

IN RECOGNITION OF THE
VESTAVIA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL
WE THE PEOPLE TEAM

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 2013

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to commend the We the People program for its continuing commitment to promoting civic knowledge and responsibility among students in our elementary schools and high schools. As a source of special pride, I would like to bring the House's attention to the representatives of the State of Alabama in this year's 26th annual national competition, the Vestavia Hills High School academic team from the Sixth District.

We the People helps to shape our next generation of leaders by instilling the principles of good citizenship and active participation in the democratic process. More than one million students from every state take part in this program each year. Students learn to be enlightened citizens by studying the enduring ideas of America's founders and the principles of constitutional government.

After competing locally in a hearing-styled, question and answer competition based on the U.S. Constitution, the top performing teams are invited to Washington to participate in the national finals on Capitol Hill. It is here that they gain firsthand knowledge of Article I, Section 1 of our Constitution—the legislative branch—by competing in a format that simulates the congressional hearing process. As Chairman Emeritus, I am pleased to announce that the Financial Services Committee hearing room will be used in this year's competition.

It takes hard work and commitment to qualify for the We the People national finals. At this time, I would like to extend recognition to the students from Vestavia Hills High School who are representing the State of Alabama. With teachers Mrs. Amy Maddox and Mrs. Jane Schaefer, I congratulate: Christian Sitarz, Carrie Clower, Reagan Cline, Patrick Sipe, Rachel Caskey, Aashka Patel, Anna Dennis, Enrico Camata, Daniel Moran, Amy Li, Sisi Zheng, Peter Adamo, Farhan Khan, Luis Jimenez, Hopson Nance, Hannah Skjellum, Botong Ma, Joseph Stahl, Molly Rhodes, Brian Stahl, Shannon Bewley, Marisa Pierluisi, and Kaustubh Udipi.

The knowledge and commitment demonstrated by all of the students who take part in We the People should give us all great confidence in the future of our precious American democracy.

HONORING THE CENTENNIAL OF
THE BOROUGH OF ALBURTIS

HON. CHARLES W. DENT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 2013

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, to honor the people of the Borough of Alburtis, both past and present as they prepare to celebrate the Borough's Centennial.

Mr. Speaker, the Borough of Alburtis is located in Lehigh County. It was formally incorporated on May 9, 1913 out of the neighboring town of Alburtis and the village of Lockridge.

While it was incorporated in 1913, the Borough's history dates back into the 1850's. As with so many communities across the United States, development was sparked by the arrival of the railroads. These included the Philadelphia and Reading, the Catasauqua and Fogelsville and the East Pennsylvania railroads. In fact the Borough takes its name from Edward K. Alburts, a civil engineer and Board Director of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad.

The railroads were drawn by the presence of iron ore in the area. The village of Lockridge grew as a result of the presence of the Lockridge Iron Company operating an iron furnace, Lockridge Furnace, in the area. Housing and a church sprang up around the furnace.

In a testament to the spirit, skill and entrepreneurial spirit of the people who lived in the area, other industries soon developed including a silk mill, shirt factories, and a shoe factory in the late 1800s.

Alburtis had a population of 700 people in 1914; on the advent of its Centennial, 2,300 people now call the one square mile Alburtis Borough their home.

Eventually, in 1921, Lockridge Furnace ceased operation. Lehigh County bought the property in 1970 and now the former industrial site serves the community as the picturesque Lockridge Park and Museum which opened its doors in 1976, the year of America's Bicentennial.

The Furnace serves the people of Alburtis as a wonderful recreational site and a great draw for those interested in the history of Lehigh County. Indeed, the residents' commitment to their heritage is shown by their outstanding historical preservation efforts on display in Alburtis' downtown.

Mr. Speaker, it is my great honor to represent the people of Alburtis in the Congress of the United States at the time of their Centennial celebration and, with the blessings of Divine Providence; it is my great hope that one hundred years from now another Representative of the United States Congress stands in this Chamber to offer their words of praise in support of the intrepid people of Alburtis on the occasion of its Bicentennial.

RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL DAY
OF REASON

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 2013

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Thursday, May 2, 2013 as the National Day of Reason.

The National Day of Reason celebrates the application of reason and the positive impact it has had on humanity. It is also an opportunity to reaffirm the Constitutional separation of religion and government.

I have the privilege of representing Silicon Valley, where every day scientists and engineers employ the scientific method and apply reason to develop innovative technologies that help advance humanity. The application of reason, more than any other means, has proven to offer hope for human survival upon Earth, improving conditions within the universe, and cultivating intelligent, moral and

ethical interactions among people and their environments.

Our Founding Fathers based the Constitution of the United States, the basic document governing the affairs of people within the United States, upon philosophical principles that have their origins in the historical Age of Reason. It is important that on the National Day of Reason, we take time to remember and celebrate this history, including the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of religion and freedom from the imposition of religion by the state. Our nation's founders knew that the best way to protect religious freedom was to keep the government separate from religion.

The National Day of Reason is also a time to continue the effort our Founding Fathers began to form a more perfect union. Every year, events such as food drives and blood drives are held on this day in which Americans help their fellow citizens and our nation as a whole. These community service events are just some of the many ways Americans will be working to help those in need on the Day of Reason and throughout the year.

I encourage all citizens, residents and visitors to join in observing this day and focusing upon the employment of reason, critical thought, the scientific method, and free inquiry to the resolution of human problems and for the welfare of human kind.

THE 98TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 2013

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, yesterday marked the ninety-eighth anniversary of the onset of the Armenian Genocide, one of the ugliest chapters in the bloodiest century in recorded human history. Over the course of the Genocide, 1.5 million innocent Armenians were slaughtered; those Ottoman Armenians that survived were the tiny and miraculous remnant of a forced march conducted by the Ottomans under the most savage of conditions.

Those murders were not only a tragedy for the Armenian people, who bear its scars to this day. The barbarity inflicted on the Armenians also opened the floodgates on a century of genocide and ethnic-cleansing. We've all seen Hitler's sneering statement "Who after all speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" That statement makes clear the link between indifference to the Armenians and the murder of six million Jews. And it expresses the mindset of so many thuggish leaders after Hitler, leaders convinced that their nationalist aims could easily be achieved through a policy of murder that carried no punishment. The victims of this mindset have spanned the globe, as we know too well.

"Who after all speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" Mr. Speaker, I want to affirm today that we do remember, and we remember with reverence. We recall with sorrow the massive loss of life as the result of a deliberate policy of murder. We also know that we owe it to humanity and history to remember, if only to help erect a deterrent against future such tragedies. And let me add that Turkey owes it to the Armenians to acknowledge and come to terms with what its forbears perpetrated—and, at a minimum, to apologize.

Turkey also owes that to itself, too, for Turkish society will be stronger for having ended the charade of denying what the whole world knows to be true.

Mr. Speaker, to the Armenian people, including the very few remaining survivors, I want to express my great sorrow and deepest condolences. And I say to them, as we say regarding the Holocaust, "Never again."

21ST ANNUAL NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS NATIONAL FOOD DRIVE

HON. JIM JORDAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 25, 2013

Mr. JORDAN. Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I show my support for the 21st Annual National Association of Letter Carriers National Food Drive, which will take place on Saturday, May 11, 2013.

Every year, NALC members across the country work together to execute the largest one-day food drive in the United States. To participate, those who are able to make a donation need only place a box of non-perishable food items by their mailbox. On May 11, letter carriers will pick up the contributions along their route and pass them along to local food banks.

Donations to the NALC stay local and help feed needy Americans in our own communities.

I urge my colleagues to stand with me and support the 21st Annual NALC National Food Drive.

AWARDING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO ADDIE MAE COLLINS, DENISE McNAIR, CAROLE ROBERTSON, AND CYNTHIA WESLEY

SPEECH OF

HON. SHEILA JACKSON LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 24, 2013

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a sense of indignation, sadness, and deep and abiding pride in the memory of four little girls from Alabama who were callously murdered by the bomb of a homegrown terrorist.

Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robinson, Cynthia Wesley and Denise McNair did not get a chance to celebrate any more birthdays, run through the fields of Alabama, go to the prom, dance at a wedding, or simply grow up and enjoy life as Americans.

As was reflected in the prayer given last week in this Chamber by world-renowned soul and gospel singer Yolanda Adams we have been taught to embrace God's grace and mercy, and for those who will listen, to stand in the sunlight of joy as one looks toward the hopefulness of the future, while standing tall as a Black woman in the memory of my four little girls, your girls—these little girls were America's children, and bore the brunt of a very ugly side during a very nasty, ugly, vicious, cruel, and inexorably painful era in the history of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, on August 27, 1963, at the March on Washington, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered the speech that both challenged and inspired a nation. "I have a dream," he said, that "one day right there in Alabama, little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers."

Nineteen days later, on September 15, 1963, the nation learned that there was still a long path to travel before it realized Dr. King's dream. For on that day 50 years ago, the nation was shocked—and the City of Birmingham was rocked—by an explosion at the 16th Street Baptist Church that severely damaged the church, injured 22 people, and claimed the lives of four beautiful and innocent little girls: Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robinson, Cynthia Wesley and Denise McNair.

But the horror and heartbreak of that tragedy galvanized a nation to act. Less than two years later, the nation responded to one of the worst and cowardly acts of hatred with two great acts of justice that have changed America for the better and still stand today as monuments to what can be achieved when challenged to live up to the true meaning of its creed.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 are a part of the legacy of Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robinson, Cynthia Wesley and Denise McNair.

Today we celebrate their lives—lives cut down as they should have been learning to bake cakes, play hopscotch, and learn the violin, instead they were murdered in a place which should have been a safe haven, a sanctuary. The death of the four girls drew national attention to the fight for civil rights and is credited with creating a surge of momentum for the civil rights movement.

It is also important that we pass on the lessons learned through this deep tragedy so that we do not repeat it. Little girls and little boys around this great nation should hold hands and walk together regardless of race, color, religion, or creed.

This bill simply directs the Speaker of the House and the president pro tempore of the Senate to arrange for the posthumous award of a Congressional Gold Medal to commemorate the lives of Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robinson and Cynthia Wesley in recognition of the historical significance of the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church. But this bill is more than that. It is a reckoning.

This legislation, which I am proud to cosponsor and strongly support, is intended to complete some of the nation's most important unfinished business. And that is to address one of the most depraved acts of violence against school-aged girls belonging to a racial group which was vulnerable, politically powerless, and innocent, and against those persons who risked life and limb to help them secure the rights promised in the Declaration of Independence and made real in the Constitution.

The Congressional Gold Medal recognizing the 50th Anniversary of 16th Street Baptist Church bombing is long overdue. I thank my CBC colleague who hails from Alabama, Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL of Birmingham, who sponsored this legislation, and Senator RICHARD SHELBY of Alabama, who leads the Senate effort for this special recognition as America comes to terms with its rich and often painful history.

Mr. Speaker, in 1989 the Civil Rights Memorial was dedicated in Montgomery, Alabama,

the birthplace of the modern Civil Rights Movement. The Memorial honors the lives and memories of 40 civil rights martyrs who gave their lives in the struggle for justice and equality. But we know that many more people lost their lives to racial violence during that era. In honoring the four little girls of Birmingham today, let us resolve to remain steadfast in the quest to obtain justice for these other heroes.

Mr. Speaker, fifty years later we have made much progress from the dark days of Birmingham. In those days there simply was no justice for African Americans because the criminal justice system—from the police, to the prosecutors, to the juries, and to the judges—was perverted by racial bigotry.

Inspired by the sacrifice of four little girls in Birmingham, Americans of good will and of all races and creeds, worked to hasten the day when all would be treated equally before the law and every person would be judged by the content of their character.

It is, of course, fitting and proper that H.R. 360 bears the names of Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robinson, Cynthia Wesley and Denise McNair. Although forever linked together in history, we must not forget that each of them was an individual. Each had her own hopes and dreams for the future. Sadly, they were robbed of that future by the cowardly act of persons motivated by racial hatred. But in sacrificing their futures, Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robinson, Cynthia Wesley, and Denise McNair helped to transform America into a place where little girls and little boys today can know that their dreams can come true and their futures will be bright and that racial hatred is no longer an insuperable barrier to realizing the American Dream.

Mr. Speaker, nearly 50 years ago, on June 11, 1963, President John F. Kennedy addressed the nation from the Oval Office on the state of race relations and civil rights in America. In his historic speech to the nation President Kennedy said:

We are confronted primarily with a moral issue. It is as old as the scriptures and is as clear as the American Constitution. . . .

[T]his Nation, for all its hopes and all its boasts, will not be fully free until all its citizens are free.

H.R. 360 is intended to help bring justice to those whom justice has been delayed for more than two generations. In doing so, this legislation will help this Nation fulfill its hopes and justify its boast that in America all persons live in freedom.

And Mr. Speaker, let us also remember young Virgil Lamar Ware, a thirteen-year-old black boy who was killed by segregationists while riding on the handlebars of his brother's bicycle. His killers had just attended a segregationist rally held in the aftermath of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church bombing.

It is a sad but unfortunately not uncommon occurrence that it is innocent children who suffer when adults give in to hate. But as the scriptures teach us, unearned suffering is redemptive. And the blood of the innocents—Addie Mae Collins, Carole Robinson, Cynthia Wesley and Denise McNair—helped to redeem our country and make it better.

I urge all Members to join me in supporting this fitting tribute to their heroism and sacrifice by voting to pass H.R. 360.