

real person. What he says is true. He doesn't speak in long paragraphs or long treatises because he doesn't have to. He gets straight to the point. He is a man of few words because he doesn't have to equivocate, doesn't have to qualify, doesn't have to dissemble. He just gets straight to the point.

I have found that in my relationship with that wonderful man, JIM JEFFORDS. We work together on the Environment and Public Works Committee. Time and time again he turns to me, defers to me, and says: Max, whatever you want to do, that is fine with me.

I know that he is also saying: Just keep me informed of what you are doing. And I do. It is a wonderful personal relationship. We know each other. We trust each other eminently, immediately. We don't have to ask questions such as: What do you really mean? We don't question assumptions. We just know.

That is JIM JEFFORDS.

It has been said that he believes strongly in a few issues, and he does. The environment certainly is one. There are other issues in which my friend from Vermont believes. If you will pardon the overworked phrase, one might possibly disagree with JIM, but he does so in such an agreeable manner that you don't know that there is really a disagreement.

It has been said on the floor of the Senate not too long ago that it is hard to name a Senator who could walk into a restaurant and get the same applause, stand-up applause, as JIM JEFFORDS has so many times around this country.

It is true, he does and he did. It is because people recognize his intestinal fortitude. It took a lot of courage for him to decide he was, after all, an Independent and not a Republican. It was a very difficult decision. But he did it. He did it on the basis of principle. People know that. They see that. They sense that, and they understand that. That is why they stand and applaud JIM JEFFORDS. It is not just the United States, it is in other cities around the world, where people would stand up and applaud when the U.S. Senator from Vermont would walk into the room. In his usual way, JIM would be very humble about it, and it would not go to his head. He would not take it seriously. Obviously, it was not something he disagreed with, but it didn't go to his head.

I am hard-pressed to think of any man I know who is as wonderful as my good friend and colleague from Vermont. I am sad to see him retire. The Senate needs more people like Senator JEFFORDS. I hope whoever replaces him as Senator from Vermont is in the mold of JIM JEFFORDS.

I yield the floor.

OBSERVANCE OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the victims and commemorate

the 90th anniversary of the tragic Armenian Genocide, where over 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children were systematically killed, and over 500,000 Armenians were displaced. This was the first genocide of the 20th century, and one where the international community failed to intervene to stop the killing.

We have learned a great deal since those dark days. We learned that the world cannot sit on the sidelines as systematic massacres of innocents take place. We learned that the rule of law must be upheld, and that violations of law must have consequences. And, we learned that the Armenian people are a strong, proud and persevering people who could not be defeated. Today, hundreds of thousands of Armenian Americans live in the United States, and I am proud to represent a thriving Armenian-American population—3,000 strong—in Nevada.

But we must never forget the painful lessons learned from the Armenian Genocide. This week, events around my State and the Nation will recognize this important anniversary. I am grateful for the strong and active work of the Armenian-American community in Las Vegas, who will hold their annual commemoration on April 24. To the Armenian American Cultural Society of Las Vegas and to the work of Mr. John Dadaian, I say thank you for all that you have done for the people of Nevada, and Armenia.

I am also proud of the fine work done by the University of Nevada's Center of Holocaust, Genocide and Peace Studies to inform the public about the horrors of the Armenian Genocide. Raising awareness and educating today's generations about the horrors of genocide is crucial for a safer, more peaceful future. That is why I was so proud to join my friend and colleague, Senator ENSIGN, in cosponsoring a resolution commemorating the signing of the Genocide Convention.

The people of Armenia suffered greatly during the 20th century. We cannot allow genocide to occur ever again. So today I come to the Senate floor to honor the victims of the Armenian Genocide and pledge to uphold their sacrifice by standing against genocide and the systematic killing of innocents wherever it may occur again.

NATIVE AMERICAN APOLOGY RESOLUTION

Mr. BROWNBACK. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about a joint resolution that seeks to address an issue that has lain unresolved for far too long. That issue is our Nation's relationship with the Native peoples of this land.

Long before 1776 and the establishment of the United States of America, this land was inhabited by numerous nations. Like our Nation, many of these peoples held a strong belief in the Creator and maintained a powerful spiritual connection to this land. Since

the formation of the American Republic, there have been numerous conflicts between our Government and many of these tribes conflicts in which warriors on all sides fought courageously and in which all sides suffered. However, even from the earliest days of the Republic, there existed a sentiment that honorable dealings and peaceful coexistence were preferable to bloodshed. Indeed, our predecessors in Congress in 1787 stated in the Northwest Ordinance, "The utmost good faith shall always be observed toward the Indians."

Many treaties were made between this Republic and the American Indian tribes. Treaties, as my colleagues in this Chamber know, are far more than words on a page. Treaties are our word, our bond. Treaties with other governments are not to be treated lightly. Unfortunately, too often the United States of America did not uphold its responsibilities as stated in its covenants with the Native American tribes. Too often our Government broke its oaths to the Native peoples.

I want my fellow Senators to know that the resolution I have introduced this week does not dismiss the valiance of our American soldiers who bravely fought for their families in wars between the United States and a number of the Indian tribes. Nor does this resolution cast all the blame for the various battles on one side or another. What this resolution does do is recognize and honor the importance of Native Americans to this land and to our Nation in the past and today—and offers an official apology to the Native peoples for the poor and painful choices our Government sometimes made to disregard its solemn word.

This is a resolution of apology and a resolution of reconciliation. It is a first step toward healing the wounds that have divided us for so long—a potential foundation for a new era of positive relations between tribal governments and the Federal Government. It is time—it is past time—for us to heal our land of division, all divisions, and bring us together as one people.

Before reconciliation, there must be recognition and repentance. Before there is a durable relationship, there must be understanding. This resolution will not authorize or serve as a settlement of any claim against the United States, nor will it resolve the many challenges still facing Native peoples. But it does recognize the negative impact of numerous deleterious Federal acts and policies on Native Americans and their cultures. Moreover, it begins the effort of reconciliation by recognizing past wrongs and repenting for them.

Martin Luther King, a true reconciler, once said, "The end is reconciliation, the end is redemption, the end is the creation of the beloved community." This resolution is not the end. But, perhaps it signals the beginning of the end of division and the faint first light and first fruits of the creation of beloved community.

In the 108th Congress, I worked with the chairman and ranking member of the Indian Affairs Committee, Senator Campbell and Senator INOUE, in crafting this apology resolution. I also reached out to the Native tribes as this bill was being formed, and I continue to receive helpful and supportive feedback from them. The resolution I submitted this week, S.J. Res. 15, is identical to the version that was approved unanimously by the Indian Affairs Committee last year. I ask that my colleagues in this Chamber, and those in the House of Representatives, join in support of this important resolution.

THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE OF 1915-1923

Mr. KOHL. Mr. President, this is in observance of the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide where atrocities were committed against the Armenian people of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War. In April 1915, the Ottoman government embarked upon the systematic decimation of its civilian Armenian population. The Armenian genocide was centrally planned and administered against the entire Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire. The Armenian people were subjected to deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre, and starvation. The great bulk of the Armenian population was forcibly removed from Armenia and Anatolia to Syria, where the vast majority was sent into the desert to die of thirst and hunger.

Large numbers of Armenians were methodically massacred throughout the Ottoman Empire. Women and children were abducted and horribly abused. After only a little more than a year of calm at the end of WWI, the atrocities were renewed between 1920 and 1923, and the remaining Armenians were subjected to further massacres and expulsions. In 1915, 33 years before the UN Genocide Convention was adopted, the Armenian Genocide was condemned by the international community as a crime against humanity.

In 1923, the people of the region overthrew the Ottoman government and established modern day Turkey. Since its establishment, the Republic of Turkey has disputed the tragic suffering inflicted on the Armenian people during this period. Sadly, it is estimated that 1.5 million Armenians perished between 1915 and 1923.

Affirming the truth about the Armenian genocide has become an issue of international significance. The recurrence of genocide in the twentieth century has made the recognition of the criminal mistreatment of the Armenians by Turkey all the more a compelling obligation for the international community. It is a testament to the perseverance and determination of the Armenian people that they were able to overcome one of the most egregious acts in history. I support this important annual commemoration of a hor-

rible chapter of history so that it is never repeated again. Congress should continue to show support for Armenia and their struggle to set the historical record straight on this tragedy.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, we solemnly remember the men and women who perished in the Armenian genocide 90 years ago. A million and a half Armenians were systematically massacred at the hands of the Ottoman Empire and more than 500,000 fled their homeland.

When the Armenian genocide occurred from 1915 to 1923, the international community lacked a name for such atrocities. In January 1951, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide entered into force to affirm the international commitment to prevent genocide and protect basic human decency. Today, we have the words to describe this evil, and we have an obligation to prevent it. But we must also have the will to act.

During the Holocaust, and later in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, the world has seen the crimes of ethnic cleansing and genocide recur again and again. Too often, the will to stop atrocities has been lacking, or far too late in coming. Today, as we read report after report detailing the horrific plight of the people of Darfur, Sudan, we must muster the will and the sense of urgency required to save lives.

The international community has made the first steps, but it has a long way to go in punishing and, especially, preventing genocide. As we move forward, we must learn the lessons of Armenia's genocide. We cannot be misled by the rhetorical veils of murderous leaders, thrown up to disguise the agenda at hand. We cannot respond to evidence of methodical, brutal violence by wringing our hands and waiting for some definitive proof that these events qualify as genocide. Enforcing a collective, international commitment to prevent and stop genocides from occurring is imperative. We owe the victims of the Armenian genocide this commitment.

This is why we must remember the Armenian genocide. To forget it is to enable more genocides and ethnic cleansing to occur. We must honor its victims by reaffirming our resolve to not let it happen again.

SMALL BUSINESS HEALTH FAIRNESS ACT OF 2005

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, of the 27 million working uninsured, 63 percent are working in firms with fewer than 100 employees. It is crucial that we develop a comprehensive plan to remedy the problem of the working uninsured. For this reason I support legislation that would allow for the creation of association health plans, which would allow small businesses to band together to purchase health insurance for their employees.

Because of the current structure of the health care industry, too many

small business owners and their employees do not have access to affordable health insurance. When I talk to small business owners as I travel the State, I have found that most of them want to provide this benefit because it not only helps provide the uninsured with coverage but it also helps small businesses retain good employees.

A recent Census Bureau report says slightly more than 45 million Americans now lack health coverage. While Minnesota is out front in tackling the issue of the uninsured, with uninsured in my State at about 7 percent, I still believe that providing affordable access to health care is a critically important national interest, that there are no silver bullet solutions, and so we need as many tools to fix this problem as possible. According to Kaiser Family Foundation, employer-based health insurance has decreased markedly from covering 66 percent of the non-elderly in 2000 to 62 percent by 2003. The Census Bureau says the drop-off in employer health coverage occurred in the small business sector, largely in firms with fewer than 25 employees. It's no coincidence that these events are taking place as the cost of insurance continues to skyrocket double-digit increases year after year, pricing more and more small firms out of the market.

I want to thank the chairwoman of the Small Business Committee, Senator SNOWE, for her strong leadership and sponsorship of S. 406, The Small Business Health Fairness Act of 2005. I also want to thank my very good friend and colleague, Senator JIM TALENT of Missouri, who has long championed this issue in the same thoughtful and forward looking way that he is renowned for in tackling all important public policy issues in which he gets engaged. I look forward to working with members of the committee to enact this legislation.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

IN MEMORY OF EDWARD MOSKAL

• Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I honor the life and legacy of Edward J. Moskal.

Edward Moskal was a giant in the Polish-American community. He was President of the Polish American Congress and the Polish National Alliance. These are empowering organizations—rooted in heritage, history and philanthropy. Their members are humanitarians and patriots—dedicated to Polish history and culture, and to strengthening the historic links between America and Poland. Because of Ed Moskal's leadership, these organizations have flourished.

The Polish American Congress and the Polish National Alliance were created during one of the darkest periods in Polish history. We know that the history of Poland has, at times, been a melancholy one. Every king, kaiser, czar or comrade who ever wanted to