

one of the most awful events in modern history. Many are not aware that Ottoman officials expelled millions of Armenians from the homelands they had inhabited for over 2,500 years. They are not aware that Ottoman officials attempted to exterminate the Armenian race and the precedent this event set for the genocides that followed. It is distressing that horrors of this magnitude have largely been forgotten.

Even more disturbing are the governments, institutions, scholars, and individuals who deny the enormity of these crimes against humanity. It is inconceivable that individuals and governments continue to ignore the substantial evidence—including numerous survivor accounts, photodocumentaries, and official documents in the archives of the United States, Britain, France, Austria, and the Vatican—that prove these atrocities took place. It is also frustrating that some rationalize these crimes or refuse to recognize this premeditated ethnic cleansing as genocide.

The international community must deal honestly with this senseless genocide. World leaders must rise above indifference and the political considerations that they have covered behind. They must unequivocally acknowledge the murders of one and a half million Armenians that began in 1915 for what it is—genocide. They must use their position to reveal the truth and bring attention to this tragedy that has been overlooked and brushed aside for too long.

We all want to forget these horrific tragedies in our history and bury them in the past. However, understanding the immeasurable wrongs the Armenian people endured—and the mass scale on which they occurred—is vital to grasping the impact these events continue to have on the stability of the region. It is only through the painful process of acknowledging and discussing these horrific events that we can prevent similar iniquity in the future.

We owe full recognition and acceptance of these crimes to the one and half million victims of the Armenian Genocide. Anything less is an insult to their memory.

#### PAYING TRIBUTE TO LUCY RICKMAN

**HON. SCOTT MCINNIS**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 28, 2004*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank Lucy Rickman, an extraordinary woman from my district. Lucy will soon be retiring as the director of The Haven, an assisted living center in Hayden, Colorado, where she has worked since its inception in 1992. She has dedicated an extraordinary amount of time, effort, and care into the project, and it is my privilege to recognize her career here today.

Seeing the need for an assisted living center in Hayden, Lucy became heavily involved in The Havens planning and design. After thirty-four years of teaching English and Social Studies to seventh and eighth graders, Lucy became director of The Haven in 2000. Lucy saw to it that the facility grew and became a success, and worked to obtain grants for the center totaling \$115,000. A firm believer in grassroots community involvement, she has

implemented events such as senior visit lunch Fridays, holiday light tours, and socials in the town park.

Mr. Speaker, Lucy has been a vital part of The Haven's formation and operation since its beginning, and it is my pleasure to recognize her today before this body of Congress and this nation. Her hard work and dedication are largely responsible for The Haven's existence and success. Thanks for your service Lucy, and I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS NURSE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACT

**HON. ROB SIMMONS**

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 28, 2004*

Mr. SIMMONS. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation that would authorize several new and innovative initiatives to attract and retain nursing personnel in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

Since 1996, the number of patients treated annually by VA has risen by 70 percent. During this same period of growing demand for VA health care services, the number of nursing program graduates nationwide began to fall, along with the number of registered nurses employed in nursing. The latest U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration report projects that the shortage of nurses this year will reach about 138,322 nationally, and will rise to about 808,416 in 2020.

Today, about 7.6 million veterans are enrolled in VA health care and in 2010 it is estimated that this number will grow to approximately 8.4 million. VA cannot meet the future health care burden for caregivers without an adequate supply of nurses in its 1,300 facilities. VA's nurse vacancy and turnover rates have greatly increased since 1998. Unless we create incentives and opportunities for experienced caregivers to choose VA as a professional career, our nation's veterans will suffer.

First, my legislation would authorize a new initiative to improve VA's program for recruiting nurses through the use of outside recruitment, advertising, and communication agencies, and the use of interactive and online technologies. The federal government's recruitment process is not responsive to the market conditions for recruitment of nursing personnel. In order to address the human capital challenges in the VA, the Department needs better tools and strategies to plan, attract, assess, hire and manage its recruitment process for nurses. This pilot program would test whether such tools can fit VA's needs.

The VA health care system has over 200,000 employees, ranking it among the top 25 largest employers as defined in the Hoover's Handbook of American Business. The VA health care system has more employees than, for example, Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the Kaiser Foundation Health Plan and Manor Care, Inc., and is the largest employer of registered nurses in this country. In the private sector, human resources professionals have developed and are successfully using internet-based recruitment tools, but VA's use of such tools is extremely limited. Forrester Research, an independent technology re-

search company that provides advice about technology's impact on business, recently reported that 100% of Fortune 500 companies are now using online recruiting. It is in the best interest of VA to capitalize on this best practice of private industry. I believe that streamlining the recruitment process to offer nursing employment opportunities in an appealing and contemporary format will attract talented nurses to fill Department vacancies.

The bill would enhance VA's ability to provide nurses flexible work schedules by authorizing three different options for alternative tours of duty to accommodate the personal needs of nurses to have more control over their schedules. Nurses are the front line providers of care and their continued dedication and support makes patients' lives better and doctors' jobs easier. According to an American Organization of Nurse Executives survey, a major cause of dissatisfaction in the nursing workforce is inflexible work schedules. Offering more family friendly schedules is critical to keeping experienced nurses employed in the VA.

My bill would also clarify that the Department's policy for nurse recruitment should focus on the registered nurse's clinical competencies and direct patient care performance. If a nurse has presented or accomplished the required elements for VA employment, the lack of a specific educational degree should not be a factor in VA's hiring decision. Recent testimony before the National Commission on VA Nursing, established in Public Law 107-135, called attention to a concern that VA's policies under its nurse qualification standards discourage some nurses with associate degrees in nursing from seeking employment in VA because they are not judged for their experience and expertise, but are disqualified because they do not possess a baccalaureate degree in nursing.

The American Association of Community Colleges reports that 62 percent of employed staff nurses, including 45 percent in nurse clinician positions, 42 percent in clinical nurse specialist positions, 52 percent in head nurse positions and 65 percent in nurse supervisor positions received their nursing educational preparation through associate degree or diploma nursing programs.

Regardless of educational preparation, all nursing graduates must pass rigorous licensing examinations administered by state governments. Once licensed, they perform the identical scope of nursing practice under state law. A recent review of test data by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing indicates that the pass rates of nurses trained with associate and baccalaureate degrees are virtually identical. However, notwithstanding their years of bedside nursing or clinical proficiency, VA will not hire nurses above the entry Nurse Level I position unless they have baccalaureate degrees. VA is losing the opportunity to bring experienced, qualified nurses into its system because of this policy.

Finally, the bill would make technical corrections and incorporate blind rehabilitation specialists in the list of certain positions that the VA is permitted to hire through use of the direct appointment authority provided in title 38, United States Code. The use of this so-called "hybrid Title 38" authority enhances VA's ability to hire clinical staff in a timely fashion to maintain the necessary level of highly-trained staff.

It is vital for the health of our veterans that VA possesses the tools to employ and retain experienced nurses in the VA health care system. I look forward to seeing the VA nursing workforce grow as a result of the enactment of the measures contained in my bill and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

# PAYING TRIBUTE TO JOHN E. KAPUSHION

## HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 28, 2004*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to pay tribute to the life and memory of John Kapushion of Pueblo, Colorado, who passed away recently at the age of eighty-three. John was a true American patriot, and a beloved friend and colleague to many in his Colorado community. As his family and community mourn his passing, I believe it is appropriate to recognize the life of this exceptional man, and his many contributions to his community, state and country.

Born and raised in Crested Butte, Colorado, John proudly served his country in World War II under General George Patton. After the war, he moved to Pueblo where he worked as an electrician for Colorado Fuel and Iron until his retirement in 1982. An avid outdoorsman, John enjoyed fishing and hunting, as well as spending summers with his family in the mountains of Crested Butte. He was also active in his community, serving as a member of the American Legion.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise before this body of Congress and this nation to recognize the life of John Kapushion. He dedicated his life toward the betterment of his community, state and nation, and he will be greatly missed. My thoughts are with his loved ones during this difficult time of bereavement.

## SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate on February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place, and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled, and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, April 29, 2004 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

## MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MAY 4

2:30 p.m.

Armed Services

Airland Subcommittee

Closed business meeting to markup those provisions, which fall within the juris-

diction of the subcommittee, of proposed legislation authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense.

SR-222

3:30 p.m.

Armed Services

SeaPower Subcommittee

Closed business meeting to markup those provisions, which fall within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee, of proposed legislation authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense.

SR-232A

5 p.m.

Armed Services

Emerging Threats and Capabilities Subcommittee

Closed business meeting to markup those provisions, which fall within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee, of proposed legislation authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense.

SR-222

MAY 5

9 a.m.

Armed Services

Personnel Subcommittee

Closed business meeting to markup those provisions, which fall within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee, of proposed legislation authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense.

SR-232A

9:30 a.m.

Appropriations

Defense Subcommittee

To hold hearings on proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2005 for defense related programs.

SD-192

10 a.m.

Judiciary

To hold an oversight hearing to examine material support statute relating to aiding terrorists.

SD-226

Armed Services

Readiness and Management Support Subcommittee

Closed business meeting to markup those provisions, which fall within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee, of proposed legislation authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense.

SR-222

Finance

Social Security and Family Policy Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine the benefits of healthy marriage.

SD-215

11:30 a.m.

Armed Services

Strategic Forces Subcommittee

Closed business meeting to markup those provisions, which fall within the jurisdiction of the subcommittee, of proposed legislation authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities of the Department of Defense.

SR-232A

2:30 p.m.

Armed Services

Closed business meeting to markup proposed legislation authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities for the Department of Defense.

SR-222

Energy and Natural Resources

Public Lands and Forests Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine S. 155, to convey to the town of Frannie, Wyoming, certain land withdrawn by the Commissioner of Reclamation, S. 2285, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey a parcel of real property to Beaver County, Utah, S. 1521, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land to the Edward H. McDaniel American Legion Post No. 22 in Pahump, Nevada, for the construction of a post building and memorial park for use by the American Legion, other veterans' groups, and the local community, S. 1826, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land in Washoe County, Nevada, to the Board of Regents of the University and Community College System of Nevada, S. 2085, to modify the requirements of the land conveyance to the University of Nevada at Las Vegas Research Foundation, and H.R. 1658, to amend the Railroad Right-of-Way Conveyance Validation Act to validate additional conveyances of certain lands in the State of California that form part of the right-of-way granted by the United States to facilitate the construction of the transcontinental railway.

SD-366

MAY 6

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

Closed business meeting to markup proposed legislation authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities for the Department of Defense.

SR-222

10 a.m.

Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine new opportunities for agriculture, focusing on biomass use in energy production.

SD-106

Governmental Affairs

Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine S. 1668, to establish a commission to conduct a comprehensive review of Federal agencies and programs and to recommend the elimination or realignment of duplicative, wasteful, or outdated functions.

SD-342

2 p.m.

Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Children and Families Subcommittee

To hold hearings to examine certain challenges facing military parents raising children.

SD-430

MAY 7

9:30 a.m.

Armed Services

Closed business meeting to markup proposed legislation authorizing appropriations for fiscal year 2005 for military activities for the Department of Defense.

SR-222

MAY 11

10 a.m.

Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the impacts and costs of last year's fires, focusing on the problems faced last year and what problems agencies and the land they oversee may face next season, including aerial fire fighting assets and crew, and overhead availability.

SD-366