leader in the community and dedicated his life's work to making this world a better place than the way he found it. Sylvan was a very special person and meant a lot to all who knew him. He loved people and he made us better because he educated and challenged us!

At this time, I do not think Sylvan would have wanted the Houston communities to anguish over his passing; instead, he would want all of us to pick up the torch of leadership and responsibility, and work together to ensure that our communities continue to grow and learn from one another, and to continue God's work.

Nevertheless, Sylvan's passing will forever leave a void in all of our hearts in Houston, and throughout the great state of Texas. I hope that in time, his family, friends, and colleagues are comforted by the legacy of accomplishments Sylvan leaves behind. In addition, I hope that fond memories of Sylvan Rodriguez will continue to inspire all who knew him and the Houston community for the future. In closing, I offer my deepest sympathy on Sylvan Rodriguez passing and bid him a fond farewell.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

□ 1800

MICROSOFT BREAK-UP

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

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, we are a Nation of laws. Without a codified, uniform, and fairly administered systems of laws, American society would be harmed, lives would be ruined and businesses would falter and fail.

I also know that our system is not perfect. Sometimes it is possible for existing laws to be misapplied or misinterpreted. Sometimes it is possible for reasonable men and women to look at the same set of facts and to simply draw different conclusions. And sometimes our very human and very American desire to side with the little guy overwhelms our objectivity and colors our view of the facts; that I believe is happening in the case of Microsoft versus the Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Microsoft is being unfairly judged, not only in the federal courtroom, but also in the court of public opinion, and I believe this good company stands a chance of being unfairly punished. That is why I am here today to do what I can to stop an injustice from occurring.

Microsoft is the great American success story. Today, it is a company whose products have increased the efficiency of our work force immeasurably. It is a company whose products are used and respected worldwide. It is a company who has shared more of its wealth creation with its workers than any other business in this country. It is a company whose founder has made more charitable contributions than any other business leader in the entire world.

And this American success story is under attack today, because it wanted to offer better products to its customers in order to stay competitive. That seems absurd to me. Even more absurd is the precedent that this decision would set for all of American business, because the attack on Microsoft is not simply an attack on a single very successful company.

It is an attack on the very principles of business competition and technological innovation. It is an attack that threatens to undermine one of the most successful engines of economic growth and technological innovation in our Nation.

One of the first rules of business is to anticipate changing markets, to predict what competitors will do, and try to do better. The way to win in a competitive marketplace is to produce better products more quickly and more economically. That is the basis of our free enterprise system. It is why our economy leads the world, and it is why we are the envy of the rest of the world.

It is a terribly, terribly serious matter for the government to intrude in that process of healthy competition. And it is simply not acceptable or reasonable for our government to seek to destroy a fundamental engine of our economy.

Microsoft is a generous and responsible corporate citizen, one of the most innovative and creative success stories in American history. Microsoft should not be attacked simply because they sought to provide more integrated, advanced, and efficient products to the marketplace, that is what consumers want companies to do. Far from harming consumers, that is what consumers want from products that and the companies that make them.

The theory behind antitrust actions is to prevent monopolistic or anticompetitive practices that could stifle development or competition and thereby hurt the consumer.

I understand that principle, but the key phrase is thereby hurt the consumer. And what is most important to consider here is not whether there is a specific level of competition, but whether consumers have, in fact, been harmed.

It is equally important that we carefully, very carefully, examine the possibility that a proposed response, a proposed response could be more harmful to consumers, more harmful to competition. Let us be clear about something. It is perfectly acceptable to ensure the competition is not unfairly restrained by monopolistic entities. But it is not acceptable, it is not reasonable to use the antitrust process to penalize companies for trying to improve their products for the sake of competitive advantage.

If protecting the consumer is the guiding principle behind antitrust proceedings, it is only fair to ask where the consumers have been in all of this. From the time this process began, right up to the present, there has not been an uprising of consumers demanding Microsoft being prosecuted or penalized.

In fact, consumers use and benefit from Microsoft products every day. And when it comes to choices, consumers have a multitude of choices of various software systems and operating systems.

Competition is alive and well in the software industry. Beyond the matter of choice in consumer satisfaction, it would be difficult to argue that prices have been driven up by Microsoft because every day the price of computer systems and more powerful systems are actually going down.

What is really going on? The case against Microsoft is not fundamentally about protecting consumers, it is really about competing businesses in the States in which those businesses reside seeking to get the upper hand on one another by using litigation where innovation has failed, by using the power of the government to usurp the power of the marketplace.

Our Federal Government should not be party to this, and our government must not stifle competition in the name of protecting consumers. Break up should not be an option.

Mr. Speaker, I have visited Microsoft. I know well the fine work they do, and I know how essential it is for the success of that company that products be integrated. We must not allow break up to harm consumers in the name of protecting them.

COMMEMORATING THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHERWOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow evening on this floor there will be a special order commemorating the 85th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I will not be present because of a conflict tomorrow evening, and, therefore, I chose this evening to rise in remembrance of all of those who perished during the Armenian Genocide. The commemoration of the Turkish persecution of its Armenian citizens is important because only by educating