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A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Betty McCollum MN 4E".

Congresswoman Betty McCollum
Extension of Remarks
Minnesota Remembers the Victims of the Armenian Genocide
April 28th, 2015

Mr. Speaker, on April 24th I was honored to be invited to join members of the Armenian-American community from across Minnesota for a service of remembrance at St. Sahag Armenian Church in St. Paul. That evening we remembered the victims of the Armenian Genocide and it was my privilege to deliver the following remarks which I respectfully request to be included in the Congressional Record.

Today we join the people of Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora around the world in commemorating a historic reality, a historic truth, a historic crime. One hundred years ago a campaign of cruelty was waged against Ottoman Armenians that resulted in suffering and death of such a profound magnitude that it continues to be felt today.

The entire world – all nations and peoples – need to stand with Armenians everywhere in commemorating the Armenian Genocide, acknowledging the horror of its cruelty, and the recognizing the generations of pain it has caused. But this goal cannot be fully realized until truth triumphs over denial; until the historical horrors are acknowledged by the government of those responsible. We need to strengthen condemnations of the past and recognize the important relationship that the United States shares with Armenia today.

The Armenian people were exposed to torture, starvation, deportation, abduction, and massacre. In addition to mass killings, millions of Armenians were forced into deportation and were expelled from their historic homeland. The framework for the United Nations Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was, in part, based on this unbelievable crime. Many survivors of this genocide have passed away now, and we are running out of time as an international community to move toward peace and reconciliation in the region. We are running out of time for the victims and those who remember the tragedy to come together and heal.

A clear recognition of this atrocity would affirm that the Armenian Genocide is not an opinion, but a widely documented fact supported by a body of historical evidence. Forty three states including Minnesota have recognized, by legislation or proclamation, the Armenian Genocide. Fortunately the Ottoman Empire no longer exists. However, people living in the region, and especially the descendants of the Armenian victims, deserve to have an accurate

reflection of history acknowledged in order to move forward toward peace and reconciliation. As a Member of Congress, I want the United States to officially call the events of 100 years ago a genocide inflicted upon the ancestors of Armenian-Americans. Furthermore, our government should call on our NATO ally – Turkey – to acknowledge their historic responsibility.

On this 100th anniversary, my thoughts and prayers are with the families and ancestors of victims of this international crime against humanity. Let us remember and pray for the victims we never have met. Let us pray for those who survived and lived lives of courage. And, let us pray for the Armenian community in Minnesota, across the U.S. and all around the world who stand united in honoring your ancestors and in pursuing the truth with perseverance, honor, and dignity. As we reflect on this tragedy let us also reinforce our own resolve, as Americans, to prevent future genocides.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.