

my votes. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea" on rollcall 92, "yea" on rollcall 93, "yea" on rollcall 94 and "yea" on rollcall 95.

DR. CARIDAD PEREZ COMPLETES
THIRTY YEARS OF ACADEMIC
EXCELLENCE

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today I am honored to pay tribute to Dr. Caridad Perez, a dear friend and an outstanding educator who had completed thirty years of excellent academic achievements.

As Principal of Edison Private School, Dr. Caridad Perez has been a positive influence in the lives of the many students with whom she actively interacts, as well as with the teachers and faculty members who seek her wisdom and experience for guidance.

It is through Dr. Caridad's leadership, hard work and dedication to improving the lives of youth that she has helped scores of students acquire not only an exceptional, solid education, but a strong sense of values and morals that will help carry each student through a lifetime of success.

On Sunday, April 25th, at the Tropicana Fontainebleau Hilton in Miami Beach, many of Dr. Caridad's grateful students and highly appreciative staff will gather for a festive luncheon accompanied by music to honor the loyal and beloved principal of Edison Private School for the praise and honor that she so earnestly deserves.

I ask that my Congressional colleagues join me in celebrating Dr. Caridad's thirty years in educational excellence.

84TH COMMEMORATION OF
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 21, 1999

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 84th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. On April 24, 1915, a group of Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were summarily arrested, taken to Turkey and murdered, commencing a dark and solemn period in the history of Armenians. From 1915 to 1923, the Ottoman Empire launched a systematic campaign to exterminate Armenians. In eight short years, more than 1.5 million Armenians suffered through atrocities such as deportation, forced slavery, and torture. Most were ultimately slaughtered.

And yet, despite irrefutable evidence, Turkey has refused to admit the Armenian Genocide occurred, and continues to harbor hatred towards its neighbors. In addition to denying the crimes committed against the Armenian people, Turkey continues to block the flow of humanitarian aid and commerce to Armenia.

In the face of this tragedy, children and grandchildren of the survivors of the Armenian Genocide have gone on to positively impact society, while at the same time preserving

their heritage and unique identity. Over 60,000 Armenian-Americans live in the greater Boston area. Within Massachusetts, many of these Armenians have formed public outreach groups seeking to educate society about Armenia's culture. One particular group, Project Save, operates out of Watertown, Massachusetts. "Project Save collects photographs of Armenian people and places in the homeland and the world-wide diaspora." This remarkable organization preserves the Armenian culture and history through restoration of photographs from all over the world. Some of these photographs date back as early as 1893.

Last year, the world, once again, united to condemn atrocities committed towards fellow human beings. Both the United Nations Human Rights Commission and the General Assembly adopted a resolution, introduced by Armenian Ambassador Rouben Shugarian, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the UN Genocide Convention. By adopting the resolution, member nations recognized that "the crime of genocide [was] an odious scourge which had inflicted great losses on humanity and was convinced that international cooperation was required to facilitate the speedy prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide." Here in the United States Congress, I am a proud cosponsor of a resolution honoring the memory of the victims of the Armenian genocide and calling for the United States to encourage the Republic of Turkey to acknowledge and commemorate the atrocity committed against the Armenian population by the Ottoman Empire.

It is sad and frustrating that at the beginning of this century, Armenians were murdered en masse, and now at the end of the 20th century the same type of brutal killing of innocent people continues. Since 1988, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has cost thousands of lives and produced over 1.4 million refugees.

Let me say, that as a member of the Congressional Armenian caucus, I will continue to work with my colleagues and with the Armenian-Americans in my district. Together we will demand more accountability from Azerbaijan and Turkey for their persistent bullying of their neighbor and search for a way to end the Armenian people's suffering. We must continue to be vigilant, we must preserve the cultural history of Armenians, and we must work towards ending crimes against all humanity.

EARTH DAY 1999

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as a member of this body, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Earth Day. We have made great strides in elevating the protection and knowledge of our treasured natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, Earth Day matters. It raises the awareness of Americans and is a catalyst for positive change. Since the first Earth Day in 1970, Americans have gathered to celebrate the preservation of our environment and to focus on the work that is left to be done. Earth Day has always been a day to celebrate the environment and our natural heritage. It has also served to mark the importance of environmental protection and responsible living.

Earth Day has been a catalyst for the enactment of some of our nation's most important laws. Laws such as the Clean Air Act of 1970; The Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Act and the Community Right-to-Know laws. These laws have enabled regulatory agencies to better understand what, where, and when pollutants enter our environment.

I am proud of my strong environmental voting record. I strongly support H.R. 525, the Defense of the Environment Act. I challenge my colleagues to work towards its passage. I can think of no better way to commemorate the importance of Earth Day than to pass this comprehensive bill.

I am also proud to support H.R. 960, Endangered Species Recovery Act of 1999. If passed, this bill would ensure the recovery of our Nation's declining biological diversity; reaffirm and strengthen this Nation's commitment to protect wildlife; safeguard our children's economic and ecological future; and provide assurances to local governments, communities, and individuals in their planning and economic development efforts.

Earth Day must also serve as a reminder that even today, we still have a need for improvement. People in our poorest communities are struggling for environmental justice. They continue to struggle for their civil and human rights here and abroad. From Louisiana's "Cancer Alley" to Native American reservations' nuclear problems, and from the plight of the people living along the border in the Maquiladora region to Chicago's West and South Side, millions of Americans live in housing and surrounded by physical environments that are over-burdened with environmental problems from hazardous waste, toxins and dioxins, incinerators, petrochemical plants, lead contamination, polluted air and unsafe water. These factors continue to pose a real and grave threat to our nation's public health.

Environmental Justice matters. We must begin to eliminate the mentality that our nation's poorest communities can be used as dumping grounds for our industrial achievements. We must begin to look at the issues of unequal distribution and disproportional impacts on minorities, as well as the problems of green space and living standards. Low income communities must not bear the brunt of selective environmental standards. Today we must mark a new dedication towards bringing a more proper balance to the widening gap between rich and poor community standards.

I also want to speak briefly about our commitments to the international community. It is clear today, maybe more so than in 1970, that there is a global connection through the environment. Since the formation of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1949 and the more recent meeting of the Kyoto convention, we have begun the needed international monitoring and protection of our environment on a global scale. We now must begin to realize the responsibility we have in providing under developed nation with the environmental technology that will allow them to grow as they move towards a more industrialized society.

So today as we mark the 29th anniversary of the first Earth Day, I am reminded that although we in the United States have made major improvements in the last 20 years, we have a way to go and look forward toward this improvement. We must also strive as global citizens toward safer drinking water and cleaner air at home and abroad.

In closing, I leave you with this thought, it is not a question of whether we can afford to protect the environment, rather it is a question of whether we can afford not to.

EXPOSING RACISM

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 22, 1999

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, in my continuing efforts to document and expose racism in America, I submit the following articles into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

[From the New York Times, Feb. 24, 1999]

47 PERCENT IN POLL VIEW LEGAL SYSTEM AS UNFAIR TO POOR AND MINORITIES

(By Linda Greenhouse)

WASHINGTON—Despite having only a minimal knowledge of the legal system, nearly half of the public thinks it treats minorities and the poor unfairly, a survey conducted for the American Bar Association indicates.

In the months before William H. Rehnquist raised his public profile by presiding over the Senate impeachment trial, only 17 percent could identify him as Chief Justice of the United States. More than one-third of those responding held the mistaken belief that in a criminal trial, it is up to the defendant to prove his innocence.

But a surprising 96 percent knew that a criminal defendant who is found not guilty can still be sued in a civil trial. The survey report, made public by the bar association today, speculated that widespread knowledge of this "relatively obscure concept" might be attributed to the intense coverage of O.J. Simpson's consecutive criminal and civil trials.

While most people believe that "the justice system needs a complete overhaul" and that "we would be better off with fewer lawyers," the public still agrees by a strong majority, 8 out of 10, that "in spite of its problems, the American justice system is still the best in the world," according to the survey.

But of the 1,000 adults polled by telephone in August, 47 percent said they believed that the courts did not "treat all ethnic and racial groups the same." Thirty-nine percent said there was equitable treatment of minorities and 14 percent had no opinion. Also, 90 percent of respondents said affluent people and corporations had an unfair advantage in court.

The bar group's president, Philip S. Anderson, who commissioned the survey, said in a statement that while he was cheered by the results showing public confidence in the system, he was disturbed by the indication that substantial numbers of people discerned racial unfairness in the behavior of courts and law-enforcement authorities.

"We are concerned that the current perception of bias will eventually erode confidence in our system of justice," Anderson said in remarks prepared for delivery on Wednesday at the National Press Club.

The results of the nationwide telephone survey are to be presented and discussed at a bar association symposium here later this week on "public understanding and perceptions of the American justice system."

An independent research firm in Chicago, M/A/R/C Research, conducted the survey, which had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus three percentage points.

The news media fared badly in public confidence, in fact worse than any other institu-

tion. Eight percent of the people had strong confidence in the news media, while 60 percent expressed slight or no confidence. The Supreme Court, by contrast, was at the top of the list, with 50 percent of the people expressing strong confidence in it. Compared with a similar survey conducted in 1978, public confidence in all levels of the judicial system has increased, while confidence in doctors, organized religion, public schools and Congress, as well as the news media, has declined. A majority rejected the statement that "the courts are just puppets of the political system."

Anderson, the bar group's president, urged the Supreme Court to enhance public understanding of the law by allowing television cameras into its argument sessions.

"One television camera in the Supreme court will educate more people more effectively in one morning than the traditional methods can reach in one year," he said.

Some of the survey's results appeared certain to warm the hearts of the American Bar Association's 400,000 members. Of people who had used a lawyer within the past five years, three-quarters were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the quality of service, with 53 percent in the "very satisfied" category.

Most people agreed that "it would be easy to get a lawyer if I needed one," while at the same time expressing the view that "it costs too much to go to court" and "it takes courts too long" to do their job.

THOMPSON DOESN'T CONDONE COUNCILMAN'S ACTIONS

JACKSON, MS.—U.S. Congressman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., says he doesn't condone the actions of former City Council President Louis Armstrong, but he warns people not to condemn his longtime friend.

Armstrong pleaded guilty last week in U.S. District Court to charges of conspiracy to commit extortion and accepting part of a \$25,000 bribe to influence a council vote on rezoning a topless bar. He is scheduled to be sentenced May 7.

Artie Armstrong, 30, his eldest son, faces trial March 1 on bribery, extortion and conspiracy charges in the same case.

"Nobody really supports individuals doing wrong. As long as the pursuit of the wrong-doers is within the confines of the laws and on balance, then the general public will support it. And I don't know any people that I talk to who support people doing wrong," Thompson said.

"People sympathize with people who make mistakes. And those people who are Christian hope that the people who do wrong will see the error of their ways and seek some opportunities for redemption."

Former state senator Henry J. Kirksey says FBI investigations into alleged corruption by black Jackson City officials and business leaders, like Armstrong and his son, are not based on race.

The veteran lawmaker who has been active in state and local politics criticized those who are labeling recent FBI investigations as selective prosecution of minorities.

Kirksey says last week's guilty plea by Armstrong, who is black, to bribery and extortion charges reflects the mentality of some politicians who have risen to power and subsequently abused it in search of the dollar.

"They are teaching that to their children—'You get it anyway you can'—and that's why the jails and detention centers are loaded with blacks," Kirksey said. "The problem is there is something wrong at City Hall, and it's not all just Louis Armstrong, either."

Councilmen Kenneth Stokes and Robert Williams testified during the December trial

of two businessmen charged in the FBI cable investigation that they were never offered any money in exchange for their votes.

The councilmen have not been charged with wrongdoing. Car salesman Robert Williams, 50, and snack food distributor Roy Dixon, 56, were convicted Dec. 11 of conspiring to extort \$150,000 from Time Warner Cable in an attempt to influence the city council's vote on the franchise renewal.

On Friday, U.S. District Judge Tom S. Lee gave Williams 21 months in prison and two years supervised probation.

U.S. Attorney Brad Pigott said the FBI's investigations centered only on criminal actions of suspects, not their race. He pointed to the guilty pleas of Armstrong and Clinton Moses Jr., a confessed bank robber who on Friday admitted he firebombed the Jackson Advocate and accused Armstrong of hiring him.

"From the fact that both of them have every reason to expect to go to prison for having confessed under oath for their criminal conduct, I certainly don't see where the room is to see that they're both just lying so that they can have the chance to go prison," Pigott said.

Moses, who worked in Armstrong's 1997 reelection campaign, told authorities that Armstrong paid him \$500 to burn the black weekly newspaper.

Pigott won't say whether Armstrong will be charged in the Advocate's firebombing.

SCHOOL OFFICIALS SAY RACIAL TENSION A PROBLEM AMONG STUDENTS

FARMINGTON HILLS, MI.—School officials in several Detroit area schools find themselves investigating incidents linked to racial tension—and they're searching for ways to head off violence within school walls.

Kim Kennedy, who is black, never thought her son, Jeffrey, would have to face the kind of racial attacks she felt growing up in Detroit. Her son attends Walled Lake Western High School, where in January he was involved in a racially motivated fight.

"I never thought my children would have to experience what happened to us in the 1960s," Ms. Kennedy, 38, of Farmington Hills told The Detroit News for a Thursday story. "Sometimes, I question whether we made the right decision moving here."

Other recent racial incidents in area schools include: Dearborn Edsel Ford High School. On Dec. 2, an altercation between several Arab and non-Arab students escalated into a food fight.

West Bloomfield High School. Last week, tempers flared between groups of Chaldean-American and African-American students in the school's cafeteria.

Saline High School. Three white students were charged with felony ethnic intimidation in connection with a Dec. 17, 1998, hallway fight with two black students. A preliminary examination is scheduled for March 23.

Experts say schools can and should take responsibility for helping to solve ethnic and racial tensions—even though the conflict usually begins outside the schools.

"Schools must be on top of what is creating the tension, and be proactive, rather than waiting for something to happen," University of Michigan education professor Percy Bates said.

In Walled Lake, about 25 parents attended a "racial summit" for parents a week after the Jan. 21 incident involving Kennedy, 14, and several other students. Many of the students—including Kennedy—were suspended and one was expelled.

"We promised parents that the administration would meet with them to discuss their concerns and to invite them to participate in