

Fresno Consolidated Charter, Association of California School Administrators and a part time faculty member at CSUF. He has been a member, vice-chair, and chairman of various education committees and councils and has served as Chairman of the Board of Regents of the Armenian Schools under the auspices of the Western Prelacy Armenian Apostolic Church. Meher is an active member of several Armenian organizations and has received many awards and honors from organizations such as the Fresno City Council PTA, Fresno City Youth Development Program, Armenian Community Schools of Fresno and Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church of Fresno.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Meher Chekerdemian on receiving the Armenian Educational Foundation's Educator of the Year Award. Meher has been an outstanding educator for many years. I urge my colleagues to join me in wishing Meher Chekerdemian many years of continued success.

IN HONOR OF GREEK  
INDEPENDENCE DAY

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Greek Independence Day, March 25th.

The fall of Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottoman Empire brought a halt to the important leadership role of Greeks. Their heritage remained important, however, for others around the world. Tsarist Russia emulated the Orthodox and imperial models of Byzantium. Classical Greece offered inspiration and guideposts for the flowering of the Renaissance. And the influence of Classical Greece on the founding fathers of American independence is universally known.

During the rule of the Ottoman Empire, the Greek people never lost sight of their distinct identity and deep devotion to their Orthodox Church, whose clergy played a critical function in maintaining their language and religion. As the eighteenth century ended, the Greeks began organizing a struggle for their freedom. On March 25, 1821, Bishop Germanos called for all to join the campaign for Greek independence. Despite overwhelming odds, thousands of Greeks throughout the region responded to this inspiring call and fought heroically.

The combination of Greek sacrifice and bravery with the help of foreign volunteers succeeded by the end of the 1820s in establishing an independent Greek state. It was a struggle that caught the world's attention, in large part because of the admirable ideals of freedom and revived opportunities for a heroic peoples. We cherish and honor these same ideals today. The Greek-American community offers a cultural bridge between the two countries and takes pride that Greek ideals contributed to America's revolution before Greeks themselves had the chance to follow a related and successful campaign for freedom.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in celebrating Greek Independence Day.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

CHIEF JIMMIE L. BROWN RETIRES  
FROM MIAMI-DADE POLICE DEPARTMENT

**HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to one of Miami-Dade County's finest, a man who has valiantly defended the streets of our cities for over thirty years, Miami-Dade County Police Chief Jimmie L. Brown.

A special celebration will soon be held in honor of Chief Brown's long devotion and commitment to defend and protect our South Florida streets. For the last 30 years, Chief Brown has served in law enforcement, his latest assignment being Chief of Special Investigations. He also serves as church pastor, radio show host, adjunct professor and consultant, always being instrumental and positively influential to many in the community. As a soldier in the U.S. Air Force, Chief Brown was awarded a Bronze Star and Air Force commendation medals for service in Vietnam.

General Robert E. Lee once said, "duty is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less." These words embody the kind of exemplary life that Chief Brown conducted as he always lived a life of sacrifice and service.

Chief Brown additionally volunteers his time and energy to a host of other community organizations and affiliations. Having received over 100 awards from professional and civic groups, as well as having earned an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from International Seminary, Chief Brown will retire in April and will be missed greatly by all members and employees of the Miami-Dade Police Department.

FRIENDS OF IRELAND

**HON. JAMES T. WALSH**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, March 17, 1999*

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, in the spirit of St. Patrick's Day, I am inviting all my colleagues to become a Friend of Ireland. The Friends of Ireland is a bipartisan Congressional organization established in 1981 by the late Speaker, Thomas "Tip" O'Neill. Every successive Speaker has carried on the tradition with Speaker HASTERT and Minority Leader GEPHARDT serving as honorary Chairmen of the group.

The purpose of the Friends of Ireland is to increase the bonds of friendship and understanding between the American people and the people of Ireland. We look for a peaceful solution to the problems of this troubled land. Our organization is open to all members of the 106th Congress who share its principles and has attracted widespread support over the years. There are also several Senators who are members of the Friends.

Over the years, the statements of support for peace in Ireland, condemnations of human

rights abuses, assistance to the International Fund for Ireland and general expressions of goodwill have made a difference. The voice of the United States Congress is listened to very attentively in Ireland both in the Republic and in the North.

I would like to share with you this year's St. Patrick's Day Statement:

STATEMENT BY THE FRIENDS OF IRELAND ST.  
PATRICK'S DAY 1999

On this St. Patrick's Day 1999, the friends of Ireland in the United States Congress join with the 44 million Americans of Irish ancestry in commemorating an extraordinary year for the people of the island of Ireland. We are proud of the dramatic progress achieved in last year's Good Friday Agreement. We commend those who contributed to this historic agreement.

The Agreement is a unique opportunity to end a tragic conflict which has caused needless tragedy and destruction. It holds out the promise of a new beginning, honorable and realistic, for all involved. The Agreement was endorsed decisively by the people in both parts of the island of Ireland as a clear democratic mandate to their political leaders. We call on all those leaders to implement that mandate fully and fairly, and to embrace the opportunity for peace offered by the Agreement with courage, imagination and empathy. History will not deal kindly with those who fail to do so.

We are pleased to welcome to Washington over the St. Patrick's Day period many of those who were central to the success of the negotiations leading to the Good Friday Agreement. We particularly welcome the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, whose outstanding commitment and leadership, both during the negotiations, and in the succeeding months, have been deservedly recognized. We also pay tribute to Prime Minister Tony Blair, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Marjorie Mowlam, Minister for Foreign Affairs David Andrews, the leaders of the Northern Ireland political parties, and many other Irish and British Government officials for their courage and determination to reach agreement despite the opposition they faced.

We congratulate John Hume and David Trimble on the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their efforts for peace. We take pride in the contribution made to the peace process by President Clinton and many other leaders in the United States. We especially salute our former colleague, Senator George Mitchell, for his indispensable leadership, and welcome the recent establishment by the U.S.-Ireland Alliance of the Mitchell Scholarships in his honor. We welcome the generous \$3 million contribution of the Irish Government to this scholarship fund, announced by the Taoiseach last September during our President's visit to Ireland. We also welcome the Irish Government's support of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, through a grant to promote the Festival of Irish Arts, in May 2000.

Ireland has given to America in many ways, including men to fight our battles from Revolutionary War to Desert Storm. In appreciation for these services, and as a special tribute to 12 Irish citizens who gave their lives as members of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Vietnam War, we are pleased to note that the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund's traveling wall, called the Wall that Heals, will be making a tour of Ireland from April 16 to May 3 this year.

This July, we look forward to welcoming the first 4,000 young men and women who

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