

As we honor the memory of the 1.5 million Armenians whose annihilation began 83 years ago, we must also remember the countless other victims of "ethnic cleansing" around the globe, and recommit ourselves to the effort to punish those responsible for these unspeakable crimes.●

#### THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF SRI LANKA

● Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of independence of Sri Lanka. I believe it is appropriate that we so mark this occasion by offering our congratulations to her excellency, President Kumaratunga and the people of Sri Lanka.

In the five decades since Sri Lanka gained its independence from British colonial rule, Sri Lanka has held regular national elections as well as provincial and local government elections. The most recent parliamentary elections were held in August 1994, and the third presidential election was held in November 1994.

Sri Lanka has prospered economically since 1977, when it introduced economic liberalization policies which shifted the economy away from state controls, subsidies and public sector involvement to a market-oriented system in which private entrepreneurship flourishes. The U.S. is Sri Lanka's largest trading partner, accounting for 30% of the latter's exports, and over 90 U.S. companies have invested in Sri Lanka, with a heavy concentration in mining and textiles.

U.S. official relations with Sri Lanka date back to 1850 when John Black, an American merchant residing in Colombo was appointed the first American commercial agent in Galle. Fifty years later the agency moved to Colombo and became a consulate. It subsequently became an embassy in 1948 after Sri Lanka became independent.

The exchange of bilateral visits has played an important role in strengthening the cordial relations between our two nations. Then Secretary of State John Foster Dulles visited Sri Lanka soon after its independence, and since that time members of this body as well as our colleagues in the House have regularly visited this lovely country.

Despite its prosperity and commitment to democratic principles, Sri Lanka has been plagued for many years by two domestic insurgencies, one mainly Tamil in the North, and the other mainly Sinhalese, in the South. The result has been the loss of many lives and heavy damage to property. The government has reiterated its commitment to addressing grievances articulated by these groups through dialog and the process of negotiation. Four rounds of unconditional talks with the Tamil Tiger separatists were held following the President's election in November 1994, and a cease fire was subsequently reached. This however,

was breached by the separatists after 3½ months when they resumed their terrorist activity.

As a result of these terrorist actions at home, Sri Lanka has placed counter terrorism at the forefront of its foreign policy. Sri Lanka was the Vice Chair of the United Nations Ad hoc Committee on Terrorism and played an important role in the drafting of the Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombing, being the first to sign the Convention at United Nations Headquarters on January 12, 1998.

I am therefore, Mr. President, pleased to acknowledge this occasion by expressing best wishes to the Government and people of Sri Lanka as they celebrate 50 years of independence. I know that we all look forward to continued cooperation and friendship with the Government and people of Sri Lanka in the years ahead.●

#### RECOGNIZING ARIZONA'S TOP TWO 1998 YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

● Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to congratulate and honor two young Arizona students who have achieved national recognition for exemplary volunteer service in their communities. Eliza Robinson of Scottsdale and Jason Kelley of Prescott have just been named State honorees in the 1998 Prudential Spirit of Community Awards program, an annual honor conferred on only one high school student and one middle school student in each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

Ms. Eliza Robinson is being recognized for her many years of dedication and service to the Multiple Sclerosis Society, culminating with a term as spokesman for that wonderful organization.

Mr. Kelley is being recognized for his efforts to start a Youth Chamber of Commerce. Jason's organization will give other young people in his community the opportunity to participate in Chamber events similar to those sponsored by their local Chamber of Commerce, as well as interact with business leaders from the area.

In light of numerous statistics that indicate Americans today are less involved in their communities than they once were, it's vital that we encourage and support the kind of selfless contributions these young people have made. People of all ages need to think more about how we, as individual citizens, can work together at the local level to ensure the health and vitality of our towns and neighborhoods. Young volunteers like Mr. Kelley and Ms. Robinson are inspiring examples to all of us, and are among our brightest hopes for a better tomorrow.

The program that brought these young role models to our attention—The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards—was created by the Prudential Insurance Company of America in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals in 1995

to impress upon all youth volunteers that their contributions are critically important and highly valued and to inspire other young people to follow their example. In only three years, the program has become the nation's largest youth recognition effort based solely on community service, with more than 30,000 youngsters participating.

Ms. Robinson and Mr. Kelley should be extremely proud to have been singled out from such a large group of dedicated volunteers. As part of their recognition, they will come to Washington in early May, along with other 1998 honorees from across the country, for several days of special events, including a Congressional breakfast reception on Capitol Hill. While in Washington, ten will be named America's top youth volunteers of the year by a distinguished national selection committee co-chaired by our colleagues, Senators BOB KERREY of Nebraska and TIM HUTCHINSON of Arkansas.

I heartily applaud Mr. Kelley and Ms. Robinson for their initiative in seeking to make their communities better places to live, and for the positive impact they have had on the lives of others. I also would like to salute four other young people in my state who were named Distinguished Finalists by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards for their outstanding volunteer service. They are: Chrissy Weiers of Maricopa, who has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to make her peers aware of the dangers of drugs; Christina Barela of Glendale, who helped organize a day camp for elementary school girls; Purvi Patel of Yuma, who designed and built a park adjacent to her school with five peers from the Gifted and Talented Education Program; and Tirzah Orcutt of Phoenix, who created a volunteer project to paint a mural on the Veterans Administration Medical Nursing Home Care unit in Phoenix.

All these young people have demonstrated a level of commitment and accomplishment that is truly extraordinary in today's world, and deserve our sincere admiration and respect. Their actions show that young Americans can—and do—play important roles in their communities, and that America's community spirit continues to hold tremendous promise for the future.●

#### GORTON AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2646

● Mr. FAIRCLOTH. Mr. President, I rise to explain my support of Senator GORTON's amendment to the Coverdell A+ Accounts legislation. I was pleased to support the Gorton amendment because it returns the decision making authority over our children's education to parents, teachers, and locally elected school boards. After more than 30 years of top down control, it is clear that the hundreds of federal education programs and one size fits all policies from Washington, D.C. are not working.

The Gorton Amendment allows each state to choose from one of three options: to have federal funds sent directly to local school districts minus federal regulations; to have funds sent to the state education authority without federal regulations; or to continue to receive federal funds under the current system of categorical programs. Any changes to the current system are not mandated by the federal government—but are left to the discretion of the states.

I believe this is a wonderful opportunity to send money directly to local school districts free from the excessive mandates and regulations imposed on our schools from the Department of Education. I want it clearly understood, though, that this does not affect my support for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. I support the National Board and support further funding for its initiatives.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) seeks to establish high and rigorous standards for teachers. It is leading the way in making teaching a profession dedicated to student learning and to upholding high standards for professional performance. Teachers are role models for our students and our communities. Interestingly enough, they are the ones leading the way in establishing and implementing the National Board certification.

I fully support the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards and hope that this body will support it for the sake of our young people. It is children in their care that are the beneficiaries of teacher improvement.●

#### THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VERMONT ELECTRICAL COOPERATIVE

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to take this time to commemorate the 60th birthday of the Vermont Electric Cooperative. Beginning on that April day in 1939 when the co-op first brought electricity to a family farm in Eden, they have provided an indispensable service to generations of Vermonters who were missing out on the conveniences of electricity.

Mr. President, I ask that a short retrospective about the co-op which recently appeared in their newsletter be printed in the RECORD.

The material follows:

#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY CO-OP!—A RETROSPECTIVE

Studying by lantern light, milking cows by hand, cutting blocks of river ice for refrigeration—life in Colonial America, perhaps?

In rural Vermont, this way of life was not so long ago and there are plenty of Co-op members who remember all too well those days before Vermont's Governor George Aiken pioneered the federal legislation that spawned the birth of Vermont Electric Cooperative.

This year, the Co-op celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of its creation which brought to rural residents of Vermont the conveniences of electricity which many Americans had been enjoying for years.

More than anyone, Vermont's farmers looked forward to the day when the power poles would march down the road to their own barns and houses. Harold Putnam, of Cambridge, was one of them.

"Some of our neighbors closer to town were already on CVPS and we were very anxious to get electricity to the barn and the house. The gas lanterns we were using in the barn were kind of dangerous, the gas-powered milking system didn't always work and it was hard to keep things clean without a constant supply of hot water."

The Putnam farmhouse had running water from a spring by the kitchen door to keep food cool. Harold's mother, Maybelle, was especially looking forward to the day when the barn would have its own hot water tank and the endless parade of milking equipment through the kitchen to her sink would finally end, recalled Harold's wife, Lois.

The Putnams relied on a gravity-fed system to bring cold spring water into a tank in the barn which held milk cans. Until the late 1930's, the Putnams, like many farmers in Vermont, sold their cream to a local creamery. The Putnams worked with the Cloverdale Creamery in Westford on Route 15, where the Burlington and Lamoille Railroad had been stopping since 1887. The cream was then shipped to Hartford, Connecticut. The skimmed milk was fed to pigs and the family sold pork. Just before the advent of VEC, the Putnams began shipping fluid milk, which required not just the cool spring water, but also a steady supply of ice.

"We bought our ice from a neighbor who cut ice under the Cambridge covered bridge (the long bridge now at the Shelburne, Museum) or at Halfmoon Pond in Fletcher," Mr. Putnam explained.

For the Putnams, switching to electricity was a fairly simple matter: their barn was already equipped with a milk pump that had been powered by the unreliable gas-powered system. They wired just half the house at first to save money.

Mr. Putnam took on the task of helping to secure easements for the new Co-op line from the CVPS substation, then at the junction of routes 15 and 104 in Cambridge, out to Poker Hill Road in Underhill.

Twenty-five miles away from Cambridge, Evelyn and Ernest Earle were milking 20 cows by hand in Eden where the entire town was without electricity.

The Earles moved to their current home, just off route 118 between Eden and Belvidere, a year or so after they were married in 1940. It had been the first house in Eden on the Co-op's very first power line, and Mr. Earle was part of the crew that dug the holes for the poles to carry that first line in 1939.

The line that supplied power to what is now the Earle's home originated at the first substation built specifically to serve the Co-op. The house still has the wall brackets which held the gas lamps. Most houses had a large table lamp as well with several mantles that maximized the output of the lamp, easily brightening up an entire room, Mrs. Earle said.

Richard Parker and his brother Henry, who grew up in Lowell, wired many of the buildings served by the Co-op, including those owned by both the Putnams and the Earles, and were later long-time Co-op employees.

Richard Parker, then 21, remembers the day Governor Aiken came to Eden and turned on the lights for the first VEC line. The inaugural line ran from the new Eden substation through the villages of Eden and Eden Mills, where the first Co-op office was located, to Lowell.

"It was quite a gathering—40 or 50 people. The Co-op had tested the lines before-hand to make sure the lights were all working. Gov-

ernor Aiken threw the switch and the Co-op was in business."

It was a warm, sunny day in April 1939. It had taken less than a year from the creation of the Co-op to the construction of the first substation and transmission line.●

#### "FRIENDS COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD" RECIPIENTS

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to honor two very special people, Dr. Haifa Fakhouri and Ms. Florine Mark. Both will be receiving the "Friends Community Service Award" on Sunday, May 17, 1998 from the American Arab and Jewish Friends, a program of The Interfaith Round Table of the National Conference. American Arab and Jewish Friends was established in 1981 to promote a greater understanding between the Arab and Jewish Communities of Southeastern Michigan.

Dr. Fakhouri is the President and CEO of the Arab-American and Chaldean Council, the nation's largest community based, human service organization serving the Arab-American and Chaldean population. The ACC has grown tremendously under Dr. Fakhouri's leadership. In addition to her work with the ACC, she has served as special advisor to the United Nations on women's issues in the Arab world and as a delegate to the International Women's Conference in Mexico. She also serves on the boards of several national, state and local organizations. In all of her capacities, Dr. Fakhouri works to strengthen relations between the Arab-American and Jewish communities. She is well-deserving of the award being presented to her.

Ms. Florine Mark has been the President and CEO of the WW Group, Inc., the nation's largest franchise of Weight Watchers International for the last 30 years. In addition to this, Ms. Mark also finds time to serve on the boards of numerous community organizations including the American Red Cross, the Detroit Institute for Children and the United Jewish Appeal National Campaign. Ms. Mark's contributions to society, especially promoting Arab-American, Jewish relations are commendable.

Both of these women deserve special recognition for their contributions to the Arab-American and Jewish communities. I want to congratulate them on their awards. At this time, I would also like to commend the Interfaith Round Table on all of their efforts to improve understanding and friendship between the Arab and Jewish communities. I extend my best wishes for a successful 12th Annual Awards and Scholarship dinner.●

#### TRIBUTE TO UNIVERSITY OF UTAH ROTC CLASS OF 1944

● Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the University of Utah ROTC Class of 1944 which responded to the call for active military