

daughters, twins Nicole and Rebecca, work in the field of Native American advocacy, health, and education. Steve and his wife, Susan, love their children and their numerous grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Steve for all of his contributions. Because of his work, generations to come will learn about the culture and contributions of the indigenous people.

REMEMBERING THE HONORABLE JOHN CONYERS, JR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, yesterday evening, I joined Ambassador Etienne at the French Embassy to acknowledge the DC JazzFest. But I also was there, more importantly, to pay tribute to the Honorable John Conyers.

Yesterday, I took a minute on the floor to indicate that I would be speaking about him over a period of days and weeks because his 53 years as a mentor and beloved colleague deserve that tribute. But yesterday, I was probably at a place John Conyers enjoyed the most. Many people may not know that he was a jazz enthusiast and maybe prepared to become a jazz musician in his early years as a young, young man. His father, a strong union organizer, a UAW worker, thought that might not be the best approach for his young son, I believe the oldest of their four children.

John, being a dutiful son, went on to Wayne State and graduated from its law school as well. That was our gift to the American people.

I want to take a moment to be able to highlight the very undercore, if you will, the underpinnings of the leadership of John Conyers, a progressive before the term could even be defined.

I don't believe that he looked at himself in that way, but I think he looked at himself as one who would break through doors that others could not.

Of course, he was one of the original cofounders of the Congressional Black Caucus. But he rose to be chairman of two committees, the Committee on Oversight and Reform and the Committee on the Judiciary, and he became the dean of this House, this entire House of Representatives.

I don't think that would be what his own desire of tribute would be. I use the terminology that he not only spoke for the voiceless, but he spoke for persons who were actually silenced. That means that they tried to speak, but they were silenced. They were rejected. They were pushed back. They had not the power to be heard.

How amazing it is to have found someone of the African American heritage and tradition who had gone through life in a segregated America to be able to speak for voices that were varied and different, who needed to hear that someone cared about them, from Native Americans to Latinos, to

the disabled, to those in the LGBTQ community and beyond.

He was a champion of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He got into Congress in 1964. He understood the value of giving people, no matter who you were, the right to vote. I will talk about that more extensively in the days to come, but I remember when we sat and reauthorized that legislation with a Republican President, what a wonderful experience of coming together around voting as we wrote legislation that George W. Bush signed enthusiastically, with an overwhelming vote in the House and an overwhelming vote in the Senate.

We even honored many different people from around the Nation, including naming it after the Honorable Barbara Jordan and many others in that timeframe to reinforce the value of voting. John did that in a bipartisan manner, a lesson that we can learn even today. He never compromised his principles, but he stood for the idea of bipartisanship for justice.

He was here for the Legal Services Corporation Act. Can you imagine that if you were poor 50 years ago, you wouldn't have any representation, not in the criminal system or sense, but in the civil system—being evicted, having problems with healthcare and dealing with your health insurance, or having a matter that required legal representation so that you could have justice. The Legal Services Corporation was something very near and dear to John Conyers.

Let me move quickly to talk about his work dealing with the PATRIOT Act after 9/11. Yes, we wanted to be protecting ourselves against terrorists, but John Conyers was a voice that said that civil liberties of the American people are crucial, and we will not trample in this committee, the Committee on the Judiciary, on their rights of privacy and their rights of liberty. He believed in that.

Let me also say that in the bankruptcy bill, when so many people were pushing to get a bill done that would leave out women and children, divorcees, leave out the poor who also needed to have some way of organizing their debt, in fact, he was a champion for that.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, a champion for the reparations bill that most people don't understand, an idea they would understand later, he was our champion. He spoke for those who were silenced.

CELEBRATING LIBERTY DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Ms. PLASKETT) for 5 minutes.

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, this week, the Virgin Islands celebrates Liberty Day and honors David Hamilton Jackson and his relentless pursuit of free press for the people of the Virgin Islands.

From the 1700s until the 1950s, the Virgin Islands was owned by Denmark,

which maintained censorship over the press. D. Hamilton Jackson knew that in order for a people to truly have freedom, the press must also be free.

Traveling to Denmark to advocate on behalf of the workers of the Virgin Islands, he took it upon himself to also fight for the emancipation of the press. His passionate advocacy was fruitful, and upon his return to the territory, he published the first newspaper in the Virgin Islands not controlled by the government.

This act empowered the people of the Virgin Islands and opened the door for generations of Virgin Islanders to allow their voices to be heard in the formal medium of press.

D. Hamilton Jackson challenged the status quo and the prevailing laws of his time to secure a future for the islands he loved.

D. Hamilton Jackson used his newfound right for the free press to create The Herald. As editor, he used that publication to uncover corruption and educate the working class. Frustrated with neglect from the Danish Government, Jackson used The Herald to build support for the transfer of the Virgin Islands from Denmark to the United States.

The American flag that flies over the Virgin Islands today is a fruit of the seed that D. Hamilton Jackson sowed on his quest for liberty and greater opportunity for Virgin Islanders.

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The Virgin Islands continue to embody the spirit of D. Hamilton Jackson and his work.

Rena Brodhurst has spent her life walking the path of Jackson as a champion of Virgin Islands Free Press as the owner and editor of the St. Croix Avis. Educated on St. Croix and then attending college, she followed her family's tradition of fighting to defend a free press.

Her father, Mr. Brodhurst, was once convicted of contempt of court after publishing an unsigned letter critical of a court decision and social conditions of his time. However, the right to free press prevailed with the U.S. Third Circuit making clear that the constitutional right to freedom of speech in the press was not one that would be infringed upon in the United States.

Rena, herself, has sued the government to protect the right to publish freely without retribution. A strong woman, mother, and friend, she acts as a true Virgin Islands queen, unbroken and a fierce defender of free press.

Today, a new generation steps up to carry the torch of D. Hamilton Jackson. State of the Territory founder Amaziah George, a Marine Corps veteran, brings Virgin Islands press to the world through his online social media paper.

His passion for making the voice and concerns of millennial Virgin Islanders heard make him a trailblazer of his generation. With his willingness to speak truth, the secret stories that

others are unwilling to discuss, this veteran is really a fighter and a soldier of truth.

These individuals have dedicated themselves to truthfully informing the people of the Virgin Islands about their community and the world outside of our small corner of it. They are truly legacies of D. Hamilton Jackson.

We must continue this work, as Virgin Islanders still have limited constitutional rights as determined by the Insular Cases of the early 1900s. Those Supreme Court decisions relegate people living within the territories to a separate and unequal status.

The cases posture that people living in territories are inferior races that cannot understand Anglo-Saxon principles of law. It keeps American citizens living in places like the Virgin Islands, Guam, and Puerto Rico as disenfranchised from the full American experience.

As a young constituent of mine recently wrote in an essay outlining the importance of free press, “only a free press can ensure the people’s access to information and build a well-informed, transparent, and accountable society,” and that “we, the people, owe it to our country to demand and defend the freedom of such a priceless heritage.”

What a wonderful sentiment from a young person.

Free press, we must cherish and protect it as a most American of values and as one of the most fragile pillars of democracy here and around the world.

In the words of D. Hamilton Jackson, I challenge us to walk in his spirit and challenge the status quo for the betterment of our people and our Nation. Let us all embody the motto of his newspaper, *The Herald*: “Liberty, equality, fraternity.”

RECOGNIZING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

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

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, today is a great day because, after decades of struggle, this House will recognize the Armenian genocide, just in time to be viewed by the last survivors of the first genocide of the 20th century.

Two weeks ago, I came to this floor and I said now is the time, finally, to recognize the Armenian genocide because it was no longer the time to kowtow to Turkey. Since then, many of us have approached the Speaker and urged her to put this bill on the floor.

But this great day belongs to NANCY PELOSI, our Speaker, who made the decision to bring it to the floor, where we will pass this resolution, H. Res. 296, which I and so many others introduced to this House in April of this year. And, of course, I have cosponsored and been an original cosponsor of every Armenian genocide resolution since 1997.

We always should have recognized the Armenian genocide, but we were

told again and again that we wouldn’t do it because we have this great alliance with Turkey.

Earlier this month, Turkish forces shelled to the left and then to the right of an American base. It seemed clear to many that they were ready to kill Americans. America withdrew. And this was not some well-planned, careful, deliberate withdrawal. We left because of the Turkish shelling and the Turkish threats.

Great alliance? It has been a great alliance for Turkey. We defended them from communism. We defended them from the Soviet Union. We provided them \$23 billion in aid. And we are the reason why there is not an independent Kurdistan in northern Iraq.

They shelled to the left; they shelled to the right of an American military outpost.

From 1915 to 1923, the Ottoman Empire massacred 1.5 million Armenians, the first genocide of the 20th century. There is no doubt that this occurred. Even the administration testified before our committee last week.

The massacre of 1.5 million Armenians in 1915, et cetera, was one of the greatest crimes of the 20th century, and this is not in dispute. There is no dispute that that mass death constituted a genocide because Raphael Lemkin, who invented the word “genocide,” said the Armenian genocide was an example—the first example, perhaps—of what he was talking about.

It is time that we recognize the genocide because genocide denial is the last act of the genocide. First, you obliterate a people; then, you seek to obliterate their memory; and, finally, you seek to obliterate the memory of the obliteration.

But genocide denial is also the first step in the next genocide. When Hitler’s cadres wondered whether they could get away with the Holocaust, he assured them: Who today speaks of the annihilation of the Armenians?

And it is time to recognize this genocide to remove a stain on America’s honor because, up until now, we have hidden and refused to acknowledge the truth. We have been silent, all in an effort to appease Turkey.

Turkey committed a genocide in World War I and denies it to this day. Germany committed a genocide during World War II and has acknowledged it from the 1940s.

Germany has moved on to be a prosperous and strong democracy. Turkey continues to deny the genocide, then passes law prohibiting the discussion of the genocide; and that leads to censorship, authoritarianism, undercuts the rule of law, leads to corruption and a country that has great problems.

Where would Germany be if it denied the Holocaust to this day? Where would we be if we denied the genocide of so many Native American Tribes?

Turkey will be a great ally of the United States only when it recognizes the first genocide of the 20th century, only when it allows free discussion of its own history by its own people.

So, today is the right day to recognize the first genocide of the 20th century. We should have done it earlier. We should do it every year on the anniversary in April. But it starts here and now, and, finally, America can stand up along with so many other countries that have recognized that genocide.

BILLS ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE

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

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address two critical bills that would mandate studies to examine, one, whether tasers are a safer alternative to firearms and, two, how innovative technology can enhance the safety of firearms.

My bill, H.R. 4740, the TASER Access, Safety, and Effectiveness Review Study Act, or TASERS Act, will direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission to coordinate a multiagency study comparing the effectiveness and the safety of firearms and of tasers. By studying tasers, Mr. Speaker, we can determine whether they can be a safe, effective, and, most importantly, non-lethal weapon of self-defense.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4784 would direct the National Institute of Justice to update its 2013 study on gun safety technologies. The 2013 NIJ study noted that several innovative gun-locking technologies were close to coming onto the market in our Nation.

Newer gun-locking or smart-gun technologies require fingerprints or other advanced mechanisms to unlock the firearms. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, vehement protests and inaccurate information about drastic cost increases from the gun lobby have prevented this technology from becoming widely available.

Mr. Speaker, smart-gun technology has the potential to stop firearms from being used by those who shouldn’t possess them. A 2019 Department of Justice survey found that 56 percent of prisoners who possessed a firearm during their offense obtained it through illicit channels. Additionally, Mr. Speaker, a study in the *American Journal of Public Health* concluded that over 1,500 stolen guns were recovered in connection with violent crimes between 2010 and 2016.

Updating the Department of Justice’s 2013 study would be a critical step forward into determining how smart-gun technology can be incorporated into the multifaceted approach needed to reduce gun violence.

Congress must always seek to harness the power of innovation and innovative technology to make Americans safer. The studies these bills would mandate are a critical first step in evaluating how we can use technology and innovation to prevent gun violence.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to sponsor both of these measures and encourage