



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE **108th** CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 150

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2004

No. 55

House of Representatives

The House met at 12:30 p.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
April 27, 2004.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 30 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

TIME TO REMEMBER THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, this April marks the 89th anniversary of the cataclysmic events that occurred in the Turkish Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923, where 1.5 million Armenians were killed and over a half million survivors were forcibly deported into exile.

On Sunday, I had the privilege to participate in a service at the Armenian Church of Our Savior in Worcester, Massachusetts, where in the pres-

ence of 19 survivors, the community of Worcester paid homage to the martyrs and survivors of the Armenian Genocide and their descendants.

Mr. Speaker, last May, the House Committee on the Judiciary reported out House Resolution 193. We have been waiting for nearly 1 year now for the Speaker of the House to schedule this bill for a debate and for a vote, and I would urge at this time that the Speaker schedule this bill as quickly as possible so that the House of Representatives may join those nations and those scholars who affirm the Genocide Convention and recognize the Armenian Genocide and Holocaust as genocides of the 20th century.

Mr. Speaker, I am submitting for the RECORD comments I made at the Armenian Church of Our Savior this past Sunday.

I would very much like to thank Father Terzian and the community of faith of the Armenian Church of Our Savior for inviting me once again to this commemoration. It is one of the great privileges of my office to participate in this annual day of remembrance of the martyrs and survivors of the Armenian Genocide.

It is a privilege to be in the company of our city's mayor, the Honorable Tim Murray, and in the company of Councilor Petty, Representative Leary, Representative Fresolo, Senator Moore, Senator Glodis, and Selectman Montocalvo. And I am very much looking forward to the pleasure of hearing the Worcester Chorale perform after their five-month break, under the continuing leadership of Maestro Petrossian.

It is also a pleasure for me to share the podium with Nathaniel Mencow, who is so well known for his work as a historian, and who has worked for so long for the recognition of the heroic service of his brother, First Lieutenant William Martin Mencow, who gave his life in defense of freedom during World War II.

But I am most privileged and most honored to be here in the presence of survivors of the Armenian Genocide, their descendants, and the descendants of those who perished in the genocide.

This April marks the 89th anniversary of the cataclysmic events that occurred in the

Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923, where one-and-a-half million Armenians were killed and over half-a-million survivors were exiled.

Our city has been especially blessed by the presence and contributions of a large and vital Armenian community. Each year we come to this church to recognize, honor and remember that this rich heritage is, in part, a sad inheritance paid with the blood of millions of innocent men, women and children.

I know that most of you are aware that legislation has been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives which reaffirms U.S. support for the Genocide Convention, calls upon the president and the U.S. government to work to prevent future genocides, and recognizes the Armenian Genocide.

This bill, H. Res. 193, has 110 bipartisan cosponsors and was reported out of the House Judiciary Committee last May. It has been waiting for nearly one year now for the Speaker of the House, Dennis Hastert, to put it on the schedule of the House for debate and vote.

I am always amazed that there are those in Congress who view this bill as controversial. They are influenced, in part, by those voices who continue to deny that the Armenian Genocide or the Holocaust, which is also cited in this bill, ever happened. The Turkish government, for example, claims that the Armenian Genocide does not meet the definition of genocide, despite the fact that the father of the Genocide Convention, human rights pioneer Rafael Lemkin, specifically cited the Holocaust and the Armenian Genocide as the two clear instances of genocidal crimes covered by the Convention.

Contrary to the Turkish government's claims, legal scholars, historians, human rights organizations, journalists and the majority of political leaders around the world firmly believe and assert that the 1915 mass slaughter of Armenians fits the legal definition of genocide.

Israel Charney, the noted genocide and Holocaust scholar and the editor of the respected Encyclopedia of Genocide, has written extensively about the psychology of genocide denial. He has stressed that to deny the countless deaths of a known event of genocide is to celebrate those deaths and to send a signal that the power that brought about this destruction is still in force and can be used again when opportunity permits. To seek to erase agonizing memories—to assert that those memories are false—is to

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H2379