

The Committee to Protect Journalists, which has repeatedly expressed concern to the Peruvian government for the safety of journalists covering the military and the National Intelligence Service, wrote to me earlier this year to strongly urge that I reintroduce this resolution. The Committee to protect Journalists informed me "Not only have we failed to receive an official response to any of our protest letters, but we continue to document attacks that confirm our suspicion of a coordinated government campaign to discredit and undermine the independent media in Peru."

I have been one of Peru's strongest supporters in Congress. There is no question that Peru has made it back from the brink of the abyss. Not so many years ago, Peru was a terrorized nation.

Peru has become a good partner in our war against drugs. The drop of coca prices in Peru to historically low levels provided a real opportunity to help farmers grow legitimate crops. I was pleased to encourage our European allies to join us in seizing this opportunity to promote meaningful alternative development in Peru.

Nonetheless, I continue to be alarmed with regard to the harassment of journalists and signs that the independence of Peru's judiciary is being substantially undermined.

The continuing actions taken by the government of Peru against Baruch Ivcher, the Israeli-born owner of television station Channel 2, have become emblematic of government interference with freedom of expression in Peru. These acts of intimidation were precipitated by Channel 2's exposés of abuses—including alleged torture and murder—by Peru's intelligence service.

The Government of Peru, which revoked Mr. Ivcher's Peruvian citizenship, issued him a new Peruvian passport. Nonetheless, the government of Peru has continued to pursue highly questionable legal proceedings against Mr. Ivcher and his family and against former associates. Recently, the former general manager of Channel 2, was sentenced to four years in prison. The Committee to Protect Journalists asserts that the government of Peru "... has continued to hound Mr. Ivcher—initiating legal action against him, harassing his family, and mounting an orchestrated misinformation campaign to discredit him."

Just today, a small opposition newspaper, Referendum, stopped publishing amid allegations that the government of Peru applied pressure to force the newspaper out of business. Several members of this newspaper's editorial board used to work for Channel 2.

This resolution will put the House of Representatives on record expressing bipartisan concern over the erosion of the independence of judicial and electoral branches of Peru's government and the intimidation of journalists in Peru. These concerns have only been heightened by Peru's effective withdrawal from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. These are matters of concern to United States and all nations of the Hemisphere.

Peru's good efforts in our shared fight against drugs deserve our recognition and strong support. However, the United States should not turn a blind eye to interference with freedom of the press and the independence of judicial and electoral institutions of Peru.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support H. Res. 57, expressing the sense of Congress that the erosion of the independence of the judicial and electoral

branches of the government of Peru, along with the intimidation of journalists within the country, are major concerns of the United States. I also support the United States pursuit of an independent investigation and report by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States on threats to freedom and judicial independence in Peru.

The Constitution in Peru provides for freedom of speech and of the press. It provides for a judicial system free from the executive branch. Today, human rights reporting have provided an assessment of Peru that is causing concern. For although, the Constitution of Peru provides for these fundamental rights and privileges, recent actions are demonstrating the Government of Peru is limiting these rights.

The press in Peru represents a wide spectrum of opinion, ranging from left-leaning opposition views to those favoring the Government. In the greater Lima area alone, there are 16 daily newspapers, 7 television stations, 68 radio stations, and 2 commercial cable systems. The Government owns one daily newspaper, one television network, and two radio stations, none of which is particularly influential. However, in order to avoid provoking government retribution, the Peruvian press practices a degree of self-censorship.

Government accusations of treason against investigative journalists, the ordeal of Baruch Ivcher who lost control of his television station, harassment of media representatives increased to such a degree that it appears to be an organized campaign of intimidation on the part of the Government, are areas of concern for democratic institutions. A full report, by an independent counsel, is justified to understand the extent of the problem.

The Constitution provides also for an independent judiciary; however, documents allege in practice the judicial system is inefficient, often corrupt, and easily manipulated by the executive branch. As a result, public confidence in the judiciary is low.

There is a three-tier court structure: lower courts, superior courts, and the Supreme Court. A Constitutional Tribunal rules on the constitutionality of congressional legislation and government actions; a National judiciary Council tests, nominates, confirms, evaluates, and disciplines judges and prosecutors; and a Judicial Academy trains judges and prosecutors. The Government moved to limit the independence of the Constitutional Tribunal almost from its inception in 1995 and continued such efforts in subsequent years. By year's end, the Peruvian Congress still had not taken any steps to replace the three judges ousted from the Constitutional Tribunal after they voted against the interpretation allowing President Fujimori a third term. An action that seems to be punitive just due to its subject matter. This effectively paralyzed the Court's ability to rule on any constitutional issues for lack of a quorum.

The Peruvian Government cites its efforts to revamp its judicial system. It is commendable that administrative and technical progress is occurring in the area of caseload reduction and computerization but little has been done to restore the judiciary's independence from the executive. Of the country's 1,531 judges, less than half, only 574 have permanent appointments, having been independently selected. The remaining 957, including 19 of the

33 judges of the Supreme Court, have provisional or temporary status only. Critics charge that, since these judges lack tenure, they are much more susceptible to outside pressures, further crippling the judicial process.

Increased economic and social stability has resulted in a substantial increase in U.S. investment and tourism in Peru in recent years. In 1997, approximately 140,000 U.S. citizens visited Peru for business, tourism and study. About 10,000 Americans reside in Peru and over 20,000 U.S. companies are represented in the country. U.S. relations improved with Peru after the 1992 auto-coup when the country undertook steps to restore democratic institutions and to address human rights problems related to counter-terrorism efforts.

I urge my colleagues to support with me this effort designed to continue U.S. promotion of the strengthening of democratic institutions and human rights safeguards in Peru.

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

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I urge strong support of H. Res. 57.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and 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 agree to the resolution, House Resolution 57, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The title of the resolution was amended so as to read: "Resolution expressing concern over erosion of democracy and the rule of law in Peru, including interference with freedom of the press and independence of judicial and electoral institutions."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1451) to establish the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 1451

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

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress makes the following findings: (1) Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President, was one of the Nation's most prominent leaders, demonstrating true courage during the Civil War, one of the greatest crises in the Nation's history.

(2) Born of humble roots in Hardin County, Kentucky, on February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln rose to the Presidency through a legacy of honesty, integrity, intelligence, and commitment to the United States.

(3) With the belief that all men were created equal, Abraham Lincoln led the effort to free all slaves in the United States.

(4) Abraham Lincoln had a generous heart, with malice toward none and with charity for all.

(5) Abraham Lincoln gave the ultimate sacrifice for the country he loved, dying from an assassin's bullet on April 15, 1865.

(6) All Americans could benefit from studying the life of Abraham Lincoln, for his life is a model for accomplishing the "American Dream" through honesty, integrity, loyalty, and a lifetime of education.

(7) The Year 2009 will be the bicentennial anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln, and a commission should be established to study and recommend to the Congress activities that are fitting and proper to celebrate that anniversary in a manner that appropriately honors Abraham Lincoln.

#### SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.

There is established a commission to be known as the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (in this Act referred to as the "Commission").

#### SEC. 4. DUTIES.

The Commission shall have the following duties:

(1) To study activities that may be carried out by the Federal Government to determine whether they are fitting and proper to honor Abraham Lincoln on the occasion of the bicentennial anniversary of his birth, including—

(A) the minting of an Abraham Lincoln bicentennial penny;

(B) the issuance of an Abraham Lincoln bicentennial postage stamp;

(C) the convening of a joint meeting or joint session of the Congress for ceremonies and activities relating to Abraham Lincoln;

(D) a redesignation of the Lincoln Memorial, or other activity with respect to the Memorial; and

(E) the acquisition and preservation of artifacts associated with Abraham Lincoln.

(2) To recommend to the Congress the activities that the Commission considers most fitting and proper to honor Abraham Lincoln on such occasion, and the entity or entities in the Federal Government that the Commission considers most appropriate to carry out such activities.

#### SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP.

(a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission shall be composed of 15 members appointed as follows:

(1) 3 members, each of whom shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President.

(2) 2 members, each of whom shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Illinois.

(3) 2 members, each of whom shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Indiana.

(4) 2 members, each of whom shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Kentucky.

(5) 2 members, each of whom shall be Members of the House of Representatives from the State of Illinois, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(6) 1 member, who shall be a Senator from the State of Illinois, appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate.

(7) 1 member, who shall be a Senator, appointed by the Majority Leader of the Senate.

(8) 1 member, who shall be a Member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

(9) 1 member, who shall be a Senator, appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate.

(b) QUALIFIED CITIZEN.—A qualified citizen described in this subsection is a private citizen of the United States with—

(1) a demonstrated dedication to educating others about the importance of historical figures and events; and

(2) substantial knowledge and appreciation of Abraham Lincoln.

(c) TIME OF APPOINTMENT.—Each initial appointment of a member of the Commission shall be made before the expiration of the 120-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP.—If a member was appointed to the Commission as a Member of Congress and the member ceases to be a Member of Congress, that member may continue as a member for not longer than the 30-day period beginning on the date that member ceases to be a Member of Congress.

(e) TERMS.—Each member shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(f) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(g) BASIC PAY.—Members shall serve without pay.

(h) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(i) QUORUM.—5 members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(j) CHAIRPERSON.—The Chairperson shall be designated by the President from among the members of the Commission appointed under section 5(a)(1). The term of office of the Chairperson shall be for the life of the Commission.

(k) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chairperson. Periodically, the Commission shall hold its meeting in Springfield, Illinois.

#### SEC. 6. DIRECTOR AND STAFF.

(a) DIRECTOR.—The Commission may appoint and fix the pay of a Director and any additional personnel as the Commission considers appropriate.

(b) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE LAWS.—

(1) DIRECTOR.—The Director of the Commission may be appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and may be paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

(2) STAFF.—The staff of the Commission shall be appointed subject to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service, and shall be paid in accordance with the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates.

#### SEC. 7. POWERS.

(a) HEARINGS AND SESSIONS.—The Commission may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act, hold hearings, sit and act at times and places, take testimony, and receive evidence as the Commission considers appropriate.

(b) POWERS OF MEMBERS AND AGENTS.—Any member or agent of the Commission may, if authorized by the Commission, take any action which the Commission is authorized to take by this section.

(c) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—The Commission may secure directly from any department or agency of the United States information necessary to enable it to carry out this Act. Upon request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of that depart-

ment or agency shall furnish that information to the Commission.

(d) MAILS.—The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the United States.

(e) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon the request of the Commission, the Administrator of General Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reimbursable basis, the administrative support services necessary for the Commission to carry out its responsibilities under this Act.

#### SEC. 8. REPORTS.

(a) INTERIM REPORTS.—The Commission may submit to the Congress interim reports as the Commission considers appropriate.

(b) FINAL REPORT.—The Commission shall transmit a final report to the Congress not later than the expiration of the 4-year period beginning on the date of the formation of the Commission. The final report shall contain—

(1) a detailed statement of the findings and conclusions of the Commission;

(2) the recommendations of the Commission; and

(3) any other information the Commission considers appropriate.

#### SEC. 9. TERMINATION.

The Commission shall terminate 120 days after submitting its final report pursuant to section 8.

#### SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

#### SEC. 11. BUDGET ACT COMPLIANCE.

Any spending authority (as defined in subparagraphs (A) and (C) of section 401(c)(2) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 651(c)(2)(A) and (C))) under this Act shall be effective only to such extent and in such amounts as are provided in appropriation Acts.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the bill, H.R. 1451.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1451, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act, sponsored by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD).

H.R. 1451 authorizes a 15-member commission to begin national planning for the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of our Nation's 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. This commission would be authorized for 4 years and is charged with developing and reporting to Congress recommendations on activities that appropriately honor this great man and his accomplishments.

Let me borrow from a line from Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and say that it is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. It goes without saying that Abraham Lincoln was one of

our greatest, if not the greatest, Presidents of the United States. Lincoln led our country through its most challenging time, the Civil War. He was a man who sought to unite rather than to divide, urging a nation battered by war to "bind up its wounds." Perhaps most importantly, he was a man who stood on principle and believed in the greatness of this Nation and its people.

Abraham Lincoln's every word and action were based on the founding principle of our Nation, that all are created equal, and none can be denied their natural rights by government or unjust laws. This principle, which forms the basis for our Declaration of Independence and the moral foundation for our Constitution, lives on today and continues to serve this country well.

Mr. Speaker, Abraham Lincoln described the nobility of our experimental form of government more eloquently than any other national leader. He did so in a matter of moments on the battlefield at Gettysburg.

The Gettysburg Address was a reaffirmation of the principle that no person can rightfully govern others without their consent. It was also a testimony to the greatness of our form of government and to the American people.

Through his famous debates with Stephen Douglas, Lincoln reminded the citizens of my home State of Illinois, as well as those residing in other parts of the country, that there are limits to any form of government, even the democratic principle of majority rule.

Lincoln opposed the doctrine of what was then called "popular sovereignty." In contrast to Douglas, Lincoln recognized that a too narrow interpretation of the doctrine of majority rule could lead to the misguided conclusion if one man would enslave another, no third person should intervene.

Lincoln also recognized that a house divided against itself cannot stand. He stood tall, fighting for what provided the American people a new birth of freedom.

Just before an assassin ended his life, Lincoln outlined the approach to Reconstruction that would proceed, "With malice toward none, with charity toward all." His spirit defines the best of the American experiment and appeals to the better angels of our nature.

As we approach the new millennium, it is entirely fitting that Congress adopt this commission bill now. The principles that our declaration established and that Lincoln led us to sustain are truly timeless. Congress authorized a similar commission nearly 100 years ago. It was the recommendations of that commission that created the Lincoln Memorial which stands so prominently today in our Nation's Capital.

□ 1545

This same commission also approved the placing of Lincoln's image on a stamp and made the day of Lincoln's birth a national holiday.

H.R. 1451 carries the spirit of this commission. The commission called for on this bill will provide recommendations that will help this body recognize Lincoln's birth as well as the greatness of the man well into the next millennium.

Let me add that the manager's amendment we are considering today amends the bill that was unanimously approved by the Committee on Government Reform. It authorizes four additional members of the commission, adding two each from Kentucky and Indiana. Given that Abraham Lincoln was born in Harding County, Kentucky, on February 12, 1809, and spent formative years in Indiana, this is an appropriate change, and I urge its adoption.

This manager's amendment has also been modified to address concerns about the authority to accept gifts, bequests, and donations that have been included in the bill marked up by the Committee on Government Reform. The Committee on Ways and Means expressed concerns about that provision, and we have deleted such authority since it is not necessary to the commission's authority to make recommendations for further action.

I am proud to offer this legislation, and I am proud that the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) gave me the chance to manage this bill and to be a cosponsor of the bill, and I encourage the support of all Members.

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

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

I, too, want to take a moment to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) for sponsoring this very important legislation. I think it is very important that we take time to recognize those people who came upon this Earth, saw it, saw the problems with it and tried to change it to make it better; and so I thank him, and I want to thank our ranking member of our committee and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), the entire Illinois delegation, and certainly the chairman of the committee and the chairman of the subcommittee.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation before us today establishes a bicentennial commission to celebrate the life and accomplishments of this Nation's 16th President, Abraham Lincoln. In many respects Abraham Lincoln was an ordinary man who throughout his life did many extraordinary things.

Mr. Lincoln was poor and struggled to educate himself. He encountered numerous business setbacks and challenges. A captain in the Black Hawk War, Lincoln practiced law and spent 8 years in the Illinois legislature. In 1836, Lincoln was elected to Congress and served two terms. Lincoln took 5 years off from politics to focus on his law practice. When he returned to the political arena in 1854, he took an unpopular stance. He opposed the Kansas Nebraska Act which threatened to extend slavery to other States.

Lincoln was elected President in 1860 when the United States was no longer united. Believing that secession was illegal, he was prepared to use force to defend the Union and did so. The Civil War began in 1861 and would last 4 years, costing the lives of over 500,000 Americans.

On November 16, 1863, in the midst of the war on a battlefield near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, President Lincoln presented to the people his vision for our Nation, conceived in liberty where everyone is created equal. This speech known as the Gettysburg address shaped the destiny of the United States of America, that government of the people and by the people should be for all people regardless of race, or color, or gender. For this, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lincoln lost his life in the balcony of the Ford's Theatre in 1865 right here in Washington, D.C.

The bicentennial commission will recommend to Congress what activities and actions should be taken to celebrate the life of this great man. The commission's recommendations to this body should reflect how a man of humble roots rose to the Presidency of the United States and the diversity and uniqueness of this great Nation. It should send a message to all of our young people that they can, too, start in humble beginnings; but it will not matter where they were born or who they were born to, it is what they do with the life that they have been given.

Again, I commend the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) and the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) for working with me and the Democratic Illinois delegation to formulate bipartisan language that would expand the membership of the commission to allow the House minority leader and the Senate minority leader to each appoint one Member of Congress to the commission. That is so important because I think that is the way Lincoln would have wanted it. The commission's bipartisan membership will further honor the memory and works of Abraham Lincoln.

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

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), my friend and colleague and sponsor of this important legislation.

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) for yielding this time to me, and I also thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for his remarks that he made in the committee which were very eloquent last week about President Lincoln.

Mr. Speaker, I am here today to celebrate the life and legacy of President Abraham Lincoln by asking for my colleagues' support for H.R. 1451, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act of 1999. The bill will establish a commission, the purpose of

which would be to make recommendations to Congress for a national program to honor President Abraham Lincoln in the year 2009, the bicentennial celebration of his birth. For decades historians have acknowledged him as one of our country's greatest Presidents. As our 16th President, Lincoln served the country during a most precarious era. While most of the country looked to divide, President Lincoln fought for unity and eventually saved the Union.

With the belief that all men are created equal, President Lincoln led the charge to free all slaves in America. Without the determination and wisdom of President Lincoln, our country, as we know it, may not exist today.

President Lincoln also serves as a national symbol of the American dream. Born of humble roots in Hardin County, Kentucky, on February 12, 1809, Abraham Lincoln rose to the Presidency through a legacy of honesty, integrity, intelligence, and commitment to the United States of America. In 1909, America celebrated the centennial of President Lincoln's birth in a manner deserving of the accomplishments. Congress approved placing the image of President Lincoln on a first-class stamp for the first time, made President Lincoln's birth a national holiday, and passed legislation leading to the construction of the Lincoln Memorial here in Washington, D.C.

Further, President Theodore Roosevelt approved placing the image of President Lincoln on the penny.

As in 1909, the Congress again should honor President Lincoln in 2009 by establishing the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. Through this commission, Congress will be able to demonstrate its appreciation for Abraham Lincoln's accomplishments and ultimate sacrifice for our country.

This commission will identify and recommend to Congress appropriate actions to carry out this mission and through the recommendations of this commission and subsequent acts of Congress, the American people will benefit by learning about the life of President Lincoln, and as an Illinoisan, I am proud of the fact that President Lincoln considered Illinois his home for virtually all of his adult life.

In 1837 Lincoln moved to Springfield, Illinois, which is an area that I represent along with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) where he established a law office and quickly earned a reputation as an outstanding trial lawyer. He served in the State legislature from 1834 to 1842 and was elected to this House of Representatives in 1846 as a member of the Whig party, and 9 of the 14 counties that I currently represent were once represented by Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln joined the Republican party in 1856 and ran for the U.S. Senate from Illinois against Stephen Douglas in 1858. As a candidate for that office, Lincoln rose from relative obscurity to become a nationally known political figure.

Throughout the campaign, Lincoln stated that the U.S. could not survive as half slave and half free States. In a famous campaign speech on June 17, Lincoln declared, I quote, "a House divided against itself cannot stand," end quote. Additionally, the famous Lincoln-Douglas debates drew the attention of the entire Nation. Although Lincoln ultimately lost that campaign, he returned only 2 years later to run for the Presidency. Lincoln was elected the 16th President on November 6, 1860, defeating the previous Senate opponent, Stephen A. Douglas. In one of the most famous acts President Lincoln enacted, the emancipation proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863.

After discussing this issue with Representative RON LEWIS of Kentucky, we both agree that the commission should strongly consider Hodgenville, Kentucky, the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, as the site for its inaugural meeting.

Abraham Lincoln is remembered for his vital role as the leader in preserving the Union and beginning the process that led to the end of slavery in the United States. He also is remembered for his character, his speeches, his letters, and a man of humble origin whose determination and preservation led him to the Nation's highest office.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the, as I mentioned earlier, to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT), also Chuck Schierer and Peter Kovlar, who originally brought this idea of a Lincoln commission to me, and their research was invaluable to this important project.

I ask all colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of President Abraham Lincoln by supporting the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act of 1999.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act. Abraham Lincoln is rightly considered one of America's greatest Presidents. He occupied the White House through 4 of our country's darkest years and was faced with the prospect of uniting our country torn asunder by civil war. Through his leadership and perseverance, Mr. Speaker, our country and system of government was preserved.

While it is impossible to overlook his contributions to America from the White House, there is much more to the story of Abraham Lincoln that endears in the hearts and minds of his countrymen. Lincoln was born to humble roots in Hodgenville, Kentucky, located within my district. He was largely self-educated, yet became one of our country's greatest statesmen with his

eloquent use of the English language. He clung to the highest ethical standards throughout his political career, earning the nickname Honest Abe. He was fiercely devoted to his family, and he put the interests of his country above his own, which ultimately led to his assassination. He was born into obscurity but earned the gratitude and love of his countrymen.

Lincoln's story is one of America, and it serves as an inspiration to all of us. It is a story all posterity needs to learn, and it is incumbent on the Federal Government to use all available resources to preserve his legacy.

To borrow a quote from one of his most famous addresses, "It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this."

I urge my colleagues to support the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act. As Edwin Stanton said upon the President's death, "Now he belongs to the ages." We have an opportunity today to make sure President Lincoln remains a man for the ages by passing this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is my hope that this commission will be able to conduct one of its meetings in Hodgenville, Kentucky, the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

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

Mr. Speaker, finally, I think that, as my colleagues know, when we think about the life of Abraham Lincoln, his words of the Gettysburg Address were just so profound; and I just repeat them, just a part of them, at this moment, for I think they still live in our hearts, and he simply said, and this is important, he said, "It is for the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this Nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the Earth."

With that, Mr. Speaker, I urge all of our colleagues to support this legislation.

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

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

H.R. 1451 provides a means to begin this national period of reflection and recognition. I thank my colleagues for their eloquent and elegant words on behalf of Abraham Lincoln. I appreciated working with the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), with the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) from the minority, and my colleagues from Kentucky and Indiana to strengthen this legislation.

□ 1600

I am proud to have brought this legislation to the floor, and I ask for the full support of all Members.

Mr. SOUDER. Mr. Speaker, Abraham Lincoln spent his formative years in Indiana, and as a Hoosier I would like to rise in strong support of this bill providing for commemoration of the bicentennial of his birth.

I would like to begin by thanking the bill's sponsor, the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. LAHOOD, and the gentlelady from Illinois, Mrs. BIGGERT for their willingness to work with me to include representation from the states of Indiana and Kentucky on the Commission to be formed by this bill. Both states played significant roles in the life and development of Abraham Lincoln, and I very much appreciate their recognition of this history and openness to including citizen members from each of these states on the Commission.

The commission will celebrate the bicentennial of President Lincoln's birth in 1809, which took place in Hodgenville, Kentucky. At the age of 7, young Abe Lincoln moved to Southern Indiana, and the family moved to Illinois in 1830. As the National Park Service points out at the Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, he spent fourteen of the most formative years of his life and grew from youth to manhood in the State of Indiana. His mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, is buried at the site. And even today, what is probably the largest private Lincoln Museum in America is in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in my district.

Thomas Lincoln moved the family to an 80 acre farm in Perry County, Indiana after the crops had failed in Kentucky due to unusually cold weather. He bought the land at what even then was the bargain price of three dollars an acre. Just days before, Indiana had become the 19th state in the union. The land was still wild and untamed. President Lincoln later recalled that he had "never passed through a harder experience" than traveling through the woods and brush between the ferry landing on the Ohio river and his Indiana homesite. This observation speaks volumes about the nature of the Hoosier frontier.

The family quickly settled into the log cabin with which we are all so familiar from our earliest history lessons. Tom Lincoln worked as a cask maker. Abe Lincoln worked hard during the days clearing the land, working with the crops, and reading over and over from his three books: the Bible, Dilworth's Speller, and Aesop's Fables. He also wrote poems. Shortly after the death of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, young Abe attended a new one room schoolhouse. When his father remarried, his new stepmother Sally Bush Johnston brought four new books, including an elocution book. W. Fred Conway pointed out in his book "Young Abe Lincoln: His Teenage Years in Indiana" that the future president after reading the book occasionally "would disappear into the woods, mount a stump, and practice making speeches to the other children."

Abraham Lincoln also received his first exposure to politics and the issues that would later dominate his presidency while in Indiana. One of his first jobs was at a general store and meat market, which was owned by William Jones, whose father owned slaves in violation of the Indiana State Constitution. This was Lincoln's first introduction to slavery. In addition, he exchanged news and stories with customers and passersby, with the store even-

tually becoming a center of the community due largely to Young Abe's popularity. Once he was asked what he expected to make of himself, and replied that he would "be President of the United States."

Mr. Speaker, Indiana takes pride in its contributions to the life of President Lincoln, and we greatly look forward to the work of the Commission in honoring him and reminding Americans of his legacy. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1451, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act. On behalf of my constituents in the 9th Congressional District of Illinois. I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 1451, legislation which seeks to further honor the life of a most honorable individual, the sixteenth President of the United States and an American Hero, Abraham Lincoln.

H.R. 1451, would establish a commission to study and recommend to Congress ways to celebrate the 200th anniversary of President Lincoln's birth. The bicentennial of President Lincoln's birth will be February 12, 2009. Although 2009 is a long way off, planning a celebration of the life, achievements and contributions made by President Lincoln to the United States is a task that deserves adequate time and resources.

The values taught by Abraham Lincoln's leadership are celebrated today at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. Coming from the State of Illinois, which is also known as the "Land of Lincoln," I was particularly moved when shortly after being sworn into service in Congress, I visited the Lincoln Memorial. I look forward to the Memorial's rededication in 2009.

Authorizing further commemorations of his life and the issuance of a memorial stamp and minting of a bicentennial coin, and other activities are appropriate ways to celebrate the life of this shining example of American value.

President Lincoln lost his life at the early age of 56, when he was shot and killed by an assassin. Although President Lincoln's life was taken at a young age, the values and lessons he taught through his policies and his eternal words of wisdom will remain with us forever.

I look forward to reviewing the recommendations of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and to celebrating with the people of Illinois and the entire nation the bicentennial of his birth in 2009. I urge all members to vote in support of H.R. 1451.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MILLER of Florida). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1451, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART EXHIBIT FEATURING WORKS OF A SACRILEGIOUS NATURE

Mr. DEMINT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 191) expressing the sense of Congress that the Brooklyn Museum of Art should not receive Federal funds unless it cancels its upcoming exhibit feature works of a sacrilegious nature, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 191

Whereas on October 2, 1999, the Brooklyn Museum of Art opened an exhibit entitled "Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection";

Whereas this art exhibit features a desecrated image of the Virgin Mary;

Whereas the venerable John Cardinal O'Connor considers the exhibit an attack on the Catholic faith, and is an affront to more than a billion Catholics worldwide;

Whereas the exhibit includes works which are grotesque, immoral, and sacrilegious, such as one that glorifies criminal behavior with a portrait of a convicted child murderer fashioned from small hand prints;

Whereas the Brooklyn Museum of Art's advertisement acknowledges that the exhibit "may cause shock, vomiting, confusion, panic, euphoria, and anxiety";

Whereas the Brooklyn Museum of Art refuses to close the exhibit, despite strong public opposition to the show from religious leaders, government officials, and the general population;

Whereas the American taxpayer, through the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities, provides funding to the Brooklyn Museum of Art; and

Whereas the American taxpayer should not be required to subsidize art that desecrates religion and religious beliefs: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring).* That it is the sense of Congress that the Brooklyn Museum of Art should not receive Federal funds unless it closes its exhibit featuring works of a sacrilegious nature.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT).

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

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to have this opportunity to bring House Concurrent Resolution 191 to the floor. This resolution was submitted by my distinguished colleague, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SWEENEY).

Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, the Brooklyn Museum of Art opened a controversial new art exhibit, despite strong objections from civic and religious leaders. As many know, the exhibit includes a desecrated portrait of the Virgin Mary, decaying animals, and a depiction of a child molester.

These are just a few of the offensive items in an exhibit recognized and celebrated for its shock value, an "over the edge" flaunting of decay, defamation, and death.