

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

HONORING AND PRAISING THE NAACP ON ITS 99TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 289) honoring and praising the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the occasion of its 99th anniversary.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 289

Whereas the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), originally known as the National Negro Committee, was founded in New York City on February 12, 1909, the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, by a multiracial group of activists who answered 'The Call' for a national conference to discuss the civil and political rights of African-Americans;

Whereas the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was founded by a distinguished group of leaders in the struggle for civil and political liberty, including Ida Wells-Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, Henry Moscowitz, Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villiard, and William English Walling;

Whereas the NAACP is the oldest and largest civil rights organization in the United States;

Whereas the mission of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights of all persons and to eliminate racial hatred and racial discrimination;

Whereas the NAACP is committed to achieving its goals through nonviolence;

Whereas the NAACP advances its mission through reliance upon the press, the petition, the ballot, and the courts, and has been persistent in the use of legal and moral persuasion, even in the face of overt and violent racial hostility;

Whereas the NAACP has used political pressure, marches, demonstrations, and effective lobbying to serve as the voice, as well as the shield, for minority Americans;

Whereas after years of fighting segregation in public schools, the NAACP, under the leadership of Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall, won one of its greatest legal victories in the Supreme Court's 1954 decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*;

Whereas in 1955, NAACP member Rosa Parks was arrested and fined for refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama—an act of courage that would serve as the catalyst for the largest grassroots civil rights movement in the history of the United States;

Whereas the NAACP was prominent in lobbying for the passage of the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006, and the Fair Housing Act, laws which ensured Government protection for legal victories achieved;

Whereas in 2005, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People launched the Disaster Relief Fund to help survivors in Louisiana, Mississippi, Texas,

Florida, and Alabama to rebuild their lives; and

Whereas in 2007, the NAACP was prominent in lobbying for the passage of H. Res. 826, "The Noose Intimidation Bill", which expresses "that the hanging of nooses is a horrible act when used for the purpose of intimidation and which under certain circumstances can be a criminal act that should be thoroughly investigated by Federal law enforcement authorities and that any criminal violations should be vigorously prosecuted": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That the Congress—

(1) recognizes the 99th anniversary of the historic founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and

(2) honors and praises the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the occasion of its anniversary for its work to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all persons.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HODES). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. CHABOT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the concurrent resolution.

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

There was no objection.

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

Today I rise and join my colleague, the Honorable AL GREEN of Texas, in honoring the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the occasion of its 99th anniversary. As we celebrate Black History Month, it is only appropriate that we do so by recognizing our Nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization.

The NAACP was founded on February 12, 1909, by Ida Wells-Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, Henry Moscowitz, Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villard, and William English Walling.

Since its inception, the NAACP has united students, laborers, professionals, scholars, officials, and others of all races to advance its vision of "a society in which all individuals have equal rights and there is no racial hatred or racial discrimination."

Historically, the NAACP is probably best known for its role and that of Thurgood Marshall in the seminal case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, in which the Supreme Court held in 1954 that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." Yet we must not forget that the NAACP has been at the forefront of all efforts to secure equality and justice for every American throughout the 20th century and now into the 21st century.

The NAACP spoke out against lynching, challenged racially biased Supreme Court Justice nominees as early as 1930, and pursued nondiscrimination policies in the military, war-related in-

dustries, and the Federal Government during the world wars.

At the height of the civil rights era, the NAACP fought battles on the ground, in the courtroom, and in Congress, where it lobbied for passage of civil rights legislation like the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

□ 1700

Since then and during our current session, NAACP has lobbied for hate crimes legislation and other legislation that protects minorities, not necessarily based on race, but based on discrimination.

Today, on the shoulders of distinguished members and leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Coretta Scott King, Rosa Parks, Medgar Evers, Merlie Evers-Williams, Benjamin Hooks, Julian Bond, Jesse Turner, Jr., Maxine Vasco Smith, and Kweisi Mfume, the NAACP continues to fight the good fight.

Most recently the NAACP is promoting African American graduation and college readiness, protecting and advancing voting rights, and identifying solutions to the subprime mortgage foreclosure crisis. I have the privilege of working with the association to further those important efforts.

So in recognizing the NAACP's past and present, I again salute the organization on its near centennial anniversary. I am confident the NAACP will remain an integral part of our Nation's efforts to protect and promote civil rights in the future and move society forward in a progressive manner on a wide array of issues.

I urge my colleagues to support H. Con. Res. 289.

I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I support and strongly urge my colleagues to support House Concurrent Resolution 289 which recognizes the 99th anniversary of the NAACP. For almost a century, the NAACP has fought to bring justice and racial equality to this Nation. It is appropriate that we review that history.

In 1917, the NAACP won a major legal victory in the Supreme Court which held that States could no longer restrict and officially segregate African Americans into particular residential districts. The same year, the NAACP fought for the right of black Americans to be commissioned as military officers during World War I.

In 1920, the NAACP held its annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia, which at the time was one of the most active areas for the Ku Klux Klan. As a result, the NAACP showed the world it would not be intimidated by racial violence.

In 1935, NAACP lawyers Charles Houston and Thurgood Marshall won a major legal battle to admit students to the University of Maryland.

During World War II, the NAACP led the effort that resulted in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's ordering a

nondiscrimination policy in war-related industries and Federal employment.

And in 1948, the NAACP convinced President Harry Truman to sign an executive order banning discrimination by the Federal Government.

In 1954, under the leadership of Special Counsel Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP won one of its greatest legal victories in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

In 1960 in Greensboro, North Carolina, members of the NAACP Youth Council launched a series of nonviolent sit-ins at segregated lunch counters.

The history of America's modern struggle to live up to our constitutional principles was written in large part by the NAACP. And it continues to champion the cause of social justice today for all Americans.

The NAACP has served as the voice of those who were muzzled by fear. It served as the voice of those who were handcuffed and jailed under segregationist policies. And it carried the weight for those whose backs were nearly broken in brutal beatings fueled by racial hatred. It did so peacefully and with dignity. And as a result, America is a better place.

I am pleased to join my colleagues on this concurrent resolution honoring the historic contributions made by the NAACP to the cause of civil rights in this Nation. And I would like to conclude by acknowledging and recognizing and honoring the leadership of a gentleman in my district, Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, who marched with Dr. Martin Luther King but who has been ill recently. He has been a leader in our community and really across the entire country in the civil rights movement, and we all keep him in our prayers and hope that he recovers quickly.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN).

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. I thank the gentleman for the time.

I would like to thank Chairman CONYERS for being there and making this resolution possible and bringing it to the floor. I also would like to remember Mr. SENSENBRENNER, who at the time we first introduced this piece of legislation was the chairperson of the Judiciary Committee. And I recall how he made a great effort to get this legislation to the floor and to get it passed. I am grateful to the Honorable STEVE COHEN who is our floor leader today, a lawyer par excellence who does an outstanding job on the Judiciary Committee. Thank you so much. I am grateful to Mr. STEVE CHABOT. Thank you for your very kind words. What you said about the NAACP is entirely correct, but it is also something that means a lot to a lot of people. And I think the people across the length and breadth of this country appreciate what you have said and how you have made it clear that the NAACP is important to us in the United States Congress.

I also want to thank the many persons, about 45 of whom signed on to this piece of legislation so that we could bring it to the floor this year. This is the 99th anniversary of the NAACP, having been founded February 12, 1909. The NAACP has always been an integrated organization. It has fought for integration. But it has from its genesis been an organization that has been integrated. And while we remember many of the names of the great NAACPers, James Weldon Johnson, of course, who was one of the great executive secretaries of the organization, we will remember always the name Roy Wilkins, who was a labor leader and executive secretary of the NAACP, W.E.B. DuBois, who was one of the great intellectuals of his time and of all time. We remember Julian Bond who today is the chairperson of the organization, and Dr. Benjamin Hooks who was an FCC board member but also a lawyer and executive director of the NAACP.

But some of the names we don't always remember are names of persons who are not African Americans who were there at the genesis of this organization. Mary White Ovington, this lady held one of the very first organizational meetings of the NAACP in her living room at a time when it was not popular to host a meeting for an organization like the NAACP. I also would remember, if we would, William English Walling and Oswald Garrison Villiard. These persons were not African Americans, but they literally put their lives on the line so that African Americans could have the types of rights and privileges that we enjoy today.

The NAACP, the Nation's oldest civil rights organization, has been there at times of need when it came to issues like the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960 and 1964. It was there for us when we were lobbying for the Voting Rights Act of 1965. *Brown v. Board of Education* is always mentioned when we think of the NAACP, for it was Thurgood Marshall who took this case to the Supreme Court and won it, integrating the schools across this country.

But the NAACP was also there in the case of *Shelley v. Kramer*, and the case of *Borrows v. Jackson*. These cases outlawed restrictive covenants, racially restrictive covenants that barred African Americans from living in certain communities. The NAACP took these cases to the Supreme Court and won them as well.

If the truth be told, we live where we live, we sleep where we sleep and we eat where we eat because of the NAACP. It has made a difference in the lives of all Americans. And I am so grateful that this Congress has seen fit to honor it today for its 99 years of service.

As of late, the NAACP was a party to the legislation that we put before Congress to deal with noose intimidation. Noose intimidation, one of the latest

means by which persons are having civil rights violated, and the NAACP was there to help us push this legislation through Congress, so as to make it very clear, transpiciously so, that this country will not tolerate noose intimidation. In fact, the President of the United States, as late as yesterday, made it clear that noose intimidation is unacceptable in this country.

The NAACP has been a part of the fiber and fabric of the human rights, civil rights movement in this country. If we did not have the NAACP, we would have to create the NAACP. It has been there for us. Today we are there for the NAACP.

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

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the words Mr. CHABOT expressed and Mr. GREEN. The NAACP is an outstanding organization, and I would submit that during my time here in Congress, I don't know of another group that has had a more effective lobbying force on issues concerning human rights and civil rights and rights of people who are underrepresented and need the help of government and need it in a fair and just way.

In my community of Memphis, the president of NAACP is Mrs. Johnnie Turner. We have had a great NAACP chapter. Ben Hooks, who is a former head of the agency, is a resident of my community, an outstanding individual who recently was honored by President Bush with a Medal of Freedom. And Maxine Vasco Smith and Jesse Turner who have been national officers of the NAACP are residents of my community as well.

The NAACP has been very important to Memphis but very important to this country. I thank Mr. GREEN for bringing the resolution to the floor, and I appreciate the remarks made here on the floor. I urge final passage.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on its 99th Anniversary.

In 1909 the founders of the NAACP came together with the purpose of promoting the rights guaranteed under the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution.

Today, the NAACP works to ensure that all individuals have equal rights and to end racial hatred and discrimination.

The NAACP has influenced some of the greatest civil rights victories of the last century, including: the integration of our nation's schools and the *Brown v. Board* decision; the Voting Rights Act; striking down segregation; and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.

Despite the advancements of the past 99 years under the leadership of the NAACP, there is still much work to be done.

The NAACP continues to promote new ideas and leadership in the fields of: educational and employment opportunities, ending health care disparities, and economic empowerment.

The NAACP instilled in America a sense of consciousness, and it continues to do so today.

I commend the NAACP on this anniversary and the thousands of individuals who continue to fight for equality and justice.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to one of the oldest and greatest civil rights organizations in our country's history. The NAACP has served for nearly a century to provide help for those who cannot help themselves, to provide justice for the wronged, and to give a voice to the disenfranchised. Though the group formed to fight for equality for minorities and the disadvantaged, the NAACP has vigilantly stood guard for all Americans so that the basic rights of none are infringed upon.

In 1909, six great Americans, Ida Wells-Barnett, W.E.B. DuBois, Henry Moscowitz, Mary White Ovington, Oswald Garrison Villiard, and William English Walling, banded together to produce the "Call to National Action." This founding document of the NAACP laid out the organization's goals—to protect the rights guaranteed by the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. From their ever-present task to preserve these rights to the fight to put an end to lynching, the great victory over segregation won in 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education*, and their continuing crusade to protect civil rights, the NAACP has been an inimitable champion of the cause of equality and social justice in our Nation. Today, under the leadership of Chairman Julian Bond, the organization has grown to over 2,200 branches with over 500,000 members nationwide.

Connecticut is very grateful for the work that the NAACP has done in the State. Headquartered in Hartford, Connecticut and led by chapter president Scot X. Esdaile, the Connecticut NAACP has been a great advocate for civil rights in the State.

The Connecticut NAACP has been a valuable partner in local efforts to ensure civil rights. Our chapter has worked to ensure that minorities are represented in all levels of government as important legislative decisions are being made. The group worked with other local organizations to develop a talent bank of highly qualified minority candidates to fill senior-level positions in the State and combat any discrimination that might exist. The local NAACP has also worked tirelessly with the seven members of the Connecticut Congressional delegation to ensure that our Federal Government secures the blessings of liberty for all. I am proud to have a 95 percent rating from the NAACP. It remains a prevalent voice in the State and a standard-bearer of the principles of equality and justice.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we can honor the work of the NAACP best by continuing to work for the noble cause for which the organization exists: to protect the rights of all persons and eliminate hatred and racial discrimination. I extend to the NAACP my best wishes for a happy 99th anniversary and I commend and thank them for a century of service.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am honored to rise today to congratulate the NAACP on its 99th Anniversary. As the Nation's oldest civil rights organization, the NAACP has for 99 years fought to ensure the educational, social, economic and political equality of all persons, so that all may participate and share in this country's great Democracy.

The NAACP was founded by a multi-racial group of activists who answered "The Call" to engage in a national conference to discuss the civil rights of African Americans in the summer of 1908. That year, the NAACP embarked on

its mission to ensure equal rights for all citizens and to eliminate racial prejudice in the United States.

Since then, the NAACP has worked tirelessly to accomplish its mission by continually looking for ways to improve the democratic process and by seeking the enactment and enforcement of Federal, State, and local laws that secure civil rights. The NAACP furthers its mission by making the public aware of the adverse effects of racial discrimination and by seeking its elimination. The NAACP also seeks to educate the public about their constitutional rights and goes to court to enforce those rights when necessary.

Shortly after its founding in the early 1900s, the NAACP undertook an anti-lynching campaign and launched a public protest when segregation was introduced into the Federal Government. The NAACP was influential in President Harry Truman's decision to issue an Executive Order in 1948 ending discrimination by the Federal Government. In 1954, the NAACP helped bring an end to segregation in public schools in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*. In 1964, it worked to raise support for the passage of the Civil Rights Act. In 1979, it helped expand voter participation through voter registration in high schools. And the list goes on.

Today, the NAACP continues to eliminate racial prejudice when it rears its ugly head, and informs the public of its intolerable presence when it does. It continues to act as a watchdog to protect the constitutional and civil rights of all people. And it educates the public about civil rights so that future generations will know tolerance and equality as the norm, rather than the exception.

I am proud to be a Diamond Life Member of the NAACP and to have once served as President of the Newport News, Virginia branch.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the NAACP on 99 years of service to our great country and its people, and I wish them another highly successful 99 years.

Mr. COHEN. I yield back the remainder of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 289.

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. CHABOT. 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.

□ 1715

AMERICAN BRAILLE FLAG MEMORIAL ACT

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4169) to authorize the placement in Arlington National Cemetery of an American Braille tactile flag in Arlington National Cemetery honoring

blind members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and other Americans.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4169

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 "American Braille Flag Memorial Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) There are more than 175,000 blind veterans.

(2) The Department of Defense estimates that 16 percent of the members of the Armed Forces who have been injured in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom have severe vision loss as a result of their injuries.

(3) The American Braille tactile flag was created by the Kansas Braille Transcription Institute in Wichita, Kansas, to allow blind Americans and blind veterans to experience the American flag.

(4) Arlington National Cemetery, visited by approximately 4,000,000 people annually, is a national place of remembrance and honor for the Nation's veterans.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF PLACEMENT OF AN AMERICAN BRAILLE TACTILE FLAG IN ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY HONORING BLIND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES, VETERANS, AND OTHER AMERICANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Army is authorized to place in Arlington National Cemetery an American Braille tactile flag in Arlington National Cemetery honoring blind members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and other Americans.

(b) APPROVAL OF DESIGN AND SITE.—The Secretary of the Army shall have exclusive authority to approve an appropriate design and site within Arlington National Cemetery for the memorial authorized under subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. RODRIGUEZ) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4169.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in strong support of the American Braille Flag Memorial Act, H.R. 4169. I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. TIAHRT, for drafting this important piece of legislation and for his leadership in this area.

Today, there are nearly 1.3 million blinded and visually impaired Americans, and approximately 187,000 of those are veterans. It is estimated that 16 percent of these veterans have sustained injuries in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom,