

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 51) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. CON. RES. 51

Whereas high quality after school programs provide safe, challenging, engaging, and fun learning experiences to help children and youth develop their social, emotional, physical, cultural, and academic skills;

Whereas high quality after school programs support working families by ensuring that the children in such families are safe and productive after the regular school day ends;

Whereas high quality after school programs build stronger communities by involving the Nation's students, parents, business leaders, and adult volunteers in the lives of the Nation's youth, thereby promoting positive relationships among children, youth, families, and adults;

Whereas high quality after school programs engage families, schools, and diverse community partners in advancing the well-being of the Nation's children;

Whereas "Lights On Afterschool!", a national celebration of after school programs held on October 18, 2007, promotes the critical importance of high quality after school programs in the lives of children, their families, and their communities;

Whereas more than 28,000,000 children in the United States have parents who work outside the home and 14,300,000 children in the United States have no place to go after school; and

Whereas many after school programs across the United States are struggling to keep their doors open and their lights on: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress supports the goals and ideals of "Lights On Afterschool!" a national celebration of after school programs.

COMMENDING NASA LANGLEY RESEARCH CENTER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 222, just received from the House and at the desk.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 222) congratulating and commending the men and women of NASA Langley Research Center for their accomplishments and role in inspiring the American people.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to

reconsider be laid on the table, without intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 222) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

EXTENDING THE TIME TO OBTAIN A STATUE OF ROSA PARKS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to immediate consideration of S. 2206, introduced earlier today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2206) to provide technical corrections to Public Law 109-116 (2 U.S.C. 2131a note) to extend the time period for the Joint Committee on the Library to enter into an agreement to obtain a statue of Rosa Parks, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, Rosa Parks has been described as the "Mother of the Modern-Day Civil Rights Movement."

Her actions on a Montgomery bus in 1955 sparked one of the Nation's largest movements against racial segregation: the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

Due to those brave actions, Rosa Parks became an icon of civil disobedience.

In 2005, Congress voted to preserve the legacy of Rosa Parks by authorizing a statue of her to be placed in the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall.

A statue of Rosa Parks would be a fitting tribute to the struggle for equal rights for all Americans.

But two years later, the statue has not been obtained. It is time to remove the hurdles, and ensure that Rosa Parks is honored as Congress intended.

The law designated Congress's Joint Committee on the Library to obtain the statue. But it was later determined that the Joint Committee does not have the technical ability or resources to enter into contracts or pay for the statue.

And now that law is set to expire on December 1, 2007, without ever achieving its intended goal.

So, to correct the problems in the original law, I have introduced a stand alone bill that would: designate the Architect of the Capitol as the agent of the Joint Committee; and extend the deadline by 2 more years.

This legislation would allow for the Architect of the Capitol to distribute funds on behalf of the Joint Committee on the Library.

This legislation has been cosponsored by seven other Senators, including: Senators BENNETT, KERRY, DURBIN, LEVIN, SCHUMER, DODD, and STABENOW.

It is so important that we honor this great American.

Mrs. Parks' actions on a single day in December 1955 changed the lives of so many who followed her.

Let me tell you a little more about Rosa Parks:

Mrs. Parks was born Rosa Louise McCauley, February 4, 1913, in Tuskegee, AL. Her parents were a carpenter and a teacher.

Rosa Parks grew up and lived in a segregated South. And when she married, she and her husband became active in the local NAACP chapter.

On December 1, 1955, after a day of work at a department store in downtown Montgomery, AL, Rosa Parks boarded a bus to go home. She paid her fare, and took an empty seat in the first row of seats reserved for Blacks.

As the bus traveled along its route, all of the White-only seats in the bus filled up. When the bus reached its next stop, several White passengers boarded.

As was standard practice at that time, the busdriver told the Black passengers seated in the rows behind the White-only section to move. This included Mrs. Parks and three other passengers.

The three other Black passengers moved at the bus driver's insistence. But Mrs. Parks did not.

As she recalled in her autobiography, she was simply "tired of giving in":

People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day.

I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.

This action of civil disobedience sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, which became one of the Nation's largest movements against racial segregation.

Rosa Parks was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996. She received a Congressional Gold Medal in 1999. And in 2005, Congress voted to honor her with a statue in the U.S. Capitol. The Architect of the Capitol is prepared to work with the National Endowment for the Arts to find suitable artists and statues to be considered for this honor. But until the funds for this project can be allocated, the search for a statue will not move forward. The legislation introduced today would fix this problem and allow the funds to be released. But more importantly, this legislation would ensure that Rosa Parks an American hero is honored as she so deserves.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statement be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 2206) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 2206

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

SECTION 1. ROSA PARKS STATUE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1(a) of Public Law 109-116 (2 U.S.C. 2131a note) is amended by—

(1) striking “2 years” and inserting “4 years”; and

(2) adding at the end the following: “The Joint Committee may authorize the Architect of the Capitol to enter into the agreement and related contracts required under this subsection on its behalf, under such terms and conditions as the Joint Committee may require.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect as if included in the enactment of Public Law 109-116.

VETERANS’ COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Veterans’ Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1284, and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1284) to increase, effective as of December 1, 2007, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, I am speaking in support of Senate passage of S. 423, the “Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2007.” This measure, which I introduced earlier this year and which the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs reported on July 24, would direct the Secretary of Veterans’ Affairs to increase, effective December 1, 2007, the rates of veterans’ compensation to keep pace with the rising cost-of-living in this country. The rate adjustment is equal to that provided on an annual basis to Social Security recipients and is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Consumer Price Index.

Congress regularly enacts an annual cost-of-living adjustment, “COLA,” for veterans’ compensation in order to ensure that inflation does not erode the purchasing power of the veterans and their families who depend upon this income to meet their needs. This past year Congress passed, and the President signed into law, Public Law 109-361, which resulted in a COLA increase of 3.3 percent for 2007. The cost-of-living adjustment for 2008 will be 2.3 percent.

As I have stated many times, it is important that we view veterans compensation, including the annual COLA, and all benefits earned by veterans, as a continuing cost of war. Unfortunately, it seems highly likely that the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan will continue and this in turn will

result in injuries and disabilities that will yield an increase in claims for compensation. One million, six hundred thousand servicemembers have deployed in support of Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom, and studies by VA indicate that the most significant predictor of new claims activity is the size of the active force.

The COLA affects, among other benefits, veterans’ disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. Many of the more than 3 million recipients of those benefits depend upon these tax-free payments not only to provide for their own basic needs, but those of their spouses, children and parents as well. Without an annual COLA increase, these veterans and their families would see the value of their hard-earned benefits slowly dwindle, and we, as a Congress, would be in abandonment of our duty to ensure that those who sacrificed so much for this country receive the benefits and services to which they are entitled.

Disbursement of disability compensation to our nation’s veterans constitutes a core responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is a necessary measure of gratitude afforded to those veterans whose lives were irrevocably altered by their service to this country.

I urge all of our colleagues to support passage of this COLA increase. I also ask our colleagues for their continued support for our Nation’s veterans.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statement be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 1284) was ordered to be read a third time, was read the third time, and passed.

ATLANTIC FREEDOM TOUR OF THE FREEDOM SCHOONER AMISTAD

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 399, S. Res. 258.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 258) recognizing the historical and educational significance of the Atlantic Freedom Tour of the Freedom Schooner Amistad, and expressing the sense of the Senate that preserving the legacy of the Amistad story is important in promoting multicultural dialogue, education, and cooperation.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, en bloc; and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 258) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 258

Whereas the Slave Trade Act of the British Parliament in 1807 was the first major legislation to abolish the slave trade and began the march to end slavery;

Whereas, in 1839, 53 Africans were illegally kidnapped from Sierra Leone and sold into the transatlantic slave trade;

Whereas the captives were brought to Havana, Cuba, aboard the Portuguese vessel *Tecora*, where they were fraudulently classified as native-born Cuban slaves;

Whereas the captives were sold to José Ruiz and Pedro Montez of Spain, who transferred them onto the coastal cargo schooner *La Amistad*;

Whereas, on the evening of the rebellion, *La Amistad* was secretly directed to return west up the coast of North America, where after two months the Africans were seized and arrested in New London, Connecticut;

Whereas the captives were jailed and awaited trial in New Haven, Connecticut;

Whereas the trial of the captives became historic when former President John Quincy Adams argued on behalf of the enslaved before the United States Supreme Court and won their freedom;

Whereas, in 2007, the Freedom Schooner Amistad will embark on its first transatlantic voyage to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade; and

Whereas the Amistad case represents an opportunity to call to public attention the evils of slavery and the struggle for freedom and the restoration of human dignity: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate recognizes the historical and educational significance of the Atlantic Freedom Tour of the Freedom Schooner Amistad;

(2) the Senate encourages the people of the United States to learn about the history of the United States and better understand the experiences that have shaped this Nation; and

(3) it is the sense of the Senate that preserving the legacy of the Amistad should be regarded as a means in fostering multicultural dialogue, education, and cooperation.

REQUIREMENT FOR REPORTS ON ACTS OF TERROR AGAINST AMERICANS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBYA

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 418, S. 1839.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1839) to require periodic reports on claims related to acts of terrorism against Americans perpetrated or supported by the Government of Libya.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time, passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid on the table,