

to a nation that did not treat them equally, but they were never recognized for the uniqueness of their efforts during the war. Like of many of us, they adapted to changes or were the engines of social change. But they have suffered and sacrificed so much that few of us will ever understand.

Veterans are dying at a rate of more than 1,000 a day. It is especially important, therefore, for Congress and the administration to do their part now to pay tribute to these men and women who served so valiantly in that conflict.

The minority veterans from World War II represent a significant part of what has been called America's Greatest Generation. They are American heroes that deserve recognition for their efforts. For this reason, the resolution specifically asks President Clinton to issue a proclamation "calling upon the people of the United States to honor these minority veterans with appropriate programs and activities."

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this resolution.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H. J. RES. 98

Whereas World War II was a determining event of the 20th century in that it ensured the preservation and continuation of American democracy;

Whereas the United States called upon all its citizens, including the most oppressed of its citizens, to provide service and sacrifice in that war to achieve the Allied victory over Nazism and fascism;

Whereas the United States citizens who served in that war, many of whom gave the ultimate sacrifice of their lives, included more than 1,200,000 African Americans, more than 300,000 Hispanic Americans, more than 50,000 Asian Americans, more than 20,000 Native Americans, more than 6,000 Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, and more than 3,000 Native Alaskans;

Whereas because of invidious discrimination, many of the courageous military activities of these minorities were not reported and honored fully and appropriately until decades after the Allied victory in World War II;

Whereas the motto of the United States, "E Pluribus Unum" (Out of Many, One), promotes our fundamental unity as Americans and acknowledges our diversity as our greatest strength; and

Whereas the Day of Honor 2000 Project has enlisted communities across the United States to participate in celebrations to honor minority veterans of World War II on May 25, 2000, and throughout the year 2000: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress—

(1) commends the African American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Native American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Native Alaskan, and other minority veterans of the United States Armed Forces who served during World War II;

(2) especially honors those minority veterans who gave their lives in service to the United States during that war;

(3) supports the goals and ideas of the Day of Honor 2000 in celebration and recognition of the extraordinary service of all minority veterans in the United States Armed Forces during World War II; and

(4) authorizes and requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to honor these minority veterans with appropriate programs and activities.

REQUEST TO CLAIM SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim my special order time now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOSSELLA). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. I object, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Objection is heard.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
COMMEMORATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about the Armenian genocide commemoration. I am going to talk a little bit about Armenia. There are many positive things happening in Armenia today that give us confidence that progress is being made. Armenia has made remarkable, stable strides toward becoming a democratic free market economy even in the face of the setbacks, including the tragic assassinations of Armenian Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan and other Parliament members last October. I had gotten to know Mr. Sargsyan before this tragedy and found him to be a man of immense ideas.

It was a tragedy that frankly we all look at with horror. It is behind us now. The government is strong. They have been able to go on in spite of this tragedy, and they have strengthened the situation to a point where it will prevent any future happening of this kind.

Tonight, I would like to talk not so much about what is going on in Armenia and how it is growing but, rather, to talk about a dark period in the remembrance of the genocide that took place back in 1915. When most people hear the word genocide, they immediately think of Hitler and his persecution of the Jews during World War II.

Many individuals are unaware that the first genocide of the 20th century occurred during World War I and was perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenian people. Concern that the Armenian people would move to establish their own government, the Ottoman Empire embarked on a reign of terror that resulted in the massacre of over a million and a half Armenians. This atrocious crime, as I mentioned, began on April 15, 1915, when the Ottoman Empire arrested, exiled, and eventually killed hundreds of Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders.

Once they had eliminated the Armenian people's leadership, they turned their attention to the Armenians serving in the Ottoman Army. These soldiers were disarmed and placed in labor camps where they were either starved

or executed. The Armenian people, lacking political leadership and deprived of young, able-bodied men who could fight against the Ottoman onslaught were then deported from every region of Turkish Armenia. The images of human suffering from the Armenian genocide are graphic and as haunting as the pictures of the Holocaust.

Why then, it must be asked, are so many people unaware of the Armenian genocide? I believe the answer is found in the international community's response to this disturbing event. At the end of World War I, those responsible for ordering and implementing the Armenian genocide were never brought to justice. And the world casually forgot about the pain and suffering of the Armenian people. This proved to be a grave mistake. In a speech before his invasion of Poland in 1939, Hitler justified his brutal tactics with the infamous statement, "Who today remembers the extermination of the Armenians?"

Six years later, 6 million Jews had been exterminated by the Nazis. Never has the phrase "those who forget the past will be destined to repeat it" been more applicable. If the international community had spoken out against this merciless slaughtering of the Armenian people instead of ignoring it, the horrors of the Holocaust might never have taken place.

As we commemorate the 85th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, I believe it is time to give this event its rightful place in history. This afternoon and this evening, let us pay homage to those who fell victim to the Ottoman oppressors and tell the story of the forgotten genocide. For the sake of the Armenian heritage, it is a story that must be heard.

1700

SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO CENTRALIA
COLLEGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FOSSELLA). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay special tribute to an outstanding institution of higher education located in Washington's Third Congressional District.

This month we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of Centralia College in Centralia, Washington. Throughout its proud history as the oldest continuously operating community college in the State of Washington, Centralia College has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to learning. I am proud of Centralia's novel programming and flexible learning options. These features reveal that at Centralia, scholarship is indeed a priority.

In addition to its 44 associate degree and 14 certificate programs, Centralia offers several invaluable courses of