

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). Pursuant to the provisions of clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair announces that he will postpone further proceedings today on each motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record votes on postponed questions will be taken after debate is concluded on all motions to suspend the rules, but not before 6 p.m. today.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN BICENTENNIAL
COMMISSION ACT

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1451) to establish the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

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

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

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 Lincoln loved, dying from an assassin's bullet on April 15, 1865.

(6) All Americans could benefit from studying the life of Abraham Lincoln, for Lincoln's 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 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 (referred to in this Act 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 the activities are fitting and proper to honor Abraham Lincoln on the occasion of the bicentennial anniversary of Lincoln's 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 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 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) Two members, each of whom shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President.

(2) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Illinois.

(3) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Indiana.

(4) One member, who shall be a qualified citizen described in subsection (b), appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Governor of Kentucky.

(5) Three members, at least one of whom shall be a Member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(6) Three members, at least one of whom shall be a Senator, appointed by the majority leader of the Senate.

(7) Two members, at least one of whom shall be a Member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(8) Two members, at least one of whom 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 enactment of this Act.

(d) CONTINUATION OF MEMBERSHIP.—If a member of the Commission was appointed to the Commission as a Member of Congress, and ceases to be a Member of Congress, that member may continue to serve on the Commission 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 not affect the powers of the Commission but shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(g) BASIC PAY.—Members shall serve on the Commission 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.—Five members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(j) CHAIR.—The Commission shall select a Chair from among the members of the Commission.

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

SEC. 6. DIRECTOR AND STAFF.

(a) DIRECTOR.—The Commission may appoint and fix the pay of a Director and such addi-

tional personnel as the Commission considers to be 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 such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission considers to be appropriate.

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

(c) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—The Commission may secure directly from any department or agency of the United States information necessary to enable the Commission to carry out this Act. Upon request of the Chair of the Commission, the head of that department 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 Congress such interim reports as the Commission considers to be appropriate.

(b) FINAL REPORT.—The Commission shall submit a final report to 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 that the Commission considers to be appropriate.

SEC. 9. BUDGET ACT COMPLIANCE.

Any spending authority provided under this Act shall be effective only to such extent and in such amounts as are provided in appropriation Acts.

SEC. 10. TERMINATION.

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

SEC. 11. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

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

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 gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1451, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act, as amended by the Senate. As my colleagues will recall, this is the second time the House has considered H.R. 1451, which creates a commission to honor the life of Abraham Lincoln. Last October, this body overwhelmingly passed this legislation by a vote of 411 to 2 and sent it to the Senate for consideration.

I am pleased to have the opportunity today to manage H.R. 1451 for the second time. I congratulate the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), my good friend and colleague, for authoring this fine bill.

Mr. Speaker, in 2009, America will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of our 16th and perhaps greatest President, Abraham Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. He was the son of a Kentucky frontiersman and struggled throughout most of his younger years in both Kentucky and Illinois to earn a living and to learn.

Abraham Lincoln once claimed he had been educated by "littles," a little now and a little then. Yet for a man without what we would call a formal education, Abraham Lincoln embodied every character trait that we aspire to attain.

It is because Abraham Lincoln possessed these traits that his name is synonymous with all that is great and good in America. His name has come to symbolize commitment, freedom, honesty, bravery and vision: freedom because it was Abraham Lincoln who led the successful effort to free all slaves in the United States; honesty because of his untarnished character and impeccable integrity, which earned him the nickname "Honest Abe"; bravery because he fought for and eventually gave his life to advance the principles that guided our Founding Fathers, including that "all men are created equal"; and he had the vision to preserve a "more perfect union" by guiding this country through its most divisive period, the Civil War. When that war was drawing to a conclusion, Lincoln sought to bind up the Nation's wounds rather than punish those who had seceded from the union.

Tragically, an assassin's bullet not only took Lincoln's life, but with it killed any chance for a magnanimous peace.

Let me take a moment to inform my colleagues of the changes the Senate has made to H.R. 1451. Under both the

House- and Senate-passed bills, the commission will consist of 15 members, individuals who possess a substantial appreciation of Abraham Lincoln's life. However, as amended by the Senate, the individual who chairs the commission will be appointed by the members of the commission, not by the President.

In addition, the Senate amendments reduce the number of commissioners appointed by the President from nine to five. The number of commission members appointed by congressional leaders is increased from six to 10, and the leaders are provided more flexibility in making those appointments.

Finally, the Senate amendments provide that three, rather than six, of the President's appointments will be individuals recommended by the governors of Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky. States in which Lincoln spent most of his life. I believe these are appropriate changes and urge all Members to concur with their adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to offer this legislation. I am also proud 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.

Mr. Speaker, this 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. After completing his duties, he practiced law. He served in the military, holding the rank of captain during the Black Hawk War. Thereafter, he continued his public service by spending 8 years in the Illinois legislature. Then in 1836, he was elected to Congress and served two terms.

□ 1415

In 1832, when Abraham Lincoln was seeking his first seat in the Illinois General Assembly, he stated in his first political announcement, and I quote, "Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as a most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in. That every man receive at least a moderate education and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object vital importance."

It is important that H.R. 1451 stipulates that the members of the commission be selected based on their demonstrated dedication to educating others about the importance of historical figures and events. It is through education that we learn about our pasts and prepare ourselves for our future.

Abraham Lincoln made decisions and took actions that would forever change the course of America. The commission will be responsible for educating Americans, young and old, about the importance of the Lincoln legacy and contributions he made for a free and unified country.

In 1854, Lincoln took an unpopular stance and 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 but was divided over slavery. 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 a war, on a battlefield near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, President Lincoln not only acknowledged the sacrifice of thousands who had perished but presented his vision for the future of our Nation, conceived in liberty, where everyone is created equal. The 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 the people, regardless of race or color. For this, Mr. Lincoln lost his life on the balcony of the Ford Theater 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 Abraham Lincoln. The commission's recommendations to this body should reflect how a man of humble roots rose to the office of the President of the United States of America.

The bicentennial anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln presents the opportunity for Americans to recommit ourselves to the principles extolled by Abraham Lincoln; honesty, integrity, loyalty and the pursuit of education. I urge all Members of this body to support H.R. 1451.

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

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), the author of this bill.

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

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) for yielding this time to me, and also thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for his remarks here today, his remarks in the committee, and his remarks when we previously considered this bill last year. They were most eloquent 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 of H.R. 1451, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Act of 1999. The bill, which has passed the Senate,

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 President Lincoln 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 end slavery 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 on February 12, 1809 in Hardin County, Kentucky, 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 the 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, I am pleased that Congress will again 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.

The 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.

As an Illinoisan, I am proud of the fact President Lincoln considered Illinois his home for virtually all his adult life. In one of his most famous acts, President Lincoln enacted the Emancipation Proclamation, which went into effect January 1, 1863. 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 is remembered for his character, his speeches, his letters, and as a man of humble origin whose determination, preservation, perseverance led him to the Nation's highest office.

I would also like to acknowledge the assistance of a man named Peter Kovler, who actually came to me with this idea of establishing the commis-

sion. And it was he, as a private citizen, because of his interest in Lincoln, that this idea was brought forth in the form of a bill which will become law.

I would also like to thank Chuck Schierer of my staff and Chris Guidry of my staff for their help in drafting this bill.

I also want to acknowledge the fact that I have spoken to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. LEWIS), and we both have agreed that the commission should strongly consider holding their first meeting in Kentucky, the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln, as the site of its inaugural meeting. And we hope that will be accomplished.

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

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS).

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

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise to join my colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD), and the entire Illinois delegation in supporting H.R. 1451 to create the Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

As we near the 200th birthday of one of America's greatest presidents, it is important that we celebrate and commemorate his legacy. There can be no doubt that it was Abraham Lincoln's resolve that kept our Nation together during its most turbulent period. To forget or overlook that resolve and the sacrifices that President Lincoln and millions of others made, and many continue to make, would be wrong.

It is said that the 1700s were about creating a Nation, the 1800s were about preserving a Nation, and the 1900s about bringing a Nation together. Let us dedicate this next 100 years to building on the Lincoln legacy, to move our Nation forward as one people committed to freedom.

Lincoln said at Gettysburg that the world would not long remember and would soon forget what he and others were doing to preserve our Nation. Well, I say that we have not forgotten the sacrifices made and we will not take President Lincoln's legacy for granted. We thank him for his service and the example of the ends to which we must go to preserve this Nation and the rights of all citizens.

Happy birthday, Mr. Lincoln. I ask my colleagues for a favorable vote.

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

Mr. Speaker, when I look at what we are doing today, I think it is extremely important, and I certainly urge my colleagues to support this very important legislation; but I was considering something that Abraham Lincoln said that I think is just so telling about the man that we honor through this legislation. It is a quote I had not heard before, but I think it is one that perhaps all of us

should give some serious consideration to.

He said, "I desire to so conduct the affairs of this administration that if at the end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left and that friend shall be down inside of me." He really said something. The fact is that Abraham Lincoln stood for so much.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) for his foresight in taking up the mantle of a constituent, which says a lot. I think a lot of times constituents think that they have little effect. But the fact is that here we are standing here today with this legislation because the gentleman took it upon himself to lift up the idea of a constituent. It goes to the same kind of thing, that one person can make a difference.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I again urge our colleagues to support the legislation, and I want to thank the gentlewoman for her cooperation and certainly the ranking member and the chair of our committee and subcommittee.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, let me close by reading to my colleagues a portion of the sermon given by Phineas D. Gurley at President Lincoln's funeral at the White House. The sermon and its message are powerful. They express the essence of Abraham Lincoln's character and why we seek to honor him today with this legislation.

I quote Dr. Gurley. "Probably no man since the days of Washington was ever so deeply and firmly embedded and enshrined in the very hearts of the people as Abraham Lincoln. Nor was it a mistaken confidence and love. He deserved it well, deserved it all. He merited it by his character, by his acts, and by the whole tenor and tone and spirit of his life. He was simple and sincere, plain and honest, truthful and just, benevolent and kind. His perceptions were quick and clear, his judgments were calm and accurate, and his purposes were good and pure beyond a question. Always and everywhere he aimed and endeavored to be right and to do right."

Let us do right by our 16th president by passing this legislation today.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LAHOOD) for introducing the bill. I also thank the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON), the chairman of the Committee on Government Reform, and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Service, for expediting its consideration, as well as the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. WAXMAN) for their strong support. I urge all Members to support H.R. 1451.

Mr. ROEMER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1451, The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act recognizing the bicentennial of his birth. As a proud Hoosier, I call attention to the fact that Abraham Lincoln spent several key years of his life, his most formative years, maturing from youth to manhood while living in the State of Indiana.

Therefore, it is most fitting that this bill gives the Governor of Indiana the authority to appoint two members of the commission. Growing up in Indiana was a considerable influence in the life and development of Abraham Lincoln. He received his first exposure to politics and the issues that would later dominate his life in public service while living in Indiana. One of his first jobs was at a general store and meat market, which was owned by William Jones, whose family owned slaves in violation of the Indiana State Constitution. This was Lincoln's first introduction to slavery.

Abraham Lincoln firmly held to the highest ethical standards throughout his political career, appropriately earning the nickname Honest Abe. His vigorous work ethic and strong sense of morality are shining examples of selfless devotion to public service. His memory continues to serve as a guiding light for the future. He was fiercely devoted to his family, and he put the interests of his country above his own, which tragically led to his assassination. The Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural Speech live on as two of the most important and best written speeches in American history.

Mr. Speaker, Indiana takes pride in its contributions to the life of President Lincoln, and we look forward to the work of the Commission in honoring him and reminding Americans of his legacy. All Americans, regardless of their state, take great pride in Abraham Lincoln. I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1451, the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act. First of all, I would like to thank Congresswoman JUDY BIGGERT of the Civil Service Subcommittee, who happens to represent Illinois, for speaking so eloquently on this important piece of legislation. Secondly, I commend Mr. LAHOOD, my colleague also from Illinois, for his sponsorship of this measure honoring President Abraham Lincoln. I also would like to mention Congressman RON LEWIS of Kentucky for his work on H.R. 1451, which ensured that President Lincoln's birthplace of Kentucky also had a legitimate role in this commission.

Mr. Speaker, in 9 years the United States will celebrate the bicentennial anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. On this occasion we will certainly want to properly honor Abraham Lincoln for his immeasurable contributions to our Nation and to mankind. The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, established by H.R. 1451, will study and recommend activities and programs through which we, as a nation, can best remember and honor Abraham Lincoln, and rededicate ourselves to the ideals for which he fought and died.

At this time, I also would like to express my appreciation to my colleague from Indiana, Congressman MARK SOUDER, for his efforts on behalf of our home State. Indiana is proud to be the boyhood home of Abraham Lincoln. From age 7 to age 21, he lived on the frontier in southern Indiana. During his years in Indiana, he acquired his education, grew to his full

height, and most important, developed his strong character which served our Nation so well during the crisis of the Civil War.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1451, and again thank all those involved for making this the exceptional piece of legislation that you see before you.

Mr. LEWIS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to again voice my support for the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Act. It is very fitting that we are considering this legislation today because this Saturday, February 12, will mark the 191st birthday of one of the greatest Presidents to ever serve our Nation.

Lincoln 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, the Union 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 endures in the hearts and minds of his countrymen. Lincoln was born to humble roots in a log cabin in Hodgenville, Kentucky, located in the Second 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 interest of his country above his own, which ultimately led to his assassination. He was born into obscurity but earned the gratitude and love of every American.

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

Lincoln has always been one of my heroes of history. In fact, his portrait, along with many other likenesses, graces my Washington and District offices and serves as a reminder to me of my duty to my country and responsibility to those who have elected me to serve.

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 conduct its inaugural meeting in Hodgenville, Kentucky, the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska). The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 1451.

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.

□ 1430

POISON CONTROL CENTER ENHANCEMENT AND AWARENESS ACT

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 632) to provide assistance for poison prevention and to stabilize the funding of regional poison control centers.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 632

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 "Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Each year more than 2,000,000 poisonings are reported to poison control centers throughout the United States. More than 90 percent of these poisonings happen in the home. 53 percent of poisoning victims are children younger than 6 years of age.

(2) Poison control centers are a valuable national resource that provide life-saving and cost-effective public health services. For every dollar spent on poison control centers, \$7 in medical costs are saved. The average cost of a poisoning exposure call is \$32, while the average cost if other parts of the medical system are involved is \$932. Over the last 2 decades, the instability and lack of funding has resulted in a steady decline in the number of poison control centers in the United States. Within just the last year, 2 poison control centers have been forced to close because of funding problems. A third poison control center is scheduled to close in April 1999. Currently, there are 73 such centers.

(3) Stabilizing the funding structure and increasing accessibility to poison control centers will increase the number of United States residents who have access to a certified poison control center, and reduce the inappropriate use of emergency medical services and other more costly health care services.

SEC. 3. DEFINITION.

In this Act, the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL TOLL-FREE NUMBER.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide coordination and assistance to regional poison control centers for the establishment of a nationwide toll-free phone number to be used to access such centers.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting the establishment or continued operation of any privately funded nationwide toll-free phone number used to provide advice and other assistance for poisonings or accidental exposures.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, \$2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through 2004. Funds appropriated under this subsection shall not be used to fund any toll-free phone number described in subsection (b).

SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONWIDE MEDIA CAMPAIGN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a national media campaign to educate the public and health care providers about poison prevention and the availability of poison control resources in local communities and to conduct advertising campaigns concerning the nationwide toll-free number established under section 4.