

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 209

Supporting the goals and ideals of Anti-Slavery Day.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 1, 2007

Mr. ENGEL (for himself and Mr. BURTON of Indiana) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of Anti-Slavery Day.

Whereas Anti-Slavery International, established in 1839 in the United Kingdom, is the oldest human rights organization in the world, and has declared February 27, 2007, as Anti-Slavery Day;

Whereas Free the Slaves is the United States sister organization to Anti-Slavery International;

Whereas 2007 is the bicentennial of the abolition of the British slave trade;

Whereas Anti-Slavery Day is dedicated to focusing attention on the existence of slavery in the world today and the possibility of eradicating slavery;

Whereas, in 2007, at least 27,000,000 people are enslaved around the world;

Whereas the Declaration of Independence recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of all people, and states that all people are “created equal” and are “endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights”, which includes the right to be free from slavery and involuntary servitude;

Whereas the United States outlawed slavery and involuntary servitude in 1865, recognizing in the 13th amendment to the Constitution, that slavery and involuntary servitude are inherently evil institutions that must be abolished;

Whereas the United States and the international community have repeatedly condemned slavery, involuntary servitude, and human trafficking through declarations, treaties, and United Nations resolutions and reports, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1926 Slavery Convention, the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery, the 1948 American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man, the 1957 Abolition of Forced Labor Convention, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

Whereas these prohibitions against slavery have achieved the level of customary international law and have attained *jus cogens* status, and the practice of slavery has been universally accepted as a crime against humanity;

Whereas slavery is characterized by the complete control of one person by another using violence or the threat of violence, and by the use of economic exploitation by one person against another;

Whereas slavery has dramatically increased worldwide in the past 50 years due, in part, to the tripling of the population of the world during that period, resulting in large numbers of poor and vulnerable people, the economic transformation of the developing world which has increased the susceptibility of such people to enslavement, and the corruption of government and police forces that allows violence against such people to be used with impunity even where slavery is nominally illegal;

Whereas slavery thrives in situations of conflict, social disruption, political chaos, and economic crisis;

Whereas the traffic in human beings is third only to the traffic in drugs and weapons in generating profits for organized crime worldwide;

Whereas between 800,000 and 900,000 of the world's slaves are estimated to be trafficked across international borders each year, of whom between 14,500 and 17,500 are trafficked into the United States each year;

Whereas Free the Slaves' research indicates that slavery is present in nearly every country and that slavery affects those—especially women and children—who are most vulnerable and have less social and economic power in their communities;

Whereas education and economic empowerment, especially of women and girls, have proven to be the most powerful preventative measures to combat slavery;

Whereas slavery is a global crime and is integrated into the global economy, and it therefore requires a global approach for its eradication and increased public education for all citizens;

Whereas goods made by slaves feed into the global economy and enter the markets of the United States in violation of United States laws;

Whereas Free the Slaves, labor organizations, consumer organizations, and United States industry, working with Members of Congress, have developed a multi-sector approach to eradicate slavery from the product supply chains of goods which prevents slavery from entering United States homes;

Whereas the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons of the Department of State coordinates United States activities in the global fight against modern-day slavery;

Whereas, in September 2006, the United States levied sanctions on Burma, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Syria, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe for failing to meet the minimum standards for combating human trafficking as outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, and named Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Uzbekistan as eligible for such sanctions;

Whereas President George W. Bush stated in his address to the United Nations on September 23, 2003, that “Nearly two centuries after the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and more than a century after slavery was officially ended in its last strongholds, the trade in human beings for any purpose must not be allowed to thrive in our time”; and

Whereas Attorney General Alberto Gonzales has supported educational programs for local law enforcement agents to recognize incidents of human trafficking and slavery when they encounter it: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the goals and ideals of Anti-Slav-
3 ery Day;

4 (2) requests that the President issue a procla-
5 mation calling on the people of the United States to
6 observe Anti-Slavery Day with appropriate cere-
7 monies, programs, and activities; and

8 (3) encourages the Secretary of State to in-
9 crease collaboration with foreign governments to
10 combat slavery, punish human traffickers and
11 slaveholders, and provide social services to assist in
12 rehabilitation, family reunification, attaining sus-
13 tainable freedom, and preventing slavery from occur-
14 ring.

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