

referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

1630

#### REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1824

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my name be removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 1824.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

#### SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

#### ST. PETER'S MASS HOSTED BY REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KLECZKA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KLECZKA. Mr. Speaker, today's mass at St. Peter's will be hosted by the Republican Conference. The homily will be given by the House Chaplain and he will speak in support of the H.R. 4199, to abolish the Tax Code by the year 2004. Does that sound ridiculous to my colleagues? It sure does to me as a Catholic Member of this House.

But let me review for my colleagues what transpired yesterday. There was a mass at St. Peter's hosted by the Republican National Committee to honor and to introduce the new chaplain of the House followed by a reception in the church basement.

We were told that all Members were invited to mass. But in reality, only 26 Republicans were given the invitation.

Mr. Speaker, masses have been conducted in this world by Catholic clergy for centuries; and never, never in my recollection have they been hosted by a political party.

I think it is wrong. I think it is misdirected. And I am told at the mass itself speaking to the congregation was the chairman of the Republican National Committee, Mr. Nicholson, and a former Member of this House who headed up the campaign committee.

I think the Republicans have gone too far this time. For those of my colleagues who do not know the background, the chaplain of the House announced he was retiring. The Speaker appointed a bipartisan Search Committee made up of nine Republicans and nine Democrats to find a new chaplain. They interviewed 37 clergymen, and they came up with the top choice of a Catholic priest.

But that was not to be. The Republicans would not stand still for a Catholic, the first in the history of this country to be chaplain of this House.

So they bypassed him for the man who came in number three. Then a big uproar occurred.

Catholics throughout the country were just totally up in arms, and they knew they were going to lose the Catholic vote this November. So what do they do? They bring a resolution to the floor praising the Catholic schools.

I am a product of that Catholic education. I do not need my Republican colleagues telling me how good the education is. They kept slipping with the Catholics. Then they found Cardinal O'Connor in New York. So one day we had a resolution to give him a gold medal and that still did not help the slippage with the Catholic vote.

So then the Speaker swallowed his pride and he himself appointed a Catholic priest from Chicago who was not interviewed by the committee but he was a Catholic, and he thought that would stop the hemorrhage of the loss of the Catholic vote; and everything was quiet for a couple weeks and we started to heal. And then, out of the blue, comes a mass at St. Peter's sponsored by the Republican National Committee.

Mr. Speaker, today the only word that my colleagues could come up with was this is "disgusting." The Catholic celebration of mass does not need promotion from my colleagues, guys. We go there voluntarily. If it was the Democratic party pulling this nonsense, I would be on this floor tonight.

When is this going to stop? Are they going to ridicule my entire religion? Have they bought into the notion from Bob Jones University that we are a cult, that the Pope is anti-Christ?

In the press reports today on this debacle, we are told by a spokesman for the Republican National Committee that he is sorry that some Democrats were finding fault with this event, with this "event."

The mastermind who they dusted off, a former ambassador to the Vatican, stated in this article, I have been to events sponsored by lots of organizations, including Democrats, and there has never been any problem.

Is this an event? Is this like a college football bowl game where there is a sponsor, the Rose Bowl is brought to us by Microsoft, today's mass is brought to us by some foundation?

Mr. Speaker, the Republicans in the House have gone over the line. I have asked the Catholic Bishop's Conference to review this matter. I believe that what they have done is turn this Catholic chaplain into a Republican poster-priest.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 gentle-

woman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### ANSWERS FROM NATIONAL READING PANEL ON AMERICAN CHILDREN'S READING LEVELS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Ms. NORTHUP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTHUP. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow is an important day for all of our schoolchildren and all of our children across this country.

When I came to Congress 3½ years ago, the rate of children that could not even read at basic level in our schools across this country was 40 percent. Forty percent of all schoolchildren in the fourth grade could not even read at basic levels.

Clearly, as we have poured resources, we have poured time and attention and research into making sure our children all learn to read, we were missing the mark with some our children.

I am sure all of us do not need to be reminded how important it is that children learn to read. They learn to read first in kindergarten and first grade so that they can go on about in fourth grade to other things: science, health, geography, social studies, all other subjects that require good reading skills.

We also know from research that if a child does not learn to read by the beginning of fourth grade, there is a very strong probability that that child will never learn to read at their capacity. Because, in those early years, children are at the stage of brain development where they can learn to read, learn to read quickly, and accurately, learn fluency, and learn to put what they see on the written page into understanding ideas and convert it and learn that information.

That is a time in their lives where they are particularly adept at that; and if they miss that opportunity, they are going to find it very difficult at any age and with any amount of work to learn to read at their capacity.

So it is a serious problem in this country that we confront today as so many of our children miss this time in their lives when they learn to read.

We know that everybody means for children to read, and we believe that all children can learn at a high level. And so, it was important that we ask the question, what are we doing that is not right? What are we missing? The questions that need to be answered are, how do children learn to read? At what age do children go through the stages of learning to read? We need to know at what time we need to intervene when children are not going through those stages and are not learning to read as we hope they will. And what kind of intervention works best?

Three years ago, Congress put into the appropriations bill for the education appropriation and health education a research requirement that the Department of Education and the National Institute of Child Health and Development together look at all research that has been done on how children learn to read to give us a better road map, answer the questions that have so confounded us for so many of our children.

Today, I am thrilled to know that tomorrow the National Reading Panel is going to give us their answers. They are going to tell us what all the research together tells us about how children learn to read. They are going to answer many of the questions that we have, many of the questions that our teachers around this country want so that they can have a better road map as they approach reading in ways that are the most effective.

I am here today to share with the American people and with the Congress the importance that, number one, we have this information; number two, that we make sure that our teachers in our schools around the country get this information and that it is incorporated into our lessons as we go forward in our efforts to make sure that every child learn and learn at a high level; number 3, that we make sure that all future research is done according to standards that will give us the feedback we need to answer additional questions that we have.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that our children are waiting for us to have this answer. They only get to be 6 years old once in their life. They only get to be in that time of their life once where they can learn to read and they can learn to read well. After that, it is a struggle.

And so, for every child that today is in the first grade, for every child that tomorrow and next year will be in the first grade, let us make sure that we listen to what the scientists can tell us. They can give us a good road map on what we are doing right and what we are doing wrong. And may we please not be so closed minded or set in our ways that we cannot change and adjust and incorporate in our schools and in our children's lives this information that we have waited so long for.

#### ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. CROWLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CROWLEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) for organizing this special order this evening on the Armenian genocide.

The leadership on this issue of importance to Armenian people has been vital. It is with some sadness that I know this will be the last statement of the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. PORTER) on the Armenian genocide in this

body, and I thank the gentleman for all his fine work.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take note of the tragic occurrences perpetrated on the Armenian people between 1915 and 1923 by the Ottoman Turkish Empire.

During this relatively brief time frame, over 1½ million Armenians were massacred and over 500,000 were exiled. Unfortunately, the Turkish Government still has not recognized these brutal acts as acts of genocide, nor come to terms with its participation in these horrific events.

1645

I believe that by failing to recognize such barbaric acts, one becomes complicit in them. That is why as a New York State assemblyman, I was proud to support legislation adding lessons on human rights and genocide to the State education curricula. I am also a proud cosponsor of H. Res. 398, the United States Training on and Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide Resolution.

H. Res. 398 calls upon the President to provide for appropriate training and materials to all foreign service officers, officials of the Department of State, and any other executive branch employee involved in responding to issues related to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide by familiarizing themselves with the U.S. record relating to the Armenian Genocide.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this very important resolution.

April 24 is recognized as the anniversary date of the Armenian Genocide. The history of this date stretches back to 1915, when on April 24, 300 Armenian leaders, intellectuals and professionals in Constantinople were rounded up, deported and killed, beginning the period known as the Armenian Genocide.

Prior to the Armenian Genocide, these brave people with the history of well over 3,000 years old were subject to numerous indignities and periodic massacres by the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire. The worst of these massacres occurred in 1895 when as many as 300,000 Armenian civilians were brutally massacred and thousands more were left destitute. Additional massacres were committed in 1909 and 1920. By 1922, Armenians had been eradicated from their homeland.

Yet, despite these events, the Armenian people survived as a people and a culture in both Europe and the United States. My congressional district has a number of Armenians, especially in the Woodside community, and their community activism is extraordinary, to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, I make note of this because of a statement by Adolph Hitler when speaking about the "final solution," when he said who remembers the Armenians. Mr. Speaker, I remember the Armenians and so do many of my colleagues speaking here this evening.

#### ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUTKNECHT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROGAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join so many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle tonight to rise in support of House Resolution 398 commemorating the Armenian Genocide. House Resolution 398 is a necessary step for our government to take, a recognition of the historical truth of one of history's cruelest acts against a great and good people.

Between 1915 and 1923, over 1 million Armenians whose ancestors had inhabited their homeland since the time of Christ were displaced, deported, tortured and killed at the hands of the Ottoman Empire. Families were slaughtered. Homes were burned. Villages were destroyed and lives were torn apart.

Regrettably in the years since, officials from what is now Turkey have denied this history and failed to recognize the truth, the historical truth of the Armenian Genocide.

Mr. Speaker, as their loved ones were killed, many right before their very eyes, more than 1 million Armenians managed to escape and establish a new life here in the United States. I am honored to have a large portion of the Armenian American community residing in my district in and around Glendale, California.

The Armenian people suffered a horrific tragedy in the first part of the 20th century. Today, our government can work to ensure that the 21st century is a century free both from genocide, and also free from lies.

We must not stray from our work to embrace democracy and build a world that is free from suffering on this immense scale, but that building can never happen as long as we allow one of the worst slaughters in world history to continue to go being unrecognized.

Mr. Speaker, I went through 4 years of college and never once heard about the Armenian Genocide in public schools. We have whole generations of people that have been raised not knowing anything about it because it is not politically correct to teach it in our schools, because we are afraid it might offend an oil-producing Nation with whom we have commercial or military ties.

I just think that that is a wrong-headed approach. It is a disgrace for our Congress. And the purpose of House Resolution 398 is to take a major step toward right and toward morality and recognizing this historical truth.

Today on the eve of the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, I ask my colleagues to join with our bipartisan group that you have already heard from tonight and will hear from again in support of House Resolution 398 to commemorate the Armenian Genocide.

Having visited the Republic of Armenian and also Nagorno-Karabakh just a