



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins: Not an Anchor but a Mast

JACK M. MARTINS May 10, 2024

| ISSUE: **MOTHER'S DAY, MOTHERS**

Earlier this week, I set myself to writing a Mother's Day message. As I scrolled through hundreds of my old documents, I came across something I wrote in 2014 and realized my sentiments haven't changed a bit. The message is as true today as it was then. So – with some slight tweaks – I share this “oldie but goodie.” And...Happy Mother's Day.

My calendar is jam-packed. There are countless hours spent wading through paperwork and policy and long days turned to night in legislative session at the state house in Albany. When I'm home on Long Island, I'm working on dozens of constituent problems and a typical day includes functions and meetings throughout our various communities.

Now take into account that my brothers and sisters are just as busy. There are five of us siblings, with two sets of twins and as hectic as we are with our wives, husbands, children, and jobs, our entire family still regroups at my mother's house weekly to break bread with each other. For us it provides a much-needed respite and it reminds us that family is what's most important. Naturally, the home-cooking and camaraderie are key but truth be told, even the ear-splitting commotion the 18 of us make (21 with our dogs) is comforting to me. At the center of this whirlwind you will find my mom, who quietly brings this eclectic brood together in order to keep us moving forward.

To borrow a sentiment from the poet Khalil Gibran, our house is “not an anchor but a mast” and my mom continuously hoists it for us. That’s why no matter how crazy my schedule or stressful the situation, simply hearing her voice defuses a lot of pressure for me. Her love is unconditional and that somehow rights everything else.

That’s probably also why I believe so many of our societal ills could be helped by pursuing one simple strategy: to hold up and support the role of motherhood. I’m not alone in thinking so. One need only google the word online and thousands upon thousands of pages of research studies, papers and just plain old common sense make it clear: mothers play a pivotal role in societal development.

For most, the first real unit we belong to is family. It’s where we learn to interact, to grow and most important, where we develop a sense of belonging with accountability to someone other than ourselves. It’s microcosm of larger community, and since time immemorial mothers have been the primary shapers of that experience. Unfortunately, I think we’ve seen those qualities go haywire more and more as the role of family – any family – becomes diminished in our fast-paced world.

To be sure, we should celebrate the personal love we have for our moms and the love they have for us on Mother’s Day. But maybe we can honor them another way. Maybe we can use the day to recognize how vital mothers are to our society and commit ourselves to building them up, whomever and wherever they may be. I can think of no surer way to better our world than to make sure moms have the love and support they need to raise good families. Happy Mother’s Day to my mom, my wife, and to all the wonderful moms reading this column. Your gifts are immeasurable.