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The courage of the "Little Rock Nine" (who stood in the face of violence, was one of the defining moments of the Civil Rights movement and changed American history by providing a foundation upon which to build greater equality.

I hope that the Senate will join me in passing this measure to commemorate the Little Rock Nine and the desegregation of Little Rock Central High School.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this bill and allow the measure to move forward in an effort to ensure that these extraordinary achievements are recorded and shared for future generations.

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I rise, along with my friend, colleague and fellow Arkansan, Senator MARK PRYOR, to introduce a bill to direct the Treasury to mint a commemorative coin in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the integration of Central High School in Little Rock, AR.

Our colleagues in the House have led the way in this effort with a bill written by Representative VIC SNYDER and co-sponsored by the entire Arkansas delegation.

On September 2, 1957, nine African-American students made their way to the front doors of Central High School in the city of Little Rock, AR. In our modern era, this seems like a very normal moment. And in truth there is nothing particularly special about students making their way to school on the first day of class. However, in 1957, this was a Nation changing event.

Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford, Jefferson Thomas, Terrence Roberts, Carlotta Walls, Minnijean Brown, Gloria Ray, Thelma Mothershed and Melba Pattillo showed courage in the face of strong opposition. Their principled stand helped to move the State and the Nation forward as it marched toward greater equality for all.

What happened in Little Rock almost 50 years ago is not only a testament to the Little Rock Nine, but it is also a testament to those who supported them. It is a testament to the people of Little Rock of all hues who decided that they would confront their own consciences. And it is testament to those who, upon reflecting on the matter, decided that doing what is right was worth the cost.

This decision to move this Nation forward makes me proud to be an Arkansan. It makes me proud to be an American. That's why I'm especially pleased to introduce this legislation to direct the Treasury to issue these commemorative coins. This bill is a small token of recognition of the gift that the Little Rock nine and the entire Little Rock community has given to this Nation.

I believe that someone who was there can say it better than I can. At the

20th anniversary of the integration of Central High, Ralph G. Brodie, the '57-'58 student body president, spoke at a special ceremony where he paid tribute to the Little Rock Nine. He addressed the three of the Little Rock Nine who were present saying: "You've done much to assure the rights of others. Yours were acts of courage, and I salute you."

I join him. I salute the Little Rock Nine and I salute those, both black and white, who helped to successfully integrate Central High School.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

#### THE GUN INDUSTRY IMMUNITY BILL

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I am disappointed to see the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act reintroduced. I supported the successful effort to defeat the gun industry immunity legislation during the 108th Congress and I continue to oppose the legislation.

The misnamed "Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act" would rewrite well-accepted principles of liability law, providing the gun industry legal protections not enjoyed by other industries. In addition, this bill would set a dangerous precedent by terminating a wide range of pending and prospective civil cases against members of the gun industry. It would give a single industry broad immunity from civil liability and deprive many victims of gun violence with legitimate cases of their day in court.

While most gun dealers and manufacturers conduct their business responsibly, this gun industry immunity legislation would provide protection from liability even in cases where gross negligence or recklessness lead to someone being injured or killed.

The reintroduction of this bill comes after the Supreme Court recently allowed a civil suit against members of the gun industry to progress in California. Reportedly, the plaintiffs in this case allege that the gun manufacturer being sued distributed guns to dealers who were likely to sell them illegally or through largely unregulated gun shows. Judge Richard Paez of the Ninth Circuit wrote of this case: The social value of manufacturing and distributing guns without taking basic steps to prevent these guns from reaching illegal purchasers and possessors cannot outweigh the public interest in keeping the guns out of the hands of those who in turn use them in crimes.

Last year, in a settlement that marked victory for the 2002 Washington, DC, area sniper shooting victims, Bushmaster Firearms, manufacturer of the XM-15 assault rifle used in the sniper attacks, agreed to pay \$550,000 in damages for negligence leading to criminal violence in connection with the shooting spree.

According to reports, Bushmaster continued to sell firearms, including the XM-15 assault rifle used in the sniper shootings, to Bull's Eye Shooter Supply in Tacoma, WA, even after several ATF audits documented the dealer's inability to responsibly account for its inventory of weapons. Reports indicate that 238 guns had gone missing from Bull's Eye's inventory and over 50 had been traced to criminal acts since 1997. The victims of the sniper shootings would have lost their ability to sue Bushmaster Firearms and Bull's Eye Shooter Supply had the gun industry immunity bill become law during the 108th Congress.

If it is enacted, this bill would substantially weaken the legal rights of gun violence victims. In addition, other industries will almost certainly line up for similar protections. This is unwise legislation and it should not be adopted.

#### ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

##### HOOSIER ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

• Mr. LUGAR. Mr. President, I rise today to share with my colleagues the winners of the 2004-2005 Dick Lugar/Indiana Farm Bureau/Farm Bureau Insurance Companies Youth Essay Contest.

In 1985, I joined with the Indiana Farm Bureau to sponsor an essay contest for eighth grade students in my home State. The purpose of this contest was to encourage young Hoosiers to recognize and appreciate the importance of Indiana agriculture in their lives and subsequently, craft an essay responding to the assigned theme. I, along with my friends at the Indiana Farm Bureau and Farm Bureau Insurance Companies, am pleased with the annual response to this contest and the quality of the essays received over the years.

I congratulate Thomas (Trey) Dunn III of Jay County and Brittany Lechner of Daviess County as winners of this year's contest. Likewise, I include the names of all of the district and county winners of the 2004-2005 Dick Lugar/Indiana Farm Bureau/Farm Bureau Insurance Companies Youth Essay Contest.

I ask that the following materials be printed in the RECORD.

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