

the world. We must promote tolerance and understanding. Only then will we have peace. When we remember the Armenian genocide we send a strong message to our global community that violence born of hatred and fear is unacceptable.

While reflecting on the tragedy that began in 1915, our thoughts inevitably turn to a present day tragedy: Bosnia. The world is just beginning to comprehend the atrocities that took place there. The international community is working tirelessly to piece this war torn country back together. However, like those lost in the Armenian genocide, no one can bring back the many precious lives that were lost for no valid reason in the Bosnian War.

I represent a large and active Armenian community in my district. They are hard working and proud of their heritage. As Representatives to the United States Congress, it is our duty to commemorate the Armenian genocide in the hope that future generations will never allow such a callous disregard for human rights to occur again.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. HOKE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HOKE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

RECOGNIZING THE 81ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. LEVIN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, April 24, 1996 marks the 81st anniversary of one of the world's most tragic events—the genocide of the Armenian people by the Young Turk government of the Ottoman Empire. The genocidal process which began in the 1890's, came to a peak in 1915 when the Turkish government began a systematic and willful attempt to wipe out the Armenian population of Anatolia, their historic homeland.

The process continued in 1918 and 1920 when Turkish armies invaded the Armenian Republic in the Caucasus in a heartless attempt to eradicate the remnant of the Armenian people who had taken refuge in a newly freed homeland. The final act of genocide was committed in Smyrna in 1922 when the Turkish Nationalist armies burnt the beautiful coastal city on the Mediterranean and drove its Armenian and Greek population into the sea in full sight of American and other European warships.

In all, over 1.5 million Armenians perished and over 500,000 more were left homeless and driven into exile.

While the Sultan's government, that of Damat Ferit Pasha, directly after

World War I held war crime trials and condemned to death the chief perpetrators of that heinous crime against humanity, the vast majority of the culpable were set free. From that day to the present, successive Turk governments have denied the Armenian Genocide and have attempted to spread doubt in the world community.

However, at the time, the United States had consular and embassy officials stationed in strategic locations in the Ottoman Empire and all these officials, including our Ambassador, Henry Morgenthau, reported the intent, the technique, and the results of Ottoman Turkey policy in detail to our own State Department. The records of these officials, demonstrate what the official records of all the European Powers revealed—including Turkey's allies Germany and Austria—that the genocide was a deliberate act on the part of the government to destroy a native ethnic and religious minority whose only crime was to be different.

All victims of man's inhumanity to man have the right to have their fate known and recorded. The survivors have the right to mourn the victims. And the world has the responsibility to see that the crime of genocide does not go unpunished, at the very least to the extent that the perpetrators are held up to universal opprobrium.

Genocide cannot be allowed to be a policy of state. A crime unpunished and unrepented is a crime which can and will be repeated. Even today, as I speak, the present Turkish Government is enforcing a blockade of Armenia blocking American humanitarian assistance from reaching that country. This aid, supported by this Congress, is prevented by the present government of Turkey from being transported to Armenia by land. Such a violation of fundamental principles of humane conduct cannot be allowed to continue.

This issue is not just an abstraction. Every year a substantial number of my constituents who I have known personally for many years, feel deep pain when April 24 comes about. A pain made worse by the fact that it is ignored by most media and the educated public. This is something that we must not let continue.

Take, for example, the Yessaian family, whose story is recorded in the book, "Out of Turkey," which is distributed by Wayne State University Press. Only six members out of a family of 37 survived the Genocide, and of the six, four had left Turkey prior to the onslaught. One of these survivors is alive today and can recall the heart wrenching experience of seeing his mother and his relatives perish before his very eyes. He still experiences nightmares to this very day.

Suren Aprahamian, also a survivor, has written his memoirs "From Van to Detroit: Surviving the Armenian Genocide," which were published in Ann Arbor, MI. He was among the few survivors of an extended family of over 40 and was forced to watch as old men,

women, and other children died one by one due to hunger, thirst, slaughter, and exposure.

Hundreds of other tragic stories of survivors have been preserved on oral history tapes which are on file at the Armenian Research Center of the University of Michigan-Dearborn, directed by another of my constituents, Dr. Dennis R. Papazian. These hundreds of stories, recited by innocent victims, provide a human dimension to the chilling horror of this cataclysm.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there are still many living survivors in my district. The memory of their tragedy still haunts them. They participate each year in commemoration ceremonies fighting against hope that the world will not forget their anguish. Fighting against hope that the present-day Turkish Government will show signs of remorse for a crime committed by their ancestors. Fighting against hope that the United States Government will again show signs of sympathy as it did in 1915-1920.

To me, Mr. Speaker, the Armenian Genocide is not just a footnote in history. It is something that many of my constituents feel very deeply about. It is an issue above politics and partisanship. It is a question of morality.

I am painfully aware of other recent and current acts of genocidal activities being carried on around the world. What began as an exception in the Armenian case, and which then shocked the civilized world, seems to be becoming almost commonplace. It is my belief that when governments are allowed to deny genocide with impunity, and its perpetrators escape punishment, it only encourages this dreadful virus to spread further in the international body politic.

Our Nation's strong support for human rights for all people is more important than ever as we witness the systematic extermination of innocent people caught up in ethnic and religious conflict.

We cannot let the Armenian Genocide be forgotten. To do so would be to doom future generations to the same curse. Only through remembering the past, and condemning genocide, can we stop such acts of hatred, cruelty and violence from happening again, again, and again.

□ 1815

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah [Mr. HANSEN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HANSEN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

SIEGE ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas [Ms. JACKSON-LEE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against the current siege on affirmative action. In my home State of Texas, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals recently struck down affirmative action in admissions at the University of Texas Law School in Hopwood versus State of Texas. Then just this week, a Federal judge in Houston temporarily barred the Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority from considering race or sex as factors in awarding contracts. I am very concerned about this case, and I have just asked that the Department of Transportation investigate this decision and the impact it will have on funding for the Houston Metro.

Why are we so quick to eradicate these programs, when it took so many years of struggle to even begin these programs? We should not act impulsively to abandon affirmative action. As long as there is discrimination based on race and gender, we must fashion remedies that take race and gender into account. Race- and gender-conscious remedies have proved essential and remain essential. All Americans want a color- or gender-blind society. That is our goal. But serious discrimination persists and we cannot ignore it.

In the Hopwood versus State of Texas case, the opinion suggested that affirmative action conflicts with merit-based admissions because of small differences in index ratings among nonminority and minority applicants. This is an incorrect definition of merit.

The president of Harvard University, Neil Rudenstine, has said: "Standardized tests do not assess qualities such as competitiveness, decisiveness, creativity, or imagination." Standardized test scores should not be the sole criteria for admissions. The definition of merit should include an assessment of what each student would bring to the learning experience of classmates.

Having a racially and ethnically diverse student body produces benefits for the students, for educational institutions, and for society as a whole. The chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley, one of the most highly regarded schools in the California system said "Excellence and diversity are woven from the same cloth—they are inextricably linked."

The former president of the University of Pennsylvania has said: "The most compelling institutional interest in achieving diversity is the educational necessity of preparing students to live in an increasingly diverse society." Indeed, many students have benefited from affirmative action in education.

It is no accident that as recently as 1974 racial and ethnic minority groups constituted only 1 percent of the University of Texas Law School's student body, while the same groups constituted 30 percent of the State's population. Only a policy of ethnic and race-consciousness led to the 1995–96 presence at the law school of a 17-percent-minority population in a student body that is still 58 percent male and 75 percent white, despite the fact that the State's minority population now stands at 40 percent. Clearly, the school's policy of attempting to insure some degree of diversity, from which everyone benefits, in the student body has not denied, or even appreciably affected the basically white, mostly male character of the school.

The present law of the land for affirmative action in education is the Supreme Court's 1978 decision in Bakke versus Regents of the University of California. This decision estab-

lished that a university, if it so chose, could employ race as one of the criteria to recruit and bring students of diverse backgrounds into its student population. This is a good rule which should not be rolled back.

I rise today to urge that we do not rush to tear down the affirmative action programs that have been essential in combating the pervasive discrimination that still exists in society today. Let us not roll back affirmative action just when we are beginning to see the benefits to society and business. A commitment to diversity in the work force is simply good business. Opening opportunities helps business compete in a global market and in a multicultural and multiethnic country such as ours.

We should not rush to scapegoat affirmative action as the cause of our economic problems. It is painfully ironic that affirmative action, which was put in place to correct the problems of discrimination, is now seen as a source of injustice. The appropriation of the language of the civil rights movement to now eliminate affirmative action is a perversion of the struggle for equality and justice that so many have fought so hard to begin. If we lose sight of the history of discrimination and injustice, we are doomed to repeat it.

The SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Oregon [Ms. FURSE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Ms. FURSE addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York [Mrs. MALONEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, as a proud member of the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues and the representative of a large and vibrant community of Armenian-Americans, I rise to remember, to commemorate the Armenian genocide.

First, I would like to commend the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PALLONE] and the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. PORTER], cochairs of the caucus, for all their hard work on this issue and other issues of human rights and international decency.

April 24, 1996, marks the 81st anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. It was on that day in 1915 that over 200 Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arrested and subsequently murdered in central Turkey.

This date marks the beginning of an organized campaign by the "Young Turk" government to eliminate the Armenians from the Ottoman Empire. Over the next 8 years, 1.5 million Armenians died at the hands of the Turks, and a half million more were deported.

This tragedy is the first genocide of the 20th century and is well documented. The New York Times alone ran over 194 articles during the Turkish atrocities.

As the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., has written: "When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race. They understood this well and made no particular attempt to conceal the fact."

Mr. Speaker, the time has come for Congress to put our government unequivocally on the side of the truth in this tragedy. I commend our colleagues, the gentleman from Michigan, DAVID BONIOR, and the gentleman from Massachusetts, PETER BLUTE, for introducing House Resolution 47, which I have cosponsored. This resolution not only represents official United States recognition of the memory of those who died, but will also put pressure on the Turkish government to do what it has so far callously refused to do: acknowledge and commemorate the atrocities committed over 81 years ago.

We must not condone Turkey's attempts at historical revisionism and denial of the Armenian genocide's occurrence.

Another issue of great importance to Armenia and Armenian-Americans is the Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act. Mr. Speaker, I was in Greece several years ago and saw, firsthand, warehouses full of United States humanitarian aid destined Armenia which could not be sent because Turkey was refusing to allow its transport.

While the situation has improved, this hateful practice must not be permitted by this Congress. We have addressed the issue on a temporary basis in the 1996 foreign aid appropriations bill, which included a temporary Humanitarian Aid Corridor Act. We need to make this permanent.

Nothing we can do or say will bring those who perished back to life, but we can imbue their memories with everlasting meaning by teaching the lessons of the Armenian genocide to future generations.

Adolf Hitler, in 1939, cruelly justified the Holocaust with the haunting and hateful words, "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"

My fellow Members, tonight we remember the Armenians. We speak for the Armenians, and by doing so we salute their indomitable spirit. By remembering the past, by honoring the Armenians' martyrdom and sacrifice, we will hopefully prevent similar atrocities in the future.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. ENGEL] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. ENGEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr.