



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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## From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins

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### **Mother - The Great Vacationless Class**

Two sets of twins – same family – double doses of double trouble. That was life for my mom and dad: two sets of twins and another child just to stir things up. How they actually survived, especially mom, I'll never know. But having a weekly column I think it's high time I offer some reflection on and praise for the woman who so selflessly raised us. So I apologize in advance if this week's column sounds like I'm being sentimental about her. It's only because I absolutely am.

A great thing about a weekly column is it gives opportunity to spotlight groups whose work goes overlooked or underappreciated. I'd say that as a whole, moms pretty much head up those categories. My mom's a perfect example and I think her life is one that many can relate to. Hers was a typical immigrant story. She and my dad came to this country in the early '60s, and determined to make it in the construction trade, my father dedicated many long hours to growing his business. Mom understood that and supported him - or at least that's how it always appeared to us. With us kids and a full-time job, her hands were more than full, but like most kids, we never even noticed. Late for practice? Mom got you there. Argument with a friend? She was ready to listen. Hungry? Mom was cooking. Fall off your bike and scrape a

knee? She had ointment. Fall of your bike doing wheelies and break an arm? Yes, she was fuming but there she was in the emergency room. The author Ann Lindbergh wrote that mothers “are the only workers who do not have regular time off. They are the great vacationless class.”

As I look back, what’s amazing is that mom went about raising our sizeable family, quietly and stoically, without any fanfare. In a million, little, untold ways, she was the glue that kept us together. We gathered around her as a family would a hearth. She was, and still is, thank goodness, the center of it all - our rock and our strength. I know that many of you feel the same about women in your lives, so on behalf of all of us I offer all of them a most sincere and heartfelt “thank you.”

Lately the media has bombarded us with Presidential elections and various “attacks on women” and “attacks on motherhood.” I try not to pay it too much mind because it’s exceptionally offensive when politics starts messing around with the sacred. Call me overly cautious, but I think it’s still best to abide by playground rules in this matter. Mothers and motherhood are strictly off-limits. No matter our politics, it seems people too easily lose sight of the fact that mothers are the building blocks of civil society. Learn it from a sociology book, national study or just from common sense, but more than any other influence, mothers are largely responsible for the character of children. Their hands shape the men and women who shape our communities, nation and of course, our world. Be it George Washington or Picasso, everyone gives credit to mom.

So of course, on Mother’s Day, we honor the special women in our lives with flowers, dinner and the love in our hearts. But I think we might also try honoring motherhood in general throughout the year. Maybe it’s helping the single mom you know by watching her kids for a spell, or something as simple as running some errands for the harried mom with twins. Any help, courtesy, or kindness we show a mom actually reverberates for generations to come. In

that light, make it a happy Mother's Day every day!