

HONORING THE KOREAN  
INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

**HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 25, 2019*

Mr. PASCRELL. Madam Speaker, I rise to celebrate the outstanding achievements of the people of South Korea in their fight for independence. This push for Korean independence from Japan would begin in Seoul on March 1, 1919 and spread throughout the country.

Over 100 years ago, the Korean people were inspired by former Governor of New Jersey and United States President Woodrow Wilson's ideas of self-determination to resist the occupation of Japanese military rule. This revolutionary spirit was aided by release of a Korean Declaration of Independence that was written by 33 core activists in the Samil Movement. The declaration was read by the leaders in the Seoul and in townships throughout Korea by supporters of the movement.

Attempts by the Japanese military to suppress the Samil Movement's peaceful gatherings gave their followers a stronger will to keep demonstrating. It is estimated that approximately two million Koreans participated in more than 1,500 demonstrations for independence. Several thousand were massacred, wounded and arrested by the Japanese police force and army in what is known as the Bloody History of the Korean Independence Movement. These acts became the catalyst for the Korean Independence Movement that would help unify the Korean people in their quest for independence in 1945.

Our alliance with the Republic of Korea has always been firm. Korea has remained one of the United States' closest and most steadfast allies and partners. Our shared belief in self-determination is pivotal to our joint success. I am proud to rise today to honor that history.

I look forward to joining my constituents on February 26, 2019 for a ceremony recognizing the Centennial of the March 1st Movement. I hope my colleagues will recognize the importance of the Korean March 1st Movement as a reflection of our own values of freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and freedom to self-govern.

CHET HITT RECEIVES THE DISTINGUISHED  
COMMUNITY SERVICE  
AWARD

**HON. PAUL COOK**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 25, 2019*

Mr. COOK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the service and commitment of Chet Hitt, who received the Distinguished Community Service Award from the Victor Valley College Foundation on February 23, 2019.

Chet was born in the High Desert and has lived in Apple Valley for most of his life. Always ambitious and driven, Chet's entrepreneurial spirit came alive when he began to control High Desert mortuary business market. In 1997, he became partners with the owner of a prior competitor, Victor Valley Mortuary, and within three years they were able to pur-

chase four additional mortuaries in the High Desert. Chet has served on the Board of Trustees of St. Mary Hospital, where he is the only Board Member to have been born at that hospital, and also sits on the Board for Friends of the Fair for the San Bernardino County Fairgrounds. He was named the Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year in 2002, and was named Service-Based Entrepreneur of the Year at the 2017 Spirit of the Entrepreneur Awards for the Inland Empire. Chet serves as Chairman of the Board of the Sunset Hills Children's Foundation and the Topock 66 Children's Foundation.

Chet Hitt is one of the most kind, generous, and hard-working people in the High Desert, and is eminently deserving of this award. I offer my sincere congratulations to Chet on this recognition and my thanks for all the outstanding work he does in our community.

HONORING STEPHEN PHILIP  
SPERNAK

**HON. J. LUIS CORREA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 25, 2019*

Mr. CORREA. Madam Speaker, I rise to commemorate the distinguished public service career of Mr. Stephen Philip Spernak. Mr. Spernak has dedicated over 20 years to serving and benefitting our community in Orange County. In 1982 Mr. Spernak began working for the Cypress Police Department, and here is where his strong leadership and hard work began to take notice.

Mr. Spernak served 14 years with the Cypress Police Department, during this time he was named Officer of the Year in 1988 and received the Medal of Valor in 1993 for rescuing an infant from a burning structure. Officer Spernak was nationally recognized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) in 1990 for creating a drunk driving education program for teens, which is still used today. MADD recognized Mr. Spernak as Officer of the Year in 1989 and he has since served as a spokesman and lecturer for MADD for 24 years. He also created and launched a notable public affairs program related to crime prevention, drunk driving, traffic safety, and neighborhood watch through public appearances and cable TV. Mr. Spernak has also served as an Orange County Sheriff Reserve Deputy.

Outside of law enforcement, Mr. Spernak acted as Executive Assistant and Policy Advisor to Orange County Supervisor Todd Spitzer during his two terms in office. In these roles he aided the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) in their efforts to incorporate Rancho Santiago Margarita into cityhood. His successful role led him to serve as Deputy City Manager of this new city in 2000.

While serving the Orange County Supervisors, he played a lead role on Supervisor Spitzer's staff, serving as his Southern California Liaison. In this role he collaborated with anti-airport committees and successfully defeated a plan to build an international airport at El Toro Marine Air Corps Station.

REMEMBERING THE 27TH ANNI-  
VERSARY OF THE KHOJALY  
MASSACRE

**HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 25, 2019*

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 27th anniversary of the Khojaly Massacre, which took place on February 26, 1992, and remember the 613 men, women, and children who were brutalized during this despicable act of violence.

Khojaly, a town in the Republic of Azerbaijan, was home to an unprecedented act of brutality that desecrated the norms and principles of international law, human rights, and freedoms. Armenian forces, with the support of the 366th motorized rifle regiment of the Russian army, stormed the besieged town of Khojaly engaging in acts so violent that their effects are still felt in the community, indeed the entire country, to this day.

Madam Speaker, although a ceasefire was achieved in 1994, more than 20 percent of Azerbaijani territory including Nagorno Karabakh remain occupied and more than 1 million Azerbaijanis remain refugees and internally displaced persons. Over the past 20 years, Azerbaijan has spent over 6 billion dollars to ensure the social welfare of the internally displaced. Notably, while providing this crucial and costly support, Azerbaijan has still taken significant and impressive strides to improve economic development in their region.

Indeed the Government of Azerbaijan has not only contributed to regional stability, but has continued to be a reliable ally for the United States in combating terrorism around the world. In the days after September 11, 2001, Azerbaijan quickly conveyed its solidarity with the American people and provided crucial assistance to our fight against terrorism by granting unconditional clearance to our military to use Azerbaijan's airspace as part of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. This is in addition to the naval and ground routes the country provides for the international coalition's supplies that are to be delivered to forces in Afghanistan.

Madam Speaker, marking the anniversary of a tragedy is always a solemn occasion. However, as a member of the Azerbaijan Caucus, I believe it is important to recognize and remember those whose lives were lost. I ask my colleagues to join me in offering condolences to the people of Azerbaijan.

IN HONOR OF ANTONIO VACCARO'S  
100TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. CHRIS PAPPAS**

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, February 25, 2019*

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Antonio Vaccaro, who celebrated his 100th birthday this past Saturday. A longtime resident of Portsmouth and a communicator like no other, Mr. Vaccaro spent much of his career working as chief engineer at the radio station WHEB in Portsmouth.

During World War II, Mr. Vaccaro answered the nation's call and served as a member of