their occupants and visitors. Today, with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON), co-chair of the Congressional Fire Caucus, and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ANDREWS), I am introducing a bill intended to enhance fire protection of the United States Capitol complex and the safety of the thousands who work in or visit the complex every day.

No one can deny that the Architect of the Capitol, the official responsible for operation and maintenance of the complex, has taken steps to improve fire safety on Capitol Hill. However, recent reports warn that much work remains in order to make these buildings safe. A December 1998 report by the House Inspector General found the condition of House's fire-protection systems, such as