

the Magnet Schools Assistance Program. I am committed to continuing to fight for strong supports and funding for public schools and programs with a track record of success, so that every school in my district and around the country has resources needed to mirror the accomplishments achieved at Thomas Edison Middle School.

Every school in America has the potential to be a school of distinction—we just need to prioritize education.

Again, I congratulate the Thomas Edison Middle School community for this award and honor.

#### BAKU POGROMS

#### HON. ANDY LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mr. LEVIN of Michigan. Madam Speaker, I rise, as the representative of a large and vibrant community of Armenian-Americans in southeast Michigan, in remembrance of the Baku pogroms.

During these tragic events 30 years ago, Armenians faced unthinkable horrors. Press reports describe Armenians tossed out of their homes, their possessions thrown into bonfires. Others were killed by mobs.

As we condemn this violence and remember those who were lost, we must also look forward and reaffirm our commitment to the Armenian people.

Last year, I was proud to be an original cosponsor of and to cast my vote for the resolution that finally recognized the Armenian Genocide. Our vote affirms that there is no question about what happened to the Armenian people, and that we will never forget it.

I was also proud to support funding for aid to Artsakh, including support for critical demining projects. I am committed to continuing that support and working to secure the safety and wellbeing of the Armenian people.

I stand with the Armenian-American community of Michigan's 9th District and across the nation, as they honor those lost during the Baku pogroms. Armenian-Americans have champions and friends in the U.S. House of Representatives.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

#### HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Ms. BONAMICI. Madam Speaker, I was unable to be on the House floor on February 26, 2020, because my flight from Oregon was canceled. If I had been present, I would have voted in favor of H.R. 35, the Emmett Till Antilynching Act.

I am a cosponsor of H.R. 35, legislation to make lynching a federal hate crime. This bill is named in memory of Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old African American child from Chicago who was brutally tortured and murdered in 1955 by two white men during a trip to visit family in Mississippi. An all-white jury deliberated for less than an hour before finding the men not guilty of Till's murder. Emmett is one

of thousands of African American children, men, and women who have been lynched in this country in the past four centuries. Our country's historical acceptance of lynching is appalling, and by passing this bill Congress took an important step in recognizing lynching for what it is—a hate crime. For hundreds of years people have escaped convictions and justice has been denied. This legislation cannot and will not undo those unspeakable crimes, but it is an important step in reckoning with our nation's history. I am grateful for Rep. RUSH's leadership in advancing this bill, and I urge the Senate to quickly pass the bill so it can become law.

#### COMMEMORATING THE VICTIMS OF THE SUMGAI AND BAKU POGROMS

#### HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, I rise to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of the pogrom against the Armenian residents of the town of Sumgait, Azerbaijan. On February 27, 1988, and for three days following, Azerbaijani mobs assaulted and killed Armenians. The violence left hundreds of Armenian civilians dead and injured, women and girls were raped, and some victims were burned alive. Thousands were forced to flee their homes, leaving behind their belongings.

Two years later, it is estimated that only 40,000 of the 250,000 Armenian residents of Baku remained in Azerbaijan. On January 13, 1990, organized Azerbaijani mobs turned on those remaining, many of them elderly or disabled, and killed hundreds and injured many more.

The pogroms came as a direct result of years of vicious, racist anti-Armenian propaganda by Azerbaijani authorities, dehumanizing the Armenian residents of Azerbaijan and laying the groundwork for mass violence. Azerbaijani authorities made little effort to punish those responsible, instead attempting to cover up the atrocities and denying the government role in instigating the attacks.

The pogroms accomplished their purpose in displacing the entire Armenian community from their homes in Azerbaijan, but in the decades since, Azerbaijani authorities have continued to fan the flames of ethnic hatred, using it as a tool to distract their populace from the corrupt and repressive regime in Baku. The anniversary of Sumgait is a reminder of the consequences when aggression and hatred grow unchecked.

Madam Speaker, in less than two months we will mark the 105th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, an event the Turkish government, Azerbaijan's closest ally, goes to great lengths to deny. We must not let such crimes against humanity go unrecognized, whether they occurred yesterday or 30 years ago or 100 years ago. Today, let us pause to remember the victims of the atrocities of Sumgait and Baku pogroms. It is our moral obligation to condemn crimes of hatred and to remember the victims, in hope that history will not be repeated.

#### INTRODUCTION OF A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO COLLECT OVERPAYMENT OF SPECIALLY ADAPTED HOUSING ASSISTANCE

#### HON. J. LUIS CORREA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mr. CORREA. Madam Speaker, the Department of Veterans Affairs' Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) program offers grants to assist veterans with service-connected disabilities with the purchase, construction, or modification of their homes to meet their unique needs.

The SAH program provides for an increased quality of life by allowing veterans to live independently in their homes. Unfortunately, there have been cases where veterans have been unsatisfied with the quality of work provided. Currently, VA does not have the explicit authority to recover SAH funds even if it determines there has been standard work.

To address this situation, my bill authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs to determine whether SAH overpayments have occurred as a result of a breach of contract and to recover such funds in the same manner as any other debt due to the United States. To prevent any financial burden for veterans and their families who receive an overpayment through no fault of their own, the bill requires VA to waive the overpayment.

My legislation will allow for more accountability and discourage individuals from breaching SAH contract.

#### HONORING BISHOP WILLIAM GEORGE FIELDS

#### HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 28, 2020*

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to honor a leader in our community whom we recently lost, Bishop William George Fields of Refugee Temple Annex in the Bronx.

Bishop Fields was a native New Yorker, born on June 16, 1932 in Harlem Hospital. He attended New York University and later received a Doctor of Divinity Degree from the Universal Bible Institute. In 1959 Bishop Fields married Mother Bertha Lee Fields, and from their union they were blessed with 3 children, Bishop William Michael, Bertram Brett, and E. Beth Chism. They also had 4 wonderful grandchildren, Michael Aaron, Shekinah, Amon and Bethany, and 2 beautiful great-grandchildren, Zion and Katie.

Bishop Fields was first ordained and appointed Pastor of Refugee Temple Annex in 1961. In 1975, he was consecrated Bishop. Bishop Fields also held several other positions in ministry, including serving as chairman and member of many convention committees, instructor at the Church of Christ Bible Institute, and treasurer of the Board of Bishops. He also served faithfully for many years on the 47th Precinct Clergy Coalition in the Bronx.

A dedicated, kind, and mild tempered leader, Bishop Fields served as pastor of Refuge