

I can tell you that I have done my reconnaissance and that we are not involved in any scandals in Florida. When we had a problem in the Miami hospital—and this is a service that we should give the Secretary the authority to do—two small projects had to be stopped because they combined into one project—the operating facility. We were able to get it amended and get it taken care of so that the veterans in the Miami hospital were being cared for. In Orlando, we have been working on that VA hospital for over 25 years—a long time. The VA has not built any hospitals until recently, and now we are building six new hospitals. We had not built a VA hospital in the Veterans Administration for 15 years.

Yes, we are coming together in Congress and are doing what we should do for the veterans. Let me point out that I support this bill, but this bill should go to every agency, because every single agency ignores the reports that come in. So, if we are going to do our oversight, we should do it with all of the agencies. We should not let veterans think that we are not doing what we need to do to take care of them. It should be, as I would say, one team and one fight. We should be fighting for the veterans. Ever since I have been on this committee, it has been all for the veterans. It hasn't been about the politics that go on—you did not fill out my report. The important thing is that we are taking care of the veterans.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 2072, as amended, the Demanding Accountability for Veterans Act, and, in turn, to support our veteran heroes.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2072, 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.

□ 1730

AUTHORIZING USE OF ROTUNDA FOR CEREMONY COMMEMORATING 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ENACTMENT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res 100) authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 100

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

SECTION 1. USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR CEREMONY TO COMMEMORATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENACTMENT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964.

The rotunda of the United States Capitol is authorized to be used on June 24, 2014, for a ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the significant impact the Act had on the Civil Rights movement. Physical preparations for the conduct of the ceremony shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as may be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) and the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support today of House Concurrent Resolution 100, authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

It is certainly fitting that we take pause and recognize the passage of this historic landmark legislation that was passed into law and the events in our Nation that called upon its leaders to act all those years ago.

The passage of the Civil Rights Act was a major step forward for America that finally allowed our great Nation to truly live up to its creed found in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal.

188 years following the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, 99 years after the conclusion of the Civil War, and after decades of struggle by great leaders like Martin Luther King and so many Americans who fought valiantly, broad bipartisan majorities of both Houses of Congress came together to ensure equality for every American.

The passage of the Civil Rights Act was a very proud moment for the House of Representatives because America faced a time of choosing in 1964, and together, our Congress rallied and voted to strengthen individual protections and rights, and voted to end discrimination and segregation 50 years ago.

The Civil Rights Act still remains one of the most important pieces of legislation that has ever been debated in our Chamber and instituted across

our great Nation, not only for people of color or different nations of origin, but for each and every American, regardless of gender or socioeconomic status or their religious background.

Our Nation has a very vibrant and rich history, and that moment, 50 years ago, when many different people of various walks of life joined together and, in one voice, called for equality stands as one of the most monumental in our history.

Our Nation stood as a witness to those who led and participated in civil rights protests such as the March on Washington, sit-ins at lunch counters, and maintaining one's seat on a bus and refusing to move solely based on one's color of one's skin.

Fifty years ago, so many risked prison or worse to overcome huge odds and stand for what they truly believed must be changed. Their contributions reverberated across every State and every town and every home. Many took up roles as spokespersons, using their talents or what was available to them to make peaceful statements. Several have joined this Chamber as Members.

I see JOHN LEWIS has joined us today, and I am just very proud to be able to serve with a man of his historic background and distinguished service to our Nation, Mr. Speaker.

These people were pillars, absolutely pillars of strength. They used their courage to meet injustice head-on, and they are memorialized in the history that we carry forward. The actions of those individuals called on every citizen of our Nation to recognize and to listen to the struggles of others and to support the call for a change to our laws.

So many individuals from all walks of life rose up and lifted their voices to add to the call for change in our Nation, and they stood for all of those who were to come after them in the next generation and for the betterment of their lives.

They brought their concerns to the forefront of our political stage and they spoke for all of us, men, women, rich or poor.

In my home State of Michigan, Mr. Speaker, we were blessed to have so many great leaders in this movement, but one of those individuals was truly a civil rights icon who became a treasured member of our community. Rosa Parks inspired countless Americans with her grace, her dignity and strength, and through the simple yet profound act of refusing to give up her seat on a bus, she continued her advocacy for equality and freedom and inspired so many others who have carried the cause for individual rights forward to this very day.

She also has a connection to this House with another Member of Congress as well, a Michigan colleague of mine, JOHN CONYERS, who was also a recognized leader in the civil rights movement.

As we mark this 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, we remember the

efforts, the struggles, and the achievement of those who stood for equal rights. They saw to it that America will make good on its promise for every individual to obtain justice, freedom, and equality.

It is certainly fitting, Mr. Speaker, that the House and the Senate join together later this month to formally remember and pay tribute to our Nation's civil rights attaining this milestone.

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

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the chairwoman for the support. It is very much appreciated.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 100, which authorizes the use of the Capitol rotunda to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The passing of the bill that became the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a critical turning point in the history of this Nation, prohibiting all forms of discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin.

This significant law also ensured that the promise of equal protection under the law would be true for all Americans.

Millions of Americans faced violent opposition to ensure that the Civil Rights Act was brought before Members of the House and the Senate for a vote.

During what was one of the most turbulent times in this Nation, a time when discrimination was commonplace and segregation was an accepted norm, passing this law was a true bipartisan effort, with Members of both parties overcoming their differences to do what was best for this Nation.

If passed, H. Con. Res. 100 would allow the use of the Capitol rotunda to recognize the courageous efforts made by former Members of this House to pass the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, and will honor civil rights and community leaders who dedicated their lives to see this bill become a reality and be signed into law by the President of the United States, President Lyndon B. Johnson.

I urge all Members to support H. Con. Res. 100, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, it is now my pleasure to yield as much time as he may consume to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN), the assistant Democratic leader of the House.

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

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Representative MARCIA FUDGE, for yielding time to me on this important resolution. I also want to

commend her for her leadership on this initiative to pay appropriate commemoration to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Prior to my first election to the House of Representatives, I served in the State government of my native State, South Carolina, in an office charged with administering this landmark legislative achievement.

We, in South Carolina, effectively used provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to enforce fair employment practices. That instrument has had tremendously positive impact on the working men and women of my State and across the country.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, along with the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fair Housing Law of 1968, and other initiatives embody the ideals upon which this Nation was founded.

I had the opportunity to expound on this notion at some length when I spoke in Dayton, Ohio, in 1985 as president of the International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies. At that time I spoke these words:

We are an experimental Nation toying with the idea of individual rights as opposed to collective control and tyranny. So far, the experiment has worked, no doubt to the surprise of many who witnessed its birth over 200 years ago.

It is interesting to speculate why not only has the Nation survived, but also its ideals and principals. Let me hazard a few guesses as to why America and its ideals have worked over all these years. First of all, I do not believe America is perfect. Neither did the Founding Fathers of the Nation. No sooner had our Constitution been written than the first ten amendments were presented and adopted. They were called the Bill of Rights, and we can all be thankful that they were included in the package.

I continued on that day:

Americans have never tried to conceal or ignore their imperfections. For the most part, they have tried to recognize and correct them. When the enslavement of a race of people created a conflict which threatened the very foundation of our Constitution, the Nation went to war with itself to resolve the conflict and ensure the integrity and sovereignty of the Constitution. And, a century later, when it was found that discrimination still prevented millions of Americans from participating as full-fledged citizens, our Nation moved to correct the flaw with wide-ranging civil rights legislation.

This bill that we commemorate today was one of them:

Now, while it is common to say that no nation in the history of the world has granted more individual freedom, it is just as valid to say that no nation has ever tried harder to correct the flaws and impediments in its system. We are still imperfect, and we are still trying to live up to the principles to which the Constitution has committed us. The important message is that this Nation has never stopped trying, and we would do well not to stop now.

Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, too many in this country hold the view that the flaws in the system are not worth fixing or no longer need attention. Too often, the view is advanced that the civil rights movement and all of its achievements are things of the past.

I strongly disagree with that view. The work of securing a more perfect Union is never completed. The struggle continues.

I want to thank Chair FUDGE for her leadership on this resolution to commemorate the Civil Rights Act of 1964 in the rotunda of the Capitol.

□ 1745

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I have been blessed and privileged to work with many great people in this House. You have just heard from one, the assistant leader who is our historian and has been an activist in many, many ways throughout his life.

I now want to yield to someone who all of us consider an icon, as was referenced by the chairwoman earlier. It is, indeed, an honor to yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia, JOHN LEWIS, my good friend who is the face and voice for so many of the civil rights movement.

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE), the esteemed chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, for her hard work, for her leadership on this resolution, and for her kind words.

I would also like to thank the gentlewoman from Michigan for her kind words and for her leadership. The two of them have never given up or given in and have kept the faith, and for that, I thank them so much.

I would also like to thank the Speaker and our friends on both sides of the aisle for helping to bring this resolution to the floor.

I am glad to be on the floor with the gentleman from South Carolina, JIM CLYBURN, who I met more than 50 years ago at an organizer meeting of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, when we both were very young, first for the sit-ins, when we both had all of our hair.

To be here with the gentleman from South Carolina today, if someone had told me then that the two of us would be sitting here in the Congress, I would say: you are crazy, you are out of your mind, you don't know what you are talking about.

Fifty years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. This bipartisan effort outlawed discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The following year, President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. It was a bipartisan effort.

Mr. Speaker, if you visit my office in the Cannon Building, you will see both Democrats and Republicans standing together. You will see me standing with Members of the Senate. One man I will never forget, the Republican leader Everett Dirksen, helped make it possible to get the bill passed.

Too many people I knew and loved lost their lives in the fight for civil rights and simple justice. Every single

day, each and every one of us must remember the heroes—average men, women, and children—who put their lives on the line in the fight for equality.

We cannot forget their sacrifice, and we must not ignore the lessons of history. When we come together across party lines, from different races, religions, and regions, we can achieve the greater good.

I hope and pray that we will come together again—Democrats and Republicans, of all faiths, colors, and regions—to pass laws that maintain, protect, and strengthen rights for which many gave their ultimate sacrifice.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Michigan, the gentlewoman from Ohio, and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their strong support of this resolution.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute to say that the gentleman from Georgia, Representative LEWIS, mentioned the term “heroes.” He truly is a hero, an American hero, a treasure.

In the 12 years I have been honored to be a Member of Congress, anytime I hear him come to the floor and talk about civil rights, someone who has actually lived it, I wish I could take him home and have him talk to groups of schoolchildren, and I know he does that in his own district and around the country.

Because every time the gentleman from Georgia, as well as Representative CLYBURN and so many others come to this floor to talk about the civil rights movement, it really is very moving, and it makes us all think about, before we are anything, we are Americans first, and he truly is a hero.

I will continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, there are just some things that are inherently American. They are truth and freedom and justice, doing what is best for our Nation.

I know that we have disagreements, we have differences, but today, we stand together as one House, and I thank the chairwoman for allowing that to happen again.

Again, I urge all Members to support H. Con. Res. 100, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I would certainly urge all of my colleagues, as well, to support this resolution, which will authorize the use of the rotunda of the United States Capitol Building for a ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

I yield back the balance of my time. The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 100.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the

rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERMITTING USE OF ROTUNDA FOR CEREMONY AWARDCING CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO NEXT OF KIN OR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF RAOUL WALLENBERG

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 36) permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the next of kin or personal representative of Raoul Wallenberg.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

S. CON. RES. 36

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

SECTION 1. USE OF ROTUNDA FOR CEREMONY TO AWARD CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE NEXT OF KIN OR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF RAOUL WALLENBERG.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used on July 9, 2014, for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the next of kin or personal representative of Raoul Wallenberg in recognition of his achievements and heroic actions during the Holocaust.

(b) PREPARATIONS.—Physical preparations for the ceremony described in subsection (a) shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

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

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I might consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the concurrent resolution, permitting the use of the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the next of kin or personal representative of Raoul Wallenberg.

The issuing of the Congressional Gold Medal is in recognition and in honor of this individual's heroism and selfless humanitarian actions.

Raoul Wallenberg was born on August 4, 1912, in Sweden; and in 1931, Mr.

Wallenberg attended college in my home State of Michigan, at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

In the years that followed his graduating at the top of his class in architecture, he quickly established himself in business in his home nation of Sweden, and like so many others, then he also witnessed the ever-growing threats coming from Germany.

At the age of 32, Mr. Wallenberg was recruited by the U.S. War Refugee Board, a board that was established by then-President Roosevelt and whose mission was to rescue the Jewish from occupied territories and to provide relief to those sent to concentration camps.

Mr. Wallenberg later became known as an individual who led one of the War Refugee Board's most extensive operations.

Mr. Wallenberg was given status as a Swedish diplomat and traveled to Hungary in the summer of 1944, a few months after Nazi forces occupied that nation.

Sweden was a neutral country; and, therefore, Nazi forces or the complying Hungarian authorities could not easily arrest or otherwise harm Swedish citizens. This enabled Mr. Wallenberg to save tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews from concentration camps.

Shortly following Nazi occupation, the rounding up of Hungarian Jews and their transference into Nazi custody began. When Mr. Wallenberg arrived in Budapest that summer, the Nazis had already deported nearly 444,000 Hungarian Jews, with almost all of them being sent to the Auschwitz or Birkenau killing centers.

We now know that the SS killed approximately 320,000 of these individuals upon arrival and used the rest as forced labor. When Mr. Wallenberg made it to Budapest, only about 200,000 Jews remained in the city, but there were plans made by the Hungarian authorities under Nazi rule to deport those as well.

Provided with diplomatic credentials and the authorization from the Swedish Government, Mr. Wallenberg took heroic action to save as many of these individuals and families as he could by creating and distributing protective Swedish certificates.

Through the War Refugee Board and assistance from Sweden, Mr. Wallenberg was able to use funds to set up hospitals, nurseries, a soup kitchen, and dozens of safe houses for the Jewish of Budapest. These safe houses actually formed the international ghetto, holding some of the same protective Swedish certificates that Wallenberg handed out.

Faced with the further breakdown of the Hungarian Government and increased Nazi control, deportations of the Jewish population resumed; but this time, the authorities decided to force tens of thousands to march toward Austria, due to the railroad being cut off by the Soviet troops.

That fall, Mr. Wallenberg personally worked to stop the further deportation