CONGRATULATING ST. GREGORY THE ILLUMINATOR CHURCH OF FOWLER

HON. GEORGE RADANOVICH
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate St. Gregory the Illuminator Church of Fowler, CA, upon its re-opening. St. Gregory the Illuminator is the fourth oldest Armenian Church in the United States.

St. Gregory first opened its doors in 1906 as the Armenian Apostolic Church. The services were held in the Episcopal Church of Fowler, and affiliated by Father Sahag Vartabed Nazaretian, pastor of the Holy Trinity Church in Fresno. During this time, the congregation of the St. Gregory Church consisted of 75 to 100 families.

In 1907, the First Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church was celebrated. Immediately following the Liturgy, the congregation elected a board of trustees, their objective being the selection of a suitable site for a church building. On April 15, 1909, the present church site in Fowler was selected and purchased.

Construction of the church building on February 3, 1910. On April 17, the church was consecrated in a ceremony in the presence of a large congregation. The St. Gregory Church became the fourth established Armenian Apostolic Church in America, under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America.

Over the years, the original church building has expanded, and a church hall and Sunday school classes have been added. In 1993 the church decided to expand further. The site has since been enhanced by a park, basketball and volleyball courts, a playground and a courtyard, all of which are frequently used and enjoyed by parishioners. Most recently, construction has taken place to expand the sanctuary and church offices; a library and conference room have also been added. During this time of construction, services have been held in Markarian Hall, and a drastic increase in the congregation has been observed, making the re-opening of the sanctuary highly anticipated.

UNITED CONFEDERATION OF TAINO PEOPLE DAY

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ
OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the Taino people and the importance of observing the United Confederation of Taino People Day.

The Taino people are the descendants of the first Native Peoples of the Americas to greet Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) in the year 1492, and have a distinctive spiritual and material relationship with the lands, territories, waters and coastal seas which they have traditionally been connected to, occupied and used from time immemorial.

The Taino people have the collective and individual right to identify themselves as indigenous, to be recognized as such, and to practice, revitalize, develop and transmit to coming generations the past, present and future manifestations of their distinct identity, ethnic, cultural and spiritual traditions, history, language, and customs.

The Taino people, beyond international and political borders, have taken positive steps for the recognition, promotion and protection of their collective and individual rights and freedoms, by organizing themselves for their spiritual, social, political, economic, and cultural enhancement.

The Taino people, being represented by indigenous organizations, such as Caney Quinto Mundo, Concejo General de Tainos Borincanos, Fundacion Social Luz Cosmica Taina, Presencia Taina, Taino Ancestral Legacy Keepers, Gboney Tribe, and Cecibajagu, have in solidarity chosen representatives themselves and established the United Confederation of Taino People.

The United Confederation of Taino People is celebrating its first historic anniversary, which coincides with, and recognizes the United Nations International decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, and the equinox that signals the beginning of the planting cycle that the Taino People have observed for thousands of years.

Mr. Speaker, March 27, 1999 is the United Confederation of Taino People Day. I encourage my colleagues and all of the people of the United States to observe that day with the respect and dignity it deserves and to learn more about the great contributions of this people to our country and civilization.

MY COMMITMENT TO FREE AND FAIR TRADE FOR AGRICULTURE

HON. BOB SCHAFFER
OF COLORADO
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Thursday, March 18, 1999

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, Colorado agriculture increasingly depends upon the export market to expand sales and increase revenues. The expanding world trade in agriculture has a significant impact on both the U.S. trade balance and on specific commodities and individual farmers.

No sector of the U.S. economy is subject to more international trade barriers than agriculture. The import quotas, high tariffs, government buying monopolies and import bans imposed by other nations, coupled with the overwhelming number of trade sanctions and embargoes imposed on other countries by our own government, cost the American agriculture industry billions of dollars each year in lost export opportunities.

These barriers continue to grow in spite of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Without question, they are devastating the ability for American agriculture to effectively compete, particularly at a