

In addition, I am pleased to have successfully offered language that added exemptions for international military education and training for civilian personnel under section 541 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, commonly referred to as "Expanded IMET," from the restrictions on security assistance until the Government of Ethiopia can certify it has met certain standards of human rights, democracy, and economic development. While I certainly believe these standards are crucial goals, and that we should be using our aid programs as an incentive for the government to meet these objectives, I also strongly believe that we must continue to fund crucial programs. IMET ensures that the military and related civilian personnel receive a range of necessary training, in important areas including human rights and military justice. I do not believe these crucial programs should be suspended, pending certification. Making sure that the military receives proper training, including in international standards and norms, is a crucial component to helping Ethiopia meet human rights specifications.

Finally, I offered language to provide assistance to promote the privatization of government industries and property. As Ethiopia transitions from a socialist structure to an open-market, I believe it is mutually beneficial for us to assist in this groundbreaking transformation. My language authorizes the President, acting through USAID, to provide assistance to promote the privatization of government owned or controlled industries and property in Ethiopia.

Mr. Speaker, though Ethiopia is currently on the road to democracy, I do not believe we should be treating the country with kid gloves. This is a path that should be paved with civil and political discourse, peaceful transitions of power, and respect for human rights. By necessity, the achievement of a modern democracy requires the implementation of electoral reforms, the separation of powers in the government, and the establishment of a truly independent judiciary. These are the founding principles of our American Republic, and I have seen firsthand the progress on the path to democracy Ethiopia has made since the brutal dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam was brought down in 1991. I strongly believe that the United States should do all it can to support this transition, including bolstering civil society and speaking out when fundamental human rights are violated.

Mr. Speaker, Ethiopia is a leader in its region, and in the African continent, and has the potential to be a great global leader. However, years of fighting and alleged abuses are standing in the way of Ethiopia's progress. We need a roadmap toward establishing peace, stability, protection of human rights, and democracy in Ethiopia, and in the entire Horn of Africa region. This will necessitate addressing the ongoing lawlessness in neighboring Somalia, which continues to destabilize and threaten the entire region.

Ethiopia has a long and proud history. It is the cradle of mankind, as illustrated by "Lucy," also known as Dinkinesh (Amharic for "you are wonderful"), which is the nearly complete hominid skeleton discovered by archaeologists in the Awash Valley of Ethiopia on November 30, 1974. Lucy is estimated to have lived 3.2 million years ago and has redefined science's understanding of human evolution. I was happy to work with Texas State Senator Rodney Ellis, Ethiopian Ambassador Samuel

Assefa, and the Houston Museum of Natural Science to bring Lucy to Houston, which is one of only 9 American cities and the only city in Texas to host the exhibit. The bones are currently on display in Houston, and will be until April 2008.

Ethiopia is also the oldest independent nation in Africa, has never been colonized, and is home to the African Union. Despite Ethiopia's rich history, however, this bill recognizes that recent decades have brought hardship and suffering to Ethiopia's people, through military conflict, natural disasters, and a military dictatorship.

For over a decade in the House of Representatives, and prior to that in the Houston city council, I have been an outspoken and unwavering advocate for the country of Ethiopia and its people, both in Ethiopia and in the diaspora. Following in the legendary footsteps of my predecessor, Mickey Leland, who died attempting to alleviate the starvation faced by Ethiopia's innocent populace, I have been a champion of increasing foreign aid to, political, economic, and social cooperation with, and improving human rights in Ethiopia.

While I continue to advocate close interaction and constructive dialogue with Ethiopia and its leaders, I believe the human rights situation there must be addressed. Of particular recent concern was the detention of elected parliamentarians, human rights advocates, and independent journalists and the harsh response to protesters after Ethiopia's recent unprecedented elections in 2005. In response to reports that thousands of prisoners languished in prisons throughout Ethiopia, I was proud to join a number of my colleagues in sending a letter to Secretary Rice, expressing our strong concern about the treatment of detainees.

In July, an Ethiopian court harshly sentenced 35 opposition leaders and activists to life in prison and denied them the right to vote or run for public office on charges of inciting violence. Although I was pleased to see the Court rebuff the prosecution's call for the death sentence against these defendants, I believe that the sentence of life imprisonment is still too severe a punishment.

However, I am heartened by the active role that elders such as Professor Ephraim Isaac played in the negotiations for these prisoners' release, and I was extremely pleased that these negotiations led to the release of these prisoners. Only through amnesty will the Ethiopian government and opposition leaders be able to secure a path to reconciliation rather than assuring a future of political divisiveness.

This legislation reaffirms the United States commitment to supporting Ethiopia as it builds the necessary institutions and civil society framework for a successful democracy. It contains a number of important provisions directing the Department of State to provide mechanisms for supporting and monitoring the promotion of human rights and democracy within Ethiopia.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we in Congress should focus on the pursuit of truth. It is extremely important that we seek truthful accounts of what is going on in Ethiopia, and in the entire Horn of Africa region, and that we use these reports to develop a roadmap that will guide Ethiopia along the path to democracy and greater guarantees for human rights. This roadmap must be characterized, above all, by firm diplomacy.

I would like to conclude by reiterating my firm belief in the extreme importance of supporting the strengthening of democracy and human rights in Ethiopia.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2003, 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.

□ 1300

COMMISSION ON THE ABOLITION OF THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE ACT

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3432) to establish the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3432

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 "Commission on the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) On March 2, 1807, President Thomas Jefferson signed into law a bill approved by the Congress "An Act to prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States" (hereinafter in this Act referred to as the "1808 Transatlantic Slave Trade Act") and made it unlawful "to import or bring into the United States or territories thereof from any foreign kingdom, place or country, any negro, mulatto, or person of colour, with intent to hold, sell, or dispose of such . . . as a slave, or to be held to service or labour".

(2) Article I, Section 9 of the United States Constitution clearly spelled out that the international slave trade could not be banned before 1808, and it is only on January 1, 1808, that the 1808 Transatlantic Slave Trade Act went into effect.

(3) An Act entitled "An Act to continue in force 'An act to protect the commerce of the United States, and punish the crime of piracy,' and also to make further provisions for punishing the crime of piracy", enacted May 15, 1820, made it unlawful for any citizen of the United States to engage "in the slave trade, or . . ., being of the crew or ship's company of any foreign ship . . ., seize any negro or mulatto . . . with the intent to make . . . a slave . . . or forcibly bring . . . on board any such ship . . .".

(4) The transatlantic slave trade entailed the kidnapping, purchase, and commercial export of Africans, mostly from West and Central Africa, to the European colonies and new nations in the Americas, including the United States, where they were enslaved in forced labor between the 15th and mid-19th centuries.

(5) The term “Middle Passage” refers to the horrific part of the transatlantic slave trade when millions of Africans were chained together and stowed by the hundreds in over-crowded ships where they were forced into small spaces for months without relief as they were transported across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas.

(6) During the Middle Passage, enslaved Africans resisted their enslavement through non-violent and violent means, including hunger strikes, suicide, and shipboard revolts, the most historically-recognized events taking place on board the *Don Carlos* in 1732 and on board the *Amistad* in 1839.

(7) Scholars estimate that, at a minimum, between 10,000,000 and 15,000,000 Africans survived the Middle Passage, were imported as chattel through customs houses and ports across the Americas, and were sold into slavery.

(8) The thirteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States recognizes that “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”.

(9) The slave trade and the legacy of slavery continue to have a profound impact on social and economic disparity, hatred, bias, racism, and discrimination, and continue to affect people in the Americas, particularly those of African descent.

(10) In 2007, the British Parliament marked the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the former British Empire with plans launched by the Department for Education and Skills which provided joint funding of £910,000 (\$1,800,000) for the Understanding Slavery Initiative, and the Heritage Lottery Fund announced awards of over £20,000,000 (\$40,000,000) for projects to commemorate the anniversary.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to establish the Commission on the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to—

(1) ensure a suitable national observance of the bicentennial anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade by sponsoring and supporting commemorative programs;

(2) cooperate with and assist programs and activities throughout the United States in observance of the bicentennial anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade;

(3) assist in ensuring that the observations of the bicentennial anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade are inclusive and appropriately recognize the experiences of all people during this period in history;

(4) support and facilitate international involvement in observances of the bicentennial anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade; and

(5) study the impact of the transatlantic slave trade on the United States and the Americas.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.

There is established a commission to be known as the “Commission on the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade” (referred to in this Act as the “Commission”).

SEC. 4. MEMBERSHIP, DUTIES, AND RELATED MATTERS.

(a) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) The Commission shall be composed of 9 members, of whom—

(i) 3 shall be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

(ii) 2 shall be appointed by the majority leader of the Senate;

(iii) 2 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the House of Representatives; and

(iv) 2 shall be appointed by the minority leader of the Senate.

(B) Each appointing authority described in subparagraph (A) shall appoint the initial members of the Commission not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Members of the Commission shall be individuals with demonstrated expertise or experience in the study and program facilitation on the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery as it relates to the United States and the Americas.

(3) TERM; VACANCIES.—

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

(B) VACANCIES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—A vacancy on the Commission shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

(ii) PARTIAL TERM.—A member appointed to fill a vacancy on the Commission shall serve for the remainder of the term for which the predecessor of the member was appointed.

(4) MEETINGS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall meet—

(i) as many times as necessary; or

(ii) at the call of the Chairperson or the majority of the members of the Commission.

(B) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which all members of the Commission have been appointed, the Commission shall hold its initial meeting.

(C) NOTICE OF MEETINGS.—All Commission members shall be given reasonable advance notice of all Commission meetings.

(D) APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which all members of the Commission have been appointed, the Commission shall—

(i) designate 1 of the members as Chairperson; and

(ii) select an executive director as described under subsection (d)(2).

(5) VOTING.—

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

(B) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission, which includes at least 1 member appointed pursuant to clause (iii) or (iv) of paragraph (1)(A), shall constitute a quorum for conducting business but fewer members may meet or hold hearings.

(b) DUTIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

(A) plan, develop, and execute programs and activities appropriate to commemorate the bicentennial anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade;

(B) facilitate commemoration-related activities throughout the United States;

(C) encourage civic, historical, educational, religious, economic, and other organizations, as well as State and local governments, throughout the United States to organize and participate in anniversary activities to expand the understanding and appreciation of the significance of the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery, particularly as it relates to the United States;

(D) coordinate and facilitate for the public scholarly research on, publication about, and interpretation of, the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery, particularly as it relates to the United States;

(E) assist in the development of appropriate programs and facilities to ensure that the bicentennial anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade provides a lasting legacy and long-term public benefit;

(F) support and facilitate marketing efforts for the issuance of a commemorative coin, postage stamp, and related activities for observances;

(G) facilitate the convening of a joint meeting or joint session of the Congress for ceremonies and activities relating to the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery, particularly as it relates to the United States;

(H) promote the sponsorship of conferences, exhibitions, or public meetings concerning the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery, particularly as it relates to the United States;

(I) coordinate and facilitate the sponsorship of high school and collegiate essay contests concerning the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery, particularly as it relates to the United States; and

(J) examine reports of modern-day slavery and human trafficking to raise the public’s awareness of these matters and ensure such atrocities do not go unnoticed by the people of the United States.

(2) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than March 31, 2009, the Commission shall submit to the Congress a report containing a summary of the activities of the Commission for 2008.

(c) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.—The Commission may—

(1) accept donations and gift items related to the transatlantic slave trade, the institution of slavery, and the significance of slavery to the history of the United States;

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

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

(4) procure supplies, services, and property, and make or enter into contracts, leases, or other legal agreements, to carry out this Act (except that any contracts, leases, or other legal agreements made or entered into by the Commission shall not extend beyond the date of the termination of the Commission); and

(5) use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other Federal agencies.

(d) PERSONNEL MATTERS.—

(1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION.—

(A) BASIC PAY.—Members of the Commission shall not receive compensation for the performance of their duties on behalf of the Commission.

(B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Upon approval of the Chairperson, 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 their homes or regular place of business in the performance of their duties on behalf of the Commission.

(2) STAFF.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the Commission shall, without regard to the civil service laws (including regulations), appoint and terminate an executive director and such other additional personnel as are necessary to enable the Commission to perform its duties.

(B) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—

(i) QUALIFICATIONS.—The person appointed executive director shall have demonstrated expertise or experience in the study and program facilitation on the transatlantic slave trade and the institution of slavery, particularly as it relates to the United States.

(ii) CONFIRMATION.—The employment of an executive director shall be subject to confirmation by the members of the Commission.

(C) COMPENSATION.—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, except that the rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

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

(E) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services in accordance with section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of that title.

(F) NON-APPLICABILITY OF FACA.—Section 14(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Commission.

SEC. 5. TERMINATION.

(a) DATE OF TERMINATION.—The Commission shall terminate on December 31, 2009.

(b) FINAL REPORT.—Upon termination, the Commission shall submit to the Congress a report containing—

(1) a detailed statement of the activities of the Commission; and

(2) a final accounting of the funds received and expended by the Commission.

SEC. 6. 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 gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this bill and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank the chairman of the committee, Mr. LANTOS, for moving this bill through expeditiously, and also the cooperation of our friend, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSEHTINEN), for assisting in the moving of this bill through our committee.

Let me say that January 1, 2008, will mark the 200th anniversary of the Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves, which effectively ended the legal transatlantic slave trade. I am proud to be

the sponsor of H.R. 3432. The Bicentennial Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade Commemoration Commission Act of 2007, is the total title, to honor the victims and survivors of the transatlantic slave trade.

The bill before us establishes a commission to cultivate and preserve the memory of a grave injustice in American history, the transatlantic slave trade, and to mark the trade's conclusion at the hands of our President at that time, Thomas Jefferson.

In the early years of the Republic, the transatlantic slave trade constituted a thriving economic vein of the United States. By 1807, millions of Africans had been captured and transported to the Americas on notorious slave vessels. We may recall "Roots." The 30th anniversary of that is being lived out now, which so vividly showed that era. As a matter of fact, it was the most watched series on television, even today.

Many individuals perished as a result of torture, including rape, malnutrition and disease. Those who survived faced miserable prospects of a lifetime of bondage. Few Americans are aware that captured slaves resisted their enslavement until the bitter end.

During the Middle Passage, enslaved Africans defied their slave masters through nonviolent and violent means, including hunger strikes, suicide, and shipboard revolts, the most historically recognized events taking place on board the *Don Carlos* in 1732 and on board the *Amistad* in 1839, that famous case that was defended by John Quincy Adams, who argued and won the case and had the enslaved people released in Connecticut.

On March 3, 1807, President Thomas Jefferson signed into law the Transatlantic Slave Trade Act, which prohibited the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States. The bill was nothing short of revolutionary. It single-handedly outlawed the longstanding and brutal trade of transporting Africans to the United States.

In commemoration of President Jefferson's act and to explore the impact of the slave trade on the United States, we will move this legislation which is drafted that will establish the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission.

This important body will be tasked with the mandate to plan, develop and execute programs and activities appropriate to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, which we will tend to start talking about "slave trade" as "enslaved people," which is a new definition that is starting to be used. Slaves are now considered people who were enslaved people.

The mission is timely, and the subject is critical. The United States is a primary voice on trafficking issues today, and we are aware also that the principal advocate for human rights and freedom around the world that we

stand so strongly behind. Our Nation's willingness to confront its past and calmly assess the impact of enslaved people on the United States strengthens our ability to serve as an advocate on the international stage. I strongly urge the support of this legislation.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, as the poet Maya Angelou once said, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again." I find these words fitting as we consider H.R. 3432 today.

For over 200 years, countless Africans died in brutal conditions during the so-called Middle Passage, the overseas voyage of their lives to enslavement in America. The United States formally prohibited the importation of slaves nearly 200 years ago, although the institution of slavery persisted in this country for another 50 years afterwards.

This bill will establish a commission to ensure that this important anniversary is appropriately commemorated within the United States and also abroad. In essence, the bill seeks to ensure that all Americans, no matter their age, race, gender, culture, or even religion, are afforded the opportunity to learn more about the institution of slavery and its vestiges so that we may understand this tragic aspect of history.

While we cannot unlive our past, it is hoped that this commission will promote greater tolerance and understanding among all Americans, while shedding light on the fact that slavery still exists in the modern world. Yes, even 200 years after the transatlantic slave trade was abolished, slavery still goes on. It exists through human trafficking and wherever any group of people is systematically robbed of its fundamental human rights.

So I stand in support of H.R. 3432, in the hopes that this commission will help Americans confront the past with honesty, while committing themselves to the eradication of modern-day slavery in all of its forms, no matter where it may be found.

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

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, let me once again thank all of those responsible for moving this bill through. As you recall, it was in 1807 that slavery was abolished in England through the work of Mr. Wilberforce, who for 20 years argued against slavery in the British Parliament. A resolution was passed this year by Mr. PITTS commending the abolition of slavery in Great Britain and commending Mr. Wilberforce for his work as a great abolitionist. So we are pleased that this will give us time to commemorate, to investigate, to remember those who had this difficult period of time.

As has been indicated, even though transatlantic slavery was abolished in

1807, slavery continued. As a matter of fact, even in the North, and our State has found records that even after the Emancipation Proclamation and as late as 1866, the last slave was freed in New Jersey. Many people are unaware of the fact that there was slavery in New Jersey, which abolished slavery, but you had to be 25 as a man and 21 as a woman, and any children born of a union had to remain in slavery. Therefore, people remained in slavery up through after the Emancipation Proclamation, which only freed slaves in the Confederacy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE).

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the distinguished chairman of the committee. I rise enthusiastically to support the present legislation on the floor, because we have had a rocky time, Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of months, and we have raised in the current light that race and history are not relevant.

I am grateful that the most powerful lawmaking body in the world has now come to the floor to acknowledge the slave trade and all of the ramifications, from its beginning to its ending, because we have been told over the last couple of months that there is no concern to a young African American male still being incarcerated in the State of Georgia and that race is not an issue. We have been told that there is no problem to the existence of the Jena Six, and that race is not an issue. Likewise, we have been told that inequity in our school systems that impact heavily on African American and other minorities is not an issue of race, and many times it is. So to be able to rise to debate this question of recognizing the impact of slavery and the slave trade and its relationship to our international allies and their history with it is extremely important.

Might I, in my comments, as I support the underlying bill, thank the chairman for his leadership. I thank Congresswoman BARBARA LEE. I particularly thank the chairman for his leadership on remuneration.

On the previous bill, very briefly, I would like to acknowledge my support for the remuneration of those families that suffered in the tragedy of the African Embassies, who did not get a response, did not get coverage, did not get a response from the Federal Government for 9 years after this tragic incident where they lost their loved ones.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the full committee and other members of the full Committee on Foreign Affairs for understanding that the monies had to be raised to compensate for the grief and pain that these particular family members now hold dear to their heart. That legislation was long in coming, and it is crucial that we did it under this Democratic majority Congress. We pressed the administration to sign it.

Then I would finally like to comment, Mr. Speaker, that my delay was because we had a hearing, at the same time as this legislation, on Ethiopia. Having just come back from Ethiopia, I know how hard Mr. PAYNE has toiled. I, frankly, am concerned on the recent legislation that I know has just passed that we would have an indictment of a chairperson who has shown nothing but love and affection for the continent of Africa.

I said in my remarks that we need to be big boys and girls. The world arena of diplomacy is a tough business, and we need to be able to have tough love. We need to be able to love the people of Ethiopia and its opportunities, but we likewise need to know that we need to be able to promote human rights, we need to be able to have an independent judiciary, we need to be able to have a move toward democratization and a recognition of the brilliance of Prime Minister Meles.

But we have to address the concerns of the people, and I am grateful that amendments that I offered in that legislation now on the floor were accepted, that we have greater exchange between U.S. and Ethiopian judiciary, that we begin to look at changing property ownership from Ethiopia to the people. I saw that firsthand in Ethiopia. And in the discussion we had in the committee, it is important that we look at the Somalia-Ethiopian border and the people caught up in that crisis and begin to fight for humanitarian rights.

That is crucial. I believe that this legislation that passed just prior to my coming to the floor, I believe the legislation on the terrorist victims whose families were lost in the African Embassies 9 years ago, and this legislation, begins to address nationally and internationally that America understands that this Congress will not abnegate its responsibility to, one, affirm its commitment to the continent of Africa, but also to understand the questions of race, and that race should not be negated for the crisis that we face.

Mr. Chairman, let me thank you for your leadership and also for the acceptance of my amendments regarding the Ethiopian bill. I still, in the name of Mickey Leland, have a love and affection for Ethiopia and will continue to work with a degree of tough love with Ethiopia. I hope that the message that came forward, that you can't be harsh, you have to handle it with kid gloves, is very tricky and that it does not keep us from fighting for those incarcerated, fighting for those who are in need of humanitarian needs, and affirming the value of Ethiopia as it fights with us in the war against terror, and in Sudan. Why should we be afraid to give tough love? It will help the people of Ethiopia. That is what we are looking for.

Ethiopian Americans, bring us your roadmap so that we can work together and make not only the United States the best country in the world, but work with Ethiopia as it aspires to be a shining star of democracy on the continent.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3432, the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade of 2007, which I am proud, along with over 90 of my colleagues, to cosponsor. This legislation recognizes the 200th anniversary of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and it establishes the rubric from which the Commission, to be known as the “Transatlantic Slave Trade 200th Anniversary Commission,” shall be formed.

I would like to thank my distinguished colleague, Congressman PAYNE, for introducing this important legislation, as well as the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman LANTOS, for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, though 200 years have passed since the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the legacy of slavery continues to have a profound impact on American society. The legacy of social and economic disparity lives on, as do hatred, bias, and discrimination. Despite two centuries of progress, the African American community continues to feel the impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and subsequent years of racism and persecution.

While our Nation has pursued the ideals of liberty and equality for all, there still remain steps that must be taken in order to ensure that even such a dark piece of our Nation's history be preserved and its conclusion at the hand of President Thomas Jefferson be celebrated.

Mr. Speaker, the bill before us establishes a commission to cultivate and preserve the memory of a grave injustice in American history, we must recognize and in some small way try to rectify our past. In the early years of the Republic, the transatlantic slave trade constituted a thriving economic vein of the United States. By 1807, millions of Africans had been captured and transported to the Americas, many perishing as the result of torture, rape, malnutrition, and disease. It was not until March of 1807 that President Thomas Jefferson signed into law “An Act to prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States,” a Congressionally approved bill intended to end the heinous practice of the transatlantic slave trade.

It is in commemoration of President Jefferson's revolutionary act, and to explore further the impacts of the slave trade on our Nation that H.R. 3432 establishes the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission. This import commission will be composed of 11 congressionally appointed members charged with the task of planning, developing, and executing programs and activities appropriate to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

January 1, 2008 will mark the 200th anniversary of the “Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves.” The United States today serves as a moral compass for the rest of the world and as such we must provide a voice for human trafficking issues. Our willingness to confront our Nation's past and to address the impacts of the slave trade and its legacy on the United States strengthens our undeterred commitment to serving as an advocate for human rights and freedom in the international community.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3432 which establishes the

200th Anniversary Commission of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It was 200 years ago in 1807, when first the British Parliament and then the U.S. Congress abolished the then 300 year old practice of forcibly removing Africans from their homes along the Western coast of that continent to provide free labor for the empires of Europe in the New World.

The triangular trade would link the peoples of Africa, Europe and the Americas in a chain of blood, power, money, imperialism and despair and set the tone for our modern day relationships as none of our ancestors were left untouched by its sheer brutality.

By the time it was all over, the world's first massive attempt at globalization, would profoundly change it from corner to corner and would leave behind many of the social reverberations of race, class and poverty that we as a world community struggle with today.

As we recognize this momentous anniversary and the way it has shaped the lives of African descendants in the Western Hemisphere, and as one of those descendants I want to take the opportunity to call attention to the end of enslavement of Africans in my own district, the U.S. Virgin Islands, which was then the Danish West Indies. The abolition of the slave trade did not immediately end slavery. It was not until 1848 in response to an uprising by enslaved Africans demanding emancipation that slavery was ended there. It is a day which we celebrate on July 3rd of every year, and this year will be the 160th Anniversary of that important event.

As we approach that anniversary it is relevant to note the dialogue that the people of the Virgin Islands and the people of Denmark have embarked upon regarding reparations—not in terms of monetary compensation, but in education, restoration and reconciliation efforts that can finally close that sad chapter of our history and our relationship. While discussions have not taken place at a government level, we anticipate that these will begin in the near future and we look forward to the opportunities this could make available to both sides.

Mr. Speaker, returning to the resolution before us, it is important that we mark the end of this dark period in world history and human relations and that we study and commemorate the events that led up to the beginning, the middle and the end of slavery. It is important that the civic, historical, educational, religious and economic activities planned on the state and national levels be used for the American people to look back and seek understanding of that time and the legacy that it has left behind.

As we commemorate with speeches and conferences and exhibitions, let us remember that there is still human trafficking taking place today and that we should be as adamant and as vigilant as our forbears of 200 years ago, in seeing to its end.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3432, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title was amended so as to read: "A bill to establish the Commission on the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CONGRESSIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY ACT AMENDMENTS

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3571) to amend the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 to permit individuals who have served as employees of the Office of Compliance to serve as Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, or General Counsel of the Office, and to permit individuals appointed to such positions to serve one additional term.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3571

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

SECTION 1. PERMITTING FORMER OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE EMPLOYEES TO SERVE IN APPOINTED POSITIONS WITH OFFICE.

Section 301(d)(2)(B) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1381(d)(2)(B)) is amended by striking "legislative branch," and inserting "legislative branch (other than the Office)."

SEC. 2. PERMITTING ADDITIONAL TERM FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, AND GENERAL COUNSEL OF OFFICE OF COMPLIANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—Section 302(a)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995 (2 U.S.C. 1382(a)(3)) is amended by striking "a single term" and inserting "not more than 2 terms".

(2) DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS.—Section 302(b)(2) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1382(b)(2)) is amended by striking "a single term" and inserting "not more than 2 terms".

(3) GENERAL COUNSEL.—Section 302(c)(5) of such Act (2 U.S.C. 1382(c)(5)) is amended by striking "a single term" and inserting "not more than 2 terms".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply with respect to an individual who is first appointed to the position of Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, or General Counsel of the Office of Compliance after the date of the enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. McCARTHY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on H.R. 3571.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the Office of Compliance is an independent agency that was tasked by Congress to oversee the administration of the Congressional Accountability Act, which provides congressional and legislative branch employees with workplace protections enjoyed by other Federal and private sector workers.

Being responsible for the oversight of 12 workplace protection, health care, labor and civil rights laws is a huge task that requires a well-seasoned and experienced staff. Unfortunately, when the Congressional Accountability Act was signed into law in 1995, the law barred the Office of Compliance from promoting from within. This lack of flexibility threatens to impact the effectiveness of the office by preventing them from building on the expertise gained by certain personnel.

This legislation would lift the current ban on hiring former legislative branch employees within 4 years of their appointment to the Office of Compliance, as well as allowing for the reappointment of executive staff for one additional term. Congress passed legislation during both the 108th Congress and 109th Congress to temporarily address the issue of reappointment. Both pieces of legislation, H.R. 5122 and H.R. 3071, were noncontroversial and passed both Chambers unanimously.

Let us continue to provide the Office of Compliance with the tools needed to carry out their mandate of ensuring that all of our workers' rights are protected.

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

Mr. McCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3571, which provides needed flexibility for the Office of Compliance to fill critical positions within the office and to maintain institutional knowledge within the office.

The Office of Compliance provides an important function in the legislative branch. It is charged with administering and enforcing the Congressional Accountability Act. The act, one of the first considered and passed by the 104th Congress with the new Republican congressional majority, required Congress to comply with the same employment and workplace safety laws that applied to the private sector, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Occupational Safety and Health Act, and the Family and Medical Leave Act.

Current law governing the office places limits on the appointment and tenure of the staff and board. These limits, placed in part to preserve the integrity and independence of the office, have unfortunately resulted in the board's inability to fill vacancies with the best-qualified candidates.

In addition, GAO has recommended, and the board agreed, that Congress amend the law to allow for reappointment of board members and staff to an