these laser beam pranksters ends up killing over 200 people in a commercial airline crash.

These easily available pen-sized laser pointers, like the one I purchased here at the office supply here in the House of Representatives for $12, have enough power to cause vision problems in pilots from a distance of up to 2 miles.

This legislation is simple, straightforward and common sense. It makes it illegal to knowingly aim a laser pointer at an aircraft. Those who intentionally engage in such misconduct shall be fined or imprisoned not more than 5 years, or both, in the discretion of the judge.

Significantly, 100 percent of the Democrats and Republicans on the Judiciary Committee voted in favor of this legislation and it enjoys wide bipartisan support.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored that the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. COBLE), the ranking member and chairman respectively of the Crime Subcommittee, are the cosponsors of this legislation.

A recent rash of incidents involving lasers aimed at aircraft cockpits have raised concerns by pilots and law enforcement officials over the potential threat to aviation safety and security. The problem is more widespread than one might initially think.

According to the Congressional Research Service and the Federal Aviation Administration, there have been over 400 incidents reported since 1990 where pilots have been disoriented or temporarily blinded by laser exposure.

So far none of the 400 incidents involving flight crew exposures to lasers have been linked to terrorism. Rather, it is often a case of pranksters making stupid choices to put pilots and their passengers at risk of dying.

Let me give you just one real-life example of what it is like to be in an aircraft cockpit hit by a laser beam. In September of this year, I spoke with Lieutenant Barry Smith from my hometown of Orlando, Florida, who was actually in the cockpit of a helicopter that was hit by a laser beam.

Lieutenant Smith is with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office. He and his partner were in a police helicopter searching for burglary suspects at night in a suburb of Orlando when a red laser beam hit their aircraft twice. Lieutenant Smith said the Plexiglass windshield of the helicopter spread out the light to be the size of about a basketball. It shocked them.

They were flying near a large tower with a red light, and they mistakenly thought that they had flown too close to the tower. They were disoriented and they immediately jerked the helicopter back. When they realized that they were not actually near the tower, Lieutenant Smith began to worry that the light could have come from a laser sight on a rifle. He wondered if they were about to be shot out of the sky. He told me, ''It scared the heck out of us.''

In reality, it was just a 31-year-old man with a small pen-sized laser light standing in his backyard. Unfortunately, there are over 400 other stories just like this one where laser beam pranksters nearly caused fatal aviation crashes.

Surprisingly there are currently no Federal statutes on the books making it illegal to shine a laser beam into an aircraft cockpit unless one attempts to use the PATRIOT Act to claim that the action was a terrorist attack or other attack of violence, intentional, against a mass transportation system.

On February 17, 2006, a Federal judge in Newark, New Jersey, will sentence a New Jersey man who pled guilty last month to shining a hand-held laser at two aircrafts back in December of 2004. The defense attorneys for the defendant, Mr. David Banach, argued that the PATRIOT Act was supposed to be used against terrorists.

The Federal prosecutors acknowledged that Mr. Banach is not a terrorist, but they said they had no other choice but to use the PATRIOT Act since no other Federal law applied.

Clearly, this legislation before us is needed to clarify the law and make it crystal clear that we will not tolerate either pranksters or terrorists who jeopardize the safety of pilots and passengers by aiming laser beams into the cockpits of aircrafts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote yes on H.R. 1400.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of the time.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to thank the gentleman from Florida and the gentleman from Wisconsin for bringing this bill forward. It makes it clear that endangering pilots and passengers with laser beams is illegal.

Whatever the law may be, this will make it absolutely clear. I would hope that the House will pass the bill so that the pilots and passengers can be protected.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1400, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. 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 question will be postponed.

RECOGNIZING ANNIVERSARY OF RATIFICATION OF 13TH AMENDMENT

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 196) recognizing the anniversary of the ratification of the 13th Amendment and encouraging the American people to educate and instill pride and purpose into their communities and to observe the anniversary annually with appropriate programs and activities.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 196

Whereas on December 6, 1865, the 13th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified, proclaiming that ''neither slavery nor involuntary servitude . . . shall exist within the United States'';

Whereas the ratification of the 13th Amendment began a civil rights movement which would radically change African American existence in the United States;

Whereas the 13th Amendment represented a victory for African Americans across the United States, who had been denied the rights of full citizens;

Whereas the 13th Amendment is a symbol of the Federal Government's commitment to fulfill its promise of equality, liberty, and the American dream for all Americans because it liberated African Americans from the yoke of slavery and launched a new age activism advocating equal rights for all minorities;

Whereas December 6, 2005, marks the 140th anniversary of the ratification of the 13th Amendment;

Whereas the observation of the 140th anniversary would put into effect section 2 of the Amendment, by reaffirming Congress' ''power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation''; and

Whereas the 13th Amendment Foundation supports the establishment of a national day of recognition commemorating the anniversary of the ratification of the 13th Amendment to renew a national commitment to eradicate racial and ethnic inequalities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 140th anniversary of the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution;

(2) encourages the American people to educate and instill pride and purpose into their communities about the history of liberation and the civil rights movement in the United States; and

(3) encourages the American people to observe the anniversary of the ratification of the 13th Amendment each year by honoring its significance in United States history with appropriate programs and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. 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 material on House Resolution 196 currently under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Resolution 196, a resolution recognizing the anniversary of the ratification of the 13th amendment and encouraging the American people to educate and instill pride and purpose into their communities and to observe the anniversary annually with appropriate programs and activities.

In his Emancipation Proclamation of 1862, President Lincoln declared that, ''All persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thence forward and forever free.''

However, it took the ratification of the 13th amendment on December 6, 1865 to put an end officially to our Nation's tragic history and to extend to all citizens the promises and guarantees upon which this country was founded.

The first of three amendments known as the Civil War amendments, the 13th amendment liberated African Americans, enabling them and all Americans to experience the full meaning of citizenship and equal treatment under the law, including participation in the most fundamental aspects of our Democratic system of Government without regard to race or previous condition of servitude.

It is against this backdrop that the modern civil rights moment was born, and in this spirit that the Committee on the Judiciary, under my direction, is now examining certain provisions of the Voting Rights Act that are set to expire in 2007.

The 140th anniversary of the 13th amendment is an important mark in our history, and should serve as a reminder to all of our Nation's past. Most importantly, this anniversary provides an opportunity to reaffirm our collective commitment to continue striving toward a color-blind society.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first I want to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, for his leadership, for his support in recognizing this important date in our Nation's history, and also for ensuring that this resolution comes to the floor in a bipartisanship way, and for your support and for really reminding the entire country now of this important date.

Let me also take a moment to thank the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS), our minority leader, who worked very hard with the gentleman from Wisconsin to bring this resolution today.

The gentleman continues to lead Congress in the civil rights tradition that actually began 140 years ago. From renewing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, to protecting the victims of Hurricane Katrina, he is a tireless advocate for civil rights and civil liberties for all Americans.

Let me also take a moment to thank our staff on both sides for their diligence and very competent work in bringing this resolution, especially Kanya Bennett, Penny Applebaum, David Lockman and Jamila Thompson of my staff, who have worked together for over a year now on this very, very important effort.

Let me also express my appreciation to the 13th Amendment Foundation, located actually in my district. They have worked diligently to honor and to recognize this momentous occasion. And as the gentleman from Wisconsin said, it is very important that our young people, especially, are reminded of the importance of this 13th amendment and read and understand why what happened 140 years ago is very, very important to today in 2005.

I hope that everyone will support this effort to honor the 140th anniversary of the ratification of the 13th amendment.

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On December 6, 1865, slavery ended and the deep roots of the modern civil rights movement were planted. The 13th amendment was a response to the Dred Scott decision of 1856, a ruling that actually declared that Congress lacked the power to prohibit slavery in our country. If the Dred Scott ruling were still in effect today, Mr. Speaker, I would not be standing here, quite frankly, as a Member of Congress, nor would the 43 great Congressional Black Caucus Members.

As someone of African descent, whether free or enslaved, I would be considered only three-fifths of a person. I would never qualify as a citizen of this country. As the descendant of people who survived the Middle Passage, who survived the cruelty of slavery, who survived reconstruction, who survived Jim Crow, I know that my life, like the lives of millions of African Americans, our lives have been inextricably linked to the 13th amendment.

As we return from celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott which launched the modern civil rights movements, we really are obliged to remember this 140-year history.

In the 1860s, Representative James Ashley of Ohio, Representative James Wilson of Iowa, and Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, all Republicans, led the congressional fight to abolish slavery.

This debate is a very important debate. And again, let me just talk about the vote. It was a vote of 119–56 right here on this floor. Our predecessors voted to add the following words to our Constitution:

''Section 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

''Section 2. Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.''

Although the abolition of slavery did not necessarily mean equality for all Americans, the process actually began. According to historical accounts, on the day of the House vote on January 31, 1865, the gallery, which had just been opened, mind you, to African Americans, the gallery erupted into cheers and Representatives on the House floor were visibly moved, crying and hugging each other. Twelve months later, the requisite three-fourths of the States in the Union ratified the 13th amendment and more than 100 years later another eight States followed suit.

Although not necessary, President Lincoln signed the 13th amendment to show a united front to abolish slavery in the United States. A treacherous and divisive burden was finally removed and our Nation was allowed to unite and truly begin to commit to the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness for all. In fact, the 13th amendment was the foundation for future equal rights and legislative actions, like the 14th amendment, which ensured Federal and State rights to all individuals; the 15th amendment, which granted African American men the right to vote; and the 19th amendment, which expanded suffrage to all women, also the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act.

Protecting civil and human rights is not something that really should be taken lightly, quite frankly. It requires constant vigilance and review. As we honor this great act of our predecessors, we pay tribute to the visionaries who sacrificed and fought for our civil rights and liberty.

In 140 years, our country has fought and continues to fight to be a united country seeking liberty and justice for all. But it has been a long, hard journey; and countless individuals dedicated and continue to dedicate their entire lives towards this end. We must all pay tribute to the abolitionist movement leaders like Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, William Lloyd Garrison, Nat Turner, and John Brown.

And we have all reaped the benefits of the bravery and sacrifices of civil rights trail blazers like Dred Scott, Homer Plessy, Linda Brown, Ruby Bridges, Rosa Parks, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

There are many more individuals whose names will never ever be mentioned in the history books; but they worked hard, they fought, they sacrificed for the freedom that we all appreciate today. Collectively, we must pay homage to their legacy.

It is important that we not only honor this great day in history but

make sure that our children and our grandchildren understand its importance, not just to African Americans, but to all Americans and to the world.

This year, with all overwhelming bipartisan support, Congress passed resolutions that recognized the hemispheric survivors of the transatlantic slave trade and great historical trailblazers like the great Honorable Shirley Chisholm and Judge Constance Baker Motley.

These resolutions actually show how far we have come since the 19th century, but we also have a long, long way to go. One hundred forty years after slavery was abolished, African Americans and other minorities continue to experience social and economic injustices, as the recent Hurricane Katrina disaster magnified.

Within our own borders and throughout the world, human trafficking is rampant. It is a modern version, quite frankly, of slavery; and it must be abolished. And, of course, we witness every day discrimination against those who have no voice. Our work in Congress should be straightforward. It is our duty to reaffirm this tradition of justice, equality, and liberty for all.

We have an obligation to ensure that everyone has equal access to health care, education, liveable wages, housing, and of course economic opportunities. Clearly, we still have much work to do. We have much work to do to ensure that discrimination is eliminated, and I mean totally eliminated, and that all people are considered equal in the eyes of our laws.

The movement that began with the ratification of the 13th amendment must continue. This has not ended. We owe it not only to those who suffered and who sacrificed in the past, but more importantly we owe it to future generations. The 13th amendment liberated African Americans from the yoke of slavery. It liberated America, and we must not forget that.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution. I want to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) again for ensuring this resolution is bipartisan.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, one hundred and forty years ago, this Nation established the foundation with which it could advance freedom and equality for all of its people.

On December 6, 1865, the required 27 of the then 36 states ratified the 13th Amendment of the United States Constitution. The 13th Amendment states that "neither slavery nor involuntary servitude . . . shall exist within the United States."

This profound declaration completed the abolition of slavery which had begun with President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863. The 13th Amendment marked the official end of the institution of slavery and signified a turning point in America.

The 13th Amendment is the very bedrock on which all of our civil rights laws and protections stand. The 13th Amendment led to the 14th Amendment of 1868 which provides equal protection under the law to all citizens and clarified that African Americans are citizens. Today, the 13th Amendment has led to the Voting Rights Act of 1965—a protection that we are now in the process of re-authorizing.

As we commemorate the 140th anniversary of the 13th Amendment, we must appreciate the principles that the 13th Amendment has advanced—these principles of freedom and equality. However, on this anniversary, this nation must pledge to eradicate from society those ills that hinder us from continuing the legacy of the 13th Amendment.

Today, 1 in 9 African Americans cannot find a job; 1 in 5 African Americans is uninsured; and 1 in 4 African Americans lives in poverty. These statistics are simply unacceptable.

Let us mark the 140th anniversary of the 13th Amendment with a commitment to eliminate these social and economic inequalities.

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 196.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

TERRORISM RISK INSURANCE REVISION ACT OF 2005

Mr. OXLEY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 467) to extend the applicability of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 467

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 "Terrorism Risk Insurance Revision Act of 2005".

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF PROGRAM AND PROGRAM CHANGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title I of the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002 (15 U.S.C. 6701 note) is amended—

(1) by striking sections 101 through 107 and inserting the following new sections:

"SEC. 101. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

"(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds that—

"(1) the ability of businesses and individuals to obtain property, casualty, group life, and NBCR insurance at reasonable and predictable prices, in order to spread the risk of both routine and catastrophic loss, is critical to economic growth, urban development, and the construction and maintenance of public and private housing, as well as to the promotion of United States exports and foreign trade in an increasingly interconnected world;

"(2) property, casualty, and life insurance firms are important financial institutions, the products of which allow mutualization of risk and the efficient use of financial resources and enhance the ability of the economy to maintain stability, while responding to a variety of economic, political, environmental, and other risks with a minimum of disruption;

"(3) the ability of the insurance industry to cover the unprecedented financial risks presented by potential acts of terrorism in the United States can be a major factor in the recovery from terrorist attacks, while maintaining the stability of the economy;

"(4) widespread financial market uncertainties have arisen following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, including the absence of information from which financial institutions can make statistically valid estimates of the probability and cost of future terrorist events, and therefore the size, funding, and allocation of the risk of loss caused by such acts of terrorism;

"(5) a decision by property, casualty, group life, and NBCR insurers to deal with such uncertainties, either by terminating property, casualty, group life, or NBCR coverage for losses arising from terrorist events, or by radically escalating premium coverage to compensate for risks of loss that are not readily predictable, could seriously hamper ongoing and planned construction, property acquisition, and other business projects, generate a dramatic increase in rents, and otherwise suppress economic activity; and

"(6) the United States Government should provide temporary financial compensation to insured parties, contributing to the stabilization of the United States economy in a time of national crisis, while the financial services industry develops the systems, mechanisms, products, and programs necessary to create a viable financial services market for private terrorism risk insurance.

"(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this title is to establish a temporary Federal program that provides for a transparent system of shared public and private compensation for insured losses resulting from acts of terrorism, in order to—

"(1) protect consumers by addressing market disruptions and ensure the continued widespread availability and affordability of property, casualty, group life, and NBCR insurance for terrorism risk; and

"(2) allow for a transitional period for the private markets to stabilize, resume pricing of such insurance, and build capacity to absorb any future losses, while preserving State insurance regulation and consumer protections.

"SEC. 102. DEFINITIONS.

"In this title, the following definitions shall apply:

"(1) ACT OF TERRORISM.—

"(A) CERTIFICATION.—The term 'act of terrorism' means any act that is certified by the Secretary, in concurrence with the Secretary of State, and the Attorney General of the United States—

"(i) to be an act of terrorism;

"(ii) to be a violent act or an act that is dangerous to—

"(I) human life;

"(II) property; or

"(III) infrastructure;

"(iii) to have resulted in damage within the United States, or outside of the United States in the case of—

"(I) an air carrier or vessel described in paragraph (5)(B); or

"(II) the premises of a United States mission; and

"(iv) to have been committed by an individual or individuals as part of an effort to coerce the civilian population of the United States or to influence the policy or affect the conduct of the United States Government by coercion.

"(B) LIMITATION.—No act shall be certified by the Secretary as an act of terrorism if the act is committed as part of the course of a war declared by the Congress, except that