

gentleman from Colorado [Mr. MCINNIS] for bringing the matter to the attention of the House, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado [Mr. MCINNIS].

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, this is a great bill.

I would like to thank the subcommittee chairman on forest and forest health, the gentlewoman from Idaho [Mrs. CHENOWETH], and I would also like to thank the gentleman from American Samoa for both of their assistance and rapidly bringing this legislation to the floor.

H.R. 985 has already been described, but let me tell my colleagues that it has strong support from Summit County Open Space Advisory Counsel, the Summit County Board of County Commissioners, the Wilderness Land Trust, the Sierra Club and a number of other organizations.

This bill makes a lot of sense. I do not know of any opposition that exists out there, nor do I know of any reason for any opposition to come forth, and I think the bill will pass unanimously.

This noncontroversial legislation, as I have stressed, provides that a 160-acre Slate Creek Parcel of Summit County will be added to the Eagle's Nest Wilderness and administered as a part of the wilderness area.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. It is a good, good bill.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Eagles Nest Wilderness Slate Creek addition—H.R. 985—and in support of Congress' action to enlarge our wilderness areas and preserve open space. The amount of undisturbed land across the United States is quickly declining. Everywhere farmlands, woodlands, forests are being developed. Something must be done to stop the development of these areas and preserve open space.

That is why I wanted to make a statement today in support of H.R. 985. While I have never seen the Eagles Nest Wilderness Area, I am confident that it is a wonderful place enjoyed by thousands of Americans every year. Adding 160 acres to this wilderness area is a great accomplishment that should be commended. Last year, Congress passed and the President signed into law legislation that would add Shadmoor to the Amagansett Wildlife Refuge on Long Island, NY. This transfer of property is not yet complete but it, like the Slate Creek tract, is one of a handful of properties eligible for inclusion in our public land programs. We should all be working in Congress to identify tracts of land that should be preserved from development.

I commend Congressman MCINNIS' leadership in regard to saving the Slate Creek tract from development and for working to include it in the Eagles Nest Wilderness Area and urge my colleagues to vote in support of this important piece of legislation.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I do not have any additional speakers and at this time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, I, too, have no requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time

□ 1545

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GIBBONS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Idaho [Mrs. CHENOWETH] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 985, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill, H.R. 985, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Idaho?

There was no objection.

EXTENDING CERTAIN PRIVILEGES, EXEMPTIONS, AND IMMUNITIES TO HONG KONG ECONOMIC AND TRADE OFFICES

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 342) to extend certain privileges, exemptions, and immunities to Hong Kong economic and trade offices.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 342

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF CERTAIN PRIVILEGES, EXEMPTIONS, AND IMMUNITIES TO HONG KONG ECONOMIC AND TRADE OFFICES.

(a) APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IMMUNITIES ACT.—The provisions of the International Organizations Immunities Act (22 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) may be extended to the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in the same manner, to the same extent, and subject to the same conditions as such provisions may be extended to a public international organization in which the United States participates pursuant to any treaty or under the authority of any Act of Congress authorizing such participation or making an appropriation for such participation.

(b) APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON CERTAIN STATE AND LOCAL TAXATION.—The President is authorized to apply the provisions of Article I of the Agreement on State and Local Taxation of Foreign Employees of Public International Organizations, done at Washington on April 21, 1994, to the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices.

(c) DEFINITION.—The term "Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices" refers to Hong Kong's official economic and trade missions in the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] and the gen-

tleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER].

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume first to the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], chairman of the Committee on International Relations.

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in strong support of the measure before us this afternoon, S. 342, a bill extending certain privileges, exemptions, and immunities to Hong Kong's economic and trade offices after the reversion of Hong Kong to China. These Hong Kong offices are presently part of the British Embassy and its consulates, and while Hong Kong will revert to Chinese sovereignty on June 30 of this year, United States policy is to treat it as an autonomous entity for trade and economic purposes.

The enactment of this measure will ensure that its economic and trade offices will not fall under the auspices of the Chinese Embassy and will be given the necessary privileges and status to enable them to continue functioning independently.

This bill does not provide diplomatic or consular privileges and immunities from the trade officials in these offices. Rather, it ensures that they would be eligible for the same status as that accorded other international organizations. Most importantly, it provides the core protections that the trade and economic offices need to perform their functions in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER], the distinguished chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, for his leadership in bringing this measure before the House today and in ensuring that we continue to accord a high priority in our policies toward Hong Kong.

Notwithstanding my support for this resolution, let us recognize that Hong Kong lost its autonomy when Beijing declared that the elected legislature is going to be replaced by one appointed by Beijing. There will be no freedom or autonomy in Hong Kong if Beijing nullifies the ordinances protecting individual rights. Hong Kong's trade offices will just be an extension of government in Beijing unless the people of Hong Kong can elect their own representatives and if there are laws that will enshrine their rights. Accordingly, Mr. Speaker, I urge prompt adoption of this measure.

(Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to commend the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER], my good friend and the chairman of the Committee on International Relations Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, who is the chief sponsor of this legislation, and certainly the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], chairman of the full House Committee on International Relations, for their presence and their statements.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill. As it is now, the bill is identical to the one section of H.R. 750 which was adopted by this body earlier this year. If this bill does not become law by July 1, Hong Kong's representation in the United States will reverse to Chinese control in 2 weeks and will have to be handled by the Chinese Embassy, and I find that a very unlikely and an untenable situation, Mr. Speaker. This is clearly contrary to the attempt of the U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, which stipulates that the United States should treat Hong Kong, after reversion, as an entity distinct from the People's Republic of China.

Now, it would also be contrary to the hope shared by every one of us in this body, Mr. Speaker, that Hong Kong will retain most of its separate identity and distinctiveness after June 30. The administration originally asked for this bill and now strongly supports it. I call upon my colleagues to indicate their support for this bill, and I urge the adoption.

Again, I thank the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] for bringing this matter up for consideration by the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN], the distinguished chairman of the Committee on International Relations, and the gentleman from American Samoa [Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA] for their statements.

This bill allows the President to extend certain privileges, exemptions, and immunities to the Hong Kong economic and trade offices of the United States, and there have been three and there will continue to be three.

Specifically, the bill allows the President to extend: First authority to contract to acquire property; second, property immunity from search and confiscation; third, an exemption from custom duties; fourth, exemptions from Federal, State and local income taxes; and, fifth, legal protection for official communications. This replicates what is in place now for Hong Kong in its current status.

The legislation, as indicated by the gentleman from American Samoa, is necessary to ensure that the Hong Kong civil servants working in the Hong Kong economic and trade offices throughout the United States continue to have the same privileges, exemptions, and immunities after Hong Kong's reversion to China on midnight on June 30, 1997.

Hong Kong's civil servants currently have these privileges, exemptions, and immunities under a United States agreement with the United Kingdom. This arrangement, of course, also expires at midnight on June 30, 1997.

The State Department has negotiated a new agreement which essentially gives Hong Kong civil servants a basket of privileges, exemptions, and immunities which are roughly equal to that accorded Taiwan civil servants working in the United States. This agreement with the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must be authorized by Congress and S. 342 does just that.

The Senate passed this noncontroversial legislation under unanimous consent on May 20, 1997. The House previously considered this exact legislation, as the gentleman from American Samoa mentioned, as a part of a larger bill, H.R. 750, authored by this gentleman, the Hong Kong Reversion Act, on March 11, 1997. So this legislation has been acted upon by the House as a part of a larger bill. That bill at the time passed on a rollcall vote by 416 to 1 under suspension of the rules.

Mr. Speaker, in concluding, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that S. 342 would result in no significant cost to the Federal Government. CBO states that the bill contains no inter-governmental or private sector mandates and would not impose any cost on State, local or tribal governments. My colleagues have heard indicated that the administration is supportive of the legislation. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of S. 342.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As my good friend from Nebraska stated earlier, the administration fully supports this legislation. I would like to note that the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. HAMILTON], the senior ranking member of the House Committee on International Relations, is necessarily absent and I know he would have loved to add his commentary to the dialog this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 342. This is an important and necessary piece of legislation introduced with bipartisan support at the behest of the administration to help preserve the special status now enjoyed by the representatives of Hong Kong in the United States after the reversion of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China on July 1.

When the Congress passed the Hong Kong Policy Act in 1992, it was recognized that the reversion of Hong Kong to China under the concept of one country, two systems would require a special effort by the United States to assist in preserving Hong Kong's unique liberties and trading relations with the rest of the world.

Most recently, the Congress passed the Hong Kong Reversion Act—H.R. 750—at the

instigation of the chairman of the Asia and Pacific Subcommittee, Mr. BEREUTER, which I co-sponsored. H.R. 750 contained a provision identical to that passed by the Senate in S.R. 342.

Unfortunately, the Senate has not yet acted on the other important provisions contained in H.R. 750 which extended the Congress and the administration's responsibilities to act as a "watch dog" over Hong Kong's liberties.

There can be no doubt that this will be an increasing subject of debate after Hong Kong's reversion. I was disappointed by actions already taken by the Hong Kong provisional legislature selected by Chinese authorities to restrict basic freedoms after July 1.

The decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China to repeal sections of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance because they allegedly are in contravention of the Basic Law was deeply disturbing. The National People's Congress not only repealed a key section of the Bill of Rights Ordinance but also critical ordinances referred to in the Consultation Document: the Public Order Ordinance and the Societies Ordinance.

Curtailing the rights of assembly, giving the police new powers to ban public demonstrations, and restricting the right of access of Hong Kong political organizations to ideas and resources from abroad places in a legal strait-jacket the basic right of assembly and association which were enshrined in article 27 of the Basic Law. Actions to restrict the rights of assembly and protest are major steps toward denying Hong Kong's citizens basic human rights.

The decision to place severe restraints on these freedoms because of exaggerated incidents of public abuse and by claims that Hong Kong "is extremely vulnerable to external forces" were not justified in my opinion by any internal event or foreign threat. Giving the power to appointed officials to ban any organization "in the interest of national security" is an open invitation to capricious decisions. Moreover, any limits on jurisdiction of the Court of Final Appeals in these matters could deny Hong Kong citizens the right of judicial review.

I fear that the message being sent to the people of Hong Kong and to the international community is that the rule of law in Hong Kong will be bent and molded to suit the needs of Hong Kong's new sovereigns regardless of the international commitments to maintain human rights contained in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law.

What threatens Hong Kong's national security and stability are not threats from democracy and respect for individual freedom but threats from those who wish to constrain the free flow of ideas.

I encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of S. 342. This is an important first step in efforts to preserve Hong Kong's unique economic, cultural, and political status.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 342.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CELEBRATING THE END OF SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 56), celebrating the end of slavery in the United States.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 56

Whereas news of the end of slavery came late to frontier areas of the country, especially in the American Southwest;

Whereas the African-Americans who had been slaves in the Southwest thereafter celebrated Juneteenth as the anniversary of their emancipation;

Whereas their descendants handed down that tradition from generation to generation as an inspiration and encouragement for future generations;

Whereas Juneteenth celebrations have thus been held for 130 years to honor the memory of all those who endured slavery and especially those who moved from slavery to freedom; and

Whereas their example of faith and strength of character remains a lesson for all Americans today, regardless of background or region or race: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That—

(1) the celebration of the end of slavery is an important and enriching part of our country's history and heritage;

(2) the celebration of the end of slavery provides an opportunity for all Americans to learn more about our common past and to better understand the experiences that have shaped our Nation; and

(3) a copy of this joint resolution be transmitted to the National Association of Juneteenth Lineage as an expression of appreciation for its role in promoting the observance of the end of slavery.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAPPAS] and the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. CUMMINGS] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAPPAS].

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, "Juneteenth" has long been recognized as the date to celebrate the end of slavery in the United States. I congratulate my friend and the distinguished gentleman from Oklahoma [Mr. WATTS], for introducing this resolution to underscore the importance of that development for our Nation.

Juneteenth is the traditional celebration of the day on which the last slaves in America were freed. Although slavery was officially abolished in 1863, it took over two years for news of freedom to spread to all slaves. On June 19, 1865, U.S. General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas and announced that the State's 200,000 slaves were free. To make the date unforgettable, the former slaves coined the nickname "Juneteenth," mixing the word "June" and "nineteenth."

This holiday originated in the Southwest, but today it is celebrated

throughout the Nation. The celebration of Juneteenth provides an opportunity for all Americans to learn more about our common past and to better understand the experiences that have shaped our Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to thank the gentleman from Oklahoma [Mr. WATTS] for his leadership in guiding this bill to the House floor. I also thank the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. BURTON], chairman of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, and the gentleman from California [Mr. WAXMAN], the ranking member, for their support of this measure.

For more than 100 years, African-Americans all over this country have been celebrating a very special day, Juneteenth. Juneteenth, on June 19, commemorates a joyous day in 1865 when many of the slaves in the State of Texas first learned that they had been freed. Juneteenth is sometimes known as the African-American 4th of July.

President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863. However, as most Americans know, the Emancipation Proclamation freed only those slaves in the States fighting against the Union in the Civil War. However, it was not until General Gordon Granger of the Union army arrived in Texas in 1865 that many of the slaves were informed that they had already been emancipated for over two years.

As the news spread, African-Americans celebrated. Festive foods were prepared. Music was played. People danced and sang. Mr. Speaker, most importantly, they prayed.

Then began the long journey down the road towards equality and justice, a journey we still find ourselves traveling on more than a century later. That is why African-Americans and all people of goodwill and humanity pause to celebrate this special day in history.

□ 1600

My good friend, the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. JESSE L. JACKSON, has defined these kinds of events as faith events. More than a celebration, Mr. Speaker, the commemoration of Juneteenth is a faith event. It is a time to thank our Creator for the renewal of our people's strength, their tenacity, their determination, and the amazing grace which has sustained their souls and their faith through this great hardship.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAPPAS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Oklahoma [Mr. WATTS].

Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his kind words, and for the two gentlemen that have just articulated the thoughts on Juneteenth, I thank them both for their kind words and for their support of this legislation.

I also want to thank the chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service of the Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, the gentleman from Florida, Mr. JOHN MICA, whose leadership was instrumental in bringing this bill to the floor today during Juneteenth week. I sincerely appreciate his hard work in making that happen.

Mr. Speaker, as has been described here on the floor today, Juneteenth is the traditional celebration of the day on which the last slaves in America were freed. In September of 1862, in my opinion our greatest President, Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, issued the Emancipation Proclamation which officially freed the slaves as of January 1, 1863, a full 87 years after the War of Independence began, with the support of thousands of black American patriots.

But the official act and the actual liberation were separated by months of continuing war, and long distances and news of freedom was slow to travel during those remaining years of the Civil War. It was not until June 19, 1865 that word finally reached the people in one of the farthest corners of the South, Galveston, TX, when Gen. Gordon Granger marched into the city and announced that the State's 200,000 slaves were free. That day has since been coined Juneteenth Independence Day and has been celebrated as such by tens of thousands of Americans and families for over 130 years.

Today this congressional resolution, House Joint Resolution 56, seeks to honor the memory of all those who endured slavery. It seeks to remind us of their faith, their strength of character, and their long struggle for freedom and for equal rights. It seeks to remind us that America needed a second Independence Day to complete the work that was begun by our Founding Fathers on the Fourth of July, 1776.

I hope all Americans will take a moment to recognize this Juneteenth Independence Day by remembering those who suffered, those who struggled, and those who finally triumphed over ignorance and hate to make a better world for their children and for their grandchildren. This is an opportunity to remember that we, too, are in the process every day of our lives of leaving a legacy to our own children and grandchildren.

This Juneteenth perhaps is a time to consider whether our legacy will be as noble as those before us. Three months before General Granger rode into Galveston and 1 month before he was assassinated, President Lincoln gave a second inaugural address where he challenged his countrymen to strive on to finish the work we are in, "with malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right . . . to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace."

A just and lasting peace. That challenge reaches out across the generations. It is the reason we remember and