

I support the right of private groups to determine their membership. However, since Congress would neither endorse nor charter any group that discriminates against Latinos, African Americans, women or people with physical challenges, just to name a few, Congress cannot in good conscience continue to tacitly endorse the Scouts' discriminatory policy. We believe discrimination against any of these groups is wrong and most of us here would stand up and demand that discriminatory policies be ended. The Boy Scouts must be held to the same standard and therefore Congress has the moral responsibility to revoke the group's Congressional charter.

We must remember, that discrimination is always wrong, whatever form it takes. Whether it's the policies of the Boy Scouts, a corporate employer or a social club, Congress must not condone discrimination. We must lead by example and we must send the message that Congress will not tolerate nor endorse such policies targeted at any group.

I support this bill, and I urge each of my colleagues to do the same. Congress must not lend its seal of approval to any organization which discriminates.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this bill and to voice the strongest possible support for the Boy Scouts of America.

The Boy Scouts have always emphasized God and Family and Country.

We need more organizations like the Boy Scouts, and we should be doing everything we can to support and encourage them.

I was a Criminal Court Judge for 7½ years before coming to Congress.

I was told on my first day as a Judge that 98 percent of the defendants in felony cases came from broken homes.

I read thousands of reports going into the backgrounds of the people before me. I read over and over things like: "Defendant's father left home when Defendant was two and never returned." "Defendant's father left home to get pack of cigarettes and never came back."

Several years later I read in the Washington paper that two leading criminologists had studied 11,000 felony cases from around the country.

They said the biggest single factor in serious felony crimes was father absent households.

Everything else, like drugs and alcohol, was secondary to the absent father problem.

So many young boys are growing up today without good male role models.

We need the Boy Scouts today more than ever before.

This is a time when we should be doing more for the Boy Scouts, not trying to harass and intimidate them.

We definitely should not be taking the intolerant, bigoted, "politically-correct" position of this legislation.

If this is still a free country, then the Boy Scouts should be free to operate as it has without being discriminated against as this legislation would do.

I urge all my colleagues to oppose this bill and support the Boy Scouts.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, today, we find ourselves debating an intolerance-laden bill advanced by those who will claim to be the "tolerant" ones. What the bill's proponents are

really saying is that they are intolerant of an individual's freedom to associate with those whom they, as individuals, see fit. Two vital issues are raised by this bill's ascendancy to the House floor. The first is that of our constitutional right to freedom of association. The second being the notion of "federal charters."

On June 28, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Boy Scouts of America was within its rights when the private organization expelled an adult scout leader because he was gay. In its five-to-four opinion, the court found that requiring the Boy Scouts to admit homosexuals violated the group's free association rights.

Nevertheless, this Congress has decided to bring to the floor a bill attempting to penalize this private group of citizens for exercising their first amendment "freedom of association" rights. This is very close to denying the very right itself. To the extent the Boy Scouts should be penalized for their exercise of free association (or exclusion in this case), that penalty should only manifest itself through other private citizens exercising their freedom not to associate with individuals or groups whose associations (or lack thereof) they find offensive.

As to the "federal charter", where do we find authority for the federal government to charter organizations it deems "honorable"? To the extent the "charter" is an honorary title awarded by Congress to organizations which is then ultimately used to threaten exercise of the right to freedom of association, I suggest we repeal not only the Boy Scout's charter but all federal charters such that they won't be used as tools of federal meddling.

While I hesitate to further propagate this system of federal charters by which the federal government manipulates private groups, I despise more so this congressional attempt to penalize the Boy Scouts for merely exercising their constitutional rights—or as syndicated columnist Charley Reese recently put it in the Orlando Sentinel:

I think that it's time for all patriotic organizations that have these federal charters to surrender those documents. It is impossible for a dishonorable organization to honor anyone. And these charters are, practically speaking, worthless. If the federal government believes that mindless non-discrimination trumps morality, then it's time to disassociate from such bad company.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4892.

The question was taken.

Mr. HUTCHINSON. 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.

RECOGNIZING CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE BIRMINGHAM PLEDGE

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 102) recognizing that the Birmingham Pledge has made

a significant contribution in fostering racial harmony and reconciliation in the United States and around the world, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 102

Whereas Birmingham, Alabama, is an international symbol of the racial strife in the United States in the 1950's and 1960's;

Whereas out of the crucible of Birmingham's role in the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's, a present-day grassroots movement, embodied in the Birmingham Pledge, has arisen to continue the effort to eliminate racial and ethnic divisions in the United States and around the world;

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge, authored by Birmingham attorney James E. Rotch, sponsored by the Community Affairs Committee of Operation New Birmingham, and promoted by a broad cross-section of the community, increases racial harmony by helping individuals communicate in a positive way concerning the Nation's diversity and by encouraging people to make a commitment to racial harmony;

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge, signed by individuals as evidence of their commitment to its message, reads as follows:

"I believe that every person has worth as an individual.

"I believe that every person is entitled to dignity and respect, regardless of race or color.

"I believe that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful; if it is in my thought or act, then it is harmful to me as well as to others.

"Therefore, from this day forward I will strive daily to eliminate racial prejudice from my thoughts and actions.

"I will discourage racial prejudice by others at every opportunity.

"I will treat all people with dignity and respect; and I will strive to honor this pledge, knowing that the world will be a better place because of my effort."

Whereas more than 70,000 people have signed the Birmingham Pledge, including the President, Members of the Congress, State Governors, State legislators, mayors, county commissioners, city council members, and other people around the world;

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge has achieved national and international recognition;

Whereas efforts to obtain signatories to the Birmingham Pledge are being organized and conducted in communities around the world;

Whereas every Birmingham Pledge signed and returned to Birmingham is recorded at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute as a permanent testament to racial reconciliation, peace, and harmony; and

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge, the motto for which is "Sign It, Live It", is a powerful tool to facilitate dialogue on the Nation's diversity and the need for people to take personal steps to achieve racial harmony and tolerance in communities: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) the Congress—

(A) recognizes that the pledge popularly known as the Birmingham Pledge has made

a significant contribution in fostering racial harmony and reconciliation in the United States and around the world; and

(B) commends the people involved with the creation of the Birmingham Pledge and signatories to the pledge for the steps they are taking to make the Nation and the world a better place for all people; and

(2) it is the sense of the Congress that a National Birmingham Pledge Week should be established.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BACHUS. 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 H.J. Res. 102.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this week Birmingham, Alabama, is hosting an MSNBC and Newsweek Magazine National Conference on Race Relations. One of the highlights of this conference is the Birmingham Pledge movement.

The Birmingham Pledge is a personal commitment to work to eliminate racial division in America and around the world. Those who sign the Pledge make a personal promise to treat all individuals with dignity and respect. More than 70,000 people from every inhabited continent on the globe have signed the Birmingham Pledge. Every signed Pledge is returned to Birmingham and recorded at the Civil Rights Institute as a permanent testament to racial reconciliation, peace and harmony.

Mr. Speaker, along with my colleague, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HILLIARD), both of us being natives of Birmingham, Alabama, we introduced this resolution on June 14, 2000. This resolution has the support of 107 cosponsors, a bipartisan group of Members of the House.

The resolution recognizes that personal efforts, the efforts of individuals, do matter, and do make a difference in addressing racial intolerance and do contribute significantly in fostering racial harmony.

□ 2100

As we speak, MSNBC is conducting a televised live town hall meeting on race relations from the historic 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. Newsweek Magazine this week printed a special issue on diversity in America to coincide with the Birmingham Summit.

The resolution before us recognizes that the Birmingham Pledge is making a significant contribution in fostering racial harmony. It commends those involved with the creation of the pledge,

including Jim Rotch, who authored the pledge, and those who have signed it. It expresses the sense of Congress that a National Birmingham Pledge Week should be established.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think it is appropriate to commend the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HILLIARD), with whom I have worked very closely in the Congressional Black Caucus, and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), with whom I have worked very closely on the House Committee on the Judiciary on a number of measures.

This is a unique, ingenious way that continues the ability of America to help recognize that racial prejudice is something that we still can deal with in many creative, small ways. So House Joint Resolution 102 recognized that this ingenious notion, the Birmingham Pledge, can make an important contribution in fostering and promoting racial equality. It is a symbol of how far we have come and how far we have to go in the struggle for civil rights equality for all Americans.

Because Birmingham, Alabama, occupies a unique and important place in the history of civil rights in America, for these two Members from the State of Alabama to come forward where we have had in the past the images of police dogs, fire hoses, racial strife, Dr. King's letter from a Birmingham jail, all makes it so important that from Alabama and now from around the Nation, signatures are pouring in. I understand that more than 60,000 have taken place already, and that President Clinton and the First Lady have all been signatories.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important as I conclude that if we pledge our belief today that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful, then we should let our actions speak louder than our words and pass a hate crimes legislation bill that has come from the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HILLIARD) be the manager of this bill from this point forward.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to call upon Congress to pass this resolution recognizing the Birmingham Pledge. The Birmingham Pledge is an effort of the Birmingham community to recognize the dignity and worth of every individual and to share with the world our community's commitment to eliminate racial prejudice in the lives of all people. It is a personal daily commitment to remove prejudice from our own lives

as well as the lives of others and to treat all persons with respect.

The gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) and I proposed this resolution together, bringing to this Nation the rich heritage that we represent in Birmingham, Alabama. I would say it has been in the center of the struggle for American freedom. It was here that our citizens fought nonviolently the violent, racist, hate-mongering police commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor and won. The remnants of that racism has impacted our society for far too long. Now is the time to change the social condition for all citizens and bring new life to the American dream.

It was here in Birmingham, Alabama, 16 years later that Birmingham elected its first black mayor who recently retired after 20 years of leading our city from hate, racism, poverty, and unemployment into becoming one of the leading citizens in America in human relations. Birmingham has developed and sustained an economy which includes many more people than ever before. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the Nation. But it also has changed in terms of its human relations factors, and it is a positive one. It is one that we wish to share with all Americans.

Even with our great history, people in Birmingham forget how we got where we are today; and because of that, the loss of our understanding of this exodus is destructive. We need to find out where we have been. We need to remember in order to realize where we must go.

This pledge can renew our memories and renew our commitment to a world without the kind of hate which has, for so long, ripped out the heart of our city and our Nation. I cannot tell my colleagues how strongly I recommend this resolution to all of us to sign, and I call upon all of us to support it today, by our votes; but I also ask each one of my colleagues to seek signatures from their constituents and, most importantly, to live the pledge.

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

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

In considering this resolution, we should all keep in mind one thing: we are not born with prejudice or bigotry. These are things that are learned. In fact, psychologists call it learned behavior. By word or by action, we teach our children daily. We teach them either to be tolerant or to be intolerant, to have prejudice or bias against people because of their race, or origin, or not to be. We teach them these things many times even before they are old enough to choose for themselves. We can teach our children to love, or we can teach our children to hate. Intolerance is learned. Therefore, it can be unlearned. The pledge can be a part of that process.

This is the message we will send to Americans today about race relations. Each of us needs to take personal responsibility to conduct ourselves in a

way that will achieve greater racial harmony in our own communities. It has been said that events in Birmingham during the early 1960s, and my colleague referred to many of those, stirred the conscience of the Nation and influenced the course of civil rights around the world.

I know of no city that has worked harder to overcome its missteps and its mistakes than my native city, Birmingham. The Birmingham that has emerged is one built upon a foundation of racial sensitivity and strength and diversity. Today's Birmingham is dedicated not only to preserving the history of its struggle, but, more importantly, to ending racial intolerance, bigotry and prejudice, not only in Birmingham, but around the world.

Mr. Speaker, by passing House Resolution 102, the House will show its support for this commendable effort. In closing, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

I would like to recite the Birmingham Pledge:

I believe that every person has worth as an individual.

I believe that every person is entitled to dignity and our respect, regardless of race or color.

I believe that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful; if it is my thought or act, then it is harmful to me as well as to others.

Therefore, from this day forward I will strive daily to eliminate racial prejudice from my thoughts and actions.

I will discourage racial prejudice by others at every opportunity.

I will treat all people with dignity and respect; and I will strive daily to honor this pledge, knowing that the world will be a better place because of my effort.

Mr. Speaker, this is the Birmingham Pledge. I urge my colleagues to sign it, to vote for it, and to live it.

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

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague from Birmingham in inviting all Members not only to support this resolution, but to support this pledge and to live this pledge on a daily basis.

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 Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 102.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to

the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 327) honoring the service and sacrifice during periods of war by members of the United States merchant marine.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 327

Whereas throughout the history of the United States, the United States merchant marine has served the Nation during periods of war;

Whereas vessels of the United States merchant marine fleet, such as the S.S. LANE VICTORY, provided critical logistical support to the Armed Forces by carrying equipment, supplies, and personnel necessary to maintain war efforts;

Whereas numerous members of the United States merchant marine have died to secure peace and freedom; and

Whereas at a time when the people of the United States are recognizing the contributions of the Armed Forces and civilian personnel to the national security, it is appropriate to recognize the service of the United States merchant marine: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) honors the service and sacrifice during periods of war by members of the United States merchant marine;

(2) recognizes the critical role played by vessels of the United States merchant marine fleet, such as the S.S. LANE VICTORY, in transporting equipment, supplies, and personnel necessary to support war efforts; and

(3) encourages—

(A) the American people, through appropriate ceremonies and activities, to recognize and commemorate the service and sacrifices of the United States merchant marine; and

(B) all government agencies to take appropriate steps to commemorate the United States merchant marine.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. KUYKENDALL) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. KUYKENDALL).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

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

The merchant marines have served this country since the birth of our Nation. Many people do not think of that. They are most frequently remembered as the World War II veterans because of the great significance they played in that conflict. However, beginning as early as 1775, the merchant marine was actually the first military force we used to defeat the British Navy with. During that time period, they became our first Navy: merchant vessels with guns on them. They brought critical supplies to fight for our independence.

If we go on to the next century in the 1800s, between 1812, the War of 1812, and

the first World War, they participated in not only that War of 1812, but also the Civil War, the Spanish American War, and delivered doughboys to Europe and their supplies to go with them.

In 1936, the Merchant Marine Act was passed by Congress which established the United States merchant marine "as a naval or military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency." From 1941 to 1946, during World War II, merchant marines took part in all invasions. Merchant marine casualties were the highest in any service: 1 in 29. One in 29 people that served became a casualty. Statistics were so important in keeping track of the losses that during World War II we kept secret merchant marine losses because in some weeks we were losing over 30 vessels a week being sunk, between ours and allied forces around the world, and we would never be able to report that and still have men sign up to be a merchant seaman. By 1946, allied leaders planning the invasions of Japan had the merchant marine assigned a critical role in order to move millions of men and their material.

Again, the merchant marine after the war, World War II, came out in the Korean War and they supported that operation. They supported the Vietnam War in 1961 to 1973; and today they serve, even today, supplying troops in Bosnia as well as our earlier conflicts in the 1990s, the Persian Gulf War.

Merchant marines provide a service which is critical to every war effort. To tell my colleagues how critical it is, in World War II, the average soldier, depending upon his job, required somewhere between seven and 15 tons of material to supply them for 1 year. One soldier for 1 year, seven to 15 tons. That does not get delivered by airplanes; it gets delivered by ships all over the world. In fact, on average, in 1945, every hour there were 17 million pounds of cargo being delivered by the merchant marine in support of our war effort.

In 1965, skipping ahead now to Vietnam, we had 300 freighters and tankers supplying the United States military efforts, and on average, on average, we had 75 ships and over 3,000 merchant mariners in Vietnamese ports at any given time. Da Nang Harbor was the home of the Marine Amphibious Force Logistic Command, and in support of 81,000 Marines in Vietnam, that command brought 96 percent of the war material needed for the Marine forces there.

□ 2115

That included everything from tanks to food.

Merchant marines have served as civilians, but routinely go in harm's way in the conduct of their service. Here I am going to quote from B.D. Hammer in an article he wrote in the New York Daily News on May 20, talking about war heroes in the merchant marines:

All volunteers, these seafarers came from every vocation, level of education, ethnicity,