

that survived the carnage fled their homes and businesses, leaving behind everything they had in their desperation.

The pogroms were not an accident. They were the culmination of years of vicious anti-Armenian propaganda, spread by the Azerbaijani authorities. The Azerbaijani authorities made little effort to punish those responsible, instead attempting to cover up the atrocities in Sumgait to this day, as well as denying the role of senior government officials in instigating the violence. Unsurprisingly, it was not the end of the violence, and was followed by additional attacks, including the 1990 pogrom in Baku.

The Sumgait massacre and the subsequent attacks on ethnic Armenians, resulted in the virtual disappearance of a once thriving population of 450,000 Armenians living in Azerbaijan, and culminating in the war launched against the people of Nagorno Karabakh. That war resulted in thousands dead on both sides and created over one million refugees in both Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Time has not healed the wounds of those murdered in the pogroms in Sumgait, Kirovabad, and Baku. To the contrary, hatred of Armenians is celebrated in Azerbaijan, a situation most vividly exemplified by the case of Ramil Safarov, an Azerbaijani army captain who savagely murdered an Armenian army lieutenant, Guren Margaryan with an axe while he slept. The two were participating in a NATO Partnership for Peace exercise at the time in Hungary. In 2012, Safarov was sent home to Azerbaijan, purportedly to serve out the remainder of his sentence. Instead, he was pardoned, promoted, and paraded through the streets of Baku as a returning hero.

The assault on ethnic Armenian civilians in Sumgait helped touch off what would become a direct conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh. And today, Azerbaijan's dangerous behavior on the Line of Contact threatens peace and stability in the region. Artillery and sniper fire across the Line of Contact has become a fact of daily life for civilians in the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, causing numerous casualties. I have urged the OSCE Minsk Group to deescalate the situation by ending a policy that equates unprovoked attacks by the Azerbaijan with the defensive responses of Karabakh and Armenian troops, and by pressuring Azerbaijan to accept the installation of technological monitoring devices along the border. The anniversary of Sumgait is a reminder of the consequences when aggression and hatred is allowed to grow unchecked.

Mr. Speaker, this April we will mark the 101st 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 28 years ago or 100 years ago. Today, let us pause to remember the victims of the atrocities of the Sumgait pogroms. Mr. Speaker, it is our moral obligation to condemn crimes of hatred and to remember the victims, in hope that history will not be repeated.

TRIBUTE TO AL MANN

### HON. DANA ROHRBACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 26, 2016*

Mr. ROHRBACHER. Mr. Speaker, America lost one of her greatest sons this week. Al Mann, physicist, entrepreneur, executive, and philanthropist, spent his more than nine decades on this earth working mostly to help others.

At age seventeen, when America was embroiled in the Second World War, Al Mann volunteered for the Army Air Corps, later becoming a pioneer in guidance systems for missiles and solar power for satellites. His technological advances helped us win that war, saving countless lives throughout.

Afterward, he resisted pleas to continue his extraordinary work in military hardware, following his heart and turning his mind toward the health of humanity. Al's ingenuity, insight, and resourcefulness focused on projects to restore sight to the blind, to bring hearing to the deaf, and return mobility to the disabled.

He did all this while developing a system to deliver insulin to diabetics without needles and creating pacemakers that those afflicted with heart disease would not need to replace frequently, thus sparing them great expense and disruption of their lives.

It has been my honor and privilege to know Al Mann for many years. As he benefited humankind he in turn benefited from a patent system that has been the envy of the world; indeed, he warned against politicians who would tamper with it to advantage powerful business interests against individual innovators like him.

Clearly, he wanted other Americans to succeed by their good works just as he had done.

Because he was one of the most inspirational men I have ever known, I made a point of introducing my children to him so that they, too, might live by his example.

If our country is to know more inspiring individuals like Al Mann, it is imperative that we reclaim and protect the conditions that made his exemplary creativity possible.

IN HONOR OF RAY LAUGHTER

### HON. KEVIN BRADY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 26, 2016*

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as my friend, Ray Laughter, prepares to retire as Vice Chancellor of External Affairs for the Lone Star College system, he is leaving big shoes for his successor to fill. How do you replace a driving force for education and economic development in our district such as Ray?

Since 2002, Ray has led the Lone Star College Foundation, the Community Leadership Institute, the Small Business Development Center, as well as the college's public information and publications, governmental relations, and regional economic development departments. He was also the driving force in the passage of bond issues that ensures the college system is meeting the needs of our growing region.

Prior to becoming vice chancellor, Ray served the college system as executive director of the Center for Business and Economic Development and the director of the Small Business Development Center. If you ever wondered why Ray sets such sky-high goals and achieves them, just remember he was once chief administrative officer for an international helicopter manufacturer.

Ray's community and civic commitments don't stop with his work at Lone Star. He shared his invaluable experience by serving on numerous national, state and local boards, and various committees focused on economic development and educational needs.

Development Councils, Partnerships, Chambers, and boards in The Woodlands and across the state and the south rely on Ray to bring together education and economic development projects in innovative and thoughtful ways.

As a military officer's son who settled in Texas, Ray graduated from the University of Houston, where he also earned his MBA. Ever since then, his days and many nights have been filled helping our community learn, grow and prosper.

While his wife and kids are hoping to see more of him now, Ray has already committed to serving as chairman of the Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce board next year. My friend Ray is a servant leader who has set a high example for others to follow.

Many thousands of students and families have lifetimes of opportunities ahead because of Ray's hard work. I can't imagine the Lone Star College System without him, but then I know that he is always just a phone call or email away whenever our community needs him.

Thank you Ray Laughter, for showing us all that the sky is the limit for a true leader.

SUPPORT FOR H. RES. 551

### HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, February 26, 2016*

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, Israel is the United States' most important ally in the Middle East. But the President made a bad nuclear deal with Iran that brought a whole host of new security threats to Israel. H. Res. 551 is about bringing the importance of the U.S.-Israel relationship back into focus.

While security is the cornerstone of our relationship, many do not realize that we have very strong economic ties to Israel. Bilateral trade and investment has strengthened our partnership in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

I look forward to exploring new agreements with Israel in energy, medicine, technology, and security. Fostering deeper economic dialogue will more firmly cement the bond between the U.S. and Israel.

I support H. Res. 551 because it recognizes the importance of a strong U.S.-Israel alliance. Together with our Israeli allies we can initiate new areas of cooperation. It's time this Administration shows Israel how much the U.S. values our partnership.

And that's just the way it is.