

People across the political spectrum now agree that this approach to drug policy is flawed and ineffective. We have spent over \$1 trillion on this effort over the years.

We have undermined countries in Latin America and helped unleash an unprecedented wave of violence in Mexico, killing tens of thousands of people in the drug wars.

Yet, despite all the effort, all the money, drugs are still widely available in the United States, actually less expensive than before we started. We seem unable to even keep drugs out of our own prisons.

America's failure to deal with harm reduction, treatment, and prevention has helped lead to the epidemic of opioid addiction and death. In 2013 alone, we lost 20,000 people to prescription drug overdose.

As people get hooked on amazingly over-prescribed prescription drugs, it leads to heroin addiction when they substitute it when they can no longer get access to opioids.

Now, it is interesting that some of the countries that have been most devastated by this war on drugs, in dealing with the international cartels—Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala—were there at the United Nations leading the charge for a different approach.

Many of the presentations that I witnessed were suggestions to the Outcome Document, with the common theme that it did not go far enough in reforming the path forward.

Calls for harm reduction, greater access to treatment, and fighting the barbaric practice of executing drug offenders energized that consensus.

Now, America was on the sidelines. America was not calling for adjustment and change in reform. We were sort of between those more progressive forces, including those countries that have really been in the throes of the drug wars.

And then there is Iran and China and Russia, and we were sort of floating in between. It is kind of embarrassing, as an American, to see the United States not leading.

I come back to Washington, D.C., more committed than ever for the new administration and the next Congress to be a voice of reform to change these failed policies.

We need to put an end to the mindless military action and hard-edged policies that fail and replace them with policies that will make a difference, saving lives, and having effective regulations as tools.

Now, the United States is moving ahead at reform at the State and local levels. Forty States now provide some access to medical marijuana. Four States and the District of Columbia deal with adult use, and there will be four or five more States that will join this year.

In 2019, when we go back to the United Nations, hopefully to be able to make some of these reforms, the world is going to look different.

First of all, there are moves in both Canada and Mexico to expand the use of medical marijuana and to legalize adult use.

In 2019, virtually every American will have a legal access to medical marijuana, and we will continue the action at the State level, making those critical changes. Public opinion, once and for all, will be settled in favor of regulation, taxation, and responsible adult use.

We will break the shackles of research on marijuana, where the Federal Government actually gets in the way of being able to have the information that the scientists and doctors can produce to settle the question so we don't have to guess.

I am hopeful that the United States will be on the right side of reform, that we will stop expensive and regressive policies that don't work, and that we will be able to respond to the emerging American consensus of the people at the State and local levels to do it better. This is one effort we can't afford to fail.

RECOGNIZING THE OUTSTANDING WORK OF ILLINIPAC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DOLD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the outstanding work of IlliniPAC, a group of students on the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign campus who are making a positive and important impact through their pro-Israel advocacy.

IlliniPAC is focused on building bridges throughout the student community and educating fellow students of all backgrounds about Israel.

At a time when there are so many concerted efforts to promote myths and terrible mistruths about Israel, the student leaders of IlliniPAC have stepped forward with a positive message to highlight the importance of a strong and bipartisan U.S.-Israel relationship.

I particularly want to commend IlliniPAC for its proactive and constructive efforts to oppose misguided calls to promote boycotts, divestment, and sanctioning, otherwise known as BDS, against Israel.

As the sponsor of the bipartisan Combating BDS Act of 2016 in Congress, I greatly appreciate the efforts by IlliniPAC to oppose BDS campaigns targeting Israel. These BDS campaigns perpetuate damaging falsehoods against Israel only to serve to divide and separate students on campus.

The truth is that the BDS movement has neither brought Israelis and Palestinians closer to peace nor advanced the laudable goal of improving dialogue between supporters of both sides. Instead, the BDS movement has simply been employed as a hateful weapon to delegitimize Israel and those who stand with her.

Once again I would like to thank IlliniPAC for taking a leadership role

on campus and for the work that they do to spread the positive message about Israel, an oasis of freedom, democracy, and tolerance in one of the world's most volatile regions.

GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE ACT OF 2016

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, yesterday we in the House of Representatives passed the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative Act of 2016.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important bipartisan effort to protect our Great Lakes. I believe that, when it comes to our environment, we must all work together to strengthen conservation programs and other policies that protect our natural resources.

Mr. Speaker, I am fortunate to represent Illinois' 10th Congressional District, which borders one of our Nation's greatest treasures, Lake Michigan. Lake Michigan offers miles of beachfronts, natural habitats, recreational space for all of those that visit her, as well as drinking water for millions.

As a scoutmaster, I teach my Scouts that we should always leave or strive to leave areas better than when we found them. Reauthorizing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative for the next 5 years will help us fulfill this goal with Lake Michigan.

I now urge the United States Senate to immediately take up and pass this legislation. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative was introduced in the Senate by my friend and colleague, Senator MARK KIRK, who has been a fierce advocate for protecting Lake Michigan throughout his 15-year career representing the people of Illinois.

Working together, we can protect our country's greater natural resources for future generations to enjoy.

CONGRATULATING SHERRI RUKES

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sherri Rukes, who was awarded the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching by the Golden Apple Foundation.

Ms. Rukes has been an AP chemistry teacher at Libertyville High School for 19 years. She also was the coach of the robotics team and volunteers with the science Olympiad and math team.

The Golden Apple is awarded to the best teachers in the entire country, and Ms. Rukes is very deserving of this prestigious recognition. Her innovation and passion for teaching have made her an outstanding teacher who has bettered the lives of every student who entered her classroom.

Ms. Rukes plays an important role in educating and preparing our future leaders for success. I am happy to know that our students are getting the outstanding education they need and deserve when they step into her class.

I offer my congratulations to Ms. Rukes and to Libertyville High School for this well-deserved recognition.

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ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 101st anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Over the years in Rhode Island, I have spoken with many Armenian Americans who have recounted the stories their parents or grandparents told them about living through the horror of the Armenian genocide. Even after 100 years, there is still a deep wound in the heart of the Armenian people, particularly as genocide and atrocious human rights violations continue to be used as weapons of war in the 21st century.

Today, hardly a week goes by without news of horrific human rights violations somewhere around the world. The first step to stop these abuses is to acknowledge them for what they are and then to confront them. That is why it is important that the United States Government finally recognize and call the Armenian genocide what it is and what it was: a systematic attempt by the Ottoman Empire to annihilate the Armenian people.

The challenges, of course, continue today for the people of Armenia. All of us know that earlier this month, violence once again erupted in Nagorno-Karabakh. President Serzh Sargsyan called it “the most wide-scale military action that Azerbaijan has tried to carry out since the establishment of the 1994 ceasefire regime.”

It is critical that the United States remain deeply engaged in resolving this conflict. I recently met with the Armenian Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Grigor Hovhannissian, to discuss relations between our two countries and what role the United States must play to help promote a resolution of this long-standing conflict. I have received briefings on the current situation, and I will continue to advocate for critical American leadership to protect the innocent men, women, and children who are living in Nagorno-Karabakh.

But as we address this current crisis, it is also critical that we continue to push for recognition of the Armenian genocide. History is clear: 101 years ago, 1½ million Armenian men, women, and children were brutally and systematically murdered while living under the Ottoman Empire. That is not an opinion, it is not an interpretation, and it is not an allegation. It is a fact.

In a cable sent to the U.S. Secretary of State on July 10, 1915, the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire confirmed the persecution of Armenians by “systematic attempts to uproot peaceful Armenian populations, and through arbitrary arrests, terrible tortures, wholesale expulsions, and deportations from one end of the empire to other accompanied by frequent instances of rape, pillage, and murder,

turning into massacre, to bring destruction and destitution on them.”

After 101 years of waiting, it is time for our President and the United States Government to recognize this fact and to acknowledge this atrocity as the first genocide of the 21st century. Armenia is an important friend and ally of the United States, and it is critical that we stand with our friends and honestly acknowledge the evil of the Armenian genocide.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to leave you with the words of Pope Francis who last year reminded all of us that “whenever memory fades, it means that evil allows wounds to fester. Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it.”

After more than 100 years of waiting, it is time for the United States Government to finally recognize the Armenian genocide as the first genocide of the 21st century.

 CONFRONTING HEROIN AND OPIOID ABUSE CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, the rapid rise in drug abuse across America, specifically the sharp increase in heroin and prescription opioid abuse, has severely impacted our local communities and has become a major issue across our country.

Tragically, 78 people each day will lose their battle with addiction and their life as a result of an opioid or heroin overdose. Sadly, with the trends moving the way they are, this number will only continue to increase. According to the CDC, in 2014, over 28,000 people lost their lives due to prescription opioid pain relievers or heroin. This was the highest recorded number of overdose deaths of any year. Newsday on Long Island just reported an increase in overdose deaths in our region, stating that 442 people died of a heroin or opiate overdose in 2014, a number that has increased from 403 overdose deaths the prior year.

Addiction is a devastating disease that takes hold of our loved ones and impacts everyone around that person. This is a lonely and heartbreaking disease that is taking lives, tearing families apart, and destroying our communities. It must be stopped.

In a report that highlights the growing drug abuse epidemic sweeping across our Nation, the CDC found that over the past decade, heroin use has doubled among young adults ages 18 to 25, and heroin-related overdose deaths have nearly quadrupled, with every 6 out of 10 drug overdoses linked to opioids or heroin. The CDC also found that almost half of the people who use heroin are also struggling with a prescription opioid addiction. As drug abuse continues to rise, claiming lives and grabbing hold of our youth, it is clear that we must come together to address this crisis.

Throughout my time in the New York State Senate, and now in the United States Congress, one of my top priorities has been to support legislation to help those coping with drug addiction by increasing treatment and recovery services.

One piece of legislation I am proud to support and cosponsor is H.R. 953, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, also known as CARA. CARA would prevent and treat addiction on a local level through community-based education, prevention, treatment, and recovery services. The grants made available through this bill would also provide the necessary funding to expand prescription drug monitoring in States all throughout our country.

Additionally, CARA provides funding to supply our police force and emergency medical responders with higher quantities of Naloxone, a medication that is proven to reverse an opioid overdose. Since this bill was introduced at the beginning of last year, I have been pushing for a vote on CARA in the House. Just last month, the United States Senate passed this bill with an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 94-1. Now it is time to bring this bill to the House floor.

As a member of the Bipartisan Task Force to Combat the Heroin Epidemic, passage in the House of CARA is a top priority of mine, and I will keep fighting so that we can pass this essential piece of legislation and send it to the President's desk for his signature.

There are many other bills, other than CARA, such as the Stop Overdose Stat Act, H.R. 2850. There are bills like the Examining Opioid Treatment Infrastructure Act of 2016, which would require the Comptroller General to issue a report to Congress on substance abuse treatment availability and infrastructure needs across the country, as well as legislation that would task the FDA to create a plan on how to deal with the opioid and heroin epidemic, H.R. 4976.

Fighting drug abuse must be an effort at all levels of government, but it also must be a community effort as well. That is why I have hosted press conferences and panel discussions, including a community summit and drug task force roundtable on Long Island to bring together local elected officials, law enforcement, health professionals, community groups, parents, concerned residents, and recovering substance abusers so that we can all develop and pursue necessary solutions.

The House is also expected to take up legislation to stop the flow of illegal substances into our country, such as H.R. 3380, which would help law enforcement officials identify and target drug traffickers; and H.R. 4985, which makes it easier to prosecute drug traffickers.

We must all continue to support legislation that addresses the rise in heroin and opioid abuse to stop this tragic loss of life, family, and community as a