

satellites, wireless and terrestrial-based systems. They will evaluate all available public and private resources that could provide such a system and submit a report to Congress detailing the findings.

The DHS is then authorized to request appropriations to implement the system. Congress would then be in position to put in place whatever programs and funding are needed to get the job done. We have myriad day-to-day communications issues to address. I am mindful of these needs. As was pointed out by a witness in the Commerce Committee's morning hearing, we have major problems with "operability" within a particular agency that must be addressed before we can seriously tackle "interoperability"—communicating across jurisdictions and among different agencies.

However, we must also take steps to address an immediate crisis. We must ensure that we can respond in emergency situations with an eye toward building a reliable, redundant system for the long term. It is my hope that the Congress will consider this proposal, and other relevant proposals, before we recess for the year. I look forward to working with my colleagues in that regard.

PRESIDENT URIBE'S APPOINTMENT OF A CABINET-LEVEL ADVISOR ON AFRO-COLOMBIAN ISSUES

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise today to call attention to an important step towards progress for Afro-descendants in Colombia, and an important opportunity for Afro-descendants throughout Latin America.

I wish to commend the work of my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus on this issue, as well as the tireless efforts of nongovernmental organizations and religious groups both here and in Colombia.

This August, President Uribe of Colombia created a cabinet-level position on Afro-Colombian issues, and appointed an Afro-Colombian to fill the post. The creation of this position is especially significant because it signals both a recognition of the severity of the situation of Afro-descendants in Colombia and a willingness to address these inequalities.

At the same time, many of us recognize that this is only a first step and much more needs to be done.

I will be monitoring the progress of this office very closely in the coming months, and I especially look forward to the development of President Uribe's Committee on Civil Rights and Sustainable Development for Afro-Colombians.

It is my hope that this institution will have the resources and mandate to do an effective job of bringing some measure of equality and justice to a marginalized segment of Colombian society. It is my hope that this will encourage other governments in Latin

America to consider taking additional measures to address racial discrimination, as well as economic and social marginalization, faced by Afro-descendants in their countries.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, our own country is being awakened to a great divide in our midst. As we struggle with troubling intersections of race and class, and how we have failed the most vulnerable members of our population, I hope we will be able to take a moment to reflect on similar struggles in places such as Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil and Venezuela.

While I realize that Colombia continues to face many challenges—from human rights to narco-trafficking—I wanted to bring some good news, that is often overlooked, about the country of Colombia to the attention of the Senate. I applaud these efforts.

TRIBUTE TO SIMON WIESENTHAL

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to Simon Wiesenthal, the moral conscience of our generation and of generations to come. I was proud to cosponsor the resolution authored by my friend and colleague, Senator SCHUMER, that passed the Senate by unanimous consent, commemorating Mr. Wiesenthal's life and accomplishments.

Mr. Wiesenthal died on Tuesday, September 20, 2005, at the age of 96. After surviving internment in 12 Nazi concentration camps, Mr. Wiesenthal took on a mission for the world—to ensure that through the crucible of the Holocaust we acknowledge and understand our common humanity.

Simon Wiesenthal's name has become synonymous with the term "Nazi hunter," the man responsible for bringing more than 1,100 Holocaust collaborators to justice. But as the noted author, Robert Lifton, has said, what defined Wiesenthal "wasn't so much his identifying particular Nazi criminals, . . . it was his insisting on an attitude of confronting what happened and constantly keeping what happened in mind and doing so at times when a lot of people would have preferred to forget." Simon Wiesenthal constantly made sure that we understood the Holocaust was not a discrete event relegated to a particular time and place, but that it was, and is, emblematic of the depths to which humanity can descend and the heights to which it can soar.

Simon Wiesenthal survived the Nazi death camps through what some might call luck, some might call random acts of kindness or just indifference, or what some might call miracles. Whatever the reason, fathomable or unfathomable, Wiesenthal became our guide on a painful and essential journey through memory and consciousness, an examination of what we are and what we should be. That is a journey that is never-ending by definition—it was not for him and should not be for us.

He was a detective searching for criminals, and he was a philosopher

seeking after truth and justice. He found and helped find many criminals. His search for truth and justice is passed on to us and to our children. It lives on in the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, home to the Museum of Tolerance. It lives on in our assumption of responsibility.

Mr. Wiesenthal died in his sleep at his home in Vienna, Austria, his body at peace, his spirit among us.

THE PONTIFICAL VISIT OF HIS HOLINESS ARAM I

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I take this opportunity to recognize the Pontifical Visit of His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, to my home State of California in October, 2005.

The Catholicos represents the Great House of Cilicia, an historic Armenian religious center established in 1441. The Catholicosate was relocated to Antelias, Lebanon following the atrocities of the Armenian Genocide, which included destruction of houses of worship in Cilicia. Today, His Holiness Aram I represents hundreds of thousands of Armenian American Christians, as well as Armenians across the Near East. The Armenian faith is 1,700 years old and it is significant that Armenia was the first nation to officially adopt Christianity as a state religion in 301 AD.

The Catholicos' spiritual, cultural and educational influence extends well beyond the Armenian people. His Holiness Aram I, who holds a Master of Divinity, a Master of Sacred Theology, a Ph.D., and several honorary degrees, has authored numerous articles and texts in Armenian, English and French, some of which have been translated into other languages. The Catholicos has worked to strengthen interfaith relations between Christian and Muslim communities. In 1974, the Catholicos was one of the founding members of the Middle East Council of Churches.

His Holiness Aram I was elected as Moderator of the Central and Executive Committees of the World Council of Churches, WCC, a renowned organization which represents over 400 million Christians worldwide. The WCC brings together over 340 churches and denominations in more than 100 countries throughout the world. The Catholicos is the first Orthodox, first Middle Easterner and youngest person to hold this position and his unanimous re-election as Moderator in 1998 was exceptional in the history of the WCC.

During his trip to California, which is titled "Towards the Light of Knowledge," the Catholicos will visit churches as well as educational and cultural institutions in Los Angeles, Fresno and San Francisco. This momentous visit was initiated by His Eminence, Archbishop Moushegh Mardirossian of the

Western Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and the 1600th Anniversary of the creation of the Armenian alphabet.

I am honored to recognize this milestone visit to California by a distinguished Armenian and world leader. I wish both the Catholicos and the Armenian community in California a renewed sense of purpose and inspiration from this visit.

ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I am proud to pay tribute to Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, America's first Greek-letter organization established by black college women.

On Thursday, September 22, 2005, I had the pleasure of spending time with nearly one hundred members of this remarkable organization, including Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and AKA's International President, Linda White. I have long been aware of the rich history and tremendous contributions made to our Nation by Alpha Kappa Alpha and the other eight Black Greek Letter Organizations and I was particularly delighted to participate in AKA's event entitled "The Spirit, Let's Share it and Connect," which focused on the many ways in which AKA contributes to our communities.

In 1908, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority was founded at Howard University in Washington, DC, by Ethel Hedgeman Lyle, who envisioned AKA as a source of social and intellectual enrichment for its members. Over the past century, AKA has evolved into a nationwide organization of college-trained women working to improve the socioeconomic conditions in their cities, States and countries throughout the world.

Alpha Kappa Alpha's achievements are the result of volunteer service that captures the organization's core values. Each year, a National Program theme is constructed around one of AKA's five "targets": Education, the Black Family, Health, Economics and the Arts. This year's target is Education, with the Signature Program of the administration being "The Ivy Reading AKAdemy," a reading initiative focused on early learning and mastery of basic reading skills by the end of third grade. All AKA chapters are required to implement an after school reading initiative for students in kindergarten through third grade. Across the United States there are nine such federally funded demonstration sites in low-performing, economically deprived, innercity schools.

AKA has made several significant contributions to the black community and to American society over all over the past century. These efforts have included a wide range of issues, including among them election reform and health care and education initiatives. For example, in 1983 AKA launched a

massive registration drive designed to increase black voter registration by 25 percent by the November 1984 elections. In 1999, AKA was awarded a \$50,000 grant from the United States Department of Transportation to promote increased seatbelt use and vehicle passenger safety in the minority community. That same year, AKA established a funded partnership with the United States Department of Health and Human Services to promote women's health. Just 4 years ago, AKA raised over \$25,000 for sickle cell anemia. In 2002, AKA built and dedicated nine AKAdemies in South Africa and contributed \$25,000 to the National Council of Negro Women's Mortgage Liquidation Fund.

In addition to advancing these services, AKA maintains a focus on improving the quality of life for its members. AKA cultivates and encourages high scholastic and ethical standards; promotes unity and friendship among college women; alleviates problems facing girls and women; maintains a progressive interest in college life and serves over 170,000 women in the United States, the Caribbean, Europe, and Africa. Its distinguished alumni include national civic leaders such as astronaut Mae Jamison, author Toni Morrison, poet Maya Angelou, Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, and the late Judge Constance Baker Motley. I was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Judge Constance Baker Motley earlier this week. A champion of civil rights and a giant of the legal profession, she will be remembered for her lasting contributions to American jurisprudence and to our larger society. I am certain that the women of AKA join me in mourning her passing, grateful and heartened by the fact that the civil rights movement existed in large part because of the efforts of their friend in sisterhood.

I am privileged and proud to have a special bond with the remarkable women of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Incorporated and am honored to share with my colleagues the many reasons we should all admire and thank the members of this organization for their long-lasting and unwavering commitment to improving the lives of so many.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, 40 years ago today, President Lyndon Johnson signed landmark legislation into law creating the Foundation on the Arts and Humanities. I was privileged to be one of the cosponsors of this measure, which created the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities and bring a new nationwide focus to the creative community across America in the fields of literature and history, the visual arts, and the performing arts.

Throughout these four decades, the Endowments have provided impressive

leadership in enhancing the cultural life of the Nation. The budget for the two agencies is relatively small, but they have distributed Federal grants to a wide range of deserving educational and cultural organizations in communities in all parts of the country.

The best of our cultural heritage has broad appeal to peoples everywhere. The scholarship, the history, and the arts of America are admired around the world. Each generation of scholars and artists has much to share with the rest of the world, and with the generations to come as well. The important role of the Endowments is to support the museums, the galleries, and the theaters in our communities, and assist them in presenting these artistic achievements so that audiences, students and scholars can study them, and learn from them.

Down through the ages, the arts have inspired generations after generations with their beauty, tolerance and understanding. They enable individuals to reach beyond their own experience and know something of other peoples and other cultures. In this shrinking world, it is even more important to respect our neighbors, and build cultural bridges to reach out to one another in our shared world. The arts and humanities offer indispensable opportunities to achieve this important goal.

The Endowments help disseminate the creative work being done at the local level. In Massachusetts, we are privileged to have an extraordinary range of cultural institutions that document the story of our Commonwealth from its earliest days to the present. We are very proud of the cultural landmarks that tell of our history, so that future generations too will understand the challenges that faced the Pilgrim settlers in Plymouth, the struggle for independence that began in Boston Harbor and at Concord Bridge, the harrowing era of one stop on the Underground Railroad, the rugged life in the fishing community of New Bedford, and the early years of the China trade.

So, too, in every other State in our Nation, the story is told of discovery, development and achievement, the continuing story of the American journey.

The important task of the Endowments is to honor and preserve this legacy. Over the past four decades, they have compiled an impressive record of vital support for both the arts and humanities. The Arts Endowment has funded major arts exhibitions, dance tours by large national companies, and performances by smaller regional companies. The Humanities Endowment has provided vital research and educational support in colleges and universities across the country. It has supported a national effort to preserve important documents, brittle books and important artifacts. Its public programs have underwritten brilliant documentaries on topics ranging from the story of the Civil War to the story of baseball.

These two great Endowments have amply fulfilled the early hope that