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EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

American of German descent, who now lives in my district. Mr. Jacobs published a book earlier in the year, The Prison Called Hohenasperg that details his account of internment in the United States and Germany. Mr. Jacobs and his family spent time at Ellis Island, Crystal City, TX, and finally a prison camp in Germany. The event that put Mr. Jacobs ordeal in motion was the leveling of unsubstantiated, anonymous charges against his father.

The book has generated national interest. The November 1st edition of the American Library Association’s Booklist offered the following review of the book:

There has been very little written about the terrible punishment that was meted out to thousands of German Americans during World War II. That’s why Jacob’s book is an important one. This modest tome opens up a hidden and disgraceful chapter in our history, for all to see.

The internment of Mr. Jacobs and his family was not an isolated case. Arnold Kramer, a Texas A&M professor specializing in European history and author of Undue Process: The Untold Story of America’s German Alien Internment, observed in his book that about 15 percent of the 10,905 German aliens and Americans interned were committed Nazis, while the rest were “ordinary American citizens.” In the 48 hours following the bombing of Pearl Harbor President Franklin Roosevelt issued Proclamation 2525, 2526, and 2527, which authorized restrictive rules for aliens of Japanese, German, and Italian descent, respectively. These proclamations coupled with Executive Order 9066, which authorized the War Department to exclude certain persons from designated military areas, resulted in hardships and the deprivation of certain fundamental rights for the targeted populations. A 1980 Congressional Research Service Report, The Internment of German and Italian Aliens Compared With the Internment of Japanese Aliens in the United States During World War II: A Brief History and Analysis, revealed that the War Department would not support the “collective evacuation of German and Italian aliens from the West Coast or from anywhere else in the United States” but would authorize individual exclusion orders “against both aliens and citizens under the authority of Executive Order 9066.” In other words, German and Italian Americans and aliens could still be denied basic civil liberties because of their heritage.

Ideally, Congress would address both the Italian American and German American experience during World War II. On a per capita basis, it appears that significantly more Americans or aliens of German descent were interned than Italian Americans. According to personal Justice Denied, a report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians issued in 1982, the Justice Department had interned 1,393 Germans and 264 Italians by February 16, 1942. Moreover, the Commission’s report contains evidence that German Americans were considered to be more of a threat than Italian Americans. For instance, the Secretary of War in 1942 instructed the military commander in charge of implementing Executive Order 9066 to consider plans for excluding German aliens, but to ignore the Italians. And later in the year, the Attorney General announced that Italians would no longer be considered “aliens of enemy nationality.” No such clarification was ever issued for German Americans. Finally, President Franklin Roosevelt dismissed the threat of those of Italian descent living in America, referring to them as “a lot of opera singers.”

As we reach the end of the century, I urge my colleagues to pursue a full historical accounting of the experiences of all Americans who suffered discrimination during the Second World War as expeditiously as possible.