

that actively illustrate the culture of the Caribbean.

In the years to come, it is important that the United States maintain a strong relationship with the Caribbean nations. The value that these nations place on growth and economic development, as well as personal advancement are values reflected in American culture and thus show the commonalities that our country shares with these nations. As we continue to cultivate these relationships, let us not forget the wealth of interchangeable benefit such communication and interaction with one another can yield. Caribbean Heritage Month plays an integral role in shaping America's understanding that such nations play in our progress and growth. May this Caribbean Heritage Month designation continue to draw from the unique culture of Caribbean Americans, and be used as a source of influence for continued Caribbean-American relations.

Mr. LYNCH. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. LYNCH) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 127.

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. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

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.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

PROVIDING FOR DESIGN OF SLAVE LABOR MARKER IN CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 135) directing the Architect of the Capitol to place a marker in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center which acknowledges the role that slave labor played in the construction of the United States Capitol, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 135

Whereas enslaved African-Americans provided labor essential to the construction of the United States Capitol;

Whereas the report of the Architect of the Capitol entitled "History of Slave Laborers in the Construction of the United States Capitol" documents the role of slave labor in the construction of the Capitol;

Whereas enslaved African-Americans performed the backbreaking work of quarrying the stone which comprised many of the floors, walls, and columns of the Capitol;

Whereas enslaved African-Americans also participated in other facets of construction

of the Capitol, including carpentry, masonry, carting, rafting, roofing, plastering, glazing, painting, and sawing;

Whereas the marble columns in the Old Senate Chamber and the sandstone walls of the East Front corridor remain as the lasting legacies of the enslaved African-Americans who worked the quarries;

Whereas slave-quarried stones from the remnants of the original Capitol walls can be found in Rock Creek Park in the District of Columbia;

Whereas the Statue of Freedom now atop the Capitol dome could not have been cast without the pivotal intervention of Philip Reid, an enslaved African-American foundry worker who deciphered the puzzle of how to separate the 5-piece plaster model for casting when all others failed;

Whereas the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center was named Emancipation Hall to help acknowledge the work of the slave laborers who built the Capitol;

Whereas no narrative on the construction of the Capitol that does not include the contribution of enslaved African-Americans can fully and accurately reflect its history;

Whereas recognition of the contributions of enslaved African-Americans brings to all Americans an understanding of the continuing evolution of our representative democracy; and

Whereas a marker dedicated to the enslaved African-Americans who helped to build the Capitol will reflect the charge of the Capitol Visitor Center to teach visitors about Congress and its development: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. PLACEMENT OF MARKER IN CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER TO ACKNOWLEDGE ROLE OF SLAVE LABOR IN CONSTRUCTION OF CAPITOL.

(a) PROCUREMENT AND PLACEMENT OF MARKER.—The Architect of the Capitol, subject to the approval of the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate, shall design, procure, and place in a prominent location in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center a marker which acknowledges the role that slave labor played in the construction of the United States Capitol.

(b) CRITERIA FOR DESIGN OF MARKER.—In developing the design for the marker required under subsection (a), the Architect of the Capitol—

(1) shall take into consideration the recommendations developed by the Slave Labor Task Force Working Group;

(2) shall, to the greatest extent practicable, ensure that the marker includes stone which was quarried by slaves in the construction of the Capitol; and

(3) shall ensure that the marker includes a plaque or inscription which describes the purpose of the marker.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous matter on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in May 2005 the congressional leadership appointed a task force to study the contributions of enslaved African Americans to the construction of this great edifice, our United States Capitol. The task force was also asked to recommend appropriate steps to recognize their contribution. In support of that effort, the architectural historian to the Architect of the Capitol produced a report on the contributions of slave laborers to the Capitol's construction. During the 110th Congress the Committee on House Administration conducted a hearing to receive recommendations of the task force, chaired by the gentleman from Georgia, my colleague and mentor, Congressman JOHN LEWIS. The task force devoted considerable time and effort to reviewing the Architect's report on the use of slaves during the Capitol's construction and developing recommendations. Mr. Speaker, Americans now living cannot remove the stain of our Nation's past, but we can admit our forebears' sin. We must acknowledge the sacrifices of those Americans who, without choice, worked to build a government that kept them in bondage. The task force's report recommended a number of steps to do what we can.

□ 1500

Several of their recommendations, including the naming of Emancipation Hall in the new Capitol Visitor Center, have already been completed.

The placement of a marker in Emancipation Hall requires further legislative action as embodied in this resolution. This resolution will provide for the installation of a marker by the Architect of the Capitol, under the supervision of the House Administration Committee and the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

As the resolution contemplates, the committees will make every effort to use some of the original, slave-quarried stones. These stones were removed from the Capitol during previous renovations and are held in storage.

I urge all Members to support the resolution, which proposes a fitting commemoration of slave laborers' contribution to this temple of democracy.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 135, which will enhance the educational offerings of the Capitol Visitor Center by highlighting the contributions of enslaved African Americans to the construction of the U.S. Capitol Building.

Far too often the historical record detailing the rise of our Capitol Building fails to appropriately recognize the vital contributions by slave laborers. As a result of the Slave Labor Task Force, we are better equipped to fill

that void and will take steps toward doing so here today.

The Capitol Visitor Center quickly has become a major attraction for those visiting our Federal city, seeking greater understanding of the history which led to our present. It is therefore appropriate that Emancipation Hall, in the CVC, house a formal recognition of these essential laborers, further enriching the educational experience of visitors young and old.

I urge my colleagues' support for the successful passage of this resolution.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I would now yield 5 minutes to the Honorable Congressman from Georgia and sponsor of this resolution, JOHN LEWIS.

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague and friend from Georgia for yielding the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to tell the full story of our Nation's Capitol Building. We must recognize all of the hands that helped to construct this temple of freedom. We must continue to teach the full history of this country, and to do that, we must recognize the role that African American slaves played in the construction of our Nation's Capitol.

I would like to thank Chairman BRADY and Ranking Member LUNGREN for all their efforts to bring this bill to the floor, and also the staff of the House Administration Committee, and Jesse Uman, of my own staff, for their work and perseverance to pass this bill.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to thank and recognize Senator BLANCHE LINCOLN, who has championed the work of the Slave Labor Task Force in the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, for too long, the use of slave labor in the construction of the United States Capitol has gone untold. We look back today, not to open old wounds, but to ensure that we tell the story, the whole story, the complete story of those slaves, so their toils are never forgotten.

Slavery is part of our Nation's history of which we are not proud. However, we should not run or hide from it.

The history of the Capitol, like the history of our Nation, should be complete. As thousands of visitors walk through our Nation's Capitol, they leave without knowing the full history of its construction. Today, there is nothing, not one thing, not one note, that tells the story of the African American slaves who helped build this magnificent building: no drawings, no murals, no statues, nothing but nothing.

Mr. Speaker, with this resolution, this untold story will now be told. Thanks to the work of the Slave Labor Task Force, we will now honor those slaves who built our temple of freedom. We need something that visitors can see, that visitors can feel and which communicates the back-breaking labor that slaves completed to help construct our Capitol.

Passage of this resolution will create a historic marker in the Capitol Visitor Center, made of stones quarried by the hands of slave laborers to stand testament to their sacrifices. This physical and permanent marker will pay tribute to the blood, sweat and toils of the African American slaves who helped build this magnificent building and ensure that their story is told and never forgotten.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the passage of this resolution.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I have no other Members who wish to speak at the moment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I would now like to yield 3 minutes to my friend, the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands, Dr. DONNA CHRISTENSEN.

I am proud to report, Mr. Speaker, that she has distinguished herself as one of the foremost experts on the issue of health care in this Congress where she has served for the past 14 years. And so it is my great pleasure to introduce my friend and member of the powerful Energy and Commerce Committee, which has taken primary jurisdiction of the issue of health care reform.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. I thank my colleague for yielding and for those kind words.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 135 which would have the work of enslaved African Americans in the building of our historic Capitol Building memorialized for this generation and for posterity. And I applaud, thank and honor the lead sponsor, the mentor of all of us, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, for this resolution and for his unwavering commitment to justice.

The Architect of the Capitol's 2005 report entitled "History of Slave Laborers in Construction of the United States Capitol" clearly outlines the contributions of "the slaves who quarried the stone, cut the timber, and formed and fired the bricks that became our Nation's Temple of Freedom."

I am sure that there are many who will wonder, Why is this important? Why is it necessary to have a marker placed in the Capitol Visitor Center that acknowledges the work of the unfree in the construction of the Capitol?

In response, let me say that it is important because it is part of the American story. It is an integral part of the fabric of our history which runs from its founding on the great ideals of freedom, justice and equality to today, where we have witnessed the toils, tears and prayers of hundreds of years answered in the contributions of the descendants of those enslaved Africans in every endeavor of American life today. And that story, the American story, is an enduring one of redemption. It is a story that points to the unique quality of our Nation and our continuous striving to achieve those ideals of freedom, equality and justice.

Mr. Speaker, while some may see irony in the fact that it was hands of the then un-free that forged the structure that has become the temple of freedom for the entire world, we see it as the hand of God pointing, as always, to the lives of the "least of these" as precious in His sight.

There should be a marker in the Capitol Visitor Center because it is an appropriate way to mark how far this country has come and to show countries around the world that the impossible is indeed possible. The marker needs to be placed to finally give voice to those whose silent witness to the potential greatness of our country was forged in their blood, sweat and tears.

I urge my colleagues to vote "aye" for this resolution.

Mr. HARPER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, again, I would want to commend the conscience of the Congress, the Honorable Congressman from the great State of Georgia and the great city of Atlanta. I would like to commend him for taking on this measure and proceeding with it to conclusion. And I want to congratulate you, sir, for this and for all of the things you will continue to do to make sure that everyone's contribution throughout the history of this great country is recognized.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, more than 200 years ago, on September 18, 1793, our Nation broke ground for what would become our home to democracy—the United States Capitol.

At this time in our Nation's history, however, democracy and freedom were not enjoyed by all Americans.

Ironically, it was those who were disenfranchised—enslaved African Americans—who helped construct our symbol of democracy, the Capitol.

I commend my colleague, the gentleman from Georgia, JOHN LEWIS, for introducing this bipartisan resolution acknowledging this fact.

Specifically, the resolution "directs the Architect of the Capitol to place a marker in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center which acknowledges the role that slave labor played in the construction of the United States Capitol."

There are at least three reasons why this resolution is necessary.

First, the history of the United States Capitol would not be accurate without recognizing that enslaved African Americans played an integral role in building the Capitol. For example, the Capitol's architects negotiated with slave owners with respect to hiring out their slaves. Although the Architect of the Capitol states that "[n]o one will ever know how many slaves helped to build the United States Capitol Building," it is estimated that at least several hundred were involved in the construction.

These slaves skillfully toiled as carpenters, sawyers, blacksmiths, brickmakers, and bricklayers. They were responsible for quarrying stone and then hauling it to the work site.

Notably, an enslaved African American—Philip Reid—helped cast the Statue of Freedom, which was placed on top of the Capitol Dome during the Civil War on December 2, 1863.

Second, given the significant contributions of enslaved African Americans in the building of the U.S. Capitol, a marker in Emancipation Hall is an appropriate tribute to such efforts.

The marker was recommended by the Slave Labor Task Force Working Group, which also recommended designating the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center as Emancipation Hall.

This marker, which is to include stone quarried by these slaves, will ensure that this part of the story of the Capitol's construction is told.

When visitors stand in Emancipation Hall and view the commemorative marker, they will be reminded of the significant role that slaves played in the construction of the U.S. Capitol, thereby ensuring that the legacy of these slaves will live on.

Finally, by acknowledging that enslaved African Americans played a major role in building the Nation's Capitol, we recommit ourselves to the pursuit of freedom and democracy for all Americans.

We recognize that, even today, there are some who have yet to realize all of the rights and privileges that are afforded through our Constitution and laws. Prejudice, discrimination, and inequities remain a reality.

However, by paying tribute to those enslaved African Americans who built our Nation's Capitol, we understand that freedom and democracy are constantly evolving.

We recognize that we can commit ourselves to the advancement of these principles, knowing that those who toiled and labored in the very building that we stand in today, could not enjoy freedom and democracy for themselves.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 135, the resolution directing the Architect of the Capitol to place a marker in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center which acknowledges the role that slave labor played in the construction of the United States Capitol, and for other purposes. I would like to thank my colleague and fellow Georgian, Representative JOHN LEWIS for introducing this important piece of legislation, as well as the co-sponsors.

I stand in support of this resolution because it recognizes the important contributions that African-American slaves have made to the establishment of this country, particularly the Capitol Building, which is the foundation of our country's government. It is in this very building where the biggest decisions of our country are made. Therefore, we can all imagine how important this structure really is to the wellbeing of our nation.

It has almost been 150 years since the Thirteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution was ratified, which officially abolished slavery was passed within these same walls. It is in due time that slaves be recognized for the back breaking labor that they endured while building this great building that we now stand in. It was not for the crucial intervention of Philip Reid, an African-American slave foundry worker, the Statue of Freedom that sits on top of the Capitol Dome may not have existed. Reid figured out how to separate the 5-piece plaster model for casting when all others workers failed to figure out how this could be done.

The true purpose of this resolution is to draw recognition to the past, so that we can move on to a better future of race relations in America. There is no better time than now, than on the coat tails of one of the most his-

toric presidential elections in United States history. By no means is this resolution erasing or justifying slavery. Instead it shows America and the world the positive progression that our nation is making in its journey to ensure that all people be treated equally. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, as a co-sponsor of H. Con. Res. 135, I rise in strong support of this resolution directing the Architect of the Capitol to place a marker in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center which acknowledges the role that slave labor played in the construction of the United States Capitol.

African Americans throughout the world continue to make remarkable contributions to their communities every single day. We must not disregard the hands that worked and the feet that toiled to build our Nation's Capitol. We must honor the contributions of the slaves who helped build this magnificent structure.

Mr. Speaker, when we look to the hands that shape and built this city, particularly this Capitol, we should no longer hang our heads in shame of slavery, but instead celebrate the people who are so often forgotten. We should appreciate and acknowledge the thousands of unnamed men and women who built this structure representing democracy, liberty, and freedom. Just last month, my colleagues in the Senate approved a resolution that apologized for the enslavement and racial segregation of African Americans. As the legislative branch, we have officially acknowledged the institution that barred hundreds of thousands from freedom, and with this resolution, we can begin to celebrate those slaves that physically helped to create this country.

The Capitol Visitor Center sees almost 3 million visitors annually. As they walk the halls and admire the architecture and statues, marveling at the rich history and stories that accompany them throughout the building, it is our responsibility to ensure that all slaves who helped build the Capitol have their stories told. In the Capitol Visitor Center, Emancipation Hall was named to help acknowledge the work of the slaves who toiled over the work of the Capitol and we must ensure that their stories are told for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I express my unwavering support for this resolution and urge my colleagues to do the same.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of House Concurrent Resolution 135, recognizing the contributions of enslaved African Americans in building the United States Capitol.

This resolution will commission the Architect of the Capitol to create and place a historical marker in the Capitol Visitor Center made from the original government owned sandstone rocks that were quarried by slave labor, and removed from the Capitol building during a previous renovation.

Slavery played an important role in the foundation of this country, and slave labor was used extensively in the creation of many of the buildings that are home to our government. While we cannot rectify the sins of the past, nor thank slave laborers for their sacrifice, the contributions of these men and women should not go unnoticed.

It is important this plaque be prominently displayed for the thousands of visitors that come into the CVC. In order for these visitors to know the complete history of our Nation's

Capitol, they must be aware of the contributions of these laborers.

I would like to thank Representative JOHN LEWIS for introducing this resolution and acknowledging this frequently overlooked part of our Capitol's story. The contributions made by these workers are a part of our history and our legacy, and this recognition will help future generations better understand the sacrifices of those who came before them.

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. 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 Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 135.

The question was taken.

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

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. 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.

PROVIDING FOR ENGRAVEMENTS IN CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 131) directing the Architect of the Capitol to engrave the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and the National Motto of "In God We Trust" in the Capitol Visitor Center.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 131

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. ENGRAVING OF PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG AND NATIONAL MOTTO IN CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER.

(a) ENGRAVING REQUIRED.—The Architect of the Capitol shall engrave the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and the National Motto of "In God we trust" in the Capitol Visitor Center, in accordance with the engraving plan described in subsection (b).

(b) ENGRAVING PLAN.—The engraving plan described in this subsection is a plan setting forth the design and location of the engraving required under subsection (a) which is prepared by the Architect of the Capitol and approved by the Committee on House Administration of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. HARPER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in