

JACKSON-LEE of Texas) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1069, as amended.

The question was taken.

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. 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 motion will be postponed.

# RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE USS "CONSTELLATION" IN THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1159), recognizing the historical significance of the United States sloop-of-war *Constellation* as a surviving witness to the horrors of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and a leading participant in America's effort to end the practice.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

## H. RES. 1159

Whereas on September 17, 1787, the United States Constitution was adopted and article I, section 9 of the document declared that Congress could prohibit the importation of slaves into the United States in the year 1808;

Whereas on March 22, 1794, the United States Congress passed "An Act to prohibit the carrying on the Slave Trade from the United States to any foreign place or country", thus beginning American efforts to halt the slave trade;

Whereas on May 10, 1800, Congress enacted legislation that outlawed all American participation in the international trafficking of slaves and authorized the United States Navy to seize American vessels engaged in the slave trade;

Whereas on March 2, 1807, President Thomas Jefferson signed a bill that declared the importation of slaves into the United States illegal;

Whereas on January 1, 1808, the act "to prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States" took effect;

Whereas on March 3, 1819, Congress authorized the Navy to cruise the African coast to suppress the slave trade. The Act declared that Africans on captured ships be placed under Federal jurisdiction and authorized the President to appoint an agent in Africa to facilitate their return to the continent;

Whereas in 1819, the Royal Navy of Great Britain established the West Coast of Africa as a separate naval station and actively plied the waters in pursuit of slave ships. Great Britain negotiated with many other nations to obtain the right to search their vessels if suspected of engaging in the slave trade;

Whereas on May 15, 1820, Congress declared the trading of slaves to be an act of piracy and those convicted subject to the death penalty;

Whereas in 1842, the Webster-Ashburton Treaty between Great Britain and the United States provided that both nations would

maintain separate naval squadrons on the coast of Africa to enforce their respective laws against the slave trade. The newly formed United States African Squadron sailed for Africa in 1843 and remained in operation until the Civil War erupted in 1861;

Whereas in 1859, USS *Constellation*, the last all-sail vessel designed and built by the U.S. Navy, sailed to West Africa as the flagship of the United States African Squadron, consisting of eight ships, including four steam-powered vessels suitable for chasing down and capturing slavers;

Whereas on December 21, 1859, USS *Constellation* captured the brig *Delicia* after a 10-hour chase. Although *Delicia* had no human cargo on board upon capture, her crew was preparing the ship to take on slaves;

Whereas on the night of September 25, 1860, USS *Constellation* sighted the barque *Cora* near the mouth of the Congo River and, after a dramatic moonlit chase, captured the slave ship with 705 Africans crammed into her "slave deck". A detachment of the *Constellation*'s crew sailed the surviving Africans to Monrovia, Liberia, a colony founded for the settlement of free African-Americans that became the destination for all Africans freed on slave ships captured by the Navy;

Whereas on May 21, 1861, USS *Constellation* captured the brig *Triton*. Though the ship did not have Africans captured for slavery on board when intercepted by the *Constellation*, a search confirmed its preparation to take on slaves. *Triton*, registered in Charleston, South Carolina, was one of the first Union naval captures of the American Civil War;

Whereas from 1859 to 1861, USS *Constellation* and the African Squadron captured 14 slave ships and liberated nearly 4,000 Africans destined for a life of servitude in the Americas, a record unsurpassed by the United States African Squadron under previous commanders; and

Whereas on September 25, 2008, the USS *Constellation* Museum will hold a ceremony to commemorate the bicentennial of the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade aboard the same ship that, 149 years before, forced the capitulation of the slave ship *Cora* and freed the 705 Africans confined within: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the historical and educational significance of USS *Constellation*, a 153-year-old American warship, berthed in Baltimore, Maryland, as a reminder of both American participation in the slave trade and the efforts of the United States Government to suppress this inhumane practice;

(2) applauds the preservation of this historic vessel and the efforts of the USS *Constellation* Museum to engage people from all over the world with this vital part of our history; and

(3) supports USS *Constellation* as an appropriate site for the Nation to commemorate the bicentennial of the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

## GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me first thank Congressman Elijah Cummings for introducing this resolution honoring the USS *Constellation*, a 153-year-old American Warship that now is restored as a museum in the Baltimore Inner Harbor.

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This historic ship serves as a reminder of the role that the United States Navy played in the abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade.

In 1787, our Nation began to adopt legislation to prohibit the importation of slaves to the United States and the transport of slaves from the U.S. to other parts of the Western Hemisphere. Over the next several decades, the U.S. Government joined with the British in deploying naval vessels along the African coastline to intercept slave ships, rescue kidnapped victims and place them under international jurisdiction, and return them to homelands in Africa.

Mr. Speaker, this is sometimes little known history, and I congratulate my colleague from Maryland of highlighting the fact that the good news is, even though it took long years to end slavery in the United States, they began to stop the transportation and importing of slaves, and they vigorously used the United States military in the name of the United States Navy.

The USS *Constellation* was the flagship of an eight-ship fleet that comprised the U.S. African Squadron. The *Constellation* captured 14 slave ships and rescued nearly 4,000 Africans from a life of forced servitude in the Americas.

Launched in 1854 from the Chesapeake Bay's Gosport Navy Yard at Portsmouth, Virginia, the USS *Constellation* served our country for 100 years before its final decommissioning in 1955, I would venture to say, a long, long time. Maybe its good work of preventing the importation of slaves allowed it to have a long life with good health.

After serving the anti-slavery effort, the USS *Constellation* was charged with chasing Confederate raiders during the Civil War, and served as a training ship for the midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis from 1871 to 1893. The ship was brought to Baltimore's Inner Harbor in 1955 and restored as the USS *Constellation* Museum.

This is a historic year, 2008, as we watch presidential politics. This legislation is an appropriate testament to the history of the United States and doing the right thing as it relates to slavery here in this country. It also incorporates our recognition of the United States Navy and the United

States military as fighting for the unity of this Nation and the promotion of equality and justice for all Americans. Ending slavery was contributing to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights that offered to say that we all are created equal.

I thank our colleague, Congressman CUMMINGS, and I rise in strong support of this resolution, because this resolution celebrates the USS *Constellation* as a historic reminder of the battle to end slavery and of the role and capabilities of the Navy's elite vessels of that era. They continue to serve us, and I strongly support the resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of H. Res. 1159, which recognizes the USS *Constellation* as a surviving witness to the horrors of the Transatlantic slave trade and a significant figure in United States efforts to end that practice.

In this bicentennial year of the abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade, this body has considered a number of resolutions condemning the horrors of slavery and recognizing the efforts of those who sought to combat it. Each of these resolutions has been important, not only for the purpose of preserving our history, but also for calling attention to the fact that today, 200 years after the formal abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade, slavery still continues. It endures in those areas where traffickers are enabled to engage in their inhumane and cruel trade. It thrives where human rights are abused and tyrants rule the day.

I thank the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) for introducing this later effort to renew the charge of the United States to confront slavery in its various forms around the world while, at the same time, showing the historical significance of the USS *Constellation*.

On January 1, 1808, the act to "prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or territory within the jurisdiction of the United States" took effect. Eleven years later, the United States Congress authorized the Navy to cruise the coast of the African continent and take effective measures to suppress the slave trade. The USS *Constellation* served as the flagship in this effort from 1859 through 1861, leading the United States African Squadron, as it was called, as it captured 14 slave ships and liberated an estimated 4,000 Africans destined to be enslaved. Today the USS *Constellation* continues to serve as a museum and a tribute to the efforts of those who sought to end the horrors of the slave trade.

As such, this resolution specifically recognizes the historical and educational significance of the *Constellation*, and recommends it as an appropriate site for this Nation to commemorate the bicentennial of the abolition of the Transatlantic slave trade.

I urge all my colleagues to support this important resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS), the chairman of the Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, such time as he might consume.

Mr. CUMMINGS. I want to thank the gentlelady for yielding. And I also associate myself with her words and the words of Mr. POE.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my appreciation to the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and the leadership for bringing this resolution to the floor.

Special acknowledgment and thanks also go to my friend and colleague, Representative GREGORY MEEK of New York, for acknowledging and appreciating the efforts and accomplishments of the *Constellation's* crew by joining me as a lead cosponsor.

This resolution recognizes the USS *Constellation* for its role in ending the Transatlantic slave trade. The *Constellation* deserves to be recognized not only for the liberation of thousands of Africans, but also the liberation from oppression and ignorance.

As a descendent of slaves, I understand the importance of the *Constellation's* role as a shining moment in one of the darkest points in our Nation's history. Its role in the progression of our society is only further amplified, given the political history that is currently being made today, and as Ms. JACKSON-LEE alluded to.

As the first Union Navy vessel to interdict major slave ships along the West African coast, the USS *Constellation* was a flagship for the United States Navy's African squadron from 1859 to 1861. During this time, the USS *Constellation* was used to capture 14 slave ships and liberate nearly 4,000 Africans headed towards a life deprived of freedom and unpaid labor. In fact, after a dramatic chase into the night on September 25, 1860, the USS *Constellation* was used to capture the Cora near the mouth of the Congo River. Crammed into the dark "slave deck" were 705 Africans.

A detachment of the *Constellation's* crew took the surviving Africans to Monrovia, Liberia, a colony founded for the settlement of free African Americans that became the destination for all Africans freed on slave ships captured by the United States Navy.

In 1894, the *Constellation* continued its historic service as a training vessel at the U.S. Naval Academy and ended its service as the flagship of the Atlantic Fleet during World War II.

Decommissioned in 1955, the USS *Constellation* is berthed in my district and, of course, in my hometown of Baltimore at the Inner Harbor. This 153-year-old American warship was designated as a national historic landmark on May 23, 1963, and is the perfect location to commemorate the bicentennial of the abolition of the Trans-

atlantic slave trade in the United States.

On September 25, 2008, the USS *Constellation* Museum will hold a ceremony to commemorate the history of the ship and its crew. Additionally, there will be a special program to recognize the descendants of *Constellation's* crew who will be in attendance.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I thank those who supported H. Res. 1159 as cosponsors, and ask that my colleagues support the adoption of this resolution to ensure that this part of American history is never forgotten.

Mr. POE. We have no other speakers. I support this legislation, and yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Tennessee, Congressman STEVE COHEN, who is a member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. COHEN. I thank Congressperson JACKSON-LEE and Congressperson CUMMINGS for their work on this resolution.

It is important that we remember our history, and we teach our history to our school children and our adults as well to know how far this country has come and where it has come from. There are things that have happened in history in this country and around the world that are not things that we are proud of. Nevertheless, we learn from them and we grow.

This is not the perfect Union that we hope it to be one day, but it is a more perfect Union each year. And amendments to the Constitution and laws have changed to make this a better country.

Earlier in this session, this Congress passed, by voice vote, an apology for slavery and Jim Crow, a long time in coming, but something that should have occurred and did occur. I hope that my colleagues in the Senate will pass the same resolution.

This is in the same vein, in remembering that this country did allow slavery for many years, and Jim Crow laws to follow. But while we did allow it, there was a time that it was outlawed, and there were efforts to suspend it and to stop it. And this ship and the people that manned the ship, captained the ship and served on the ship, did their jobs in seeing that the slave trade was defeated off the African coast.

It is appropriate that this ship be maintained as a museum and a tribute to those gentlemen and to the cause that they served, and to remind people of some of the horrors in our history, but the improvements that we have made. And I compliment Congressman CUMMINGS on bringing the resolution, and the people involved in the City of Baltimore and elsewhere in preserving the USS *Constellation*.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Let me thank both Mr. CUMMINGS, the author of this bill; Mr. GREG MEEKS, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee; Mr. COHEN, and ask my colleagues to enthusiastically support this legislation

that emphasizes the importance of the United States Navy in ending the Transatlantic slave trade, H. Res. 1159. I yield back my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 1159.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### SUPPORTING THE VALUES AND GOALS OF THE U.S.-BRAZIL ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PACT

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1254) supporting the values and goals of the "Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality," signed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos on March 13, 2008, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

#### H. RES. 1254

Whereas the United States and Brazil have many qualities in common, such as the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of their populations and each country's efforts to protect democracy and the civil rights and liberties of all their citizens;

Whereas the United States and Brazil share strong values of democracy, a diverse cultural demographic, and histories marred by slavery;

Whereas in comparison to the general population, minority groups in the United States and Brazil have experienced discrimination in many areas;

Whereas there is a continuing need to combat racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality in the United States and Brazil;

Whereas the Governments of the United States and Brazil have committed to jointly seek solutions to issues affecting both countries, such as racial and ethnic discrimination and inequality;

Whereas the Department of State, Brazil's Ministry of Exterior Relations, and the Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality began formal talks in October 2007, to negotiate areas of bilateral cooperation on combating discrimination and creating opportunities for ethnic minorities in the United States and Brazil;

Whereas, on March 13, 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos signed the "Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality", also known as the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination;

Whereas the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination creates the Steering Group to Promote Equality of Opportunity, which will consist of a panel of government officials from both the United States and Brazil and facilitate the exchange of information on the best practices for anti-discrimination measures and development of ideas on how to bilaterally promote racial and ethnic equality;

Whereas United States and Brazil should discuss and consider techniques and initiatives for training educators, employers, workers, administrators of justice, such as police officers, judges, and prosecutors, and other members of society, on tolerance, equality, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination;

Whereas an Advisory Board, consisting of private sector representatives, government officials, civil society members, and experts on race relations and other relevant topics, will collaborate with Steering Group members at the periodic meetings of the Steering Group, to be held alternatively in Brazil and the United States;

Whereas the Inaugural Meeting of the Steering Group to Promote Equality of Opportunity will take place September 8-10, 2008, in Brasilia, Brazil;

Whereas the Government of Brazil and the Government of the United States each will determine their country's delegate members for the United States-Brazil Steering Group;

Whereas currently, United States Government participation in initiatives of the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination is supported by existing discretionary funds within the Department of State and other participating agencies;

Whereas the elimination of ethnic and racial discrimination in the United States and Brazil is an ongoing process that requires the long-term dedication of both countries;

Whereas additional resources may be needed to support future initiatives under the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination to address discrimination and promote racial and ethnic equality in the long term;

Whereas the specific areas of cooperation that the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination plans to address include education, communications and culture, labor and employment, housing and public accommodation, equal protection under the law and access to legal systems, domestic enforcement of antidiscrimination laws and policies, sports and recreation, health issues prevalent among minorities, access to credit and technical training, and social, historical, and cultural factors that contribute to racial and ethnic prejudices;

Whereas the Steering Group on Equality of Opportunity will address the top priority of combating discrimination and promoting equality in education at primary, secondary, vocational, undergraduate, and graduate levels;

Whereas particular programs and initiatives to be considered by the Steering Group include, but are not limited to, training programs, strengthening democratic institutions, public-private partnerships with businesses and nongovernmental organizations, workshops and seminars, exchanges of technical experts, scholarships and fellowships, cooperation with international organizations and civil society, and programs in third countries;

Whereas the United States and Brazil should support cultural exchanges between minority groups in the two countries and opportunities for the exchange of perspectives and experiences in race relations in both countries; and

Whereas the Governments of the United States and Brazil value the importance of promoting tolerance and equality by emphasizing education and promoting equal opportunities, democracy, and prosperity in both countries: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the need to promote equality and continue to work towards eliminating racial discrimination in both the United States and Brazil;

(2) commends Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos for signing the "Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality";

(3) supports the continued involvement of the Government of the United States in the bilateral partnership of the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination through funding that may be designated for programs as part of this initiative;

(4) encourages the participation of the Departments of State, Labor, Justice, and Education; the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Congress; Federal, State, and local court systems; and other agencies in the collaborative process of the United States-Brazil Steering Group on Equality of Opportunity; and

(5) urges the involvement of the private sector, civil society, and experts on race relations and other relevant topics to be considered as part of the Steering Group Advisory Board.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me generally, Mr. Speaker, thank the chairman of the full committee, Mr. BERMAN, and the ranking member, Ms. ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, both of whom are now conducting a hearing regarding the relationship between Georgia and Russia, for their leadership on these legislative initiatives. And I want to thank the Chairs and ranking members of the subcommittees from which these legislative initiatives have come forward.

It is well noted the Foreign Affairs Committee works collaboratively together, and I guess it continues to be in the spirit of our fallen leader, Representative, former chairman, Tom Lantos.