

of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never."

And never again shall we forget the atrocities that transpired during the Holocaust. As we go forward into the 21st Century, it is our job to make sure that the history of the Holocaust is re-told, so that such crimes against humanity never again recur. It is our job as humanitarians of the world to restore to victims of the Holocaust the private property and real property, chattels and assets which were so wrongfully taken by the nefarious acquisition of the Nazi regime during World War II, and restore to Holocaust Survivors and to their heirs that property which is rightfully theirs.

I sit on the Advisory Board of the Houston Holocaust Museum, and I understand the urgency and necessity expressed by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, when she delivered the keynote address at the Washington Conference on Holocaust Era Assets. Former Secretary Albright articulated the U.S. commitment to Holocaust survivors and urged conference participants to "chart a course for finishing the job of returning or providing compensation for stolen Holocaust assets to survivors and the families of Holocaust victims." The Prague Conference is expected to do just that. The Conference will take stock of issues agreed on at the Washington Conference, including financial assets, bank accounts, insurance issues, and other financial property. United States participation and leadership at the highest level is critically important to ensure a successful outcome of the Prague Conference. The Prague Congress supports further inclusion of Holocaust survivors and their advocates in the Prague Conference planning and proceedings, to provide direct testimony as to the ongoing repercussions of the Holocaust on survivors and the families of survivors.

While it is largely unspoken, many Holocaust survivors lack the means for even the most basic necessities, including proper housing and health care. We have a moral obligation to uphold and defend the plight and dignity of Holocaust survivors and to ensure their well-being. The Prague Conference is a critical forum to effectively address the increasing economic, social, housing, and health care needs of Holocaust survivors in their waning years.

On his visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Israel in July 2008, President Barack Obama stated "Let our children come here and know this history so they can add their voices to proclaim 'never again.' And may we remember those who perished, not only as victims but also as individuals who hoped and loved and dreamed like us and who have become symbols of the human spirit."

I urge my colleagues to support this important Resolution today, which advocates for an immediate and just restitution or compensation of property illegally confiscated during the last century by Nazi and Communist regimes. I applaud the Government of the Czech Republic for its decision to host the Prague Conference

and its unwavering commitment to address outstanding Holocaust-era issues. Furthermore I express strong support for the decision to make the economic, social, housing, and health care needs of Holocaust survivors a major focus of the Prague Conference. Finally, this Resolution urges the countries in Central and Eastern Europe, which have not already done so, to return looted and confiscated properties to their rightful owners or, where restitution is not possible, pay equitable compensation to the rightful owners in accordance with principles of justice and in an expeditious manner that is just, transparent, and fair. I urge passage of H. Con. Res. 89.

The concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE FOURTH OF JULY

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the most patriotic time of the year is at hand. I love the Fourth of July. It is picnics, hot dogs, potato salad and barbecue. It is kids decorating wagons with red, white and blue for neighborhood parades and little kids sitting on their dad's shoulders watching the parade. It is horses and cowboys. It is John Phillips Sousa and "The Stars and Stripes Forever." It is waving flags and thanking our troops for their service. It is yellow ribbons tied to trees.

The Fourth of July is a packed freeway and a long weekend. It is going to the beach and getting sand in everything. It is coolers, beach towels, blankets, sunscreen and the salty air.

It is the big fireworks display in the big cities and the small ones in the neighborhood. It is making circles in the air with sparklers. It is bottle rocket wars. It is Black Cat firecrackers and Roman candles. It is buy one, get four free.

It is stump speeches by politicians. It is people dressing up as Tom Jefferson and George Washington. It is snow cones and caramel apples. It is kids, grandkids and pets all packed in the Jeep and going for cotton candy.

Everybody is happy about the Fourth of July. There is nothing sad about freedom. After all, it is happy birthday to our country.

And that's just the way it is.

DEATH OF MICHAEL JACKSON, JUNE 25, 2009

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I too wish our Nation a very happy birthday. But I rise in sadness to celebrate, but yet mourn, the passing of Michael Jackson, to celebrate a life that was full of artistry. It was, in essence, a joy to many who listened and those who danced.

Michael Jackson loved America. He was truly a story that came from the

very dreams that Americans have. Starting in the very bowels of a city called Gary, Indiana, living in a two bedroom bungalow, he rose to the highest pedestals of entertainment and, of course, iconic state.

He was the King of Pop. But he was also a quiet man, a man who, in fact, loved to give back and a humanitarian. For those of us who remember the words of "We Are the World," one of the first conglomerations of bringing people together, to be able to emphasize that we do have a responsibility to others. And then the song, "The Man in the Mirror," we can make a difference.

Born on August 29, 1958, in Gary, Indiana, he was one of the Jackson Five. But more importantly, he was a father. He was someone who would bring a face to America. I intend to introduce a resolution in honor of Michael Jackson because we believe in the good. And he was good. He saw our soldiers. He fought against HIV/AIDS. He wanted to show that he cared. And he did.

It is my pleasure to have hosted Michael Jackson on Capitol Hill in 2004 when he came to stand against AIDS and to fight that devastating disease.

Today I stand and recognize that he truly was a man who loved America.

Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to remember and honor the memory of the King of Pop, Michael Jackson. Michael Jackson who was a charismatic musician and beloved American musician from a tender age, suffered from cardiac arrest today and died at the age of 50.

Michael Jackson truly was the King of Pop and a true icon that was world renowned. We watched a boy grow into a superstar before our eyes and enjoyed the music he brought to the world. The Jackson 5 were the first act in recorded history to have their first four major label singles ("I Want You Back", "ABC", "The Love You Save", and "I'll Be There") reach the top of the American charts.

Jackson was born on Aug. 29, 1958, in Gary, Indiana, the seventh of nine children. Five Jackson boys—Jackie, Tito, Jermaine, Marlon and Michael—first performed together at a talent show when Michael was 6. They walked off with first prize and went on to become a best-selling band, The Jackson Five.

Once Michael Jackson went solo we enjoyed such hits as Thriller, Beat It and Billie Jean and of course the legendary moonwalk. "Thriller" released in 1982, which became a smash hit yielded seven top-10 singles. The album sold 21 million copies in the United States and at least 27 million worldwide. It was a monumental moment in music history.

Not only an iconic singer and performer, Michael Jackson was a philanthropist and advocate for AIDS awareness and Child Hunger. Jackson co-wrote the charity single "We Are the World" with Lionel Richie, which was released worldwide to aid the poor in Africa and the US. He was one of 39 music celebrities who performed on the record. The single became one of the best-selling singles of all time, with nearly 20 million copies sold and millions of dollars donated to famine relief.

I was honored to personally meet with Michael Jackson on Capitol Hill in 2004 and am deeply saddened by his passing. He is survived by his three children, his brothers and

sisters, family, friends and a world full of fans. I will leave you all with a quote from Michael, "If you enter this world knowing you are loved and you leave this world knowing the same, then everything that happens in between can be dealt with."

HEARTBREAK ON CAPITOL HILL

(Mr. GOHMERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, just moments ago on this floor there was cheering and there was clapping over the passing of the crap-and-trade bill. And it is a little tough to get excited. From a political standpoint, I should be overjoyed because I really believe in my heart that when the American people find out, and this is just a part of it, when they find out what has been done to them, they are going to be livid. And they are going to throw some people out of this body. I just know that will happen. But I care more about America than I do politics.

I know that we will be facing the single moms that we heard from last summer that can't afford the gasoline bill. They can't afford the propane.

You didn't do a great thing. You hurt some really decent families struggling and trying to make it. And this is going to be their death knell. It breaks my heart.

CELEBRATING BLACK MUSIC MONTH

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. This is Black Music Month. And we had a resolution to introduce and pass celebrating the 30th anniversary of Black Music Month. Because of the scheduling, it didn't come up. That is why I wanted to address that fact today.

Black Music Month is important because it reminds people of the history of music in this country and the contributions of black Americans. Much of that happened in my city in Memphis, at Stax Soulsville, home of Isaac Hayes, Sam and Dave, Stax Soulsville Records, Al Green, Willy Mitchell and others, also Detroit and Motown and New Orleans and Fats Domino, Professor Long Hair, and many great musicians.

But back to Kansas City, and Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis and Max Roach and Dizzy Gillespie, not all from Kansas City, but that from that jazz era, and others. Michael Jackson, of course, passed. Many great musicians whose music needs to be remembered and young people need to learn that music is a great way to pass on our culture and preserve it and a great way to enjoy their own life and experience a better way. I'm pleased this is the 30th anniversary of Black Music Month. And we need to enjoy music and soothe the soul.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CELEBRATING THE ALBANIAN DIASPORA OF SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN

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

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Albanian diaspora of southeast Michigan and to raise the concern they have expressed to me.

Respect for people of diverse cultures is an American value and has made our Nation great. Our national heritage reflects the cultural contributions of a wide range of ethnic groups.

I am fortunate to represent the Ninth District of Michigan, a district rich in ethnic and religious diversity and one that includes many families from the Balkan region. In my time as a Congressman and resident of the Ninth District, I have developed a strong bond with the Albanian American community. This is a people that strongly value community service, family, and education. These are the values we can all admire and strive to instill in our children.

The Albanian American community of southeast Michigan is relatively new to our country. Most are first- or second-generation Americans. However, this community has established strong roots in southeast Michigan, establishing churches, community centers and small businesses. These places preserve and celebrate Albanian culture. They help enrich the lives of fellow Albanian Americans and the broader community alike.

Saint Paul's Albanian Church in Rochester Hills, Michigan, a city in my district, boasts nearly 5,000 members and is a shining example of how the Albanian diaspora has taken root in southeast Michigan. These roots are nourished by the community's focus on family, a value deeply embedded in Albanian culture, and one that I greatly respect.

As with many new immigrant communities, the entrepreneurial spirit runs deep among our Albanian Americans. Our Nation has provided many Albanian Americans with their first opportunity for business success. Members of the community have embraced these opportunities and worked tirelessly for the success of their endeavors, helping to grow our economy and create jobs in our region.

The community's affinity for entrepreneurship is coupled with a deep appreciation for education. Albanian Americans recognize the invaluable return on investment that educational achievement brings to the next generation.

I am particularly proud of the Albanian American community's patriotism, love for America and participation in the American democratic process.

Albanian Americans truly are full participants in the American democratic system. They understand that the essential element of a thriving democracy is active engagement.

Albanian Americans' unwavering dedication to democracy does not stop at our borders. The Albanian community is working tirelessly to bring attention to the needs of the emerging democracies in the Balkan region and to strengthen U.S.-Balkan relations.

I am proud of the relationship the city of Rochester Hills has formed with Tuz, Montenegro. For example, the Albanian American diaspora in Michigan and the city of Rochester Hills recently worked together to provide school supplies to the cities of Tuz, and I commend them for these efforts.

While many are aware of the efforts made by the Albanian American community to assist refugees during the Kosovo conflict, it is important to highlight important work still being performed by the Albanian American community.

The Albanian diaspora continues to seek further recognition for the Republic of Kosova and has been vital in helping former refugees rebuild their lives. The recent independence of the Republic of Kosova and the induction of Albania into NATO are a testament to the Albanian American community's progress.

The Albanian community in Michigan remains concerned with events and issues currently affecting their brethren and families overseas. Some particular concerns of my constituents I want to raise today relate to recent reports of inequities in the Montenegrin justice system. In particular, reputable human rights organizations like Amnesty International have reported that several Albanian American citizens convicted in connection with the Eagle's Flight case have been subject to torture and physical abuse. These incidents and reports have caused tremendous anxiety and uncertainty in the Albanian American community. It is my hope that the Montenegrin Government will work diligently to protect human rights and the rule of law in the exercise of justice in the future.

Whether fighting for justice, advancing democracy, supporting our schools, or working hard to strengthen our economy, Albanian Americans in my district and across America are helping to make our Nation even greater. It is an honor to represent a prominent Albanian American community here in the United States Congress.