

Concurrent Resolution 410, H.R. 2352, H.R. 2535, H.R. 3437, H.R. 5293, H.R. 5350, H.R. 5736, H.R. 6064, H.R. 6503, and H.R. 6855.

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

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, respective motions to reconsider are laid on the table and titles are amended as applicable.

There was no objection.

CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY PROJECT ACT OF 2008

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 998) to direct the Librarian of Congress and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution to carry out a joint project at the Library of Congress and the National Museum of African American History and Culture to collect video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of individuals who participated in the Civil Rights movement, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 998

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Civil Rights History Project Act of [2007] 2008”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS; PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds as follows:

(1) A fundamental principle of American democracy is that individuals should stand up for their rights and beliefs and fight for justice.

(2) The actions of those who participated in the Civil Rights movement from the 1950's through the 1960's are a shining example of this principle in action, demonstrated in events as varied as the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the sit-ins, the Freedom Rides, the March on Washington, the drive for voting rights in Mississippi, and the March to Selma.

(3) While the Civil Rights movement had many visible leaders, including Thurgood Marshall, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks, there were many others whose impact and experience were just as important to the cause but who are not as well known.

(4) The participants in the Civil Rights movement possess an invaluable resource in their first-hand memories of the movement, and the recording of the retelling of their stories and memories will provide a rich, detailed history of our Nation during an important and tumultuous period.

(5) It is in the Nation's interest to undertake a project to collect oral histories of individuals from the Civil Rights movement so future generations will be able to learn of their struggle and sacrifice through primary source, eyewitness material. A coordinated Federal project would also focus attention on the efforts undertaken by various public and private entities to collect and interpret articles in all formats relating to the Civil Rights movement, and serve as a model for future projects undertaken in museums, libraries, and universities throughout the Nation.

(6) The Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution are appropriate repositories to collect, preserve, and make available to the public a collection of these oral histories. The Library and Smithsonian have expertise in the management of documentation projects, and experience in the development of cultural and educational programs for the public.

(b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to create a new federally sponsored, authorized, and funded project that will coordinate at a national level the collection of video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of individuals who participated in the American Civil Rights movement that will build upon and complement previous and ongoing documentary work on this subject, and to assist and encourage local efforts to preserve the memories of such individuals so that Americans of all current and future generations may hear from them directly and better appreciate the sacrifices they made.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT PROJECT AT LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE TO COLLECT VIDEO AND AUDIO RECORDINGS OF HISTORIES OF PARTICIPANTS IN AMERICAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROJECT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Within the limits of available funds, the Librarian of Congress (hereafter referred to as the “Librarian”) and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution (hereafter referred to as the “Secretary”), acting jointly, shall establish an oral history project—

(A) to survey, during the initial phase of the project, collections of audio and video recordings of the reminiscences of participants in the Civil Rights movement that are housed in archives, libraries, museums, and other educational institutions, as well as ongoing documentary work, in order to augment and complement these endeavors and avoid duplication of effort;

(B) to solicit, reproduce, and collect—

(i) video and audio recordings of personal histories and testimonials of individuals who participated in the Civil Rights movement, and

(ii) visual and written materials (such as letters, diaries, photographs, and ephemera) relevant to the personal histories of individuals;

(C) to create a collection of the recordings and other materials obtained, and to catalog and index the collection in a manner the Librarian and the Secretary consider appropriate; and

(D) to make the collection available for public use through the Library of Congress and the National Museum of African American History and Culture, as well as through such other methods as the Librarian and the Secretary consider appropriate.

(2) ROLE OF DIRECTOR OF MUSEUM.—The Secretary shall carry out the Secretary's duties under this Act through the Director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

(b) USE OF AND CONSULTATION WITH OTHER ENTITIES.—The Librarian and the Secretary may carry out the activities described in subsection (a)(1) through agreements and partnerships entered into with other government and private entities, and may otherwise consult with interested persons (within the limits of available resources) and develop appropriate guidelines and arrangements for soliciting, acquiring, and making available recordings under the project under this Act.

(c) SERVICES OF EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS; ACCEPTANCE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICES; ADVANCE PAYMENTS.—In carrying out activi-

ties described in subsection (a)(1), the Librarian and the Secretary may—

(1) procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109 of title 5, United States Code;

(2) accept and utilize the services of volunteers and other uncompensated personnel and reimburse them for travel expenses, including per diem, as authorized under section 5703 of title 5, United States Code; and

(3) make advances of money and payments in advance in accordance with section 3324 of title 31, United States Code.

(d) TIMING.—As soon as practicable after the enactment of this Act, the Librarian and the Secretary shall begin collecting video and audio recordings and other materials under subsection (a)(1), and shall attempt to collect the first such recordings from the oldest individuals involved.

(e) DEFINITION.—In this Act, the term “Civil Rights movement” means the movement to secure racial equality in the United States for African Americans that, focusing on the period 1954 through 1968, challenged the practice of racial segregation in the Nation and achieved equal rights legislation for all American citizens.

SEC. 4. PRIVATE SUPPORT FOR CIVIL RIGHTS HISTORY PROJECT.

(a) ENCOURAGING SOLICITATION AND ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS.—The Librarian of Congress and the Secretary are encouraged to solicit and accept donations of funds and in-kind contributions to support activities under section 3.

(b) DEDICATION OF FUNDS PROVIDED TO LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law—

(1) any funds donated to the Librarian of Congress to support the activities of the Librarian under section 3 shall be deposited entirely into an account established for such purpose;

(2) the funds contained in such account shall be used solely to support such activities; and

(3) the Librarian of Congress may not deposit into such account any funds donated to the Librarian which are not donated for the exclusive purpose of supporting such activities.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act—

(1) \$500,000 for fiscal year [2008] 2009; and

(2) such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years [2009 through 2012] 2010 through 2013.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. DAVIS) and the gentleman from California (Mr. MCCARTHY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on this bill.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 998, which would create the Civil Rights History Project. The bill directs the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution, through the National Museum of African American

History and Culture, to collaborate and establish an oral history project. This joint venture will result in the collection and preservation of audio and video recordings by individuals who participated in the Civil Rights Movement.

A fundamental precept of our American democracy is that individuals stand up for their rights and beliefs and pursue justice through civil means. Many who participated in the Civil Rights Movement did so at great personal sacrifice. Their actions were often heroic and tireless, and challenged the practice of racial segregation in the Nation, which resulted in equal rights legislation for all American citizens.

As these pioneers continue to age, it is important that their memories and stories of events are documented so that future generations can witness their testimony regarding the lives and times of that era.

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

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 998, which would direct the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution to collect and preserve audio and video recordings from individuals who were involved in the civil rights movement.

In 1954 the Supreme Court landmark decision, *Brown v. Board of Education*, served as a beacon of hope to those who had longed for racial equality in this Nation, and is largely credited with beginning the period commonly referred to as the civil rights movement. Rather than viewing the case which provided for the desegregation of public schools in the United States as the end of a journey, supporters of the civil rights movement recognized the Court's decision as the beginning of a long and difficult road ahead.

The years that followed brought many hard battles, from the Montgomery Bus Boycott that was a result of Rosa Parks' brave refusal to give up her seat to a white passenger, to the march in Selma, Alabama, during which our own colleague, Congressman LEWIS, suffered severe physical trauma in defense of voting rights. Congressman LEWIS' recollections of this time have often brought those who have heard him speak to tears. It is exactly those types of oral histories that are in danger of being lost in the absence of a concerted effort to preserve them. We cannot afford to lose those accounts of extraordinary courage in the face of profound injustice.

With the passage of time, generations of Americans have now been born with freedoms that would not have been possible without the struggle and sacrifice of those who participated in the civil rights movement. The audio and video recordings preserved as a result of this bill's passage will be an invaluable resource from which those young people who may learn about the struggle for racial equality and will serve as an in-

spiration to all Americans as they reflect upon this pivotal time in our Nation's history.

I yield back the balance of my time. Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield such time as she may consume to Representative MCCARTHY of New York.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. I thank my colleague from California.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 998, the Civil Rights Oral History Project. I want to thank Chairman BRADY and Ranking Member EHLERS and the Committee on House Administration for moving to the floor on this bill.

I also want to thank my lead cosponsor of the bill, Congressman JOHN LEWIS of Georgia, himself a civil rights hero, for all of his help in developing and generating support for this bill.

Mr. LEWIS was at the forefront of the battle to end segregation, and his contribution to ensuring equality in our country cannot be overstated. I know I speak for all of my colleagues when I say that we are honored to serve with him, and grateful for all he has done and continues to do for all Americans as a steward of justice and equal rights.

We are fortunate to serve in Congress with several other influential civil rights leaders, and I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you for their sacrifices and commitment to the cause of freedom.

The fight for civil rights was one of the most significant social and cultural movements in our Nation's history. The will of a generation to right centuries of injustice changed the world we live in forever.

The leaders of the civil rights movement displayed tremendous courage and persistence to ensure that all Americans were treated equally, with dignity, regardless of their ethnic background, race or origins. Many leaders from all walks of life put their lives on the line to make it possible for all people to live freely and have the same fundamental rights.

We can never overstate the contributions of our Nation's civil rights leaders. Without their efforts, many of the things we take for granted every day would not have come to pass. It is vital that future generations know and understand the struggles and the challenges of those that paved the way for us to live in this Nation free.

These brave Americans' stories must continue to be told to not only inspire future generations, but to remind people what is possible in America and how far we have come. Unfortunately, with each passing year, our Nation loses more and more of the people that played major roles in the struggles to secure equal rights for all Americans. In recent years we have lost great leaders like Mrs. Coretta Scott King and Mrs. Rosa Parks. Thankfully, their stories have been well documented in the historical record, but there are many others who have already passed or whose memories are fading.

While we know so much about the lives of the leaders of the civil rights movement, such as Dr. Martin Luther King; our colleague, Congressman JOHN LEWIS; and Thurgood Marshall, it's important that we learn about the everyday people of all races who took a stand during a pivotal time in our Nation's history.

There were so many people who were crucial to the civil rights movement but have not had as much recorded about their experiences for the public record. These were the people, in many cases, that were part of some of the most significant battles in the fight for equality. The workers in Memphis that went on strike and marched in protest with Dr. King, the students that held sit-ins at lunch counters in the South, the thousands of people that marched on Washington and witnessed the "I Have a Dream Speech," and the millions of Americans that stood up and worked in their own ways to make our country a better place for all people. These people are heroes of the civil rights movement, and we need to make sure that their stories are woven into the fabric of the American story.

That's why I have introduced the Civil Rights Oral History bill. The purpose of the Civil Rights Oral History bill is to catalogue and preserve the stories and experiences of the people who were involved in the civil rights movement.

This legislation stresses the importance of capturing the memories and the deeds of the civil rights generation and will give us a unique insight into the experiences of the people that we rely on in the front lines of the civil rights movement.

This bill will create a joint effort between the future National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Library of Congress to collect oral histories of the people that were involved in the civil rights movement and preserve their stories for future generations. I urge my colleagues to support this bill and to take the time to acknowledge the contributions of these great Americans who fought to make our Nation a more fair and just place.

Mr. Speaker, we have been going for a number of years working with our veterans across this Nation to get the history from them, an oral history, that has been going to the Library of Congress. That's where this idea came from.

When you think that we are really a very young country, and hopefully, we're going to be around for centuries to come, and I think it's important that future generations actually know how we became a great country, but also the struggles that many Americans went through. This bill will help preserve that.

I hope my colleagues will support this bill. This is for the future of America; it's for the future of the generations to see the history.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield to Mr. HINCHEY of New York as much time as he may consume.

Mr. HINCHEY. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to stand here this evening with my friends and colleagues and particularly with my friend and colleague, Congresswoman CAROLYN MCCARTHY, to voice my support for H.R. 998, a bill which she has produced and which will enrich the lives of future generations. This bill will collect oral history records from those whose struggles made them among America's most notable heroes, the leaders of the civil rights generation.

The civil rights movement has strengthened our social fabric by extending basic rights to all of America's people through the right to employment, the right to buy or rent a home, the right to education, rights that are the most basic and fundamental in our country.

It is imperative that we collect oral history in order to preserve the rich cultural heritage of our Nation. Preserving oral history gives those in the future a firsthand account of the struggle that Americans went through to change the laws and the lives of our people and our government. These great Americans stood up to violence, they stood up to death threats, they stood up to local, State and government oppression and opposition, and they risked their own economic well-being so that our great Nation could fulfill its promise to all of its people. We must preserve that history that explains the hardship and sacrifice that many African Americans and others went through to get equal treatment under the law.

This history can be most richly delivered by the people who led the movement themselves, those who fought so valiantly, and who can give their account firsthand. This bill will preserve an important part of our heritage through the process of collecting this oral history and making it available. Firsthand accounts, which include the honesty, emotion and accuracy are needed as an important part of our historical record.

□ 1915

Collecting these first person accounts from the civil rights movement will also give generations, those in the future, inspiration and motivation to uphold and strengthen America's promise for equal opportunity and to be sure that that promise is fulfilled.

It is my hope that our future generations will always be able to access oral histories and will blaze new trails that promote equality and richness in diversity.

Again, I'd like to thank all of my friends who were involved with this bill, especially my colleague and friend, CAROLYN MCCARTHY, for including me to celebrate the culture that makes America the great Nation that it is by taking further steps to allow

future generations to learn from our notable American heroes.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, It is now my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to Mr. COHEN of Tennessee.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congressman DAVIS and particularly Congresswoman MCCARTHY for bringing H.R. 998.

I do represent Memphis, Tennessee, and much of the civil rights history of Memphis, for better and for worse purposes, have occurred in my district. It is important that the history of that struggle be maintained to teach people about the courageous struggle, the leadership that many, many people had to embark on to achieve their rights that should have been part of 18th century America, but the 18th century America was not complete, and all men were not created equal. Certainly women weren't created equal either, and people had to fight and risk their lives to attain rights for people who today are beneficiaries thereof.

In my community, many of these heroes of the civil rights movement have been dying lately. They're getting old. This bill I wish would have come earlier, but I really thank Representative MCCARTHY for bringing it. It's a start. And there are people like the great Reverend Benjamin Hooks, who's getting up in his years but who's got many stories to tell, and Russell Sugarman. We lost Mr. Ernest Withers, a great photographer of the civil rights movement, this past year.

Time goes by for all of us, and the opportunities to collect history become more difficult as each day passes.

So I'm proud to speak on behalf of this, but mostly as a Congressperson from the Ninth District in Tennessee, I want to express my appreciation to Representative MCCARTHY for having the leadership to bring this and for initiating this process.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that Congresswoman MCCARTHY has brought this legislation forward. As someone who's had an opportunity to travel on the pilgrimages of the civil rights movement with our own JOHN LEWIS, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, I know how important it is for us to act now and to capture the words and the actions and the memories of those who played such an important and historical role in this country.

I urge all Members to support this bill.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Civil Rights Oral History Project. I want to thank Congresswoman MCCARTHY for her leadership on this issue and for bringing this bill to the floor today.

Oral history is such an important way to capture and share our nation's story.

These are stories that need to be told, and preserved. These are the stories of the civil rights movement; eye witness accounts of the struggle for civil rights.

These are recollections of real people who marched, and even spilled a little blood in the

cause of civil rights and civil liberties, and in the cause of voting rights.

These stories will be collected and preserved by the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the Library of Congress. Future generations will be able to hear the voices of people who were there during the civil rights movement, and hear them tell their stories in their own words.

We have lost too many of those voices in the last few years—Mrs. Coretta Scott King and Mrs. Rosa Parks, and we will continue to lose more courageous Civil Rights pioneers. We must begin this wonderful Oral History Project today, before we lose parts of the story. I strongly support this bill and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. DAVIS of California. I yield back the balance of 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 pass the bill, H.R. 998, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SHOULD ENSURE THAT MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND THEIR DEPENDENTS ARE PROVIDED WITH INFORMATION ON VOTING IN THE 2008 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 388) expressing the sense of Congress that the Department of Defense and the Federal Voting Assistance Program should take certain additional and timely measures to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their dependents are provided with reasonable information on how to register to vote and vote in the 2008 general elections, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 388

Whereas members of the Armed Forces and their dependents deserve every reasonable opportunity to participate in the electoral process given their daily sacrifices to protect our liberty and freedom;

Whereas Congress enacted the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act in part to ensure that members of the Armed Forces and their dependents and citizens living overseas are provided with sufficient information, opportunities, and balloting materials to foster their participation in Federal elections;

Whereas the Election Assistance Commission found that less than 17 percent of the 6 million citizens eligible under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act chose to participate in the 2006 general election;