

and loss that accompany disasters is substantially minimized.

It is imperative that citizens know what to do in the event of an emergency and be ready to either shelter in place or evacuate their homes.

People must be ready to care for their basic needs should they be displaced for a period of time.

As we move toward the 3-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina and the 7-year anniversary of 9/11, we must not lose sight of the lessons learned from these disasters.

While I recognize that the most effective emergency preparedness programs and messages are delivered locally and not from Washington, we must ensure that the Department of Homeland Security is working with State and local partners, providing them with the tools they need to get the message out.

Following the tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001, Federal, State and local government officials agreed that the formula for ensuring a more secure and safer homeland consists of preparedness, training, and citizen involvement in supporting first responders.

As a result, the Citizen Corps Program and Ready campaigns were created.

To date, with limited resources available, over 2,000 communities in all 56 States and territories have established Citizen Corps Councils to help inform and train citizens in emergency preparedness, and promote volunteerism.

However, I think these programs can be improved.

The legislation I am introducing today formally authorizes the Citizen Corps Program and provides it with the necessary funding to be effective.

It also authorizes key Citizen Corps components administered by the Department of Homeland Security—Fire Corps and CERT.

Fire Corps promotes the use of volunteers to assist fire and rescue departments in non-operational roles such as fire safety outreach, youth programs, and administrative support.

The Community Emergency Response Team, CERT, program concept was developed and implemented by the Los Angeles City Fire Department in 1985 and has since spread to over 1,000 communities nationwide.

Under the CERT Program citizens are training citizens in basic disaster response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations.

As our Nation continues to glean lessons from the catastrophic events of Hurricane Katrina, the Federal Government must ensure that preparedness efforts help our Nation's most vulnerable populations.

To that end, this legislation requires the Secretary to work closely with organizations representing the elderly, the disabled, the hearing and visually impaired, communities with language and income barriers, and children to promote preparedness.

This legislation will also create a pilot program to enhance citizen preparedness at primary and secondary schools, as well as on university or college campuses, by providing training, exercises, and public awareness campaigns.

Finally, my bill directs the Secretary to carry out a public affairs campaign utilizing diverse media outlets to get the word out to the public

to assist them in preparing for acts of terrorism and other emergencies.

Addressing the issue of citizen preparedness continues to be a major issue for our Nation.

In fact, the National Governors' Association 2007 State Homeland Security Directors Survey, which polled the 56 State and territorial homeland security advisors, cited citizen preparedness as one of the top 5 priorities for their States.

It is now time to stop paying lip service to the issue of citizen and community preparedness and to start acting.

In closing Madam Speaker, let me say that our citizens' lack of preparedness is often cited as an impediment to an effective emergency response. I believe this legislation will make strides to change that fact and I urge my colleagues to support it.

SBIR/STTR REAUTHORIZATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 23, 2008

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 5819) to amend the Small Business Act to improve the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program and the Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) program and for other purposes:

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 5819, the SBIR/STTR Reauthorization Act. Enactment of this bill will extend important programs that improve American competitiveness in the world, and I urge its adoption.

The State of Colorado houses a strong and vibrant collection of cutting-edge small businesses, and businesses in my own district employ SBIR awards to promote advanced research in aeronautic, biotechnology, and other important industries. This bill will ensure that small businesses and research firms will continue to have access to the capital that enables them to compete with large firms both at home and abroad. Ultimately, this bill is about increasing competition and ensuring that good ideas are not lost for a lack of resources.

This bill also modernizes the SBIR and STTR programs in order to better suit the needs of small businesses, ensuring that small businesses that receive funding from venture capital firms are allowed to receive SBIR grants. Though some suggest that this policy undermines the spirit of the program, the reality for many small businesses is that their most consistent sources of funding are from venture capital firms and the SBIR program. This bill proposes sensible limits on the participation of venture capital firms so that small businesses can continue to rely on these two important sources of funds.

As co-chair of the House Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education Caucus and a representative of a district with a major research institution, I support this legislation because it will help keep America more technologically and economically competitive. I commend the committees for their hard work on this legislation, and I look forward to its enactment.

COMMEMORATING THE 93RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 24, 2008

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 93rd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, in which 1.5 million Armenian men, women, and children were killed by Ottoman authorities during World War I.

On April 24, 1915, the Ottoman government began its genocidal plan by arresting and murdering over 250 Armenian intellectuals and political figures in Istanbul. In the interior of the Ottoman Empire, where the bulk of the Armenian population lived, the government then arrested and killed village leaders. Meanwhile, most able-bodied Armenian men, who had been conscripted into the Ottoman army, were separated into labor battalions and subsequently murdered. Next, in various provinces, gendarmes and the army massacred Armenian villagers outright, while in other provinces, the remaining Armenian population of women, children and the elderly were forcibly deported over the mountains and into the scorching deserts of Syria, without food and water. Many of the female deportees were raped and killed en route, while other deportees died of starvation and dehydration. By the end of 1915 the centuries-old Armenian civilization of eastern Anatolia no longer existed.

U.S. diplomats who were stationed in Anatolia at the time were some of the main eyewitnesses and chroniclers of that horrific period. U.S. Consul Leslie Davis, stationed in Harput in eastern Anatolia, wrote the following in a cable to U.S. Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, dated July 24, 1915: "It has been no secret that the plan was to destroy the Armenian race as a race, but the methods used have been more cold-blooded and barbarous, if not effective, than I had first supposed." He also wrote in this same cable: "I do not believe there has ever been a massacre in the history of the world so general and thorough as that which is now being perpetrated in this region or that a more fiendish, diabolical scheme has been conceived in the mind of man."

This cable, and many others of a similar nature, is housed in the U.S. National Archives only a few blocks from the U.S. Capitol and the White House. They provide unambiguous, documentary evidence of what occurred. Yet there are those who still refuse to properly characterize what happened to the Armenian people during World War I as genocide. Although the word "genocide" was not invented in 1915, what these diplomats described was indeed genocide of a people.

I am deeply disappointed that many of our current officials avoid characterizing what occurred as "genocide." This avoidance does a disservice to the memory of the victims and their descendants, and hurts our moral standing in the world. I hope that one day soon, this legislative body and the U.S. Administration will properly characterize what happened to the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire.

Many of the survivors of the Armenian genocide settled in the United States. Bearing painful physical and emotional scars, they