

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

IN REMEMBRANCE OF SUMGAIT, KIROVABAD AND BAKU MAS-SACRES

HON. BRAD SHERMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I met with a constituent, Marat Khoudabakhshiev, whose family barely survived pogroms perpetrated 27 years ago today against the Armenian residents of then-Soviet Azerbaijan. He recounted how Azerbaijanis who had lived alongside Armenians for generations suddenly turned violent against them, causing Armenian families like his to flee their homes for safety.

Over three days, February 26th to 28th, 1988, a pogrom was perpetrated against the Armenian residents of Sumgait in then-Soviet Azerbaijan. Armenians were attacked and killed in their apartments and on the streets. Although official figures reported 30 deaths, it is believed that hundreds were murdered and injured as a result of the pogrom.

The violence against the Armenians in Sumgait was prompted by a vote, which took place one week prior by the Armenians of Nagorno Karabakh, to unify the region with Armenia—the beginning of the Karabakh movement. In the days immediately after this vote Azeri civilians and local officials in the city of Sumgait held rallies calling for “death to Armenians”.

On the night of February 27, 1988, Armenian residents in Sumgait were targeted and indiscriminately raped, mutilated and murdered. Calls for help from Armenians were ignored by local police and city officials. Journalists were shut out from the area. The violence raged on for three days before Soviet troops were able to put an end to the pogrom.

Witnesses of the horrific massacres later testified that the attacks were planned, as civilians had gathered weapons and the exits of the cities were blocked in advance to prevent Armenians from escaping. The homes of Armenians were marked so that the Azeri mobs could easily target them.

Unfortunately, the perpetrators of the pogrom succeeded in their ultimate goal—driving out Armenians. Fearing more violence, Armenian families fled Sumgait. Later that year, another anti-Armenian pogrom occurred in Kirovabad, Azerbaijan from November 21st to 27th, which also forced hundreds of Armenians to flee the region. In January of 1990 violent mobs targeted the Armenian community of Azerbaijan’s capital, Baku.

This year also marks the 100th anniversary of the commemoration of the first genocide of the 20th century, the Armenian Genocide. It is imperative that we honor the memory of Armenians killed in the pogroms of Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku, as well as the Armenian Genocide. If we hope to stop future massacres, we must acknowledge these horrific events and ensure they do not happen again.

Recognizing the ethnic-cleansing of the Armenians from Azerbaijan is an important step. However, we need to do more—we need to demonstrate to Azerbaijan that the United States is committed to peace and to the protection of Artsakh from coercion.

As the current government of Azerbaijan grows even more hostile towards Armenians, we must call for an end to all threats and acts of violence by Azerbaijan’s government against the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh.

Congress should strengthen Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act by removing the President’s ability to waive U.S. law prohibiting aid to Azerbaijan because of its continuing blockade against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. In 1992, Congress prohibited aid to Azerbaijan because of its continuing blockade against Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. However, in 2001, Congress approved a waiver to this provision, and administrations have used the waiver since then to provide aid to Baku. Azerbaijan should not be provided aid from the United States as long as they continue a policy of threats and blockades against Artsakh.

I urge the Administration to remove all barriers to broad-based U.S.-Nagorno Karabakh governmental and civil society communication, travel and cooperation.

HONORING NOREEN EVANS

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague, MIKE THOMPSON, to recognize California Senator Noreen Evans, who recently retired on November 30, 2014 following twenty-one years of public service.

Senator Evans has a distinguished record of serving the North Coast as a public servant and community leader. She has devoted her career to protecting the North Coast’s invaluable natural resources, reforming the California legal system, and advocating for the rights of underserved communities, especially women and children.

Ms. Evans began her career in public service on the Santa Rosa Planning Commission and continued this service as a member of the Santa Rosa City Council before serving three terms in the California State Assembly and one term in the California State Senate. As an Assemblymember, Ms. Evans took on key roles as a Majority Whip, Human Services Committee Chair, and Budget Committee Chair. In the Senate, Ms. Evans led the Senate Banking and Finance Committee, the Senate Committee on Judiciary, the Legislative Women’s Caucus, and the Senate Select Committee on Wine. Ms. Evans used her leadership positions to champion local issues as well as statewide policy and was able to forge bipartisan consensus among her colleagues.

In addition to her time in elected office, Ms. Evans has practiced law for more than twenty years and litigated before both state and federal courts, up to the United States Supreme Court. In 2011, she became the first woman to receive the Defender of Justice Award from the Judicial Council of California.

Mr. Speaker, it is fitting that we honor Noreen Evans upon her retirement from the California State Senate for her tireless work representing the North Coast by protecting its valuable natural resources and championing its people. We express our deep appreciation to Noreen Evans for her exemplary public service, and convey our best wishes to Ms. Evans and her family as she pursues new endeavors.

RECOGNIZING ANNIE GALLAGHER

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and thank Annie Gallagher, Public Affairs Specialist with the Philadelphia Region Social Security Administration for her 23 years of service to our nation and to congratulate her on her announced retirement.

Annie Gallagher, in her role as the Public Affairs Specialist at the Philadelphia Regional Office, provided assistance to a countless number of my constituents, as well as Virginians across the region and the Commonwealth. Her dedication and extraordinary commitment in providing solutions to those in need has been a credit to the Social Security Administration, which she has faithfully served for the past 13 years. Her efforts on behalf of the public have been in keeping with the highest standards of public service.

I congratulate Annie on a well-deserved retirement and wish her the best as she begins the next chapter in her life.

HONORING JUAN OSORIO ORTIZ, MR. AMIGO OF THE 78TH ANNUAL CHARRO DAYS FIESTA

HON. FILEMON VELA

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Juan Osorio Ortiz who has been named Mr. Amigo 2014. A Mexican television actor and producer, Juan Osorio Ortiz’s distinguished career spans almost three decades.

This year from February 22 through March 1, the cities of Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Tamaulipas, will come together to celebrate the 78th Annual Charro Days Fiesta.

Charro Days unites the bi-cultural, bi-literate and bi-national communities of Brownsville and Matamoros to commemorate our way of

● This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

life and shared history and to celebrate the interconnectedness of our two communities. The Rio Grande, “El Rio Bravo,” on the southern border of the U.S. and Mexico binds our two communities—one region with family and friends living on both sides of the border. Over generations we have shared memories and built relationships that span beyond any line or boundary.

The current security situation has strained our way of life, and those of us who frequented Matamoros to visit family and friends or to have dinner in the heart of the city have not been able to visit in a long time. In the face of today’s challenges, the annual Charro Days Fiesta recommits the two communities to our valued friendship. We join in celebration of our shared past, customs, cultures and traditions, and to solidify our resolve for a better tomorrow.

Every year, the Mr. Amigo Association Selection Committee names an individual who serves as a role model for the community. The recipient must be a Mexican citizen who has contributed to friendship and understanding between the U.S. and Mexico, and has excelled in their profession, exemplifying the highest standards in their personal and professional lives.

Mr. Amigo 2014, Juan Osorio Ortiz, was born on June 24, 1957, in Mexico City. His passion for theatre started as a young boy when he would memorize all the lines and roles in school plays and fill in when someone was absent. At a young age, he went to Telecentro, a training school for actors and actresses in Mexico. His interest in telenovelas, or soap operas, was sparked when he participated in “El Amor Tiene Cara de Mujer.”

Working his way up the ladder in the entertainment industry, he began as a production assistant and had the opportunity to advance in 1986 when he stepped in as executive director on the soap opera “La Gloria y El Infierno”. Juan Osorio Ortiz has been an executive producer of soap operas ever since. In the past 28 years, he has produced 24 soap operas, including “Mi Corazon Es Tuyo,” “Una Familia Con Suerte,” “Tormenta en El Paraíso,” “Salome,” “Marisol,” and “Clarisa.”

Today, we honor Juan Osorio Ortiz for his years of work bringing real life issues to the small screen in a thoughtful and engaging way. I join Brownsville, Texas, and Matamoros, Tamaulipas in welcoming him to Charro Days.

**HONORING SHARON
GOLDSWORTHY**

HON. STEPHEN LEE FINCHER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate my friend, Mayor Sharon Goldsworthy on being named the 2015 Germantown, Tennessee Lions Club Citizen of the Year. This award highlights her wonderful career in public service and enhances her legacy of dedication, passion, and commitment for the people of Germantown and all of Shelby County, Tennessee.

Mrs. Goldsworthy and her husband, Jim, moved to Germantown in 1977. Mrs.

Goldsworthy saw a need and became involved with the local schools and the issues they were facing. Involvement with the PTA and other organizations eventually led her to commission and board meetings and a desire to be a part of the decision-making process. In 1992, Mrs. Goldsworthy was elected Alderman, and she was elected Mayor of Germantown in 1994.

Despite the “part-time” job she acquired, Mayor Goldsworthy worked overtime for the betterment of her city. She served on the Tennessee Air Pollution Control Board, Governor’s Council on Higher Education, Chickasaw Basin Authority, Regional Rail Steering Committee, and Metro Planning Organization Transportation Board. Her service took her to halls and committee rooms in both Nashville and Washington with the West Tennessee Mayors Association, Tennessee Women in Government, the Tennessee Municipal League, and the United States Conference of Mayors. Through budgets, drainage issues, railroad crossings, public television, and thousands of other issues, Mayor Goldsworthy always fought for those in need and was ever-ready to meet any challenge or lend a helping hand.

The Germantown Lions Club could not have made a better selection for their Citizen of the Year than Mayor Sharon Goldsworthy. Indeed the award is a fitting tribute to the indelible contributions Mayor Goldsworthy provided to the people she served. On behalf of Tennessee’s 8th Congressional District, I would like to congratulate and wish the best of luck in retirement and for all future endeavors to the family and friends of Mrs. Sharon Goldsworthy.

SUMGAIT POGROMS

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 27th anniversary of the pogrom against the Armenian residents of the town of Sumgait, Azerbaijan. On this day in 1988, and for three days following, Azerbaijani mobs assaulted and killed Armenians. When the violence finally subsided, hundreds of Armenian civilians had been brutally murdered and injured, women and young girls were raped, and some victims were tortured and burned to death. Those that survived the carnage fled their homes and businesses, leaving behind all but the clothes on their backs. The Sumgait Pogroms came in the wake of a pattern of anti-Armenian rallies throughout Azerbaijan, aided and encouraged by high ranking officials in the Azeri government, and touched off a wave of violence culminating in the 1990 Pogroms in Baku.

In a pattern all too familiar to the Armenian people, the Azerbaijani authorities made little effort to punish those responsible, instead attempting to cover up the atrocities in Sumgait to this day, as well as denying the role of senior government officials in instigating the violence.

The Sumgait massacres led to wider reprisals against Azerbaijan’s Armenian ethnic minority, resulting in the virtual disappearance of a once thriving population of 450,000 Arme-

nians living in Azerbaijan, and culminating in the war launched against the people of Nagorno Karabakh. That war resulted in thousands dead on both sides and created over one million refugees in both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Time has not healed the wounds of those killed and hurt in the pogroms in Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku. To the contrary, hatred of Armenians is celebrated in Azeri society, a situation most vividly exemplified by the case of Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani army captain who savagely murdered an Armenian army lieutenant, Gurgen Margaryan with an axe while he slept. The two were participating in a NATO Partnership for Peace exercise at the time in Hungary. In 2012, Safarov was sent home to Azerbaijan, purportedly to serve out the remainder of his sentence. Instead, he was pardoned, promoted, and paraded through the streets of Baku in a sickening welcome home. And as we speak, Azerbaijan continues its dangerous and provocative behavior along its border with Armenia and in Karabakh.

Mr. Speaker, this April we will mark the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, an event the Turkish government, Azerbaijan’s closest ally, goes to great lengths to deny. We must not let such crimes against humanity go unrecognized, whether they occurred yesterday or 27 years ago or 100 years ago. Today, let us pause to remember the victims of the atrocities of the Sumgait pogroms. Mr. Speaker, it is our moral obligation to condemn crimes of hatred and to remember the victims, in hope that history will not be repeated.

**RECOGNIZING AMERICAN HEART
MONTH**

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 27, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize American Heart Month and commend the staff and volunteers of the American Heart Association, and the organizations in New Jersey and around the country for participating in this year’s successful effort to raise awareness of heart disease and the associated risks.

American Heart Month is a critical public awareness tool that helps promote heart-healthy lifestyles, with a focus on prevention and incorporating a healthy diet and exercise into all of our daily lives.

Last Congress, I was honored to accept the position of co-chair of the Congressional Heart and Stroke Coalition. For nearly 20 years, the Coalition has served as a resource for all members of Congress and worked to advance federal policies that raise the quality of life for individuals with heart disease.

The partnership of the Association and the Coalition is critical to raising awareness of the disease and ensuring those of us making decisions on funding and policy are educated on how what we do affects those suffering. The Association’s briefings—which they organize throughout the year—are a key component of this strategy.

Heart and stroke patients, as well as their loved ones and caregivers, need vocal advocates on Capitol Hill to ensure access to quality care and treatments. We have a duty to