

When human beings are denied their universal freedoms, and when governments put in place dehumanizing rhetoric, policies, and laws; then hatred, violence, and suffering follow. I urge my colleagues to stand with me in recognition of the plight suffered by ethnic Armenians thirty years ago and to stand vigilant against the use of ethnic and religious hatred to stir violence against minorities here in the United States and around the world.

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RECOGNIZING MR. RANDY ROUTON

**HON. VAN TAYLOR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2020*

Mr. TAYLOR. Madam Speaker, today I rise to recognize my friend, Mr. Randy Routon for his nearly thirty-four years of dedicated service in mental health as the Chief Executive Officer of LifePath Systems, a mental healthcare provider in Collin County.

Randy's steadfast leadership helped thousands of families and individuals throughout our community gain access to life changing mental healthcare. Randy's inspiring dedication was also illustrated by his role on many boards, committees, task forces, and clubs throughout our community.

I proudly worked with him during my time in the state legislatures towards our shared goal of ensuring everyone in Collin County has a chance to receive high quality of mental healthcare.

I know Randy looks forward to spending more time with his wife, Diane, as well as their six children and six grandchildren during his retirement.

As Randy prepares to begin his next chapter, I ask my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives to join me in thanking Randy Routon for his selfless and dedicated career of serving those around him.

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CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2020*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, it is with great respect and sincere admiration that I rise today to celebrate Black History Month and its 2020 theme—African Americans and the Vote. 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. This year's theme reflects on the extraordinary contributions of African Americans throughout the history of our democracy as we reflect on the ongoing efforts to ensure equality for all Americans. As we reflect on the past, this year's theme focuses on the fight to ensure that African American voices and votes mattered in America.

The year 2020 commemorates the 115th anniversary of the 15th Amendment, which granted African American men the right to vote. When the amendment was first introduced, it did not mention black men. After the

conclusion of the civil war, however, abolitionist Frederick Douglas spoke before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society advocating for the right for black men to vote. While the debate continued, in 1869, 150 African American men from seventeen states gathered for the first national meeting of African Americans in the history of the United States.

The year 2020 also marks the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment. During this time, the Women's Rights Movement was intertwined with the Antislavery Movement. African American women played a prominent role in the movement by organizing, attending, and speaking out at political and religious events, thus leading to the ratification of the 19th Amendment. We honor these brave and dedicated women who contributed to the foundation of African American liberty including Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Maria W. Stewart, Henrietta Purvis, Harriet Forten Purvis, and Sarah Redmon, among many others. As we pay tribute to these heroes of American history, let us remember their profound perseverance, sacrifice, and struggle in the fight for freedom and equality and the remarkable impact their contributions have had in shaping our great nation. This month and always, it is important that we honor and celebrate America's greatest advocates for equal rights and civil liberties.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you and my distinguished colleagues join me in celebrating Black History Month and honoring those who fought, and continue to fight, for civil rights and justice. We honor the African American men and women who have played such a crucial role in changing the landscape of American society for the better.

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SPECIAL RECOGNITION OF PAULDING COUNTY'S 200TH ANNIVERSARY

**HON. ROBERT E. LATTA**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2020*

Mr. LATTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the Bicentennial of Paulding County, Ohio, the last frontier to be settled in our great state. Our country was founded because of the brave pioneers who ventured into the Great Outdoors in order to create a better life for future settlers.

In 1819, Captain James Riley and his surveyors trudged through the mosquito infested Great Black Swamp to lay out the township lines for what would later become Paulding County.

The Great Black Swamp covered more than 1,500 square miles. It was created more than 10,000 years ago after the glaciers receded and formed the Great Lakes. From the surveyor's notes, we know that the Ottawa and Shawnee Indian tribes inhabited this land of deciduous swamp forest. The giant oaks, hickory, elm, ash, and many other large tree species created a dense canopy, which blocked sunlight from reaching the forest floor. The dense forest and mucky conditions made settlement of the area extremely difficult as Paulding County, in its entirety, laid beneath

the swamp. The landscape required drastic alterations before settlers were able to make Paulding County into the flat, agriculturally rich region that it is today.

In 1820, this area was named Paulding County in honor of John Paulding, an American hero during the American Revolution who aided in the capture of Major John Andre, a British spy who was the co-conspirator of Benedict Arnold.

The celebration of the 200th Anniversary of Paulding County reminds our community of the determination and pioneering attitude upon which counties throughout Ohio and our country were founded. Congratulations to Paulding County on this significant milestone.

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RECOGNIZING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAKU POGROMS

**HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 12, 2020*

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Madam Speaker, I rise in recognition of the 30th anniversary of the Baku Pogroms against Christian Armenians that took place from 1988 to 1990. In February 1988, the Armenian population in Soviet-controlled Azerbaijan became the victim of racially motivated, violent pogroms that started after peaceful protests took place against Moscow's arbitrary separation of Armenia and decades of repression and discrimination. The violence began with the Sumgait pogroms in February of 1988, and continued in Kirovabad (November 1988), and Baku (January 1990). Following this, the Armenian community suffered through a failed war of aggression by Baku to subjugate the people of Artsakh.

During this time, hundreds of Armenian civilians were killed, raped, beaten, maimed, and expelled from their homes for no reason other than their ethnicity. These hateful acts were fueled by anti-Armenian rhetoric from Azerbaijani officials and citizens. These pogroms were part of a systemic effort to ethnically cleanse Azerbaijan of Armenians and to send a message to Armenians to stop challenging Soviet Azerbaijani authorities.

For over 30 years, Azerbaijan has attempted to cover up these crimes against humanity and has propped up the perpetrators of the Baku and Sumgait Pogroms as national heroes. It is critical that the United States government recognize and denounce this ethnically motivated violence and attacks on innocent children, women, and men in Armenian communities.

We must all be aware of the history of violence targeting the Armenian people. I am grateful that the State of Illinois emphasizes Armenian genocide education and I will work with my colleagues to promote legislation to help facilitate more states doing the same. We must ensure that the victims of the Sumgait and Baku pogroms are never forgotten and that such hateful acts of violence never happen again. We must remain committed to achieving a lasting peace in the Caucasus, and ensure that the people of Artsakh are able to live free from Azerbaijani abuse and aggression.