

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE ARMENIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL SOCIETY OF LAS VEGAS

**HON. JON C. PORTER**

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Armenian-American Cultural Society of Las Vegas on this, the 91st anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. This organization was established in 1978, and since that time has grown in size and influence. They are now the largest non-political, non-denominational organization in Nevada. They have worked tirelessly to educate the general public about the atrocious acts committed against their people and also to help preserve the Armenian culture here in Las Vegas and America.

I am proud to represent a large and vibrant Armenian community in the Third Congressional District of Nevada and I consider it an honor to have been invited to participate in the ceremonies commemorating the 91st anniversary of the Armenian genocide. These ceremonies offer participants an opportunity to honor the survivors and their descendants, and to remind the world of the tragedy that befell Armenians of the Ottoman Empire.

It is estimated that one and a half million Armenians perished between 1915 and 1923 in a genocide planned and executed by the Turkish government against the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. The great bulk of the Armenian population was removed from Armenia and Anatolia to Syria, where the vast majority was sent into the desert to die of thirst and hunger. Large numbers of Armenians were methodically massacred throughout the Ottoman Empire. The entire wealth of the Armenian people was expropriated. After only a little more than a year of calm at the end of WWI, the atrocities were renewed between 1920 and 1923, and the remaining Armenians were subjected to further massacres and expulsions.

While there are still many who deny that the Armenian Genocide ever took place, I am pleased to see more and more countries and states and even the media are now in the process of recognizing the genocide. It is critical that we reflect on this human tragedy and on the lessons of history and work to avoid the horrors faced by the Armenian people in 1915.

H.R. 3380—THE GUARDIANSHIP ASSISTANCE PROMOTION AND KINSHIP SUPPORT ACT

**HON. ZOE LOFGREN**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and honor the 294,969 California grandparents as well as 2.4 million grandparents around the Nation who act as primary guardians to grandchildren that are unable to live with their parents. As a result of the service and efforts of these individuals, many children around California and the country are able to live with relatives and stay out of the foster care system.

According to the Census of 2000, 6.8 percent of California's children are living in grandparent-headed households as well as an additional 3.5 percent living in households headed by other non-parent relatives. I commend the efforts these relatives take in providing a safe and familiar living environment for these children.

However, now more than ever, I also recognize the financial hardships and personal sacrifices faced by these guardians. As a cosponsor of H.R. 3380, The Guardianship Assistance Promotion and Kinship Support Act, I am committed to working toward a solution that will help to alleviate these financial burdens placed on guardians and give them access to Federal funds that they deserve.

Today, on behalf of the constituents of the 16th District of California, I extend my deepest appreciation to these exceptional guardians. It is an honor to have many of these individuals in my own district whose care and commitment to vulnerable children help to build a better future for them.

IN RECOGNITION OF COUNTY CONNECTION'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise with my colleague, Representative GEORGE MILLER, to pay tribute to County Connection, the public bus system provider that serves more than a dozen communities and unincorporated areas of central Contra Costa County in our two Congressional Districts.

County Connection was founded on March 27, 1980 under a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement. After several years of careful planning, locally elected officials in Central Contra Costa recognized the need for a truly coordinated and integrated regional transit system.

County Connection began providing service with 12 buses, carrying 1,950,000 passengers, traveling 1,423,357 miles. In just its first ten years, the agency multiplied its fleet of buses ten fold. Today, the transportation agency maintains a current fleet of 131 buses and 56 LINK vans, makes nearly 5,000,000 fixed-route and paratransit trips throughout central Contra Costa and provides 4.5 million rides annually.

The system is now overseen by an 11-member Board of Directors, one representative from each jurisdiction and one representative for the unincorporated areas of Central County.

Since its establishment, County Connection has received numerous prestigious awards including: the American Public Transit Association (APTA) Minority & Women Advancement Award for its meritorious accomplishments in the employment, promotion and training of minorities and women in management positions, and this year, the California Water Environment Association recognized the agency with its "Facility of the Year" award in recognition for going above and beyond normal efforts to protect susceptible plant and wildlife that survive in local streams.

For 25 years, County Connection has provided vital transportation services to residents throughout Central Contra Costa. As the popu-

lation of this County grows, the services provided by County Connection have never been needed more. Each day agency buses help people get to their work, return home, and in general provide a service that no other program in the community can. Today, we are proud to commend County Connection for the agency's service to the community and its lasting commitment to the people of Contra Costa County.

MGIB LEGISLATION

**HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an inequity facing America's men and women in uniform who seek an education in return for their military service.

For years, the Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB) has allowed thousands of men and women in uniform attend college or to receive vocational training to prepare for a new career after the military.

It is an excellent program and one we must preserve.

However, Mr. Speaker, I would like to remedy an inequity that exists in this program with legislation I am introducing today.

To receive the benefits of the Montgomery GI Bill, our service members must pay \$1,200 to \$1,800 into the program at the beginning of their military service.

A \$100 is deducted each month from their military pay for the first 12 months, for example.

With the legislation I offer today, our service members would still make the initial contribution. However, this contribution would no longer count against them later on when they apply for federal student aid.

In many cases, Mr. Speaker, the Montgomery GI Bill alone does not cover the cost for college or job training. Our service members must also apply for federal student aid to cover tuition and other expenses.

The Department of Education considers their benefits from the Montgomery GI Bill as "income"—thereby reducing the amount they are eligible to receive from federal student aid programs.

This legislation goes back to the \$1,200 out-of-pocket contribution that a service member made to become eligible for the Montgomery GI Bill.

It is not fair to ask our service members to pay the original amount out of their own pocket and then penalize them for it later on.

This bill would simply exempt the original contribution that came from their own pocket from the Department of Education's income consideration.

This legislation does not present significant cost to the federal government but would go a long way to help America's individual service members afford college.

I offered the provisions contained in this legislation as part of the College Access and Opportunity Act (H.R. 609) when it was on the House floor.

Unfortunately, the amendment was not accepted, but I plan to pursue the issue until we correct this inequity.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to take just a moment to thank those who have worked on

this issue and who have pushed for the exemption in the past.

I am proud to offer this legislation along with Ranking Member LANE EVANS of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. EVANS and his staff have been seeking a remedy for this inequity for several years.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to offer legislation benefiting America's military service members and helping them to attend college or receive job training.

#### TRIBUTE ON THE RETIREMENT OF ED PEREZ

**HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I wish to honor the 30 years of service that Ed Perez, Esq. has given to the City of Los Angeles. Although his retirement from the City Attorney's Office on February 17th marks the end of his City employment, it does not end a notable career in the practice of law. Indeed, his contributions to the City's telecommunications policies have been so great that several members of the City Council hope he will return as an advisor.

As the City continues to negotiate franchise agreements and shape important telecommunication policies that impact the everyday lives of all Angelinos, we understand the value and depth of expertise that a faithful employee brings to the table at this critical time.

Mr. Perez began his initial employment with the Office of the City Attorney in the Criminal Division and switched to the Civil Division 3 years later. In that position he provided legal advice regarding public utilities such as telecommunications and energy, and transactional matters for the City's Information Technology Agency.

Mr. Perez was the City's legal advisor for cable television franchising and regulation from 1981–2003, beginning with the initial wiring of the city in 1981 and culminating in the citywide franchising agreements in 1987. During this period, Mr. Perez had the distinguished honor of presenting an oral argument before the United States Supreme Court in 1986, in the *Preferred Communications v. City of Los Angeles*, 476 U.S. 488. For this, we offer our sincere appreciation to Ed Perez for both his commitment to and invaluable understanding of these issues on behalf of the citizens of Los Angeles.

When Mr. Perez transferred to the Department of Water and Power in June 2003, he continued to be one of the principal attorneys monitoring complex utility regulations for the City.

He looks forward to more time with his wife Patricia, and their children, Christine and David, upon his retirement. I wish him all the best as he plans for an active retirement and sincerely thank him for his noteworthy accomplishments on behalf of the citizens of Los Angeles.

#### RECOGNIZING THE LAUNCH OF U.S.-KOREA FTA NEGOTIATIONS

**HON. GREGORY W. MEEKS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Mr. MEEKS of New York. Mr. Speaker, in a ceremony held February 2, 2006, in the Mansfield Room of the U.S. Capitol and attended by many Members of Congress, U.S. Trade Representative Rob Portman and South Korean Minister of Trade Hyun-Chong Kim announced the commencement of negotiations toward a U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement and signaled their commitment to conclude the talks by March 2007. The U.S. and Korea plan to implement the agreement by September 2007. In light of the fact that the FTA negotiations will officially begin next week, I rise to recognize the significance of this undertaking.

Launching the United States-South Korea FTA talks is a critical step in the relationship with an important U.S. strategic ally and economic partner. I strongly believe that as we pursue market access for U.S. exporters, it is to our advantage to strengthen already constructive relationships with our allies. South Korea is our seventh largest trading partner and a friend in a challenging region of the world. Advancing the economic relationship makes sense and will be an important benefit to two great nations.

Close engagement between the U.S. and South Korea has paved the way for FTA negotiations. Even before the official announcement, the South Korean Government demonstrated how important it considers improved trade relations with the United States. South Korea took the concrete step of reducing the long-standing quotas that limited the screening of films by the American entertainment industry. I am encouraged by the progress that has been made so far on addressing several trade concerns. I am confident that South Korea will continue to work closely with the USTR Rob Portman toward making this endeavor a success.

The FTA negotiations will officially begin on May 3, following the expiration of the statutory 90-day consultative period. In the interim, our two governments have agreed to hold preliminary discussions. According to reports, once the FTA takes full effect, over 90 percent of traded goods between the U.S. and Korea will be phased out over 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of underscoring the importance of these talks, permit me to list a few salient facts about the U.S.-Korean economic relationship.

South Korea is a stable, democratic country with a free-enterprise economy and a gross domestic product of \$726.5 billion in 2005, making it the world's 11th largest economy.

The per capita income of South Koreans in 2004 is an impressive \$14,162.

As noted by the Los Angeles Times, South Korea is now the seventh largest trading partner of the United States, with over \$72 billion in trade volume each year. Moreover, South Korea is the fifth largest market for U.S. agricultural products.

U.S. exports into South Korea totaled \$25.1 billion through November of 2005, up 4.6 percent from the same period in 2004, with the biggest U.S. sales coming in computer chips, \$4.2 billion; industrial machinery, \$1.4 billion,

organic chemicals, \$1.3 billion, and civilian aircraft at \$953 million.

At the same time, South Korean exports to the United States totaled \$40.1 billion through November 2005, down 5.4 percent from the same period in 2004, with the biggest South Korean sales coming in passenger cars, \$7.2 billion; household goods, including cell phones, at \$5.7 billion; computer chips, \$2.8 billion; and computer accessories, televisions, and VCRs at \$3.9 billion.

According to a study done in 2001 by the U.S. International Trade Commission, a U.S.-Korea free-trade agreement could increase U.S. exports to South Korea by \$19 billion and U.S. imports from South Korea by \$10 billion.

Finally, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce, during the 2004 calendar year, 627,000 South Koreans visited the United States for tourism and business travel, representing the fifth largest foreign market of tourists, excluding Canada and Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, for these reasons, I wish to recognize the launch of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement negotiations and I encourage my colleagues to offer their own expressions of support. South Korea is a long-standing and trustworthy ally of the United States and a mutual FTA would only further solidify and reinforce our alliance partnership.

#### TRIBUTE TO 2005 NOBEL PRIZE WINNERS

**HON. RUSH D. HOLT**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 25, 2006*

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate and honor Drs. Roy J. Glauber, John L. Hall, and Theodor Hänsch for being awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for 2005, and Drs. Yves Chauvin, Robert H. Grubbs, and Richard R. Schrock for being awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for 2005.

The 2005 Nobel Prize in Physics encompasses the field of optics and its applications. The three gentlemen celebrated today are laser pioneers. Lasers have numerous practical applications, including in products such as CD players and grocery store scanners, for computer manufacturing, and in surgery.

Roy Glauber gave a detailed, quantum mechanical description of the interaction of light and matter, thus creating the foundation for the field of quantum optics. Glauber's work also created the groundwork on the quantum theory of lasers.

In addition, John Hall and Theodor Hänsch received the prize for their contributions to the development of laser-based precision spectroscopy. This technique allows scientists to probe the atom with ever-increasing accuracy, explore the subtle intricacies of gravity, and lead to a better understanding of the pressing question of imbalance between the amounts of matter and antimatter in the universe.

The work of the three in concert will lead, for instance, to the next generation satellite navigation systems, improving on GPS, which is widely used in both military and civilian transportation systems. Another major potential application of this research, quantum cryptography, which could impenetrably secure data transmission, is of interest to financial institutions and governments as the emerging