

As we prepare to observe 100 years since the Armenian Genocide, these more recent acts of violence against Armenians remind us that the work towards peace in the region continues.

Today, we recognize the anniversary of the Sumgait pogroms and to call attention to the work we have ahead of us. We have a shared responsibility to speak out when groups of people are targeted with oppression and violence just because of their ethnicity.

Along with my colleagues on the Congressional Armenian Issues Caucus, I continue my efforts to try and shed light on these events so that those lives lost are not forgotten. We will continue to promote mutual understanding and security through the Caucasus region.

It is my hope that we can all join together in condemning acts of violence in the past, and renew our commitment to vigilance in the future.

#### RECOGNIZING ST. MARK'S SCHOOL, SOUTHBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS

##### HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the St. Mark's School for its dedication to academia, guidance, and personal growth.

St. Mark's School, located in Southborough, Massachusetts, serves high school students from across the globe. With a dedicated faculty and a motivated student body, St. Mark's School is a model for high schools throughout the nation. St. Mark's School lays a foundation for young men and women, emphasizing a well-rounded education to spur creativity and analytical thought. With its roots in the Episcopalian tradition, the school values cooperation over self-interest, and encourages every student to explore their place in the world after high school.

For 150 years, the St. Mark's School has educated students in order to prepare them for adulthood. Joseph Burnett, St. Mark's founder, sought to create an institution that offered high-quality education. With this goal in mind, St. Mark's began with a single two-story building, painted with yellow and green blinds. This modest campus then started to grow, with the additions of a large schoolroom and dormitory in 1866. This growth continued through the 1890s until the campus grew to fill 250 acres. Today, St. Mark's is still expanding, with recent additions including a new athletic center, dormitory, and performing arts center within the last two decades. Joseph Burnett's dream currently benefits a class of 350 students from 19 states, the District of Columbia, and 15 nations.

Though St. Mark's began as an all-boys school, it currently educates both young men and women. In the 1970s, St. Mark's reached an agreement with the Southborough School to offer coordinated education for all students. The faculty and staff of St. Mark's understood the importance of spreading Joseph Burnett's dream so that all types of students could benefit from the educational opportunities offered by this establishment. St. Mark's continues to include students and faculty with diverse backgrounds, particularly those who have experi-

enced prejudice or disadvantages. The St. Mark's community embraces all types of students, which empowers every St. Marker.

The St. Mark's motto, *Age Quod Agis*, or "Do and be your best," is instilled in every St. Marker. These students are challenged every day, but receive constant support. Students do their best by receiving the best training in the most ideal academic setting. With a student to teacher ratio of 6 to 1, the classroom forms into a personal setting, tailored to the needs of the students. St. Mark's encourages students to do their best in the academic arena, on the athletic field, and in their campus community. St. Mark's school week traverses six days a week to instill personal discipline and academic excellence. The school week compliments the fact that St. Mark's is a boarding school. Students attend class together, work together, and live together, creating a school culture and community important for personal growth and socialization.

I commend the trustees, faculty and staff of St. Mark's School for spending their time and effort ensuring that their students achieve success. St. Mark's School has consistently demonstrated a dedication and commitment to helping these students receive a proper education to prepare for the future. The St. Mark's faculty and staff inspire both students and professionals, and I am happy to recognize them today for all of their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in congratulating the St. Mark's School in serving such an important role in the lives of generations of high school students, both past and present.

#### SUPPORTING A CLEAN DHS FUNDING BILL

##### HON. YVETTE D. CLARKE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Ms. CLARKE of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to draw the attention of the House on the dangerous position in which my Republican colleagues have placed the American people by refusing to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

Republicans in the House of Representatives voted in January to fund DHS only if we threaten millions of undocumented parents and children with deportation. Unless Republicans stop playing games with our national security and vote to fund DHS, the agency will not have the ability to maintain critical operations by the end of February.

We have a responsibility to demonstrate to the people of the United States and the leaders of other nations that we are capable of supporting national security without concern for politics. The partisan interests that have convinced many Republicans to oppose the Obama administration on immigration are not in the interest of our nation as a whole. The position of the Republicans imposes serious risks on the American people. The failure to fund DHS, as President Obama has recently reminded us, will impact one hundred forty-three thousand Department of Homeland Security workers who are responsible for the safety of our families and children. In New York City, DHS resources support our police and fire departments to protect the city and

the millions of visitors from around the world from attacks. Undermining the funding of the DHS threatens their safety and the security of our communities across the nation. House Republicans should not hold our national security hostage to a narrow agenda.

In the community I represent in Brooklyn, New York, the many first-generation and second-generation immigrants will suffer irreparable harm if we fail to fund the DHS. Who among would want to know the fear that a knock on the door in the middle of the night or a citation for a minor infraction such as jaywalking could result in permanent separation from their children?

Mr. Speaker, instead of playing games with politics, Republicans should focus on avoiding a shutdown of the DHS by enacting a bipartisan bill to fund the DHS through the rest of the 2015 fiscal year.

#### HONORING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF BOOK-IT REPERTORY THEATRE IN SEATTLE

##### HON. JIM McDERMOTT

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 25th anniversary of Book-It Repertory Theatre (Book-It) in Seattle and to salute the company's commitment to bringing great literature to life on stage.

Since its founding in 1990, Book-It has established itself as the nation's leader in narrative theatre, and over that time has transformed more than one hundred works of literature into a repertory of works of live theatre. Book-It's adaptation style has also been honed into a highly effective tool for teaching literature of all kinds, resulting in the current launch of its Literacy Initiative with Washington State schools.

Twenty-five years after it began as an artists' collective, the company's mainstage works are seen by 20,000 theatre-goers annually, and its prolific Arts and Education programs serve as many as 62,000 students through performances, workshops, and residencies State-wide.

Classic works by vaunted authors like Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, Leo Tolstoy, Edith Wharton, Mark Twain, Kurt Vonnegut, John Irving, Maya Angelou, Michael Chabon, and many more have been adapted into Book-It plays alongside treasured writers who live in the great State of Washington including Ivan Doig, Garth Stein, Stephanie Kallos, Jim Lynch, Jess Walter, and David Guterson. And Book-It adaptations have gone on to productions in regional theatres across the U.S.

The Arts and Education Programs, through alliances with school districts throughout the state, have helped to bring vital arts programming where it's needed, serving student audiences through performances of literature for youth, including bilingual plays for young people in areas with high immigrant populations, notably in Central Washington's food- and wine-growing regions.

Book-It's commitment to literature and literacy fosters community through partnerships with Seattle and regional libraries, as well as King County's 4Culture, which connects Book-It artists with regional historical, cultural, and

social service organizations to help tell their stories in meaningful ways. The performances resulting from these partnerships are often the only arts experience a group may have.

Founding Co-Artistic Directors Jane Jones and Myra Platt were named among seven Unsung Heroes and Uncommon Genius by The Seattle Times for their contribution to life in Seattle; The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation awarded them a 20th Anniversary Founder's Grant; in 2010, Book-It was given a Mayor's Arts Award; and in 2012, the Governor's Arts Award.

As we celebrate the Silver Jubilee of Book-It Repertory Theatre, I would like to convey my congratulations to Book-It on its steadfast commitment to delivering broad, high-quality live theatre experiences to its constituents in Seattle and throughout all of Washington.

#### THE SHAME OF IRANIAN HUMAN RIGHTS

#### HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, at a time when the administration seems keen to reach a nuclear accord that relies on trust in the Iranian regime and perhaps even a de facto collaboration in the fight against ISIS, it is wise to consider and scrutinize the dismal human rights record of this country with which we are currently conducting negotiations based on good faith. How they treat their own people is illustrative of how they see and will treat outsiders. A hearing I convened yesterday provided a critical examination of human rights in Iran—which is important and necessary in its own right—and also placed it in the context of the administration's efforts to partner with this regime on critical issues.

According to a report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran, between July 2013 and June 2014, at least 852 people were executed in Iran. Shockingly, some of those executed were children under the age of 18. Iranian human rights activists place the number of people executed by the Iranian regime at 1,181.

The current Department of State human rights report states that Iranian human rights violations include disappearances; cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment, including judicially sanctioned amputation and flogging; rape, politically motivated violence and repression, harsh and life-threatening conditions in detention and prison facilities, with instances of deaths in custody; arbitrary arrest and lengthy pretrial detention, sometimes incommunicado.

While the Iranian constitution grants equal rights to all ethnic minorities and allows for minority languages to be used in the media and in schools, minorities do not enjoy equal rights, and the regime consistently denies their right to use their languages in school. In addition, a 1985 law, the Gozinesh (selection) law, prohibits non-Shia ethnic minorities from fully participating in civic life. That law and its associated provisions make full access to employment, education, and other areas conditional on devotion to the Islamic Republic and the tenets of Shia Islam.

The regime disproportionately targets minority groups, including Kurds, Arabs, Azeris, and

Baluchis for arbitrary arrest, prolonged detention, and physical abuse. These groups report political and socioeconomic discrimination, particularly in their access to economic aid, business licenses, university admissions, permission to publish books, and housing and land rights.

Because of severe religious freedom abuses, our Government has designated Iran as a Country of Particular Concern since 1999. The frequent arrest and harassment of members of religious minorities has continued, following a significant increase in 2012. The government severely restricts religious freedom, and there have been reports of imprisonment, harassment, intimidation, and discrimination based on religious beliefs. There have been continued reports of the government charging religious and ethnic minorities with "enmity against God," "anti-Islamic propaganda," or vague national security crimes for their religious activities. Those reportedly arrested on religious grounds faced poor prison conditions and treatment, as with most prisoners of conscience.

One of those imprisoned on religious grounds is Pastor Saeed Abedini, a U.S. citizen and father of two—Rebekkah Grace and Jacob Cyrus—and a Christian imprisoned in Iran because of his faith. Pastor Abedini was imprisoned by the Iranian regime nearly 1,000 days ago, when members of the Revolutionary Guard pulled him off of a bus and placed him under house arrest. He was later taken away—in chains—to Evin Prison, where he has endured periods of solitary confinement, beatings, internal bleeding, death threats, and continued psychological torture, all because he would not deny his Christian faith.

What was Pastor Abedini's crime? According to the court, he was a threat to the security of Iran because of his leadership role in Christian churches in 2000–2005. President Obama promised Pastor Abedini's son Jacob that he would do all he can to gain his father's release by the boy's birthday next month. Earlier this week, Secretary of State John Kerry, in answer to my question on this matter, said the administration was working quietly to gain Pastor Abedini's release as soon as possible. Let's hope.

Meanwhile, Iran is repeatedly cited for virtually unrelenting repression of the Baha'i community, which Iran's Shiite Muslim clergy views as a heretical sect. Baha'i number about 300,000–350,000. At least 30 Baha'is remain imprisoned, and 60 were arrested in 2012. A February 2013 UN report said in that 110 Baha'is were in jail, with 133 more expected to start serving jail time. Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the regime has executed more than 200 Baha'is. The regime frequently prevents many Baha'is from leaving the country, harasses and persecutes them, and generally disregards their property rights. Iranian regime officials reportedly offer Baha'is relief from mistreatment in exchange for recanting their religious affiliation.

Iranian courts offer no recourse to the monstrous violation of human rights because without an independent judiciary, Iranians (and foreigners tried in those courts) are routinely denied fair public trials, sometimes resulting in executions without due process. This also results in ineffective implementation of civil judicial procedures and remedies and allows arbitrary interference with privacy, family, home, and correspondence.

This is the regime the administration trusts to make agreements and honor them. I call on the administration to do more than acknowledge these facts—it must take more seriously the blatant disregard of the rights of people and factor this into any interactions we have with this predatory regime. How can we make any binding agreement with such a dishonorable regime? That question remains to be answered.

RECOGNIZING MRS. ANNA BARRY  
AS THE 2016 ESCAMBIA COUNTY,  
FLORIDA, TEACHER OF THE  
YEAR

#### HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 27, 2015*

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Anna Barry as the 2016 Escambia County Teacher of the Year. Teachers are amongst our Nation's most valuable public servants. They are responsible for mentoring our students and ensuring that our next generation emerges ready to lead our Nation in the future. Mrs. Barry's assiduous work ethic, unbridled enthusiasm, creativity, and commitment to student engagement exemplify the characteristics of an exemplary teacher.

For more than a decade, Mrs. Barry has served the students of Northwest Florida, inspiring them to strive for excellence and empowering all those who pass through her classroom to reach their full potential. Her dedication to her students' success fosters an atmosphere of achievement, and her commitment to a layered curriculum teaching method, where each individual student can take ownership of their education, helps ensure that students remain engaged and conscientious.

Mrs. Barry began her career teaching U.S. History, Science, and Geography at Ernest Ward Middle School. Despite being new to the profession, Mrs. Barry tackled her position head on and immediately began making an impact on her students. She also took on leadership positions at the school and helped to coordinate instruction amongst all grade levels.

Following her successful years at Ernest Ward, Mrs. Barry began teaching at her high school alma mater, Northview High School, where she once again established herself as an exceptional teacher and leader. At Northview, Mrs. Barry has served as a Faculty Leader, History Department Chair, and a member of the Florida Standards Team, which helps ensure that teachers are ready to meet the updated state education standards. While at Northview, she has also taken the lead in several other initiatives, including forming the first-ever Model United Nations (UN) Team for Escambia County and working with the local community to secure the funding necessary to have her students travel to Orlando to participate in Model UN. Mrs. Barry also serves as the coach for the Varsity and Junior Varsity cheerleading teams, produces the Miss Northview High School Pageant, and is a co-sponsor of the Student Government Association.

Thanks in large part to her success within her own school environment, Mrs. Barry has