

tired of President Santa Anna's policies and in 1835, he responded to a call for support by raising a company of Tejanos, Texans of Hispanic descent, to aid in the revolution. In October of 1835, following a battle in Bexar, Stephen F. Austin granted a captain's commission to Seguin.

Seguin's company would soon arrive at the Alamo with other Revolutionary heroes such as, Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett, and William Barrett Travis, who were taking shelter as General Santa Anna's army was advancing on San Antonio.

As the Alamo came under constant bombardment, Colonel Travis sent out messengers to get help. The last messenger sent out was Juan Seguin on a mission to seek reinforcements from Colonel James Fannin to send troops from nearby Goliad to help the defenders at the Alamo. After his failed attempts to persuade Fannin, he journeyed to the ranches along the Guadalupe and San Antonio Rivers to recruit more Tejanos.

His company then met up with General Sam Houston at the town of Gonzales. There, the tragic news that the Alamo had fallen was delivered. A decision was made to burn the town of Gonzales in order to deny shelter to Santa Anna's troops.

As General Houston's armies retreated, he gave Seguin's company the task of riding into the frontier and warning the settlers of the coming danger. Because of this great service to the Texas Revolution, he has been dubbed "The Paul Revere of Texas."

Later, Seguin commanded the only Tejano unit to fight in the Battle of San Jacinto. None of the Texans at San Jacinto wore uniforms on the battlefield. In order to distinguish themselves from the Mexican soldiers, only Mexican officers wore uniforms. Seguin's Tejanos wore playing cards in their hats to avoid friendly fire. After the battle, Seguin personally accepted the surrender of a number of Mexican officers. After his company's valiant effort in the battle, Seguin was promoted to Lt. Colonel. Texas liberty would not be secure without the help of the native Tejanos in this and other battles during the fight for Texas independence.

Each year, approximately 220,000 people visit the World's tallest war memorial, The San Jacinto Monument. The monument, which stands 15 feet taller than the Washington Monument, has two roads leading to the park. In honor of the contributions made by Seguin and his Tejanos one of those roads is named Juan Seguin Boulevard.

One of the oldest towns in Texas, Seguin was originally founded in 1838 near the Guadalupe River. In 1853, it was incorporated and named Walnut Springs. Six months later the name was permanently changed to Seguin. Today, the city nicknamed the "Pecan Capital of Texas" is home to the Texas Lutheran University. In October of 2000, the city of Seguin unveiled a 17-foot statue of its namesake in the town square. The statue depicts this Texas hero valiantly leading the charge atop a horse with his saber in hand. As I stand here one day after we celebrated the historic battle of San Jacinto that gave Texas its independence, I want to acknowledge this Texas legend that played such an instrumental role in the victory.

And that's just the way it is.

HONOR THE TRUTH OF THE PAST: COMMEMORATION OF THE ARME- NIAN GENOCIDE

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the survivors and their descendants of the Armenian Genocide. On Sunday, April 20th, a service in remembrance of the 93rd Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide took place at the Armenian Church of Our Savior in Worcester, Massachusetts. The message of the generations gathered there is simple: "Honor the truth of the past because denial makes it more likely that genocide will happen again."

Each year we mark the anniversary of the cataclysmic events that occurred in the Ottoman Empire from 1915–1923, when 1.5 million Armenians were killed and over half a million survivors were exiled.

I would like to enter into the RECORD the letter I sent to the parishioners of the Armenian Church of Our Savior on this solemn and special occasion, as well as the April 21st article that appeared in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette describing the commemorative event.

Memory is a precious commodity. I urge all my colleagues to support passage of the Armenian Genocide Resolution before we lose the last survivors of this terrible period of genocide against the Armenian people.

OPEN LETTER FROM REP. JAMES P. MCGOVERN TO THE PARISHIONERS OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOR

APRIL 20, 2008.

DEAR FRIENDS: As you know, this year marks the 93rd anniversary of the first genocide of the 20th Century, the Armenian Genocide. Carried out between 1915 and 1923, the Armenian Genocide was a systematic and deliberate campaign by the Turkish Ottoman Empire to destroy its Armenian minority, which resulted in 1.5 million Armenian deaths and the exile of nearly all Armenians from their ancestral homeland.

The Armenian Genocide is officially recognized and commemorated in 40 States, including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and by nearly two dozen nations, including 11 of our NATO allies. The federal government must follow suit.

I believe adopting the Armenian Genocide Resolution is the right thing to do:

As a matter of morality—and in the name of humanity—the United States should recognize and condemn all genocides.

In the name of historic truth—and in honor of the historic role so many American diplomatic personnel and humanitarian and relief workers played in saving lives and condemning the genocide as it was taking place—the U.S. especially should recognize the Armenian Genocide.

And in the hope of preventing future genocides—we have to recognize and honor the truth of the past. Denial of the Armenian Genocide—just like denial of the Holocaust—makes future genocides more likely, not less.

No nation, not Turkey, or any other country, should be allowed to block the official recognition or commemoration or the teaching of historic truth about the Armenian Genocide.

I am disappointed that the Federal government has not yet taken the necessary and courageous steps to recognize the Armenian Genocide. I will continue to work to change that reality.

It's ironic that the current Turkish government doesn't seem to realize that the more it denies the Armenian Genocide, the more people begin to think that there really is a connection between the Turks who carried out the Armenian Genocide at the beginning of the 20th Century and today's 21st Century democratic government.

By denying the truth, Turkey undermines its own standing throughout the world, blocks its own acceptance into the European family, and increases regional tensions, especially with neighboring Armenia. Turkey's recognition of the Genocide, its reconciliation with the past, would widely be viewed as the act of a mature democracy, which the world would rush to embrace and reward.

This is why America must also officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.

Some will always argue that the timing is not right to act on this bill. But when will the timing be right? After the last surviving witnesses of the Armenian Genocide are gone?

In April of last year, I was in eastern Chad. And the reality of genocide was right before my eyes. There are over 250,000 refugees from Darfur, Sudan living in camps just inside Chad. I met with individuals and families who had been forced to flee their villages in Darfur. Each had a story about loved ones murdered, homes destroyed, people and family left behind. Many didn't know if some of their family or children were even alive.

So 93 years after the Armenian Genocide, I struggle to find meaning in the words, "Never Again."

I am thankful I can turn to Worcester's Armenian-American community for inspiration, one of the oldest in the United States and the first to establish a church in America. They have worked tirelessly for nearly a century to keep alive the historic memory of the Armenian Genocide and to speak out, condemn and organize against the genocides—too many—that mark the past nine decades of human history. They were among the very first to bring to my attention the events unfolding in Darfur.

The least we can do is honor and recognize this selfless community by passing the Armenian Genocide Resolution, so that their history and heritage will be remembered for all time, even after the last survivor passes away.

With warmest respect and friendship,
CONGRESSMAN JIM MCGOVERN.

[From the Telegram & Gazette, Worcester, MA, Apr. 21, 2008].

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE REMEMBERED

(By Lisa D. Welsh)

WORCESTER.—Three generations of Armenians—a 99-year-old woman, a three time—Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and a high school essayist—spoke from differing perspectives but shared one message during the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian genocide recognition yesterday at the Armenian Church of Our Saviour: "Honor the truth of the past because denial makes it more likely that genocide will happen again."

Heghine Minassian was 6 years old the day Turkish soldiers went house to house and emptied all the buildings in her village. She said most Armenians were marched into the desert, where they were left to starve to death; but some of the women, like her aunt, were kept as slaves.

"My grandparents were in the attic hiding," Mrs. Minassian said in Armenian through an English interpreter, Van Aroian. "My grandmother's sister yelled, 'Don't open

the door. Don't go out.' But the (soldiers) gave the order to come down and they came down."

Within three years Mrs. Minassian would be an orphan, the same age of many of the children in church who participated in a candle-lighting ceremony in honor of their family members who had died in the genocide. Looking out at the young faces in the front pews, Mrs. Minassian said, "Don't forget our struggle."

Stephen A. Kurkjian, a reporter for the Boston Globe for 38 years, has written about many high-profile events. However, sharing the story of his father's family was not one of them.

"I was not an appreciating Armenian until 1992, when I accompanied my 83-year-old father to the village where he was born," Mr. Kurkjian said at the Martyrs' Day commemoration. "The sadness hit me like a sledgehammer. I started asking, 'How could this happen?'"

"I came back and wrote an article called 'Roots of Sorrow.' But now I'd add to that title, 'Seeds of Hope.'"

Mr. Kurkjian's father lost his father, brother and sister in the genocide of 1915; he survived after making the 300-mile trek to Syria with his mother, and later to America.

"My father would say out of tragedy there was opportunity for liberty and religious freedom. There was education and economic opportunity in America. I would have never had the successes I've had. Instead I would have worked at a small weekly in a mountain village."

"I asked my Der Hayr (priest), 'How this could happen?'" Mr. Kurkjian said. "He said, 'God would not have allowed the first Christian church to not have survived.' That's as good an answer as you are going to get."

With the internal awakening about his heritage Mr. Kurkjian has traveled to Turkey and watched pressure build on the Turkish government to reassess its position that downplays references to the genocide.

Robin Garabedian, a junior at Doherty Memorial High School whose family has been with the Armenian Church of Our Saviour since her grandmother's family immigrated to Worcester, said she was 7 years old when her father told her about the genocide. In reading her award-winning essay, "Why Remembrance of the Genocide is Important," she quoted Adolf Hitler as saying, "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?" as rationalization for the Holocaust.

"How does someone hate someone else so much?" Robin asked in anger. "If the world had stood up (against) the Armenian genocide, there wouldn't have been genocide of the Jews, or in Cambodia in the '70s, or in Darfur today."

H.R. 1374—FLORIDA NATIONAL FOREST LAND

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. CRENSHAW. Madam Speaker, today the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee considered S. 934, a companion bill to H.R. 1374, which passed the House of Representatives on December 17, 2007. This legislation provides the Forestry Service the flexibility they need to properly manage their assets. This legislation modifies the Florida National Forest Land Management Act in two simple ways which will provide the

Forest Service essential authority to manage the national forests in Florida effectively.

The first provision simply adds an unmanageable tract of land located in Tallahassee, FL to the list of lands the Secretary of Agriculture is currently authorized to sell. This specific property, tract W-1979, is approximately 114 acres of land that has evolved into an unmanageable, problem area for the Apalachicola National Forest. Due to the configuration and surrounding development, the vegetation cannot be managed through prescribed fire. Although a very valuable tract from a real estate/commercial aspect, this tract has lost its national forest character. The sale of this land will allow the Forest Service to purchase other lands located within the Forest that are more manageable and will enhance national forests in Florida.

Secondly, this legislation would allow the Forest Service to use proceeds from the sale of other "non-green land" to be used for construction and improvements to administrative facilities essential to the proper management of the Forest. These "non-green land" tracts of land are owned by the Forest Service, but have urban improvements like fairgrounds or sporting complexes and are not conducive to the overall purpose of protecting our national forests.

This legislation would allow the Service to use the proceeds from the sale of improved lands to build critical infrastructure they need to manage the forests in Florida, while allowing the forest service to continue its practice of using receipts from all non-developed "green land" tracts for the acquisition of other "green land" tracts to enhance the national forests in Florida. I am pleased that this legislation is moving forward and the Forest Service will have the ability to efficiently and effectively manage our Nation's precious resources.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE EARTH DAY COALITION

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 22, 2008

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today in honor and recognition of the Earth Day Coalition of Cleveland, as they celebrate EarthFest 2008 on April 20, 2008—a date that also commemorates the 19th annual celebration of EarthFest in Cleveland, Ohio.

Cleveland's Earth Day Coalition was formed in 1990 to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Earth Day in Ohio. EarthFest is now Ohio's largest environmental educational event and one of the most successful Earth Day events in the country. I stand in recognition of the staff and volunteers of the Earth Day Coalition for all their effort and dedication in creating such an innovative, exciting and educational event for the Great Cleveland community to enjoy. This year, EarthFest 2008 will be entirely wind powered, signifying the ability of the Earth Day Coalition in effectively demonstrating the need and possibilities of alternative forms of energy. The event features over 160 environmental exhibits and displays, all focused on educating the community about sustainability efforts and solutions to climate change. EarthFest is just one of Earth Day Coalition's many nationally-recognized pro-

grams and promises once again to be a significant aspect of the world celebration of Earth Day.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honor and recognitions of the staff, volunteer and members of the Earth Day Coalition as we celebrate EarthFest 2008 on April 20, 2008. EarthFest 2008 promises to educate, inspire and motivate all of us to join together as a community and work toward maintaining a more healthy earth for future generations.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE FOR SECURE ELECTIONS ACT OF 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL E. CAPUANO

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Mr. CAPUANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to share my views on H.R. 5036, the Emergency Assistance for Secure Elections Act.

As both a Member of the Committee on House Administration which has considered this issue for many months and a former mayor who was responsible for overseeing elections for many years, I know how important it is that people have confidence in their votes. This bill is part of an effort to ensure that we improve that confidence, which has waned in recent years.

There are good provisions in this bill. I believe firmly that the best way to ensure that votes are cast as intended and counted accurately, is to provide paper ballots that the voters themselves mark. This bill helps move the Nation in that direction by providing optional funding for many localities that wish to switch to paper ballots. For this reason, I support it.

However, there are some shortcomings in this legislation that I feel must be stated for the record. I do not personally believe that it is the most effective use of Federal resources to give states funding in order for them to add on printers to Direct Recording Electronic devices (DREs). I don't believe that "paper trails" are an adequate substitute for real paper ballots and for this reason, I have concerns about giving states the funding to retrofit their DREs rather than simply incentivizing the switch to real paper ballots.

Similarly, I am discouraged that the bill does not allow jurisdictions with DREs that produce a paper trail access to Federal funds to switch to real paper ballots. Many jurisdictions across the country have come to the conclusion that paper ballots, not electronic voting machines with paper trails, are the most reliable type of voting system. By denying some jurisdictions the Federal resources to make that positive switch, the bill fails to reward those who are making the commitment to switch to what many believe is the best system.

However, I am supporting this bill. Because it is not overly prescriptive, I hope that many jurisdictions consider utilizing its positive provisions, should it become law. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues on the committee and in the full House toward a better and more trustworthy vote.