

cultural exchange, and traditions which extend into the present day. Together, these two historic events will be celebrated through the creation of the Hudson-Fulton 400th Commemoration Commission. The same year of Hudson's exploration, Francis Samuel de Champlain became the first European to discover the New York lake later to be named in his honor.

The Champlain Quadricentennial Commemoration Commission will coordinate its festivities and celebrations with the Hudson-Fulton Commission. These commissions promote continued education and observations of historic events such as these which have helped to make our country what it is today. They influence the culture, heritage, and way of life for all early citizens of America.

I urge my colleagues to support the passage of H.R. 1520.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1520, the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Commemoration Act of 2007. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation, which I have been working with the Gentleman from New York, Mr. HINCHEY, since 2003 to enact. In fact, the House previously passed our bill, H.R. 2528, by voice vote during the 108th Congress.

The bill, H.R. 1520, before the House today would authorize \$500,000 annually from fiscal year 2007 through fiscal year 2011 for the Champlain Quadricentennial Commemoration Commission, to plan and execute programs and activities to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's voyage.

Likewise, H.R. 1520 would also authorize \$500,000 annually from fiscal year 2007 through fiscal year 2011 for a second commission, the Hudson-Fulton 400th Commemoration Commission, to plan and execute programs and activities to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's voyage, as well as the 200th anniversary of Robert Fulton's invention of the steamboat.

Samuel de Champlain, the "Father of New France," explored a great deal New York's 23rd Congressional District. In fact, he discovered Lake Champlain in 1609 and traveled extensively on the St. Lawrence River. Thus, my constituents in Northern New York, particularly those in Clinton County, have a keen interest in H.R. 1520, particularly its potential to enhance tourism.

Thus, I greatly appreciate the work the Gentleman from New York, Mr. HINCHEY, the Gentleman from California, Mr. WAXMAN, and the Gentleman from Virginia, Mr. DAVIS, have done to bring H.R. 1520 to the House floor and I urge my colleagues to vote for it today.

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Commemoration Act of 2007, which will simultaneously pay homage to the history of New York's Hudson Valley while helping to build a vibrant future for the region.

I would like to thank my colleague, Representative HINCHEY, for his leadership in drafting and introducing this important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, the Hudson Valley has been a cradle of prosperity and a driver of growth and exploration in America since long before there

was a United States of America. The character of the region, and the history of the nation, was strongly shaped by two separate voyages that occurred almost 400 years ago.

In July of 1609, the French explorer Samuel de Champlain, having already founded the settlement of Quebec, arrived with a group of Native Americans at what would eventually be known as Lake Champlain. This expedition would lay the groundwork for the settlement of the Champlain valley by French colonists in the "New World".

The next month, Henry Hudson would begin the voyage aboard that Half Moon that would bring him into New York under the Dutch flag. His efforts to find a sea route to Asia on behalf of the Dutch East India Company travels would eventually take him up what is now the Hudson River almost to Albany. Hudson was to be the first European explorer to navigate and note the full length of the Hudson River, and along the way he noted the region's inherent beauty and engaged in trade with Native Americans.

By laying the groundwork for settlement and commerce in the region, these voyages would help establish a corridor for trade that helped to drive the prosperity of the "New World" and continues to be an economic engine of America.

Two centuries after those fateful journeys, the region was once again home to a breakthrough that would transform commerce and transportation throughout the continent. On August 17, 1807 Robert Fulton successfully sailed his steamboat from New York City to Albany in the first long-distance trip of such a vessel. This 32-hour long trip opened the gateway to a new means of trade and transportation.

The Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Commemoration Act of 2007 will make sure that these events, and their contribution to the greatness of our nation, will be appropriately honored. By establishing the Champlain Quadricentennial Commemoration Commission the Hudson-Fulton 400th Commemoration Commission to plan and execute commemorative activities in the region, the bill honors the storied past of the Hudson Valley, will bring increased prosperity to the region, and perhaps open the door to the Corridor's next great adventure.

I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. McGOVERN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1520.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STAR-SPANGLED BANNER AND WAR OF 1812 BICENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1389) to establish the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1389

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 "Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) the War of 1812 served as a crucial test for the United States Constitution and the newly established democratic Government;

(2) vast regions of the new multi-party democracy, including the Chesapeake Bay, the Gulf of Mexico and the Niagara Frontier, were affected by the War of 1812 including the States of Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Carolina, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, Vermont, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia;

(3) the British occupation of American territory along the Great Lakes and in other regions, the burning of Washington, DC, the American victories at Fort McHenry, New Orleans, and Plattsburgh, among other battles, had far reaching effects on American society;

(4) at the Battle of Baltimore, Francis Scott Key wrote the poem that celebrated the flag and later was titled "the Star-Spangled Banner";

(5) the poem led to the establishment of the flag as an American icon and became the words of the national anthem of the United States in 1932; and

(6) it is in the national interest to provide for appropriate commemorative activities to maximize public understanding of the meaning of the War of 1812 in the history of the United States.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to—

(1) establish the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Commemoration Commission;

(2) ensure a suitable national observance of the War of 1812 by complementing, cooperating with, and providing assistance to the programs and activities of the various States involved in the commemoration;

(3) encourage War of 1812 observances that provide an excellent visitor experience and beneficial interaction between visitors and the natural and cultural resources of the various War of 1812 sites;

(4) facilitate international involvement in the War of 1812 observances;

(5) support and facilitate marketing efforts for a commemorative coin, stamp, and related activities for the War of 1812 observances; and

(6) promote the protection of War of 1812 resources and assist in the appropriate development of heritage tourism and economic benefits to the United States.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COMMEMORATION.—The term "commemoration" means the commemoration of the War of 1812.

(2) COMMISSION.—The term "Commission" means the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission established in section 4(a).

(3) QUALIFIED CITIZEN.—The term "qualified citizen" means a citizen of the United States with an interest in, support for, and expertise appropriate to the commemoration.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(5) STATES.—The term “States”—

(A) means the States of Alabama, Kentucky, Indiana, Louisiana, Maryland, Vermont, Virginia, New York, Maine, Michigan, and Ohio; and

(B) includes agencies and entities of each State.

SEC. 4. STAR-SPANGLED BANNER AND WAR OF 1812 COMMEMORATION COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a commission to be known as the “Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission”.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall be composed of 22 members, of whom—

(A) 11 members shall be qualified citizens appointed by the Secretary after consideration of nominations submitted by the Governors of Alabama, Kentucky, Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Vermont, and Virginia;

(B) 3 members shall be qualified citizens appointed by the Secretary after consideration of nominations submitted by the Mayors of the District of Columbia, the City of Baltimore, and the City of New Orleans;

(C) 2 members shall be employees of the National Park Service, of whom—

(i) 1 shall be the Director of the National Park Service (or a designee); and

(ii) 1 shall be an employee of the National Park Service having experience relevant to the commemoration;

(D) 4 members shall be qualified citizens appointed by the Secretary with consideration of recommendations—

(i) 1 of which are submitted by the majority leader of the Senate;

(ii) 1 of which are submitted by the minority leader of the Senate;

(iii) 1 of which are submitted by the majority leader of the House of Representatives;

(iv) 1 of which are submitted by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(E) 2 members shall be appointed by the Secretary from among individuals with expertise in the history of the War of 1812.

(2) DATE OF APPOINTMENTS.—The appointment of a member of the Commission shall be made not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) TERM; VACANCIES.—

(1) TERM.—A member shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(2) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Commission—

(A) shall not affect the powers of the Commission; and

(B) shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(d) VOTING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall act only on an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Commission.

(2) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum.

(e) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

(1) SELECTION.—The Commission shall select a chairperson and a vice chairperson from among the members of the Commission.

(2) ABSENCE OF CHAIRPERSON.—The vice chairperson shall act as chairperson in the absence of the chairperson.

(f) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which all members of the Commission have been appointed and funds have been provided, the Commission shall hold the initial meeting of the Commission.

(g) MEETINGS.—Not less than twice a year, the Commission shall meet at the call of the chairperson or a majority of the members of the Commission.

(h) REMOVAL.—Any member who fails to attend 3 successive meetings of the Commission or who otherwise fails to participate substantively in the work of the Commission may be removed by the Secretary and the vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

SEC. 5. DUTIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

(1) plan, encourage, develop, execute, and coordinate programs, observances, and activities commemorating the historic events that preceded and are associated with the War of 1812;

(2) facilitate the commemoration throughout the United States and internationally;

(3) coordinate the activities of the Commission with State commemoration commissions, the National Park Service, the Department of Defense, and other appropriate Federal agencies;

(4) encourage civic, patriotic, historical, educational, religious, economic, tourism, and other organizations throughout the United States to organize and participate in the commemoration to expand the understanding and appreciation of the significance of the War of 1812;

(5) provide technical assistance to States, localities, units of the National Park System, and nonprofit organizations to further the commemoration and commemorative events;

(6) coordinate and facilitate scholarly research on, publication about, and interpretation of the people and events associated with the War of 1812;

(7) design, develop, and provide for the maintenance of an exhibit that will travel throughout the United States during the commemoration period to interpret events of the War of 1812 for the educational benefit of the citizens of the United States;

(8) ensure that War of 1812 commemorations provide a lasting legacy and long-term public benefit leading to protection of the natural and cultural resources associated with the War of 1812; and

(9) examine and review essential facilities and infrastructure at War of 1812 sites and identify possible improvements that could be made to enhance and maximize visitor experience at the sites.

(b) STRATEGIC PLAN; ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLANS.—The Commission shall prepare a strategic plan and annual performance plans for any activity carried out by the Commission under this Act.

(c) REPORTS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Commission shall submit to Congress an annual report that contains a list of each gift, bequest, or devise to the Commission with a value of more than \$250, together with the identity of the donor of each gift, bequest, or devise.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than September 30, 2015, the Commission shall submit to the Secretary and Congress a final report that includes—

(A) a summary of the activities of the Commission;

(B) a final accounting of any funds received or expended by the Commission; and

(C) the final disposition of any historically significant items acquired by the Commission and other properties not previously reported.

SEC. 6. POWERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may—

(1) solicit, accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of money, services, and real and personal property related to the commemoration in accordance with Department of the Interior and National Park Service written standards for accepting gifts from outside sources;

(2) appoint such advisory committees as the Commission determines to be necessary to carry out this Act;

(3) authorize any member or employee of the Commission to take any action the Commission is authorized to take under this Act;

(4) use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other agencies of the Federal Government; and

(5) make grants to communities, nonprofit, commemorative commissions or organizations, and research and scholarly organizations to develop programs and products to assist in researching, publishing, marketing, and distributing information relating to the commemoration.

(b) LEGAL AGREEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this Act, the Commission may—

(A) procure supplies, services, and property; and

(B) make or enter into contracts, leases, or other legal agreements.

(2) LENGTH.—Any contract, lease, or other legal agreement made or entered into by the Commission shall not extend beyond the date of termination of the Commission.

(c) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may secure directly from a Federal agency such information as the Commission considers necessary to carry out this Act.

(2) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—On request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of the agency shall provide the information to the Commission in accordance with applicable laws.

(d) FACA NONAPPLICABILITY.—Section 14(b) of the Federal Advisory Committees Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Commission.

(e) NO EFFECT ON AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this Act supersedes the authority of the States or the National Park Service concerning the commemoration.

SEC. 7. PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (c)(1)(A), a member of the Commission shall serve without compensation.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the Commission.

(3) STATUS.—A member of the Commission, who is not otherwise a Federal employee, shall be considered a Federal employee only for purposes of the provisions of law related to ethics, conflicts of interest, corruption, and any other criminal or civil statute or regulation governing the conduct of Federal employees.

(b) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND OTHER STAFF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the Commission may, without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service and termination of employees (including regulations), appoint and terminate an executive director, subject to confirmation by the Commission, and appoint and terminate such other additional personnel as are necessary to enable the Commission to perform the duties of the Commission.

(2) STATUS.—The Executive Director and other staff appointed under this subsection shall be considered Federal employees under section 2105 of title 5, United States Code, notwithstanding the requirements of such section.

(3) CONFIRMATION OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The employment of an executive director shall be subject to confirmation by the Commission.

(4) COMPENSATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Chairperson of the Commission may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates.

(B) MAXIMUM RATE OF PAY.—The rate of basic pay for the executive director and other personnel shall not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

(c) GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—

(1) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—

(A) SERVICE ON COMMISSION.—A member of the Commission who is an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall serve without compensation in addition to the compensation received for the services of the member as an officer or employee of the Federal Government.

(B) DETAIL.—At the request of the Commission, the head of any Federal agency may detail, on a reimbursable or nonreimbursable basis, any of the personnel of the agency to the Commission to assist the Commission in carrying out the duties of the Commission under this Act.

(C) CIVIL SERVICE STATUS.—Notwithstanding any other provisions in this section, Federal employees who serve on the Commission, or otherwise provide services under the Act, shall continue to be Federal employees for the purpose of any law specific to Federal employees, without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

(2) STATE EMPLOYEES.—The Commission may—

(A) accept the services of personnel detailed from States (including subdivisions of States) under subchapter VI of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code; and

(B) reimburse States for services of detailed personnel.

(d) MEMBERS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—Members of advisory committees appointed under section 6(a)(2)—

(1) shall not be considered employees of the Federal Government by reason of service on the committees for the purpose of any law specific to Federal employees, except for the purposes of chapter 11 of title 18, United States Code, relating to conflicts of interest; and

(2) may be paid travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of the duties of the committee.

(e) VOLUNTEER AND UNCOMPENSATED SERVICES.—Notwithstanding section 1342 of title 31, United States Code, the Commission may accept and use such voluntary and uncompensated services as the Commission determines necessary.

(f) SUPPORT SERVICES.—The Director of the National Park Service shall provide to the Commission, on a reimbursable basis, such administrative support services as the Commission may request.

(g) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Commission may employ experts and consultants on a temporary or intermittent basis in accordance with section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily equiva-

lent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of that title. Such personnel shall be considered Federal employees under section 2105 of title 5, United States Code, notwithstanding the requirements of such section.

SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act not to exceed \$500,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2015.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts appropriated under this section for any fiscal year shall remain available until December 31, 2015.

SEC. 9. TERMINATION OF COMMISSION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall terminate on December 31, 2015.

(b) TRANSFER OF MATERIALS.—Not later than the date of termination, the Commission shall transfer any documents, materials, books, manuscripts, miscellaneous printed matter, memorabilia, relics, exhibits, and any materials donated to the Commission that relate to the War of 1812, to Fort McHenry National Monument and Historic Shrine.

(c) DISPOSITION OF FUNDS.—Any funds held by the Commission on the date of termination shall be deposited in the general fund of the Treasury.

(d) ANNUAL AUDIT.—The Inspector General of the Department of the Interior shall perform an annual audit of the Commission, shall make the results of the audit available to the public, and shall transmit such results to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform in the House of Representatives and the Committee on Judiciary in the Senate.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleague in the consideration of H.R. 1389, a bill to establish the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission.

H.R. 1389 was introduced by Representative John Sarbanes on March 7, 2007. This legislation was reported from the Oversight and Government Reform Committee on July 19, 2007, by voice vote.

Mr. Speaker, the War of 1812 was fought between the United States and Great Britain from June 1812 to the spring of 1815. During this time, a young lawyer by the name of Francis Scott Key witnessed the last assault by the British against Fort McHenry in Baltimore. He was so inspired by the

fort's still standing with its huge flag flying in the breeze of victory that Mr. Key wrote a poem celebrating this battle and the flag. He composed the lines about our great flag, the Star-Spangled Banner, which later became our country's national anthem.

I support H.R. 1389, a bill that will establish the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission to encourage, plan and execute programs commemorating the historic events that are associated with the War of 1812.

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Mr. Speaker, I would commend Representative SARBANES for introducing this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1389, the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission Act. The commission established by this legislation would be responsible for developing programs, observations, and activities commemorating the historic events associated with the War of 1812. The commission would also enhance the visitor experience at the War of 1812 sites and facilitate scholarly research on the people and events associated with the War of 1812. This legislation would provide for appropriate commemorative activities to increase public understanding, particularly that of young people, of the meaning of the War of 1812 and the history of the United States.

There is much to be learned about the effect of the War of 1812 on American history, including the victories at Fort McHenry, New Orleans and Plattsburg. As one example, it is often overlooked or even forgotten that Francis Scott Key wrote the Star-Spangled Banner during the War of 1812.

The commission is intending to raise public awareness through observations that will bring this important chapter in American history to thousands of visitors. I urge support of this bill.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield such time as he might consume to the author of this legislation, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES).

Mr. SARBANES. I want to thank Chairman DAVIS for yielding me time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1389, the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission Act, which I had the privilege of introducing. This legislation would empower a commission to plan and coordinate what I believe is going to be one of the most spectacular and memorable commemorations in recent history in this country, and that is the bicentennial celebration of the War of 1812 and the Francis Scott Key poem written during the British bombardment of

Fort McHenry, Maryland, which later became the Star-Spangled Banner, our national anthem.

The Park Service recommended the creation of such a commission in a 2004 study. Its membership would be drawn from citizens from historically significant States, from National Park Service officials, historical experts, and other individuals selected by congressional leadership.

Because we are fast approaching the bicentennial of the War of 1812, I am pleased the House has taken up this legislation. I hope that the Senate will do so as well and the measure can be signed into law in the near future.

Mr. Speaker, many refer to the War of 1812 as the “second war of independence.” When the war began, our fragile experiment in democracy was still in its early stages, and the Nation found itself under attack from one of the most powerful countries in the world. Many wondered whether a democracy could hold together through the trials of war. The War of 1812 proved that it could, and set the stage for the spread of democracy around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Chairman WAXMAN and Chairman DAVIS for bringing this measure to the floor. I hope all of my colleagues will support the bill, which will help ensure a fitting celebration of the War of 1812 and the Star-Spangled Banner bicentennial.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding, and I thank Mr. SARBAKES for introducing this very important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is imperative for all Americans to know our early American history. Soon after the War of Independence and American independence, the new struggling United States had to go to war again with England to keep its independence.

Sometimes the War of 1812 is referred to as the forgotten war in American history. It is referred to as the “second American War of Independence.” Be that as it may, we went to war with England a second time because the British kidnapped American sailors on the high seas and made them involuntary servants in the British Navy.

When the British invaded the United States during the War of 1812, they burned this city, Washington. They used Thomas Jefferson’s books to burn this Capitol. They burned the White House. The President had to flee in the darkness of a torrential rainstorm. The United States future looked bleak.

So after capturing Washington, DC, the British headed north to finish the United States off in Baltimore. During a heated sea battle, the British bombarded Fort McHenry, defending the harbor of Baltimore. But the fort commander stood defiant, refused to surrender, and hoisted a massive American flag over the fort.

Mr. Speaker, this is no small flag. It is 30 feet by 42 feet in size. Such a flag could be seen for miles and miles away from Fort McHenry. An American lawyer named Francis Scott Key was onboard a British ship during the battle. He was there seeking the release of an American captive. After watching the night battle and seeing the glorious U.S. flag at sunrise, he wrote a poem, later turned into a song called the Star-Spangled Banner to honor this American victory.

This national anthem of ours is played at sports games and ceremonies and events across the Nation every day. In fact, I think the first time it was played at a sporting event was at a Chicago White Sox game in the early 1900s. Chairman DAVIS could correct me if that is incorrect.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that Americans understand what the anthem stands for and why it was written. I totally support H.R. 1389. This bill will create a commission to plan activities, programs and observances of history events surrounding this War of 1812. I am proud of how the United States as a new democracy developed into a great Nation during this time. This war and Francis Scott Key should be celebrated and honored and recognized.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, the British left the United States permanently after the battle of Fort McHenry and after Andrew Jackson and his boys defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve my time.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the majority has offered an amendment that I think improves this bill. I support the amendment and would encourage others to join me in supporting H.R. 1389, establishing the Star-Spangled and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission.

I applaud the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBAKES) for his introduction of this bill, and I would urge passage.

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 1389, as amended, and I want to commend the gentleman from Maryland for introducing this legislation and for bringing to our attention the importance of the War of 1812, the importance of our Star-Spangled Banner.

I also take this opportunity to commend my elementary school teachers, especially Mrs. Beadie King, who taught in a one-room school, who was so good that she could teach about the Star-Spangled Banner and you could feel shivers kind of going up and down your back. I am so pleased that I can still at times feel those and recognize perhaps what Francis Scott Key may have been thinking and what he may have been feeling when he looked up and saw that the flag was still standing.

So I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. SARBAKES) again for introducing this legislation and urge its passage.

Mr. MCHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1389, the Star-Spangled Banner and War of 1812 Bicentennial Commission Act. I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation, which is of great importance to my constituents in Northern New York. Thus, I greatly appreciate the work the Gentleman from Maryland, Mr. SARBAKES, the Gentleman from California, Mr. WAXMAN, and the Gentleman from Virginia, Mr. DAVIS, have done to bring H.R. 1389 to the House floor.

I represent New York’s 23rd Congressional District, which encompasses most of Northern New York. From Lake Champlain in the east, my District runs along the St. Lawrence River and our nation’s Northern border to Lake Ontario in the west. The District encompasses territory that played an important role in our nation’s early history; much of it was literally on the front lines of the War of 1812.

During the War of 1812, my District was not only the site of skirmishes but also the significant Battles of Plattsburgh and Sackets Harbor. In fact, 193 years ago on September 11, 1814, Commodore Thomas McDonough repulsed a British invasion led by Sir George Provost at Plattsburgh Bay on Lake Champlain. McDonough’s victory was significant because it ended a grave threat and gave impetus to then-ongoing peace negotiations. Likewise, but earlier during the war and on the other side of the District, Brigadier General Jacob Brown stopped a British invasion led by Sir George Provost and Commodore James Yeo at Sackets Harbor. Of note, Sackets Harbor was the United States’ main shipbuilding naval base on Lake Ontario.

In addition to providing a mechanism to properly remember and honor these and other significant events in our nation’s history, H.R. 1389 is also important to my constituents because of its potential to help increase tourism. Tourism is an important component of the economy in New York’s 23rd District and is a cornerstone of efforts to further much-needed economic development. Accordingly, I ask my colleagues to vote for H.R. 1389 today and I look forward to working further to enact this legislation.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1389, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WOODROW WILSON PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1664) to authorize grants for contributions toward the establishment of the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library.