

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I would inquire as to whether the gentleman from Florida has any more speakers.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I do not.

Mr. CARNEY. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "aye" on House Resolution 134.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. CARNEY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 134.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. CARNEY. 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.

ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM IN CERTAIN DISTRICT COURTS TO ENCOURAGE ENHANCEMENT OF EXPERTISE IN PATENT CASES AMONG DISTRICT JUDGES

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 34) to establish a pilot program in certain United States district courts to encourage enhancement of expertise in patent cases among district judges.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 74

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

SECTION 1. PILOT PROGRAM IN CERTAIN DISTRICT COURTS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established a program, in each of the United States district courts designated under subsection (b), under which—

(A) those district judges of that district court who request to hear cases under which one or more issues arising under any Act of Congress relating to patents or plant variety protection must be decided, are designated by the chief judge of the court to hear those cases;

(B) cases described in subparagraph (A) are randomly assigned to the judges of the district court, regardless of whether the judges are designated under subparagraph (A);

(C) a judge not designated under subparagraph (A) to whom a case is assigned under subparagraph (B) may decline to accept the case; and

(D) a case declined under subparagraph (C) is randomly reassigned to one of those judges of the court designated under subparagraph (A).

(2) SENIOR JUDGES.—Senior judges of a district court may be designated under paragraph (1)(A) if at least 1 judge of the court in regular active service is also so designated.

(3) RIGHT TO TRANSFER CASES PRESERVED.—This section shall not be construed to limit the ability of a judge to request the reassignment of or otherwise transfer a case to which

the judge is assigned under this section, in accordance with otherwise applicable rules of the court.

(b) DESIGNATION.—The Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts shall, not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, designate not less than 5 United States district courts, in at least 3 different judicial circuits, in which the program established under subsection (a) will be carried out. The Director shall make such designation from among the 15 district courts in which the largest number of patent and plant variety protection cases were filed in the most recent calendar year that has ended, except that the Director may only designate a court in which—

(1) at least 10 district judges are authorized to be appointed by the President, whether under section 133(a) of title 28, United States Code, or on a temporary basis under other provisions of law; and

(2) at least 3 judges of the court have made the request under subsection (a)(1)(A).

(c) DURATION.—The program established under subsection (a) shall terminate 10 years after the end of the 6-month period described in subsection (b).

(d) APPLICABILITY.—The program established under subsection (a) shall apply in a district court designated under subsection (b) only to cases commenced on or after the date of such designation.

(e) REPORTING TO CONGRESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—At the times specified in paragraph (2), the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, in consultation with the chief judge of each of the district courts designated under subsection (b) and the Director of the Federal Judicial Center, shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate a report on the pilot program established under subsection (a). The report shall include—

(A) an analysis of the extent to which the program has succeeded in developing expertise in patent and plant variety protection cases among the district judges of the district courts so designated;

(B) an analysis of the extent to which the program has improved the efficiency of the courts involved by reason of such expertise;

(C) with respect to patent cases handled by the judges designated pursuant to subsection (a)(1)(A) and judges not so designated, a comparison between the 2 groups of judges with respect to—

(i) the rate of reversal by the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, of such cases on the issues of claim construction and substantive patent law; and

(ii) the period of time elapsed from the date on which a case is filed to the date on which trial begins or summary judgment is entered;

(D) a discussion of any evidence indicating that litigants select certain of the judicial districts designated under subsection (b) in an attempt to ensure a given outcome; and

(E) an analysis of whether the pilot program should be extended to other district courts, or should be made permanent and apply to all district courts.

(2) TIMETABLE FOR REPORTS.—The times referred to in paragraph (1) are—

(A) not later than the date that is 5 years and 3 months after the end of the 6-month period described in subsection (b); and

(B) not later than 5 years after the date described in subparagraph (A).

(3) PERIODIC REPORTING.—The Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, in consultation with the chief judge of each of the district courts designated under subsection (b) and the Direc-

tor of the Federal Judicial Center, shall keep the committees referred to in paragraph (1) informed, on a periodic basis while the pilot program is in effect, with respect to the matters referred to in subparagraphs (A) through (E) of paragraph (1).

(f) AUTHORIZATION FOR TRAINING AND CLERKSHIPS.—In addition to any other funds made available to carry out this section, there is authorized to be appropriated not less than \$5,000,000 in each fiscal year for—

(1) educational and professional development of those district judges designated under subsection (a)(1)(A) in matters relating to patents and plant variety protection; and

(2) compensation of law clerks with expertise in technical matters arising in patent and plant variety protection cases, to be appointed by the courts designated under subsection (b) to assist those courts in such cases.

Amounts made available pursuant to this subsection shall remain available until expended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

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

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

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 34 and ask my colleagues to join me in voting to pass this legislation. Last Congress, an identical bill passed unanimously through the Judiciary Committee and then passed by voice vote on suspension on the House floor.

Patents are the cornerstone of our economy and provide incentives for innovation. Therefore, it is all the more important to continually assess the effect patent litigation has on the preservation of patent quality and intellectual property rights.

H.R. 34 authorizes the Administrative Office of the United States Courts to establish pilot programs in the United States district courts where the most patent cases are filed. At minimum, five courts, spread over at least three circuits, will take part. To qualify, a court must have at least 10 judges, and at least three judges must request to take part in that program in each of the districts.

The chief judge randomly assigns the patent cases. Should that judge, who is assigned the case, decline that assignment, one of the several judges who has opted to take part in the pilot program receives the case. Further, H.R. 34 requires the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts to report to Congress on the pilot program's success in developing judicial expertise in patent law and authorizes funds to increase both judges' familiarity with patent law and provide additional funding for clerks.

Patent law is an extremely complex body of law involving analysis of intricate technologies, and Federal district court judges spend an inordinate

amount of time on patent cases, even though patent cases only make up 1 percent of the docket. The combination of the complex science and technology, the unique patent procedures and laws, the administration of the courts and their dockets, and the sheer number of issues raised by patent litigation makes improvement of the patent adjudication system a uniquely complicated, difficult, but necessary, task.

The impetus behind this bill, in part, is the high reversal rate of district court decisions. The Federal Circuit Court of Appeals, which has exclusive jurisdiction over patent appeals, reverses over 30 percent of the district court patent claim constructions. Critics assert that the high reversal rate is due to judicial inexperience and misunderstanding of patent law. The pilot program we are proposing here would address this problem by increasing judicial familiarity with patent law and providing funds to pay additional clerks to assist with patent cases.

The Administrative Office of the United States Courts had concerns about the effect of the pilot program on randomness of assignments. Therefore, in an amended version of the bill, we address this issue by only allowing the district courts with a large enough pool of judges to participate in the pilot program. As a result of this change, at least three judges will take part in the program to ensure that the selection of a certain court does not mean the selection of a certain judge.

Therefore, as the pilot program increases the expertise of judges who opt into the program, it also ensures that the selection of a certain district court is not outcome-determinative, and thus it does deter forum shopping.

While recent accounts demonstrate that as time passes Federal district court judges are becoming more proficient at the application of patent claim construction rules, and while reversal rates are coming down, judicial inexperience in patent law still frequently gives weak, untested and presumptively valid patents the same kind of protection previously reserved for strong and judicially tested patents.

As the importance of intellectual property continues to grow in our economy, we can expect that the Federal courts will spend even more time on patent cases. Thus, we must act now to improve the timeliness and quality of their decisions.

A patent program, combined with a study of its results, serves as a valuable tool in assessing the ability of the courts to become more knowledgeable about the specific laws and technologies involved in patent cases. By providing extra resources and fostering judicial experience in patent law, we can lower the reversal rate of district court decisions and ensure that invalid patents do not receive protections.

Questions have arisen about why the legislation is necessary. All Federal district judges should already be striving, obviously, to enhance their knowl-

edge of patent law through extra classes and training. I want to make clear, this bill does not serve as a cushion for judges who shy away from patent law. Instead, H.R. 34 will assess the benefits of the channeling of patent cases towards judges with greater interest and expertise in patent law and determine whether the program improves patent quality and expedites the adjudication process. This bill is only a pilot program.

Patent quality has been a long-time priority of mine, and I believe H.R. 34 is a first step to resolving some of the deficiencies in the patent system. But this in no way substitutes for comprehensive overhaul of the patent system designed to ensure that innovation is not at risk in the 21st century. By increasing judicial expertise in patent law, H.R. 34 should ultimately improve both patent quality and the litigation process.

As I mentioned previously, this bill has the full support of the Judiciary Committee and many industries and trade groups, including the pharmaceutical, technology, biotech and consumer electronics industries and intellectual property owners and other intellectual property organizations.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 34.

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is widely recognized that patent litigation is too expensive, too time consuming, and too unpredictable. H.R. 34 addresses these concerns by authorizing the establishment of a pilot program in certain United States district courts that is intended to encourage the enhancement of expertise in patent cases among district judges.

The need for such a program becomes apparent when one considers that fewer than 1 percent of all cases in U.S. district courts, on average, are patent cases and that a district court judge typically has a patent case proceed through trial only once every 7 years. These cases require a disproportionate share of attention and judicial resources, and the rate of reversal remains unacceptably high.

The premise underlying H.R. 34 is simple. Practice makes perfect, or at least better. Judges who focus more attention on patent cases can be expected to be better prepared and make decisions that will hold up under appeal.

This bill is the product of an extensive oversight hearing which was conducted by the Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet and Intellectual Property in October 2005. The authors of H.R. 34, Representatives DARRELL ISSA and ADAM SCHIFF, introduced this measure on January 4, 2007. This legislation is identical to H.R. 5418, a bill that passed the House unanimously last September. Unfortunately, the clock on the 109th Congress expired before the other body could take up this bipartisan measure.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 34 will require the Director of the Administrative Office of the Courts to select five district courts to participate in a 10-year pilot program that is to begin no later than 6 months after the date of enactment.

The bill specifies criteria the director must employ in determining eligibility of districts. It contains provisions to preserve the random assignment of cases and to prevent the selected districts from becoming magnets for forum shopping litigants.

The legislation also requires the director, in consultation with the director of the Federal Judicial Center and the chief judge of each participating district, to provide the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Senate with periodic progress reports.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the superb job that the bill's sponsors did in seeking out and incorporating the advice of numerous experts as they developed this bipartisan legislation. Congratulations go to Congressmen DARRELL ISSA and ADAM SCHIFF. Their success and cooperation have resulted in a worthy bill that deserves the support of the Members of the House.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this bill.

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

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Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

I simply join with my friend the ranking member in complimenting both the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA) and the other gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF).

If one could patent all of Mr. ISSA's ideas, the Patent Office would truly be backlogged for a very long time.

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE), the ranking member of the Intellectual Property Subcommittee and a former chairman of the Intellectual Property Subcommittee.

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished gentleman from Texas for yielding.

And I probably won't use 5 minutes, but, Mr. Speaker, H.R. 34, a bill to establish a pilot program in certain United States district courts to encourage enhancement of expertise in patent cases among district judges, is a bill that deserves the continued support of the Members of the House. As has been indicated both by Mr. BERMAN and Mr. SMITH, drafted by Representatives ISSA and SCHIFF, this bipartisan legislation was passed unanimously by the House last year, but due to the press of time the other body did not consider the measure. With House action early in this Congress, we will be able to ensure our colleagues on the other side of the Hill have maximum

opportunity to fully and fairly consider this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that our Nation's patent laws have become the subject of much scrutiny and debate. Indeed, Judiciary Committee Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH and the chairman of the Intellectual Property Subcommittee, Representative HOWARD BERMAN, with whom I look forward to working this Congress, have been leaders in developing substantive and comprehensive reforms to our Nation's patent system. The further consideration of these proposals is the IP Subcommittee's highest priority this Congress. I am encouraged and hopeful that we will be able to look back at the end of the 110th Congress satisfied that we ran the course and completed this important task.

But there is related work this House can complete immediately that will serve as a step in the right direction. By passing H.R. 34, a commonsense and narrowly tailored measure that will provide designated Federal district judges the opportunity to improve their expertise in the handling of patent cases, the House will be taking an early, positive first step along the road to comprehensive patent reform.

Mr. Speaker, a typical Federal district judge may preside over no more than three or four, five at the most, patent cases which are litigated to conclusion during the course of his or her career. Patent cases comprise only 1 percent of cases filed in Federal court, yet they make up nearly 10 percent of complex cases. The timely and appropriate resolution of these cases is vital to uphold the rights of individual litigants. But it also serves the larger interests of consumers and the economy.

Patent litigation, Mr. Speaker, is characterized by disputes that involve the interaction of numerous parties, the integration of sophisticated technologies, and the application of technical aspects of substantive patent law by judges who are rarely presented with such cases.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 34 is a modest bill that will enable a small number of these district judges to be designated to gain additional experience and resources in handling these cases, the outcome of which is so crucial to our economy.

This legislation also includes safeguards to prevent these districts from being used to promote "forum shopping" as well as provisions to ensure that the Congress is provided with useful periodic reports on the progress of this new initiative.

Again, I thank the distinguished gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), the distinguished gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), and Representatives SCHIFF and ISSA for their work.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H.R. 34.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ISSA), a member of the Intellectual Property Subcommittee and one of the two principal sponsors of this very worthy legislation.

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, there are few things in this body that truly transcend party lines. The respect for the Constitution and our obligations under it clearly are the most important among them.

The Constitution makes it clear that inventors and authors and artisans are entitled to protection for a limited period of time under the Constitution. And yet, if it takes years to get through a patent case and only to have it reversed 30 to 40 percent of the time, much more often if it is a first-time case before a Federal judge, then justice is not only delayed but in some cases denied if you don't have the ability, after paying maybe \$2 million, to pay another \$2 million to go through the appeal process. Therefore, it is essential at the district court that the judges get it right the first time.

Under the Markman decision, a Federal judge must decide what the patent means. It is incredibly technical often to decide what 5,000 claims, sometimes looking thicker than the Bible and the Koran put together, really mean; and yet that is an obligation of the judge. Those obligations may be in the areas of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering. It could be chemical. It could be bio. It could be so technical as to require outside experts just to decipher some of the language. And yet we ask a Federal judge, most often the one who has just ascended to the bench, to take on these patent cases. This bill is designed to reduce the times in which the most complex cases get before the least prepared and sometimes even the least willing Federal judges.

It also is an example of something that has been used in other ways, but appropriate here: a theory that you must mend it, not end it. We have an obligation, and the Federal courts with us have an obligation, to deal with intellectual property properly because it is a right under the Constitution, and yet it is broken. My colleagues, Mr. SCHIFF as the cosponsor but, more broadly, Ranking Member SMITH have been supportive. The now chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. BERMAN, helped all along the way. Mr. CONYERS has been supportive, both in the last Congress and this Congress, in getting this bill out; and Senator LEAHY and Senator FEINSTEIN are working on the Senate side for a counterpart.

This type of legislation is narrowly crafted but deals with the exact problems we are facing. Let me just give you one example, Mr. Speaker. Most

Americans understand in the last Congress the RIM or BlackBerry case, a case in which for years the litigation continued on and we were dealing with over half a billion dollars of final damages. Reversal after reversal, decision and indecision. That shouldn't happen when we are dealing with billions of dollars.

This legislation seeks to spend only \$5 million a year to check out the feasibility of what would probably be only \$50 or \$60 million in total a year to make our Federal courts able to deal with what turns out to be tens or hundreds of billions of dollars of commerce.

Therefore, I hope that because we pass this early and, I trust, unanimously once again, that we will be able to deal with the Senate, bring this to the President's desk, and begin working with the courts to implement it.

Last but not least, an unusual "thank you." Justice Breyer was a major part of this discussion from the earliest stages, and as somebody who, while as a Senate staffer, was considered to be the father of the Fed circuit, his opinion that there needed to be a fix in the district court so as not to have to take from the district courts the very jurisdiction that we speak of here today, was crucial to the development of this bill.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for this bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 34, a bill to establish a pilot program in certain United States district courts to encourage enhancement of expertise in patent cases among district judges. Congressman ADAM SCHIFF and I have worked together on this legislation since the last Congress, and I am grateful for the chance to move this legislation forward today.

The high cost of patent litigation is widely publicized, and it is not unusual for a patent suit to cost each party over \$10,000,000. Appeals from district courts to the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit are frequent. This is caused, in part, by the general perception within the patent community that most district court judges are not sufficiently prepared to hear patent cases. I drafted this legislation in an attempt to decrease the cost of litigation by increasing the success of district court judges.

H.R. 34 establishes a pilot project within at least five district courts. Under the pilot, judges decide whether or not to opt into hearing patent cases. If a judge opts in, and a patent case is randomly assigned to that judge, that judge keeps the case. If a case is randomly assigned to a judge who has not opted into hearing patent cases, that judge has the choice of keeping that case or sending it to the group of judges who have opted in. To be a designated court, the court must have at least 10 authorized judges with at least 3 opting in.

The core intent of this pilot is to steer patent cases to judges that have the desire and aptitude to hear patent cases, while preserving random assignment as much as possible. Each of the test courts will be assigned a clerk with expertise in patent law or the scientific issues arising in patent cases, and funding is also allocated to better educate participating

judges in patent law. The pilot will last no longer than 10 years, and periodic studies will occur to determine the pilot project's success.

I am happy to say that H.R. 34 is supported by software, hardware, tech and electronics companies, pharmaceutical companies, biotech companies, district court judges, the American Intellectual Property Law Association, and the Intellectual Property Owners Association among others.

This legislation is a good first step toward improving the legal environment for the patent community in the United States. H.R. 34 should not, however, be taken as a replacement for broader patent reform. We still need to address substantive issues within patent law, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on that broader effort as well.

I thank Judiciary Committee Chairman JOHN CONYERS and Ranking Member LAMAR SMITH, as well as Intellectual Property Subcommittee Chairman HOWARD BERMAN and Subcommittee Ranking Member HOWARD COBLE for all of their efforts in moving this legislation. I also thank Committee staff David Whitney and Shanna Winters for their counsel during the development of H.R. 34.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 34.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support of H.R. 34, which authorizes a new 10-year pilot program designed to increase judges' expertise in presiding over patent cases. Under the new pilot program, district judges could request to hear cases relating to patent law or plant variety protection. Currently, cases in Federal district courts are assigned randomly. Under the measure, if one judge declines to hear a patent case, the case could be reassigned to one of the judges in the pilot program who has requested to hear such cases.

The bill directs the Administrative Office of the Courts, within six months of enactment, to designate at least five courts in at least three different judicial circuits in which the pilot program would be conducted. It requires that these districts for the pilot program be chosen from the 15 districts that have had the largest number of patent and plant variety protection cases filed within the past year, and that the pilot program is conducted in districts in which at least three judges will participate. It also requires the administrative Office of the Courts to submit periodic reports to the Committee on the Judiciary for the House and the Senate regarding the effectiveness of the pilot program.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 34 enjoys strong bipartisan support in the Judiciary Committee. I urge my colleagues to support this pilot program.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BERMAN. 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 California (Mr. BERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 34.

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.

HONORING AND PRAISING THE NAACP ON THE OCCASION OF ITS 98TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 44) honoring and praising the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the occasion of its 98th anniversary.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 44

Whereas the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), originally known as the National Negro Committee, was founded in New York City on February 12, 1909, the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, by a multiracial group of activists who answered "The Call" for a national conference to discuss the civil and political rights of African Americans;

Whereas the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded by a distinguished group of leaders in the struggle for civil and political liberty, including Ida Wells-Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, Henry Moscowitz, Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villiard, and William English Walling;

Whereas the NAACP is the oldest and largest civil rights organization in the United States;

Whereas the mission of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination;

Whereas the NAACP is committed to achieving its goals through nonviolence;

Whereas the NAACP advances its mission through reliance upon the press, the petition, the ballot, and the courts, and has been persistent in the use of legal and moral persuasion, even in the face of overt and violent racial hostility;

Whereas the NAACP has used political pressure, marches, demonstrations, and effective lobbying to serve as the voice, as well as the shield, for minority Americans;

Whereas after years of fighting segregation in public schools, the NAACP, under the leadership of Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall, won one of its greatest legal victories in the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*;

Whereas in 1955, NAACP member Rosa Parks was arrested and fined for refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama—an act of courage that would serve as the catalyst for the largest grassroots civil rights movement in the history of the United States;

Whereas the NAACP was prominent in lobbying for the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006, and the Fair Housing Act, laws which ensured Government protection for legal victories achieved; and

Whereas in 2005, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People launched the Disaster Relief Fund to help survivors in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas, Florida, and Alabama to rebuild their lives: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) recognizes the 98th anniversary of the historic founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and

(2) honors and praises the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the occasion of its anniversary for its

work to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all persons.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on H. Con. Res. 44.

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

There was no objection.

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

Today I rise to join my colleague AL GREEN of Texas in honoring the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the NAACP, on its 98th anniversary. As we observe Black History Month this February, it is only appropriate that we recognize the Nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. Ninety-eight years after its inception, we salute the NAACP for its continued commitment to promoting equality and justice for all Americans.

The NAACP has been at the forefront of every brave and courageous moment in this Nation's civil rights history. This was particularly evident during the height of the Civil Rights Movement. In 1954 the NAACP secured one of the greatest legal victories with the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. In 1960 the NAACP Youth Council organized a series of sit-ins at lunch counters throughout the country, an activity which I think for many of us, I know for myself, helped to pique and motivate our interest in the ability of politics and movement to make change on behalf of people. And in 1965 the NAACP successfully sought enactment of the Voting Rights Act.

Today the NAACP priorities continue to "ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons," as its mission statement reads. Last year the NAACP addressed such issues as voter disenfranchisement, HIV/AIDS, and the conflict in Sudan. In 2007 the organization continues to confront these and other domestic and international concerns. Most recently, the NAACP supported Congress' efforts to increase the minimum wage.

We in this body congratulate the NAACP for this work and their continued efforts to protect the civil and human rights of our citizens. On its 98th anniversary, the NAACP remains an integral and essential part of this society. We salute the NAACP on this significant occasion.

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

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.