

TRIBUTE TO THE INNOCENT VICTIMS OF THE SUMGAI T POGROM

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 36th anniversary of the pogrom against the Armenian residents of Sumgait, Azerbaijan. From February 27 to 29, 1988, Azerbaijani mobs assaulted and killed Armenians, leaving dozens of Armenian civilians dead and hundreds injured. Women and girls were raped, and some victims were burned alive after being tortured and beaten. Those who survived the carnage fled their homes and businesses, leaving behind all but the clothes on their backs.

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.

In the years that followed this unspeakable massacre, Armenians living in Kirovabad, Baku, and Maragha suffered a similar fate. These pogroms were part of a pattern of hateful, racist anti-Armenian propaganda and activities occurring throughout Azerbaijan, dehumanizing its Armenian residents, and laying the groundwork for decades of aggression and mass violence. This brutality culminated when the Azerbaijani government initiated war against the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh.

Beginning on September 27, 2020, and over 44 days, Azerbaijani forces invaded and murdered innocent Armenians in Artsakh and displaced tens of thousands more. They continued to terrorize the people of Artsakh in subsequent military attacks, and by blocking the Lachin Corridor—which left 120,000 people without access to food, water, medical supplies and services, gas, and electricity for over 9 months. On September 19, 2023, the Aliyev regime took full advantage of a people they had systematically starved, and launched a large-scale attack, further escalating their ethnic cleansing and genocidal campaign against the indigenous Armenian people of Artsakh. At least 200 people were killed, 400 wounded, over 100,000 ethnic Armenians were forcibly displaced, and Azerbaijan now holds Artsakh's political and military leadership, civilians, and prisoners of war hostage. With no help from the international community to confront Azerbaijan's military aggression, Artsakh was forced to negotiate under duress and consequently agreed to dissolve their democratically elected government.

There is also real and growing concern that Aliyev has his eyes set on land beyond Artsakh and will continue to seek further territory and concessions from Armenia by force. To this day, Azerbaijani forces remain present on sovereign Armenian land, in violation of Armenia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and last month, President Aliyev made alarming remarks, including his refusal to remove troops from Armenian territory. These are the horrific consequences when aggression and hatred grow unchecked and when Aliyev's hostility is met with deafening silence, emboldening him to continue, and expand, his

unprovoked attacks on the Armenian people, knowing there will be no repercussions.

Azerbaijan's campaign of death and destruction against Armenians have been nothing short of deplorable, including the destruction of religious and cultural sites in Artsakh to erase or falsify history, and the torture, mutilation and killing of Armenian civilians, prisoners of war and soldiers. This February also marks 20 years of a horrific crime when Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani army captain savagely murdered an Armenian army lieutenant, Guren 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 as a returning hero. There is no more dramatic illustration of Azerbaijan's continued posture of hatred towards their Armenian neighbor than their celebration of a cold-blooded murderer.

Though the United States and international partners have condemned Azerbaijan's aggression and military assault against Armenians, the time for strong statements alone has clearly long passed. Condemnation must be followed by real consequences. The United States must hold Azerbaijan and its leadership accountable and take concrete action and press Azerbaijan to return to compliance with international law and order. Crimes against humanity cannot be ignored and cannot go unanswered.

The United States must use its immense bully pulpit to apply direct pressure to the Aliyev regime in Azerbaijan, by enforcing restrictions on additional military assistance to Baku pursuant to Section 907 and calling on Azerbaijan to immediately return all Armenian POWs, hostages, and other detainees, and provide information on the status of those still be detained or missing. Additionally, the Biden Administration should immediately implement sanctions under the Magnitsky Act against Azeri officials responsible for human rights abuses.

The United States must also demand an immediate withdrawal of Azeri forces from the sovereign territory of the Republic of Armenia, provide security assistance to Armenia including expanding humanitarian aid to assist Artsakh refugees, and help ensure the safety and security of Armenians who seek to return to their homes in Artsakh. Finally, the U.S. Department of State must continue to call attention to the destruction and desecration of Armenian religious and cultural sites by Azerbaijan, and urge their safeguarding and preservation. Only by using every diplomatic tool at their disposal, including sanctions, against Azerbaijan can we help guarantee the safety, security and continued territorial integrity of Armenia.

As we pause to remember the innocent victims of the pogroms, we are also reminded that despite the trials the Armenian people have faced, it has not broken their faith, determination, and their will to survive in the face of constant threats from Azerbaijan. Today, let us recommit ourselves to doing everything we can to bring peace and justice to our Armenian brothers and sisters abroad, once and for all.

HONORING HEB ISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION'S AWARD OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENTS

HON. BETH VAN DUYNE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Ms. VAN DUYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the following students who received HEB ISD Education Foundation's Award of Excellence in their respective fields of study: Aiden Aguirre, Isaiah Arellano, Matthew Boyd, Andrew Brooks, Dayton Crenshaw, Alexia Del Vecchio, Julie Eisermann, Anastasia Fike, Charles Fultz, Lauren Galkantas, Rafael Garcia, Orinda Dreshaj, Chloe Harmon, Ethan Hildebrand, Giselle Hill, Emma Hiros, Jacquelyn Holisinger, Mia Jax, Jayla King, Sagar Lamichhane, Ali Landreth, Jude Langsdorf, Mary McColm, Kyliya Murphy, Dorine Ngara, Maddox Olatunde, Claire Payne, Valerie Reyes, Jerry Rivera, Julissa Rodriguez, Avery Vignali, Kassidy Zastrow, and Zecharias Zewdie. I'm inspired by these students' hard work, and I wish them the best of luck in the future.

HONORING THE LATE DR. CLINTON BATTLE

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and service of Dr. Clinton Battle.

Born in the 1920s, Dr. Clinton Battle was known for his remarkable medical service to Indianola, Mississippi that contributed to the medical field where he earned nationwide recognition.

In the 1950s Dr. Battle received national press for his renowned delivery of first conjoined Siamese twins to ever be successfully separated.

Outside of the medical field, Battle helped to revive the local chapter of The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), helping over 100 African Americans register to vote.

He always inspired African Americans to rise during the Jim Crow era. Because of this contribution to civil rights and medicine, Dr. Clinton Battle has been named a recipient of the Civil Rights Trail Marker as a trailblazer for Civil Rights and his medical accomplishments.

Dr. Battle's legacy and his contribution to medicine will continue to transcend time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the late Dr. Clinton Battle for his dedication to medicine and Civil Rights.

HONORING HUSEYIN BAYRAM

HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize an esteemed and invaluable member of New Jersey's Ninth Congressional District,

Mr. Huseyin Bayram. His contributions to our community distinguish him as a prominent figure, serving as the proud owner of Toro's Restaurant and the New Corral. Today I join the City of Paterson as they honor his contributions by awarding him with the Key to the City. Huseyin is an outstanding community leader, philanthropist, and entrepreneur who continuously demonstrates an unwavering commitment to make a positive impact extending beyond the State of New Jersey.

For over three decades, Huseyin Bayram has been active in the City of Paterson. His entrepreneurial spirit is embodied in the success of the New Corral in Clifton and the Toro's Restaurants, located in Paterson, Clifton, and Montclair. The Toro's Restaurant of Paterson is an iconic dining establishment that opened its doors in 1972.

Mr. Bayram's compassionate philanthropy created numerous local initiatives, including his donation of over 10,000 meals to community members during the novel coronavirus pandemic. Huseyin wanted to show his appreciation for frontline healthcare workers by providing free meals to doctors and nurses at three hospitals in New York. Huseyin played a critical role in spearheading and organizing relief efforts for the earthquake of Turkey in 2023. Huseyin's efforts have not only enhanced our community's well-being but also fostered a spirit of unity and cooperation among its members.

Mr. Bayram led 150,000 members as the President of the Turkish American Giresun Organization, representing the largest Turkish population in the United States. In 2017, the City of Paterson appointed Huseyin as Deputy Mayor under Mayor Jane Williams-Warren establishing his role in local governance. Furthermore, he holds the position of Vice-President with the Turkish-American Federation of New York and the Paterson Mevlana Mosque, showcasing how the Turkish community places their trust in his leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join our colleagues, friends, family, and the residents of the City of Paterson in recognizing Mr. Bayram. I take this opportunity to honor the great work Huseyin Bayram has accomplished. May his work continue to be a guiding light in our community and inspire others to strive for excellence in service.

HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF MAYOR IRMA ANDERSON

HON. JOHN GARAMENDI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with my colleague, Congresswoman BARBARA LEE and Congressman MARK DESAULNIER, to honor the life and legacy of Mayor Irma Anderson, a trailblazing leader within Contra Costa County and devout public servant. Mayor Anderson, who passed away at the age of 93, leaves behind an indelible legacy as a mayor, nurse, and community advocate.

Born and raised in Boston, Mayor Anderson's passion for public service began at a young age. After serving as Student Body President and Valedictorian of her high school, she became one of the first Black students to

attend and graduate from Cornell School of Nursing. In 1959, Mayor Anderson moved to Richmond, California with her husband, Reverend Booker T. Anderson, Jr., beginning a lifelong residency in the Contra Costa County community.

Fueled by her passion for service and sincere belief in caring for those around her, Mayor Anderson worked diligently for the Contra Costa County Health Department for 20 years. She eventually became the first Black Assistant Director and Director of Public Health Nursing in Contra Costa County, and her unwavering leadership undeniably improved her community.

Following her extensive career in public health, Mayor Anderson's commitment to service led her to run for Richmond City Council. In 1993, she became the first Black woman to serve as a Richmond City Council Member. After two successful terms on the Richmond City Council, Mayor Anderson made history yet again in 2001, when she became the first Black woman to be elected mayor of a major California city.

Mayor Anderson's career in public service was characterized by her spirit for advocacy and commitment to giving a voice to the unrepresented. She developed a historic partnership with the West Contra Costa Unified School District, founding Kids! First, which cultivates and expands after-school programs throughout Richmond. In addition, she held the "Richmond Rises Above Violence Conference," which galvanized Richmond's public health approach to violence prevention. Subsequently, Richmond created an Office of Violence Prevention, later the Office of Neighborhood Safety, a nationally recognized violence intervention strategy.

Mayor Anderson's spirit of innovation was expressed both through her critical leadership and vital work as Metropolitan Transportation Committee Commissioner. She spearheaded efforts to advance multiple bridge rehabilitation and expansion projects, helping ensure Contra Costa County's roads were safe and secure. During her tenure as Mayor and Commissioner, Mayor Anderson presided over the transformation of downtown Richmond into a model of transit-oriented development.

Mayor Anderson will be remembered for her decades of service to Contra Costa County and her genuine spirit of kindness and compassion. She impacted the lives of countless community members and her steadfast leadership, constant smile, and patient mentorship brought comfort to all who knew her. Mayor Anderson's enduring spirit will live on in her son and the community she dedicated her life to serving. We would like to extend our deepest sympathies to Mayor Anderson's loved ones. We know they and the people of Contra Costa County will join us in celebrating her life and legacy.

RECOGNIZING MS. KAREN KING

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Ms. Karen King for her dedicated service to the California public transit industry and to congratulate her on her well-earned re-

tirement from the Golden Empire Transit District. Ms. King's career in public transit began in 1976 at the Utah Transit Authority. Ten years later, Ms. King joined Long Beach Transit as a Grants Administrator. She quickly moved up the leadership ranks, and in 1995 was named Executive Director of Transportation. In 1998, Ms. King worked for the North San Diego County Transit Development as the Director of Development and Communications Services and was selected as the agency's Executive Director in 2001. In 2008, Ms. King moved to Bakersfield where she became the Chief Executive Officer of the Golden Empire Transit District. During her tenure as CEO, Ms. King has been steadfast in her commitment to meeting the transportation needs of all Bakersfield residents. She helped develop and implement the On-Demand Microtransit service program, which was first piloted in southwest Bakersfield and has since expanded across the city. The program increases transportation access for all residents by offering low-cost transportation to residents traveling to popular destinations in the city. Ms. King has directed other initiatives including a partnership with Kern Health Systems to provide rides to appointments for the more than 300,000 members of Kern Family Health Care. Ms. King is also coordinating the Long Range Operational Service Analysis, which aims to improve local transportation and return ridership to pre-pandemic levels. Ms. King has been recognized at the local, state, and national levels for her leadership in the public transit industry. She is the Vice Chair of the California Transit Association (CTA) and in 2021, was selected for a two-year term as Chair.

Ms. King has also served as Chair of the CTA's COVID-19 Relief Task Force, where she has helped California's public transit industry recover from the pandemic. In 2018, Ms. King received a Distinguished Service Award from the CTA, to celebrate her distinguished career and outstanding contributions. This year, Ms. King is receiving the CTA's award for Innovation and Resiliency, to celebrate her commitment to the innovation of the industry and well-being of all Bakersfield commuters. Ms. King's many accomplishments are a true testament to her character and leadership. I'm confident that her service to the Golden Empire Transit District and her passion for improving public transit for all residents of our community will have a lasting impact for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues in the House of Representatives to join me in thanking Ms. King for her more than 40 years of dedicated service to the public transit industry and wishing her a happy and well-deserved retirement.

INTRODUCTION OF THE EQUAL FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA ACT

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, today, I introduce the Equal Federal Funding for the District of Columbia Act, which would amend title 1 of the United States Code to deem the District of Columbia as both a state and political