

to underline his loyalty: for almost a century, ethnic Macedonians in Greece have been objects of suspicion and, at times, persecution, even as their presence has been denied by almost everyone. Most are reluctant to speak to outsiders about their identity. To themselves and others, they're known simply as "locals" (dopyi), who speak a language called "local" (dopya). They are entirely absent from school history textbooks, have not featured in censuses since 1951 (when they were only patchily recorded, and referred to simply as "Slavic-speakers"), and are barely mentioned in public. Most Greeks don't even know that they exist.

That erasure was one reason for Greece's long-running dispute with the former Yugoslav republic now officially called the Republic of North Macedonia. The dispute was finally resolved last month by a vote in the Greek parliament ratifying (by a majority of just seven) an agreement made last June by the countries' two prime ministers. When the Greek Prime Minister, Alexis Tsipras, referred during the parliamentary debate to the existence of "Slavomacedonians" in Greece—at the time of World War Two—he was breaking a long-standing taboo.

The use of the name "Macedonia" by the neighbouring nation state implicitly acknowledges that Macedonians are a people in their own right, and opens the door to hard questions about the history of Greece's own Macedonian minority.

When Mr. Fokas was born, the northern Greek region of Macedonia had only recently been annexed by the Greek state. Until 1913 it was part of the Ottoman Empire, with Greece, Bulgaria and Serbia all wooing its Slavic-speaking inhabitants as a means to claiming the territory. It was partly in reaction to those competing forces that a distinctive Slav Macedonian identity emerged in the late 19th and early 20th Century. As Mr. Fokas's uncle used to say, the family was "neither Serb, nor Greek, nor Bulgarian, but Macedonian Orthodox".

In the end, the Slav Macedonians found themselves divided between those three new states. In Greece, some were expelled; those who remained were pushed to assimilate. All villages and towns with non-Greek names were given new ones, chosen by a committee of scholars in the late 1920s, though almost a century later some "locals" still use the old ones.

In 1936, when Mr. Fokas was nine years old, the Greek dictator Ioannis Metaxas (an admirer of Mussolini) banned the Macedonian language, and forced Macedonian-speakers to change their names to Greek ones. Mr. Fokas remembers policemen eavesdropping on mourners at funerals and listening at windows to catch anyone speaking or singing in the forbidden tongue. There were lawsuits, threats and beatings.

Women—who often spoke no Greek—would cover their mouths with their headscarves to muffle their speech, but Mr. Fokas's mother was arrested and fined 250 drachmas, a big sum back then.

"Slavic-speakers suffered a lot from the Greeks under Metaxas," he says. "Twenty people from this village, the heads of the big families, were exiled to the island of Chios. My father-in-law was one of them." They were tortured by being forced to drink castor oil, a powerful laxative.

When Germany, Italy and Bulgaria invaded Greece in 1941, some Slavic-speakers welcomed the Bulgarians as potential liberators from Metaxas's repressive regime. But many soon joined the resistance, led by the Communist Party (which at that time supported the Macedonian minority) and continued fighting with the Communists in the civil war that followed the Axis occupation. (Bulgaria annexed the eastern part of Greek Mac-

edonia from 1941 to 1944, committing many atrocities; many Greeks wrongly attribute these to Macedonians, whom they identify as Bulgarians.)

When the Communists were finally defeated, severe reprisals followed for anyone associated with the resistance or the left.

"Macedonians paid more than anyone for the civil war," Mr. Fokas says. "Eight people were court-martialled and executed from this village, eight from the next village, 23 from the one opposite. They killed a grandfather and his grandson, just 18 years old."

Mr. Fokas was a student in Thessaloniki then—but he too was arrested and spent three years on the prison island of Makronisos, not because of anything he'd done but because his mother had helped her brother-in-law escape through the skylight of a cafe where he was being held.

Most of the prisoners on Makronisos were Greek leftists, and were pressed to sign declarations of repentance for their alleged Communist past. Those who refused were made to crawl under barbed wire, or beaten with thick bamboo canes. "Terrible things were done," Mr. Fokas says. "But we mustn't talk about them. It's an insult to Greek civilisation. It harms Greece's good name."

Tens of thousands of fighters with the Democratic Army, about half of them Slavic-speakers, went into exile in Eastern bloc countries during and after the civil war. About 20,000 children were taken across the border by the Communists, whether for their protection or as reserve troops for a future counter-attack.

Many Slavic-speaking civilians also went north for safety. Entire villages were left empty, like the old settlement of Krystallopigi (Smrdes in Macedonian) near the Albanian border, where only the imposing church of St. George stands witness to a population that once numbered more than 1,500 souls.

In 1982, more than 30 years after the conflict's end, Greece's socialist government issued a decree allowing civil war refugees to return—but only those who were "of Greek ethnicity". Ethnic Macedonians from Greece remained shut out of their country, their villages and their land; families separated by the war were never reunited.

Mr. Fokas's father-in-law and brother-in-law both died in Skopje. But, he points out, that decree tacitly recognised that there were ethnic Macedonians in Greece, even though the state never officially recognised their existence: "Those war refugees left children, grandchildren, fathers, mothers behind. What were they, if not Macedonians?"

It's impossible accurately to calculate the number of Slavic-speakers or descendants of ethnic Macedonians in Greece. Historian Leonidas Embiricos estimates that more than 100,000 still live in the Greek region of Macedonia, though only 10,000 to 20,000 would identify openly as members of a minority—and many others are proud Greek nationalists.

The Macedonian language hasn't officially been banned in Greece for decades, but the fear still lingers. A middle-aged man I met in a village near the reed beds of Lake Prespa, where the agreement between Greece and the North Macedonian republic was first signed last June, explained that this fear is passed down through the generations. "My parents didn't speak the language at home in case I picked it up and spoke it in public. To protect me. We don't even remember why we're afraid any more," he said. Slowly the language is dying. Years of repression pushed it indoors; assimilation is finishing the job.

And yet speaking or singing in Macedonian can still be cause for harassment. Mr. Fokas' son is a musician; he plays the haunting

Macedonian flute for us as his own small son looks on. He and a group of friends used to host an international music festival in the village square, with bands from as far away as Brazil, Mexico and Russia.

"After those bands had played we'd have a party and play Macedonian songs," he says. "None of them were nationalist or separatist songs—we would never allow that. But in 2008, just as we were expecting the foreign musicians to arrive, the local authority suddenly banned us from holding the festival in the square, even though other people—the very ones who wanted us banned—still hold their own events there."

At the last minute, the festival was moved to a field outside the village, among the reeds and marshes, without proper facilities—which, Mr. Fokas's son points out, only made Greece look bad.

"And do you know why the songs are banned in the square but not the fields outside?" his father adds. "Because around the square there are cafes, and local people could sit there and watch and listen secretly. But outside the village they were afraid to join in—they would have drawn attention to themselves by doing that."

The ratification of Greece's agreement with the Republic of North Macedonia—and its implicit recognition of a Macedonian language and ethnicity—is a major political breakthrough which should help to alleviate such fears. But the process has also sparked new waves of anger and anxiety, with large, sometimes violent protests opposing the agreement, supported by parts of the Orthodox church.

An election is due before the end of the year. Greece's right-wing opposition has been quick to capitalise on nationalist sentiments, accusing the Syriza government of treason and betrayal. For Greece's Slavic-speakers, who have long sought nothing more than the right to cultural expression, the time to emerge from the shadows may not quite yet have arrived.

Mr. Fokas has been referred to by his first name to protect his identity.

#### ISAAC HINOJOS VENEGAS

#### HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 27, 2019

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Isaac Hinojos Venegas for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

Isaac Hinojos Venegas is a student at Wheat Ridge High School and received this award because his determination and hard work have allowed him to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Isaac Hinojos Venegas is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Isaac Hinojos Venegas for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt he will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of his future accomplishments.

## INTRODUCTION OF THE COREY ADAMS SEARCHLIGHT ACT

**HON. GWEN MOORE**

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 27, 2019*

Ms. MOORE. Madam Speaker, this week, I introduced the Corey Adams Searchlight Act and I rise to urge my colleagues to support this legislation which would establish a national Green Alert system at the Department of Justice to provide assistance and support to regional, state, and local officials as they work to help locate missing veterans.

This legislation is a practical step toward bringing missing veterans home safely.

This issue was brought to my attention by my constituent Corey Adams. When Corey went missing, his family knew that something was wrong—Corey left his eyeglasses, phone, money, and medications at his parent's home, where he was last seen. Despite his family filing a missing person report within hours of his disappearance, it took eight days before the police determined he met the critical missing persons' criteria. On April 7, 18 days after his initial disappearance, Corey Adams' body was recovered from a pond in a local park just one mile from his mother's home.

After this tragedy, my state of Wisconsin became the first state to create a green alert system modeled after the "Amber" alert system which has proven effective at galvanizing public attention around abducted children. And the system has already been used to help locate missing veterans. Delaware quickly followed and more and more states may follow yet.

I would like to thank the bipartisan cosponsors that have joined in this effort so far, Representative FILEMON VELA, RAÚL GRIJALVA, DEREK KILMER, FREDERICA S. WILSON, HANK JOHNSON, JOHN R. MOOLENAAR, DONALD M. PAYNE, JR., DAN KILDEE, MARK POCAN, RON KIND, EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON, STEVE COHEN, ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON, and DEBBIE DINGELL. The bill has also garnered the endorsement of Rolling Thunder National, Inc.

Madam Speaker, members of the military do not leave their fallen behind in battle and we should not do so when they come home. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this important legislation and to work with me to see that it is enacted in the 116th Congress.

## PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ADAM SMITH**

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 27, 2019*

Mr. SMITH of Washington. Madam Speaker, on Monday, February 25, 2019 and Tuesday, February 26, 2019, I was unable to be present for recorded votes due to a doctor's appointment. Had I been present for these votes, I would have voted: "yes" on roll call vote No. 88 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 539); "yes" on roll call vote No. 89 (on the motion to suspend the rules and pass H.R. 276); "yes" on roll call vote No. 90 (on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 145); "yes" on roll call vote No. 91 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 145); "yes" on

roll call vote No. 92 (on ordering the previous question on H. Res. 144); and "yes" on roll call vote No. 93 (on agreeing to the resolution H. Res. 144).

## CONGRATULATING THE BLAIR OAKS FOR WINNING THE 2018 MISSOURI CLASS 2 STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

**HON. BLAINE LUETKEMEYER**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 27, 2019*

Mr. LUETKEMEYER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Blair Oaks Falcons Football team for winning the 2018 Missouri Class 2 State Football Championship.

With a perfect record of 15–0, the Blair Oaks Falcons Football team and coaching staff should be commended for all of their hard work throughout this past year and for bringing home the state championship to their school and community.

Please join me in congratulating the coaching staff: Ted Lepage, assistant coaches: Kevin Alewine, Lerone Biggs, John Butler, Mike Cook, Josh Linnenbrink, Mason Swisher, Andrew Terpstra, manager: Ben Stockman, and the players Kamron Morris, Jayden Purdy, Nolan Hair, Gavin Wekenborg, Seth DeWesplore, Cade Stockman, Zach Herigon, Cobi Marble, Carson Prenger, Sam Luebbering, Jake Closser, Ian Nolph, Braydan Pritchett, Riley Lentz, Cadon Garber, Levi Haney, Josh Bischoff, Hayden Ellis, Adam Hughes, Zach Goeller, Trinity Scott, Griffin Herst, Kyler Griep, Adam Jurgensmeyer, Collin Branum, Jordan Keesler, Nico Canale, Conner Wilson, Nolan Atnip, John Benward, Zack Wilbers, Carson Bax, Cale Wilson, Caleb Buechter, James Thomson, Austin Lange, Corban Bonnett, Shane Gillmore, Andrew Luebbering, Rylee Niekamp, Benner Thomas, Ayden Chouinard, Isaiah Prenger, Grant Laune, and Marcus Edler on their dedication to the game and focus throughout the season.

I ask you to join me in recognizing the Blair Oaks Falcons Football team for a job well done.

## FEBRUARY IS NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

**HON. ROBIN L. KELLY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 27, 2019*

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Madam Speaker, February is National Children's Dental Health month—an opportunity that brings together thousands of dedicated professionals, healthcare providers, and educators to promote the benefits of good oral health to children, their caregivers, teachers and many others.

Each year, millions of Americans suffer from untreated dental disease. Tooth decay remains the most common, chronic childhood disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 20 percent of children ages 5 to 11 suffer from tooth decay, despite the fact that it is a completely prevent-

able disease. Children from low-income families are twice as likely to have cavities compared to children from higher-income households.

Give Kids A Smile (GKAS), sponsored by the Foundation of the American Dental Association, is an annual centerpiece during National Children's Dental Health Month. Give Kids a Smile Day is one of the most important events for children and dentists in this country. Thousands of dentists and volunteers give their time to provide free oral health education, screenings, and treatment to underserved children. Since 2003, more than 5.5 million children have been cared for by more than half a million volunteers. Programs like this will continue throughout the year.

I'm happy to have led the passage of legislation that supports programs such as Give Kids A Smile and other initiatives aimed at providing greater access to care. The Action for Dental Health Act supports a nationwide, community-based movement focused on delivering care now to people suffering from dental disease, strengthening and growing the public and private safety net to provide more care to more Americans, and expanding dental health education and disease prevention within underserved communities.

Ensuring that children and adults receive accessible, quality oral health care should remain a priority for all of us. Thank you for supporting dentistry and the oral health of our nation's most vulnerable population.

## IN RECOGNITION OF THE HONORABLE PAUL K. LEARY

**HON. WILLIAM R. KEATING**

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 27, 2019*

Mr. KEATING. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the life of the Honorable Paul K. Leary, who led a life committed to justice as well as improving the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Born in Boston in 1939, Judge Leary spent his entire life in Massachusetts. After graduating from Suffolk Law School, Judge Leary worked in the Boston Municipal Court system. He then moved on to become First Assistant District Attorney for the Suffolk County District Attorney's office. Judge Leary ended his career as First Justice of the Boston Municipal court, where he started his career at the age of sixteen.

Alongside his jobs in the Suffolk County District Attorney's office and the Boston municipal court, Judge Leary taught at Suffolk University Law School and lectured at New England School of Law. He served for a period as the President of the National Board of Trial Advocacy and was awarded their Lifetime Achievement Award in July of last year.

Judge Leary was a dedicated family man and a staple in his community. He coached his son's youth hockey team in Milton all the way to the state championship in 1980. Judge Leary spent his summers in Pocasset, where he could be found with family and friends, playing golf or racquetball, or having dinner at one of his favorite local restaurants.

Judge Leary has led a life dedicated to justice and upholding the laws of Massachusetts.