

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 314

Expressing the sense of Congress on the closure of the main entrance to
the Supreme Court.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 30, 2010

Ms. ESHOO (for herself, Mr. BACA, Mr. BECERRA, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CARDOZA, Mr. COSTELLO, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. FARR, Mr. FILNER, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GRAYSON, Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. ZOE LOFGREN of California, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. MARKEY of Massachusetts, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MCNERNEY, Mr. NADLER of New York, Mr. OBEY, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Ms. RICHARDSON, Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Ms. SLAUGHTER, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. WELCH, and Ms. WOOLSEY) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress on the closure of the main
entrance to the Supreme Court.

Whereas every day in the United States, Americans rise,
place their hands on their hearts, and recite a pledge to
this Nation that concludes with the assertion of “justice
for all”;

Whereas the courts of our Nation are where justice is nur-
tured, dispensed without fear or favor, with equality of
standing and stature;

Whereas in 1932, in laying the cornerstone of the building that would become the first and only permanent home for the Supreme Court of the United States, Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes told a Nation struggling through the depths of the Great Depression that one of its most treasured institutions remained vibrant and open, saying: “The Republic endures, and this is the symbol of its faith”;

Whereas on the west façade of the Supreme Court building, above the front doors of the Court, are engraved the words: “Equal Justice Under Law”, encapsulating the principle of justice for all;

Whereas beneath the west façade, the doors to the Supreme Court feature bronze sculptures depicting historic scenes in the evolution of the law, moments upon which this Nation’s traditions of justice and equality are founded;

Whereas it is a powerful symbol of the American commitment to the principle of “justice for all” that the front doors to the Supreme Court remain open for all to enter;

Whereas since the Supreme Court occupied its permanent home in 1935, millions of Americans have stepped through those open doors—to seek justice, to watch the Court work with openness, and, each in their own way, to pay tribute to a Nation not of men but of laws;

Whereas, on May 3, 2010, United States Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts announced unilaterally that the Supreme Court—for the first time in nearly 75 years—would be closing its western entrance to the public based on security concerns;

Whereas in the words of Justice Stephen Breyer, as joined by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg, “To many members of

the public, this Court’s main entrance and front steps are not only a means to, but also a metaphor for, access to the Court itself”;

Whereas no other Supreme Court in the world has closed its main entrance to the public, including those who have greater security concerns than the United States;

Whereas Congress provided the appropriation to build the current Supreme Court building and continues to provide appropriations for the Court, ensuring that justice is available to all; and

Whereas Congress has regulated by statute the activities that can occur on the grounds of the Supreme Court: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) the Supreme Court tradition of openness as
4 symbolized by its open front doors should be hon-
5 ored and continue to be upheld;

6 (2) even in the face of threats from enemies, it
7 is of critical and symbolic importance that the
8 United States demonstrates to the world that its
9 most sacred institutions will continue to be open for
10 business to all who seek justice; and

11 (3) the Supreme Court should act with great
12 dispatch to take every step to open its main doors
13 as a public entrance.

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