

This savage cruelty against innocent women, children and the elderly is unfathomable in and of itself but the senseless brutality did not stop with Khojaly. Khojaly was simply the first. In fact, the level of brutality and the unprecedented atrocities committed at Khojaly set a pattern of destruction and ethnic cleansing that Armenian troops would adhere to for the remainder of the war. On November 29, 1993, Newsweek quoted a senior US Government official as saying "What we see now is a systematic destruction of every village in their (the Armenians) way. It's vandalism."

This year, as they have every year since the massacre, the leaders of Azerbaijan's Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities issue appeals on the eve of commemoration of the massacre of Khojaly urging the international community to condemn the February 26, 1992 bloodshed, facilitate liberation of the occupied territories and repatriation of the displaced communities.

And every year, those residents of Khojaly, who survived the massacre—many still scattered among one million refugees and displaced persons in camps around Azerbaijan—appeal with pain and hope to the international community to hold Armenia responsible for this crime.

I am pleased to say that on January 25, 2005 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe overwhelmingly adopted a resolution highlighting that "considerable parts of Azerbaijan's territory are still occupied by the Armenian forces and separatist forces are still in control of the Nagorno-Karabakh region." It also expressed concern that the military action between 1988 and 1994 and the widespread ethnic hostilities which preceded it, "led to large-scale ethnic expulsion and the creation of mono-ethnic areas which resemble the terrible concept of ethnic cleansing."

Mr. Speaker, this is not the ringing condemnation that the survivors of Khojaly deserve but it is an important first step by an international community that has too long been silent on this issue. Congress should take the next step and I hope my colleagues will join me in standing with Azerbaijanis as they commemorate the tragedy of Khojaly. The world should know and remember.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "VIDEO DESCRIPTION RESTORATION ACT OF 2005"

HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the "Video Description Restoration Act of 2005." Mr. Speaker, we have a long history in telecommunications policy of trying to ensure that the benefits of technology reach all segments of American society. Our policies, enacted by Congress and implemented by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), has sought to further the three principal goals of telecommunications policy, namely, universal service, diversity, and localism—even as such policy objectives are buffeted by rapid technological change and competition.

For instance, in the late 1980s, the Telecommunications Subcommittee enacted legislation to include a decoder chip in all tele-

visions to ensure that the deaf and hard-of-hearing community had affordable access to closed captioning. While the industry opposed such efforts as being too costly, with exaggerated claims of how much the price of televisions would rise as a result of this mandate, the technology cost was minimal and now turns out to be about a dollar a set. The FCC's video description rules were designed to similarly serve a community, in this case the blind community, in a modest effort to ensure that television was available to that community. Video description is the insertion of narration about the visual setting and background when that information is not already included in the audio portion of the program. Because television is a mainstay for information, news, and family-oriented viewing in the home, it is important that steps are taken, in furtherance of longstanding universal service goals, to reach the blind community.

This bill would restore the video programming rules. Recently the DC Circuit Court of Appeals invalidated the rules, alleging that the Commission did not have sufficient authority to promulgate such rules. Passage of this legislation would remove any ambiguity. I believe Congress ought to give the Commission clear guidance that such rules should be reinstated in a way that no court could question the intent of Congress that the Commission should have such authority. Moreover, by approving such legislation, Congress can also establish that such video description rules do not regulate content in violation of any Constitutional protections. Broadcasters are free to air whatever content they wish over the course of a week. The video description rules simply require that a modest portion of such speech be made available to all listeners, including those who cannot see. The regulations would not stipulate which speech is acceptable, favored, or otherwise and broadcasters can choose which speech they wish to make available to the blind community. In fact, rather than infringing upon speech, the rules celebrate it, essentially saying that such speech is so important, so valued, that more Americans deserve to be able to hear it over their public airwaves, as broadcast by public licensees who are required by law to serve the public interest.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the House will move legislation this year to re-instate these important video description rules and look forward to working with all of my colleagues on this issue in the weeks and months ahead.

HONORING FIDEL GONZALEZ

HON. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate Mr. Fidel Gonzalez.

Fidel Gonzalez practiced law in Cuba and defended many dissidents of the Fidel Castro regime.

Among his various activities in the United States, he has worked as a social worker in the city of New York's Social Welfare Program.

He studied nights and weekends at Fordham University in New York, where he received a Master's Degree in Social Work and graduated with a high grade point average.

When he retired as a social worker, he began working with a well-known law firm in Union City.

In addition, Fidel Gonzalez was an outstanding leader of the Cuban Attorneys Delegation in New York and New Jersey.

He has been a member for many years of the Pan-American Culture Circle, where he has participated in their conferences as coordinator of the historic and literature sessions.

RECOGNIZING THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE RECOVERY AND ACCOUNTING FOR AMERICANS WHO ARE PRISONERS OF WAR OR MISSING

SPEECH OF

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 16, 2005

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.J. Res. 18. This bill recognizes the historic commitment of the United States to the recovery of and full accounting for Americans who are prisoners of war or in a missing status.

I would like to personally thank Mr. FRANKS and Mr. HUNTER for bringing this important Resolution to the floor and I am pleased that the House is taking time out to remember the bravery of the soldiers who participated in the rescue of American and Filipino military prisoners of war.

As Chairman of the Philippines Friendship Caucus, I am pleased that this resolution not only honors the commitment of United States Army units but also recognizes the courage of the Filipino guerrillas.

On April 9, 1942, over 75,000 American and Filipino soldiers became prisoners of war during the surrender on the Bataan Peninsula. The soldiers were forced to march without food or water on the infamous 65-mile trek, known as the Bataan Death March. It is believed that 17,000 captives did not survive the march or the ensuing years as prisoners of war. Many historians call the Bataan Death March the worst military atrocity ever suffered by American soldiers in the history of the United States.

General MacArthur committed forces under his command to make every effort to liberate prisoner of war camps and internment camps. United States Army units and Filipino guerrilla forces successfully conducted rescue missions that liberated innocent civilians, prisoners of war and Filipino citizens. General MacArthur's efforts are an example of the United States' commitment to the recovery and full accounting of our prisoners of war.

I join my colleagues in recognizing this historic commitment and I urge my colleagues to support this Resolution.

BLACK HISTORY TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH C. THOMAS

HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, throughout the month of February, I would

like to recognize outstanding African Americans of the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi, and their contribution to Black History. The 23 counties of the 2nd District are well represented from both a local and national perspective.

Americans have recognized black history annually since 1926, first as “Negro History Week” and later as “Black History Month.” In fact, black history had barely begun to be studied—or even documented—when the tradition originated. Although blacks have been in America as far back as colonial times, it was not until the 20th century that they gained a presence in our history books.

Though scarcely documented in history books, if at all, the crucial role African Americans have played in the development of our Nation must not be overlooked.

I would like to recognize Senator Joseph C. Thomas of Yazoo County. Senator Thomas is a graduate of Jackson State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration. He is also a graduate of the Mississippi School of Banking at the University of Mississippi. He is retired as Vice President from AmSouth National Bank after 30 years of service. He has served as the National Treasurer and Executive Vice President of the Friends Amistad, a national organization in support of the Amistad Research Center in New Orleans, LA.

Senator Thomas currently serves as board member and chairman of the management committee of the Yazoo County Fair and Civic League, Inc. He served as Chairman of the Policy Council of the American Public Power Association (APPA), which represents about 2,000 not-for-profits, community-owned electric utilities. He is the past president of the Yazoo City Municipal School Board and has been a member of the Mississippi Real Estate Appraisal Board. He was selected by the Mississippi Economic Council as one of the outstanding young men under 35 in 1977. Senator Thomas received the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education Award (NAFEO) in 1997. Senator Thomas received the American Public Power Association’s Spence Vanderlin Public Official Award in 1997 in Toronto Canada.

Senator Thomas loves history and has served as Chairman of the Oakes African American Cultural Center since it started in 1992. Senator Thomas is considered to be a noted historian on the subject of African-American history in Mississippi. In 2003, he won the position of Senator of District 21 for the State of Mississippi. He is serving on the Finance, Insurance, Banking Economic Development & Tourism, Education and Judiciary B Committees. Senator Thomas is married to the former Elizabeth Wilburn of Benton, Mississippi and they are the proud parents of three children, Joseph Jr., Kirk and Whitney.

I take great pride in recognizing and paying tribute to this outstanding African American of the 2nd Congressional District of Mississippi who deserves mention, not only in the month of February but year round.

REAL ID ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 10, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 418) to establish and rapidly implement regulations for State driver’s license and identification document security standards, to prevent terrorists from abusing the asylum laws of the United States, to unify terrorism-related grounds for inadmissibility and removal, and to ensure expeditious construction of the San Diego border fence.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 418, the REAL ID Act of 2005.

As a member of the 9/11 Commission Caucus, I strongly supported passage on December 7, 2004, of S. 2845, the National Intelligence Reform Act of 2004. That legislation took some much-needed and long-overdue steps toward strengthening the system of intelligence sharing and analysis in the United States. The bill implemented the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Report, a comprehensive collection of analyses and suggestions for improving the Nation’s intelligence system, in order that we might never experience another 9/11.

H.R. 418, if enacted, would repeal some provisions of the National Intelligence Reform Act of 2004. It would rob States of the ability to issue driver’s licenses and identification cards as they see fit, and further subjects the States to unfunded mandates to conform their driver’s licenses and identification cards to federal standards.

Police forces around the Nation are notably opposed to H.R. 418. They have grave security concerns surrounding the driver’s license provisions of this legislation; the job of law enforcement is made easier when the state Department of Motor Vehicles database contains information on undocumented immigrants. As a former district attorney, I place a high priority on assisting law enforcement however possible.

The asylum provisions included in this legislation are unnecessary, and will not enhance our national security. The provisions needlessly restrict the standards by which motives for persecution would qualify for asylum. I believe such a move could potentially exacerbate and multiply human rights abuses around the world by making it more difficult for victims of such abuses to seek refuge in the United States.

Opposition to H.R. 418 includes a vast array of organizations, from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to the American Conservative Union to the National Council of State Legislatures.

I believe strongly in protecting our great Nation from whatever threats exist to it. I do not believe, however, that H.R. 418 is a step in the direction of improving national security.

HONORING THE RETIREMENT OF
MCKING ALANIS**HON. RANDY “DUKE” CUNNINGHAM**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 17, 2005

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the dedicated service of McKing Alanis. A native of the Philippines, Mr. Alanis rose through adversity to humbly serve in the United States Navy for 29 years and six months, and has devoted the past 14 years to my staff.

McKing rose from a raw recruit in the Navy, to the rank of Senior Chief with a lithographers rating. This was particularly difficult because at the time Filipinos were only allowed to serve in the Navy as stewards or in the kitchen. Mac was the outstanding recruit when he graduated from Navy boot camp. He attended the Army Engineer School, Topography-Lithography-Graphics at Ft. Belvoir in Virginia and graduated 2nd in his class of 47. During his tenure in the Navy, McKing was champion of equal rights and equal opportunities. McKing has received numerous awards for his service in the Navy, including 21 letters of commendation.

Prior to joining the Navy, Mac was a disk jockey and radio personality in Naga City, Philippines. In 1965, he used the talent he developed in the Philippines to become a newscaster in his Navy off-time at AFRTS-TV in Kodiak, Alaska.

McKing’s involvement with the Filipino community in San Diego includes service as the President of the Bicol Club of San Diego County in 1979 and Public Relations Officer for the Council of Filipino American Organizations of San Diego County. He served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Samahan Dance Company from 2000 to 2002, and during that period was also an advisor to the Irigueños of Southern California. Mac is the founder of the Iriga Guys Jesters, a philanthropic organization that raises funds for the poor in Iriga City. In 1997, Mac was called to Washington, D.C. to be recognized by Fil-Am Image Magazine as one of the 20 outstanding Filipinos in the United States and Canada.

For the past 14 years McKing has served as both Community and Military Liaison in the 50th Congressional District of California. One of the original members of my staff, McKing has proved vital in services helping constituents with the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Immigration and Naturalization. McKing estimates that during his 14 years with the district office, he has helped my constituents resolve more than 4,000 cases.

Mac has dedicated his life to what he calls the 3T concept. “Time we cannot keep, talent is not permanent either, and treasure—please share it.” He firmly believes that, “the only things we can really keep are those we give away.”

Mr. Alanis is married to the lovely Susie Gonzaga Salcedo. They have three children, and are the proud grandparents of three grandsons. He has been a strong advocate of family values, equality, and has worked relentlessly to help the disadvantaged. He has been a valuable member of my team and will be missed greatly.