

of the United States, remarked that the spirituals, "told a tale of woe which was then altogether beyond my feeble comprehension; they were tones loud, long, and deep; they breathed the prayer and complaint of souls boiling over with the bitterest anguish. Every tone was a testimony against slavery and a prayer to God for deliverance from chains. . . ."

Unfortunately their plight for freedom from slavery would not end until 1865 when the United States ratified the 13th amendment to the constitution, but our fight for equality against injustices, though easier today, still taries on. The singing of these African American spirituals is just as much a part of America as our flag and should be celebrated and seen as a thread in the fabric of our rich and diverse nation.

Many slaves were not allowed to learn to read and write but they were allowed to have their faith and their song. It was these two things that became a foundation in the African American community and intertwined, was used as a method of survival, as a means to cope with human servitude and echoed their strong desire to be free. It was in these songs that an oral history of their plight was communicated to each other, taught to their children, recorded their sad history and healed their broken hearts.

The Old Negro spiritual is still alive today. The influence of these songs is felt in gospel and the many popular genres of music that evolved from gospel. African American spirituals spread all over the United States, and the songs we know of today may only represent a small portion of the total number of the spirituals that once existed.

I thank my colleague, Ms. DELAURO, for introducing this important legislation, to ensure that we celebrate, treasure and recognize the African American spiritual as a national treasure and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for H. Res. 120, which recognizes the African American spiritual as a national treasure. The African American spiritual is both an expression of culture and faith, and a symbol of the path to triumph in our democracy.

The African American spiritual originated with many cultures in Africa, and became one of the few forms of expression that the African slaves were able to maintain while held in bondage in America. The spirituals not only served to uplift, but also served as a secret code to direct those enslaved to freedom. Lyrics from songs like "Steal Away (to Jesus)" and "Wade in the Water" were guides for those who planned to escape and served as instructions to allow those escaping to avoid being traced by slave catchers. Spirituals such as "Follow the Drinking Gourd" were also means of secretly communicating maps and directions for escaping slaves to reach the network of the Underground Railroad. After the abolition of slavery in the United States in 1865, the African American spiritual remained an important expression of culture, faith, and social justice, especially during the Civil Rights movements across the Nation in the 1950s and 1960s.

And so today, also in honor of Black History Month, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the African American spiritual and the legacy left to us by those who fought for free-

dom and rights in this country for all citizens. The African American spiritual is not only testimony of history, but is a part of our national heritage.

Mr. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 120.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. 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 question will be postponed.

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TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAMS UNDER SMALL BUSINESS ACT AND SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 434) to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through December 31, 2007, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert:

**SECTION 1. ADDITIONAL TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF PROGRAMS UNDER THE SMALL BUSINESS ACT AND THE SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT ACT OF 1958.**

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—Section 1 of the Act entitled "An Act to extend temporarily certain authorities of the Small Business Administration", approved October 10, 2006 (Public Law 109-316; 120 Stat. 1742), is amended by striking "February 2, 2007" each place it appears and inserting "July 31, 2007".

(b) *EFFECTIVE DATE.*—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on February 2, 2007.

Amend the title so as to read: "An Act to provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through July 31, 2007, and for other purposes".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we will consider H.R. 434 as it came back to us from the Senate. This bill extends the authorization of the Small Business Administration and its programs through July 31,

2007. This short-term extension will ensure entrepreneurs continue to have access to the programs at the SBA that are designed to stimulate job creation and economic development throughout the United States.

Small businesses rely heavily on the SBA and its programs to start and run their ventures. As the sole Federal agency charged with assisting this Nation's 26 million small businesses, it is critical that the SBA is able to meet their needs.

While the original bill would have extended the agency until December 31, 2007, we will support this bill in order to ensure the agency's programs can operate through the end of July with no disruptions. As such, we move to pass H.R. 434 today.

I look forward to working with Ranking Member Steve Chabot to draft a bipartisan bill that will ensure the SBA can adequately and efficiently respond to the needs of entrepreneurs. Our Nation's main job creators, small businesses, deserve nothing less.

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

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

This bill simply, as the chairwoman indicated, extends all the programs, including pilot programs, the authorities or provisions of the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act as they are presently constituted until July 31 of this year. The programs and authorities of the Small Business Administration expired on February 2. We would have preferred a longer extension, but the other body insisted on a shorter extension date of July 31.

Passage of this bill will hopefully give the Small Business Committees in both the House and the Senate the time necessary to work in a bipartisan manner on a more comprehensive SBA reauthorization bill.

Many of the programs of the SBA do not operate under a direct appropriation. This legislation will reaffirm their legality to operate, including the Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is quite simple. It contains the exact same language, with only the date changed, that passed the House last month by an overwhelming vote of 413-2.

Again, I look forward to working in a bipartisan manner with Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ and other committee members to produce a good, fiscally responsible SBA reauthorization bill that can eventually be signed into law by the President. I especially want to thank Chairwoman VELÁZQUEZ for her graciousness in agreeing to bring up this bill in such a quick manner.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 434 with the Senate amendments so that our Nation's small businesses will see no interruption of service from the SBA over the next 5 months while we work to adopt a comprehensive reauthorization bill.

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

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers at this time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. CHABOT. We also have no further speakers, and we yield back the balance of our time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendments to the bill, H.R. 434.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendments were concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### HONORING THE LIFE OF BENNY PARSONS

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 69) recognizing and honoring Benny Parsons and expressing the condolences of the House of Representatives to his family on his death.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 69

Whereas Benny Parsons was born in Wilkes County, North Carolina, on July 12, 1941, and resided in the towns of Ellerbe and Concord, North Carolina in the Eighth Congressional District;

Whereas Benny Parsons was the son of Hazel and the late Harold Parsons and the brother of Steve, Phil and Patty;

Whereas Benny Parsons started racing in 1963 at the Mt. Clemens Speedway in Mt. Clemens, Michigan;

Whereas Benny Parsons was the Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA) Rookie of the Year in 1965 and ARCA Champion in 1968 and 1969;

Whereas Benny Parsons was the first ARCA Champion inducted into the International Sports Hall of Fame;

Whereas Benny Parsons made his Winston Cup debut in 1970 and had his first Winston Cup victory at South Boston Virginia Speedway in 1971;

Whereas Benny Parsons was Winston Cup Champion in 1973;

Whereas Benny Parsons had an extraordinary career as a National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR) driver, winning 21 races, including the 1975 Daytona 500;

Whereas in 1982 Benny Parsons qualified for the NASCAR Winston 500 at Talladega Superspeedway at 200.175 miles per hour, the first NASCAR qualification run over 200 mph;

Whereas in 1998 Benny Parsons was named one of the 50 Greatest Drivers in NASCAR History;

Whereas after a successful career as a driver, Benny Parsons developed a successful career in broadcasting, further expanding his sport through his insight and commentary;

Whereas Benny Parsons was known for his kindness by all who had the good fortune to meet him;

Whereas Benny Parsons was a loving husband to his wife Terri and an exceptional father to his sons Kevin and Keith;

Whereas Benny Parsons was a man of strong faith and character; and

Whereas Benny Parsons passed away on January 16, 2007, prompting friend and

former competitor Darrell Waltrip to state that “Benny Parsons was the kindest, sweetest, most considerate person I have ever known. He was a great champion, a great ambassador for our sport but more than that, he was a great person. He exemplified that good guys can be winners too.”: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes Benny Parsons as one of the greatest race car drivers ever to participate in the sport of auto racing and recognizes his many contributions to the Nation throughout his lifetime;

(2) honors Benny Parsons for transcending the sport of auto racing to become a role model as both a talented competitor and mentor and as a loving husband and father; and

(3) extends its deepest condolences to the family of Benny Parsons.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask 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, today we honor and remember the life of Benny Parsons and his contribution to the racing community. Mr. Parsons was a legendary NASCAR driver and TV analyst. His thoughtful insights as an announcer earned him the nickname The Professor, and his achievements as a driver include a Winston Cup NASCAR championship.

Born in Wilkes County, North Carolina, he developed a penchant for cars and racing with his father. At the age of 18, he moved to Detroit where he drove taxis and worked at a service station. Soon thereafter he started his NASCAR career. In 1971, he won his first race, and in 1973 won the NASCAR championship. Mr. Parsons battled with drivers like Richard Petty and Carl Yarborough throughout his racing career that stretched over 20 years.

After Parsons retired from racing in 1988, he became a commentator and a recognized voice for NASCAR. His work helped NASCAR become one of the most widely watched sports in America and taught many newcomers to understand and enjoy racing. Earlier this year Mr. Parsons succumbed to complications from lung cancer.

So I urge my colleagues to rise in support of H. Res. 69.

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

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We are very sorry to hear about Benny Parsons losing his life and his

battle with lung cancer. He was a great race car driver, known to his friends as BP. He spent his early years in North Carolina, where he began his career in sports playing high school football.

Shortly after high school, his family moved to Detroit where his father ran a taxicab company. He helped his father and drove cabs and also worked at a local gas station.

In a town known as Motor City, Benny's interest and experience in automobiles and racing thrived. He quickly became a real huge race fan.

As the story goes, he lucked out when a truck towing a race car pulled into the station for a fill-up, and after talking with the truck driver, he was invited to join him on his way to nearby Mount Clemens Speedway. Once they arrived at the track, the race car driver who was supposed to drive the car did not show up, and so BP offered to drive the car, and that was his first race.

It is hard to believe that somebody would go from a gas station to a race car and get in it right away. I am from Indianapolis, Indiana. The Indianapolis 500 is driven there, and I cannot imagine anybody without any past experience getting into a race car and driving it and doing well, but BP did.

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In 1964, Benny Parsons drove in his first official NASCAR race. Only a year later, he received the Rookie of the Year award from the Auto Racing Club of America, in one year. He would go on to win the ARCA championship in both 1968 and 1969. He had an impressive record in racing during 1971 and 1972, and his points earned him the NASCAR championship in 1973.

He also won the Daytona 500 in 1975 and the 1980 World 600 championship at Charlotte, and he continued on to win the National Speedway USA, the Texas World Speedway and his career final victory at the Coca-Cola 500 in Atlanta, Georgia. Overall, he had 283 top-10 finishes and won 21 major races.

After he finished his last race in 1988, he switched gears from driving to commentating. He started out reporting from the pits during his final years of racing but began full time for both ESPN and TBS in 1988. His firsthand knowledge of the sport captivated his audiences. He could talk from the prospective of both a fan and a driver, and was skilled at sharing his insights through his broadcasts.

As the NASCAR industry grew more popular and was televised more frequently, he commentated for both NBC and TNT. Parsons received an ACE award in 1989 and an ESPN Emmy award in 1986. His talent as an announcer earned him the new nickname, The Professor. It is a long way from race car driver to professor, but he earned it.

When he spoke, audiences listened and learned from him. In the summer of 2006, Parsons began to have trouble breathing. His doctors diagnosed him