

being a citizen. Our country has lived so long without any rights, under a dictatorship . . . I believe that we must demand rights that belong to us and, in everyone's interest, these liberties must be observed . . . In order to live a full life, it is essential to live in freedom and the Cuban people are denied these rights . . . that is why I'm initiating a fast along with other brothers (in prison) to demand that the government sign the international covenants of civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights—the Cuban regime must sign them and abide by them so that the Cuban people may live in freedom at last. . . .

MESSAGE TO THE CUBAN PEOPLE

The Cuban people must do their utmost in their struggle to win their freedom and succeed in obtaining the international support of all free and democratic countries. I trust that the Cuban people will prove their dignity as they have done so on other occasions, so that we may enjoy FREEDOM. . . .

My colleagues, despite the hell that has been described, Dr. Biscet is unrelenting in his resolve for freedom for the people of Cuba. Dr. Biscet is a great patriot, a man of peace, and an apostle of freedom for Cuba. Dr. Biscet is a hero in the tradition of the great figures of Cuba's long struggle for liberty. Quintin Banderas, Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, Ignacio Agramonte, Antonio Maceo, and thousands of other Cuban heroes established a tradition of heroism that today is being continued by countless men and women who have given their best years and often their lives for the freedom of Cuba. Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet is a hero in that same admirable tradition.

Mr. Speaker, it is completely unacceptable that, while the world stands by in silence and acquiescence, Dr. Biscet languishes in the gulag because of his belief in freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We cannot permit the brutal treatment by a demented and murderous tyrant of a man of peace like Dr. Biscet for simply supporting freedom for his people. My colleagues, we must demand the immediate and unconditional release of Oscar Elias Biscet and every political prisoner in totalitarian Cuba.

COMMEMORATING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA'S INDEPENDENCE

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 15th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Armenia. Today, we congratulate and pay tribute to the citizens of Armenia, as well as people of Armenian descent in the United States and around the globe on this important anniversary of their independence from the former Soviet Union.

Since its independence in 1991, the Republic of Armenia has been a trusted and valuable friend of the United States in the strategically important South Caucasus region. During that time, the United States and Armenia have developed a strong relationship based on shared democratic values.

Throughout their history, the Armenian people have persevered over unspeakable tragedy and hardship. Despite oppression, occu-

pation and the genocide committed against the Armenian people, the unique Armenian culture, heritage and values have flourished.

However, Armenia still faces significant obstacles. It is surrounded by hostile neighbors who have erected blockades to prevent the flow of key resources into Armenia, hindering its ability to develop economically. Despite these difficulties, Armenia's economy has continued to grow at an impressive pace. The United States must continue to provide economic and military assistance and do everything in its power to end these blockades so that Armenia's economy can continue to grow and its young democracy can thrive.

I join my colleagues in the House of Representatives today in commemorating Armenia's independence. I look forward to the bonds of friendship between the United States and Armenia becoming even stronger in the coming years and I wish all Armenian people well on this day.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARS INCORPORATED PLANT IN WACO, TEXAS

HON. CHET EDWARDS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Mars Incorporated manufacturing facility in Waco, Texas—an important institution in our community since its opening on September 23, 1976.

For decades, this facility has produced the Snickers® Bar and other Snickers® varieties for American consumers, and it is now the only facility in the country that produces Skittles® Bite Size Candy and Starburst® Fruit Chews. Roughly 700 people are employed at the Waco facility, many of whom have worked at this facility their entire careers. The loyalty of its associates is a testament to Mars' commitment to providing associates with an environment in which it is a pleasure to work.

I have been proud to have a Mars facility in my district all these years. Approximately \$30 million worth of Texas-grown peanuts are used in the Waco facility to produce Mars' popular snackfood products. In addition to the hundreds of jobs that this facility brings to our economy, Mars has also embraced its role in our community through numerous charitable contributions and community sponsorships.

Mars has also been a pioneer in its industry for the installation of water-saving treatment facilities at some of its plants, and it has incorporated a Wetlands Wastewater Treatment Facility in its Waco facility which saves 3 to 5 million gallons of water each year. In Texas, where we've experienced severe drought in recent years, water conservation is increasingly important. I commend Mars for being a leader on this and other sustainability issues, and I encourage similar facilities in Texas to use the Mars model as an example of environmentally conscious production.

Again, I congratulate Mars for reaching this 30-year milestone and hope that this facility will continue to be a member of our community for many more decades to come.

ON THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF WISE COUNTY, TEXAS

HON. KAY GRANGER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 21, 2006

Ms. GRANGER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Wise County, a Texas county that is part of the 12th Congressional District which I have the honor to represent in Congress.

The area that today is known as Wise County, located northwest of the Fort Worth/Dallas area, initially was home to Native American Indians. The Coronado Expeditions in 1540 found the Wichita Indians roaming the region. By the mid-1800s, Texas was being settled to the north and west of the Gulf Coast. The first settlers, lead by Sam Woody and his family, came to the Wise County region in 1854 attracted by an abundance of land, game and other natural resources. The Woody family and other pioneers who came from other southern states found their new home ideal for farming and ranching.

On January 23, 1856, the Texas Legislature officially created a new county from the larger Cook County and named it for Henry A. Wise, a U.S. Senator from Virginia who had supported the annexation of Texas into the United States a decade earlier. By a popular vote, the community of Taylorville, named for President Taylor, was selected to the county seat where the first of four county courthouses was constructed. Later, the town's name was changed to Decatur in honor of U.S. Naval hero Stephen Decatur at the urging of Col. Absolam Bishop, recognized as the founder of Decatur. The present courthouse on the Decatur town square is the fourth, a majestic pink granite structure constructed in 1895 and remodeled several times since.

By 1860, Wise County had more than 3,000 residents. Although Wise County was one of the Texas counties that voted against secession from the United States, it did recruit five Confederate military companies from among its male residents who fought in the Civil War. Following the Civil War, agriculture continued to be the prime focus of the Wise County economy. Over time, dairy farming, brick and limestone production and oil and gas production became important segments of the county's economic base. At the turn of the century, 99 percent of Wise County's 27,116 residents still lived in unincorporated areas.

Wise County has the distinction of being the birthplace of the first established junior college when Decatur Baptist Junior College was created in 1892 to serve as a "feeder school" to Baylor University in Waco. In 1965, the junior college took a step forward by moving to Dallas and becoming Dallas Baptist University.

Throughout its history, the many men and women of Wise County have served proudly in the U.S. military with distinction and honor. In recognition of some of its sons and daughters who fought during World War II and who were members of the famed "Lost Battalion," Allied soldiers who became Japan prisoners of war, the Wise County Heritage Museum has dedicated a room to members of the Lost Battalion.

Since World War II, Wise County has continued to flourish. Today, the county has a