

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I stand before you offering my generous support for the commemoration of H. Res. 942, recognizing the significance of Black History Month. This is a month to honor the tremendous strides and achievements made by numerous African-American leaders and activists, and to signify our continued celebration of diversity in the United States. I urge all Americans to use this month as an opportunity to recognize the accomplishments made by past African-American leaders while continuing to work for the advancement of racial equality.

The enormous contributions made by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois and other notable leaders in the African-American community have championed improved race relations and equality. We must also highlight the achievements made by a host of prominent African-Americans in other fields such as the arts, athletics, politics, and academia.

This year's theme, "Carter G. Woodson and the Origins of Multiculturalism," honors the founder of Black History Month and applauds his commitment to the preservation of African-American history. Woodson was instrumental in popularizing the role the African-American community has played in enriching the history of the United States. His mission and legacy is one our country must uphold while continuing to inspire future generations to embrace diversity and equality.

Again, I would like to express my support for the significance of February 2008 as Black History Month. Let the following month serve as a reminder of our indebtedness to those leaders possessing the courage to combat injustice. They have completed the ultimate service not only for the African-American community in the United States but for all citizens.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of this most important month of February, deemed as Black History Month. Let us join with the rest of the Nation in highlighting the significant contributions that African Americans have made to our great Nation, while celebrating this year's theme of "Carter G. Woodson and the Origin of Multiculturalism."

Throughout this noteworthy month, we all should take a moment to reflect on the fact that February was designated to make a national appeal to Americans to make note of the tremendous role that African Americans have played in the development and advancement of our country's rich history. February embraces the birthdays of two distinguished Americans—Frederick Douglas and Abraham Lincoln—whose contributions to our society are immeasurable. Let us remember that not only are we honoring Black history; we are celebrating all of our history, American history.

This month we should remember the legacy of the illustrious Harlem Renaissance and the contributions this period had in shaping America's cultural heritage. African American writers Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Toni Morrison have now become major voices in American Literature. Military achievements, not only by the Tuskegee Airmen, the 54th Regiment from Massachusetts, and the 29th Regiment from Connecticut, but by other courageous Black soldiers, have helped to create the gallant Armed Forces of this country. In this month, let us all work together to ensure a positive future for the 40.2 million African Americans who contribute to this Nation on a daily basis.

In my home State of Connecticut, we make note of Hartford's Black governors who oversaw the region from 1755 to 1800; fearless Connecticut abolitionists James Mars and J.W.C. Pennington who petitioned Connecticut's legislature regarding voting and social rights for blacks in the 1840s and 50s; and of course the survivors of the Amistad slave ship, who spent days seated in a Hartford courtroom awaiting their fate by a U.S. circuit court judge. Through relics such as the Old State House, Mark Twain House, Harriet Beecher Stowe House, the Connecticut freedom trails, and the Amistad Center for Arts and Culture, we are paying homage to the extraordinary African Americans who have resided in our State.

Mr. Speaker, this year during Black History Month, I urge my colleagues and this Nation to remember all of the African Americans who have helped to weave the historical tapestry of America. I urge us all to realize the service, dedication and courage that have emerged throughout the decades. This year, let us truly celebrate Black History as a part of us all. Like our motto says, E Pluribus Unum, Out of many we are one. We are a great Nation formed by the contribution of many, and this month we celebrate one of those outstanding groups.

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

Mr. HODES. 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 New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 942.

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. HODES. 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.

DESIGNATING "RACE DAY IN AMERICA"

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 931) expressing support for designation of February 17, 2008, as "Race Day in America" and highlighting the 50th running of the Daytona 500.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 931

Whereas the Daytona 500 is the most prestigious stock car race in the United States;

Whereas the Daytona 500 annually kicks off the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing ("NASCAR") Sprint Cup Series, NASCAR's top racing series;

Whereas millions of racing fans have spent the third Sunday of each February since 1959 watching, listening to, or attending the Daytona 500;

Whereas the purse for the Daytona 500 is typically the largest in motor sports;

Whereas winning the prestigious Harley J. Earl Trophy is stock car racing's greatest prize and privilege;

Whereas nearly 1,000,000 men and women in the Armed Forces in nearly 180 countries worldwide listen to the race on the radio via the American Forces Network;

Whereas Daytona International Speedway is the home of "The Great American Race", the Daytona 500;

Whereas fans from all 50 States and many foreign nations converge at the "World Center of Racing" each year to see the motor sports spectacle;

Whereas Daytona International Speedway becomes one of the largest cities in the State of Florida by population on race day, with more than 200,000 fans in attendance;

Whereas well-known politicians, celebrities, and athletes take part in the festivities surrounding the Daytona 500; and

Whereas February 17, 2008, would be an appropriate day to designate as "Race Day in America" because the Daytona 500 celebrates its historic 50th running on this day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the United States House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 50th running of the Daytona 500, "The Great American Race"; and

(2) supports designation of a "Race Day in America" in honor of the Daytona 500.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Hampshire.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I yield to myself so much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, I am pleased to join my colleagues in the consideration of House Resolution 931, which expresses our support for naming a "race day" in America and recognizes the 50th running of the Daytona 500, which will occur on the 17th at the Daytona International Speedway in Daytona, Florida.

House Resolution 931 was introduced by my distinguished colleague, Representative TOM FEENEY of Florida, on January 17, 2008, and was considered by and reported from the House Oversight Committee on January 29, 2008, by voice vote.

The measure, which has the support and cosponsorship of 68 Members of Congress, couldn't have been considered at a more fitting time as fans across this great country prepare for what is being called the most anticipated event in automobile racing history, the 50th running of the Daytona 500 on Saturday, February 17, 2008.

With a history dating back to February 22, 1959, the Daytona 500 at the Daytona International Speedway is a

500-mile motor sport international sweepstakes that draws the attention of millions of American racing fans and racing fans around the world every February.

Often referred to as "The Great American Race," the Daytona 500 is NASCAR's biggest, richest and most prestigious race and has been won by stock car racing greats such as Dale Earnhardt and Jeff Gordon.

Mr. Speaker, given the monumental occasion of the 50th running of the Daytona 500, I think it is only appropriate that we express our support of NASCAR and "The Great American Race" by passing this measure.

I urge passage of this bill.

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

□ 1500

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge support for this resolution designating February 17, 2008, as "Race Day in America."

Next Sunday over 200,000 people from all 50 States and around the world will convene at Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Florida, for the 50th running of "The Great American Race," the Daytona 500.

The most prestigious stock car race in the United States, the Daytona 500 is a 200-lap, 500-mile grand opening to the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. Boasting the largest purse and stock car racing's most coveted trophy, the Harley J. Earl Trophy, the Daytona 500 has become the "Super Bowl of Stock Car Racing."

Each year millions of fans, both at home as well as those serving overseas, tune in to the race by television and radio. Since 1995, the television ratings for the Daytona 500 have been higher than any auto race, and in 2006 the race drew the sixth largest television audience of any sporting event that year.

For 50 years, the popularity of Daytona, and car racing in general, has grown throughout American society. I believe it is fitting that we celebrate this rising American tradition by passing this resolution in honor of the golden anniversary of its most prestigious event. I invite anybody who's free this Sunday to come to Daytona Beach and enjoy this great tradition with us.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HODES. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. HODES) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 931.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMEMBERING THE SPACE SHUTTLE "CHALLENGER" DISASTER AND HONORING ITS CREW MEMBERS

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 943) remembering the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster and honoring its crew members, who lost their lives on January 28, 1986.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 943

Whereas January 28, 2008, marks the 22-year anniversary of the tragic accident of the space shuttle *Challenger*, Mission 51-L, and the loss of seven of America's bravest and most dedicated citizens;

Whereas the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster occurred off the coast of central Florida, at 11:39 a.m. on January 28, 1986;

Whereas the space shuttle *Challenger* disintegrated 73 seconds into its flight after an O-ring seal in its right solid rocket booster failed at lift-off;

Whereas the seven-person crew on the shuttle included Commander Francis R. Scobee, Pilot Michael J. Smith, Mission Specialist Judith A. Resnik, Mission Specialist Ellison S. Onizuka, Mission Specialist Ronald E. McNair, Payload Specialist Gregory B. Jarvis, and Payload Specialist Sharon Christa McAuliffe;

Whereas Christa McAuliffe, a schoolteacher from Concord, New Hampshire, was on board as the first member in the Teacher in Space Project;

Whereas the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) selected Christa McAuliffe from a field of 11,000 applicants to be a part of the *Challenger* crew and teach lessons to schoolchildren from space;

Whereas the Committee on Science and Technology of the House of Representatives conducted oversight hearings on the *Challenger* disaster and released a report on October 29, 1986, on the causes of the accident; and

Whereas the House of Representatives continues to support NASA and its ongoing efforts to explore and educate the American public about space: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) honors the 22nd anniversary of the space shuttle *Challenger* disaster;

(2) celebrates the courage and bravery of the crew of the *Challenger*, and Christa McAuliffe and her passion for encouraging America's children to pursue careers in science and mathematics;

(3) commits itself and the Nation to using the lessons learned in inquiries into the space shuttle *Challenger* accident to ensure that the space agency always operates on a strong and stable foundation; and

(4) recognizes the continued dedication of the United States to the goal of space exploration for the benefit of all mankind.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. MELANCON) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FEENEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MELANCON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to in-

clude extraneous material on House Resolution 943, the resolution now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to support House Resolution 943, a resolution honoring the astronauts of the space shuttle *Challenger* and honoring its crew members, who lost their lives on January 28, 1986. And I congratulate Mr. HODES for preparing this resolution.

The tragic loss of the *Challenger* and her crew of seven serves as a continuing reminder that space flight is anything but routine. As we continue to explore outer space, we here on the ground must do our part to ensure that we have learned the lessons of the *Challenger* accident and work tirelessly to make space travel as safe as possible for future generations of explorers.

In addition, I believe we can best honor the sacrifices of the crew of the *Challenger* made by our commitment to renewing America's space program, continuing the Nation's journey into space, a goal to which they dedicated their lives.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate that we pause today to honor the memory of the *Challenger* crew, and I urge all my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

I want to thank my colleague Mr. MELANCON for shepherding this memorial to the floor today. With this resolution, the House of Representatives joins with all Americans to solemnly remember the loss of the space shuttle *Challenger* 22 years ago on January 28, 1986.

Many Americans remember where they were on that cold January morning when the shuttle *Challenger* leapt from its launch pad. After receiving the call "*Challenger* go at throttle up," *Challenger* disintegrated in clear blue skies just 73 seconds into its flight.

We were stunned. One moment *Challenger* was flawlessly flying on a beautiful winter morning. Then, without warning, it was gone.

America turned to mourn its seven astronauts who gave the ultimate sacrifice for the advancement of exploration and discovery: Michael Smith; Dick Scobee; Judith Resnik; Ronald McNair; Ellison Onizuka; Gregory Jarvis; and Christa McAuliffe, a schoolteacher from Concord, New Hampshire, selected to be the first member of the teaching profession in a space project.

That evening, President Reagan spoke from the Oval Office to comfort a grieving Nation. Millions of children had watched the launch because Christa McAuliffe was to later teach science lessons from space. Instead, we were reminded of a deeper lesson. Reagan said: