

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 272

Commemorating the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic
slave trade.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 26, 2007

Ms. LEE (for herself, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, and Ms. KILPATRICK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 200th anniversary of the abolition of
the transatlantic slave trade.

Whereas the United Kingdom outlawed slavery in 1807, recognizing that “the African Slave Trade, and all manner of dealing and trading in the Purchase, Sale, Barter, or Transfer of Slaves, or of Persons intended to be sold, transferred, used, or dealt with as Slaves, practiced or carried on, in, at, to or from any Part of the Coast or Countries of Africa, shall be, and the same is hereby utterly abolished, prohibited, and declared to be unlawful”;

Whereas the transatlantic slave trade was the capture and procurement of Africans, mostly from West Africa, to the

United States and the colonies that became the United States for the purpose of enslavement between the fifteenth and late nineteenth centuries;

Whereas the Middle Passage was the forced migration through overseas transport of millions of Africans to the Americas, many of whom suffered abuses of rape and perished as a result of torture, malnutrition, disease and resistance in transit and those who survived were sold into slavery;

Whereas during the transatlantic slave trade more than 12,000,000 Africans were transported in bondage from their African homelands to the Americas, and those born in the Americas estimating 1,200,000 men, women, and children who were displaced in the forced migration that was the domestic slave trade;

Whereas it is important to acknowledge that as a result of the slave trade, approximately 80,000,000 to 150,000,000 persons of African descent live in Latin America and the Caribbean, making them the largest population of persons of African descent outside of Africa;

Whereas the transatlantic slave trade is characterized as the largest forced migration in world history;

Whereas Africans' resistance to the transatlantic slave trade culminated in revolts—collective acts of rebellion—against slave ships and their crews during the Middle Passage and on the colonial plantations;

Whereas the institution of slavery which enslaved Africans, their progeny and later generations for life was constitutionally and statutorily sanctioned by the Government of the United States from 1789 through 1865;

Whereas slavery in the United States during and after British colonial rule included the sale and acquisition of Africans as chattel property in interstate and intrastate commerce;

Whereas the General Assembly of Virginia passed in 1619 “an act declaring the Negro, Mulatto, . . . slaves within this dominion, to be real estate and shall descend unto the heirs and widows of persons departing this life, according to the manner and custom of land of inheritance”;

Whereas the Great Compromise of 1787, a compromise under which representation in the House of Representatives would be based on the population of each State, prompted the Three-Fifths Compromise, a compromise between the Northern and Southern States under which only three-fifths of the population of enslaved Africans would be counted for purposes of enumerating a State’s representation in the House of Representatives;

Whereas the slavery that flourished in the United States constituted an immoral and inhumane dispossession of Africans’ life, liberty, and citizenship rights and denied them the fruits of their own labor;

Whereas the treatment of enslaved Africans in the colonies and the United States included the deprivation of their freedom, exploitation of their labor, psychological and physical abuse, and destruction of their culture, language, religion, and families;

Whereas the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa, declared the slave trade and slavery a crime against humanity;

Whereas the slave trade and the legacy of slavery continue to have a profound impact on social and economic disparity, hatred, bias, racism, and discrimination, and continue to affect people of African descent today; and

Whereas March 25, 2007, marks the 200th anniversary of the Slave Trade Abolition Act enacted by the British Parliament: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the historical significance of the
3 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-
4 atlantic slave trade to the world;

5 (2) respects the memory of those who died as
6 a result of slavery, including through exposure to the
7 horrors of the Middle Passage and in revolt against
8 and resistance to enslavement; and

9 (3) should educate current and future genera-
10 tions about this crime against humanity by honoring
11 its significance in United States history with appro-
12 priate programs and activities.

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