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Supervisor Christopher P. St. Lawrence's Memorial Day Message – May 30, 2016

Memorial Day is the time for Americans to reconnect with their history and core values, by honoring those who gave their lives for the ideals we cherish.

In 1882, our nation observed its first official Memorial Day; a day set aside to remember and honor the sacrifices of those who died in our nation's wars. For decades Memorial Day was a day when stores closed and communities gathered together for parades and other celebrations with patriotic themes.

More than one million American service personnel died in wars this nation has fought since the first colonial soldiers took up arms in 1775 to fight for independence. Each person who died during these conflicts was a loved one cherished by family and friends.

We knew them as brothers and sisters, as husbands and wives, as children. They gave us hope and faith in the future. They gave us strength to overcome tyranny and human bondage. They gave us freedom. They often did not know why they were called to this duty or why they were asked to make this sacrifice. They only knew that their nation called and they willingly answered.

Sadly, many Americans have lost connection with their history. Memorial Day has come to mean simply a three day weekend or a major shopping day. Families still gather for picnics, but for many of them the spirit of remembrance is absent. In the words of President John F. Kennedy, "A nation reveals itself not only by the citizens it produces, but also by the citizens it honors, the citizens it remembers."

May God Bless all who died for the cause of freedom. The following poem is dedicated to their memory...

Freedom Is Not Free

I watched the flag pass one day,
It fluttered in the breeze
A young Marine saluted it
And then he stood at ease
I looked at him in uniform
So young, so tall, so proud
He'll stand out in any crowd
I thought how many men like him
Had fallen through the years
How many died on foreign soil?
How many mothers' tears?
How many pilots' planes shot down?
How many died at sea?
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?
No, freedom isn't free
Freedom isn't free.

Christopher P. St. Lawrence
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