

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.

RECOGNIZING CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE BIRMINGHAM PLEDGE

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution (H.J. Res. 102) recognizing that the Birmingham Pledge has made a significant contribution in fostering racial harmony and reconciliation in the United States and around the world, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.J. RES. 102

Whereas Birmingham, Alabama, is an international symbol of the racial strife in the United States in the 1950's and 1960's;

Whereas out of the crucible of Birmingham's role in the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's, a present-day grass-roots movement, embodied in the Birmingham Pledge, has arisen to continue the effort to eliminate racial and ethnic divisions in the United States and around the world;

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge, authored by Birmingham attorney James E. Rotch, sponsored by the Community Affairs Committee of Operation New Birmingham, and promoted by a broad cross-section of the community, increases racial harmony by helping individuals communicate in a positive way concerning the Nation's diversity and by encouraging people to make a commitment to racial harmony;

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge, signed by individuals as evidence of their commitment to its message, reads as follows:

"I believe that every person has worth as an individual.

"I believe that every person is entitled to dignity and respect, regardless of race or color.

"I believe that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful; if it is in my thought or act, then it is harmful to me as well as to others.

"Therefore, from this day forward I will strive daily to eliminate racial prejudice from my thoughts and actions.

"I will discourage racial prejudice by others at every opportunity.

"I will treat all people with dignity and respect; and I will strive to honor this pledge, knowing that the world will be a better place because of my effort.";

Whereas more than 70,000 people have signed the Birmingham Pledge, including the President, Members of the Congress, State Governors, State legislators, mayors, county commissioners, city council members, and other people around the world;

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge has achieved national and international recognition;

Whereas efforts to obtain signatories to the Birmingham Pledge are being organized and conducted in communities around the world;

Whereas every Birmingham Pledge signed and returned to Birmingham is recorded at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute as a permanent testament to racial reconciliation, peace, and harmony; and

Whereas the Birmingham Pledge, the motto for which is "Sign It, Live It", is a

powerful tool to facilitate dialogue on the Nation's diversity and the need for people to take personal steps to achieve racial harmony and tolerance in communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That—

(1) the Congress—

(A) recognizes that the pledge popularly known as the Birmingham Pledge has made a significant contribution in fostering racial harmony and reconciliation in the United States and around the world; and

(B) commends the people involved with the creation of the Birmingham Pledge and signatories to the pledge for the steps they are taking to make the Nation and the world a better place for all people; and

(2) it is the sense of the Congress that a National Birmingham Pledge Week should be established.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BACHUS. 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.J. Res. 102.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, this week Birmingham, Alabama, is hosting an MSNBC and Newsweek Magazine National Conference on Race Relations. One of the highlights of this conference is the Birmingham Pledge movement.

The Birmingham Pledge is a personal commitment to work to eliminate racial division in America and around the world. Those who sign the Pledge make a personal promise to treat all individuals with dignity and respect. More than 70,000 people from every inhabited continent on the globe have signed the Birmingham Pledge. Every signed Pledge is returned to Birmingham and recorded at the Civil Rights Institute as a permanent testament to racial reconciliation, peace and harmony.

Mr. Speaker, along with my colleague, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HILLIARD), both of us being natives of Birmingham, Alabama, we introduced this resolution on June 14, 2000. This resolution has the support of 107 cosponsors, a bipartisan group of Members of the House.

The resolution recognizes that personal efforts, the efforts of individuals, do matter, and do make a difference in addressing racial intolerance and do contribute significantly in fostering racial harmony.

□ 2100

As we speak, MSNBC is conducting a televised live town hall meeting on

race relations from the historic 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham. Newsweek Magazine this week printed a special issue on diversity in America to coincide with the Birmingham Summit.

The resolution before us recognizes that the Birmingham Pledge is making a significant contribution in fostering racial harmony. It commends those involved with the creation of the pledge, including Jim Rotch, who authored the pledge, and those who have signed it. It expresses the sense of Congress that a National Birmingham Pledge Week should be established.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I think it is appropriate to commend the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HILLIARD), with whom I have worked very closely in the Congressional Black Caucus, and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS), with whom I have worked very closely on the House Committee on the Judiciary on a number of measures.

This is a unique, ingenious way that continues the ability of America to help recognize that racial prejudice is something that we still can deal with in many creative, small ways. So House Joint Resolution 102 recognized that this ingenious notion, the Birmingham Pledge, can make an important contribution in fostering and promoting racial equality. It is a symbol of how far we have come and how far we have to go in the struggle for civil rights equality for all Americans.

Because Birmingham, Alabama, occupies a unique and important place in the history of civil rights in America, for these two Members from the State of Alabama to come forward where we have had in the past the images of police dogs, fire hoses, racial strife, Dr. King's letter from a Birmingham jail, all makes it so important that from Alabama and now from around the Nation, signatures are pouring in. I understand that more than 60,000 have taken place already, and that President Clinton and the First Lady have all been signatories.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it is important as I conclude that if we pledge our belief today that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful, then we should let our actions speak louder than our words and pass a hate crimes legislation bill that has come from the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HILLIARD) be the manager of this bill from this point forward.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISAKSON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise to call upon Congress to pass this resolution recognizing the Birmingham Pledge. The Birmingham Pledge is an effort of the Birmingham community to recognize the dignity and worth of every individual and to share with the world our community's commitment to eliminate racial prejudice in the lives of all people. It is a personal daily commitment to remove prejudice from our own lives as well as the lives of others and to treat all persons with respect.

The gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) and I proposed this resolution together, bringing to this Nation the rich heritage that we represent in Birmingham, Alabama. I would say it has been in the center of the struggle for American freedom. It was here that our citizens fought nonviolently the violent, racist, hate-mongering police commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor and won. The remnants of that racism has impacted our society for far too long. Now is the time to change the social condition for all citizens and bring new life to the American dream.

It was here in Birmingham, Alabama, 16 years later that Birmingham elected its first black mayor who recently retired after 20 years of leading our city from hate, racism, poverty, and unemployment into becoming one of the leading citizens in America in human relations. Birmingham has developed and sustained an economy which includes many more people than ever before. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates in the Nation. But it also has changed in terms of its human relations factors, and it is a positive one. It is one that we wish to share with all Americans.

Even with our great history, people in Birmingham forget how we got where we are today; and because of that, the loss of our understanding of this exodus is destructive. We need to find out where we have been. We need to remember in order to realize where we must go.

This pledge can renew our memories and renew our commitment to a world without the kind of hate which has, for so long, ripped out the heart of our city and our Nation. I cannot tell my colleagues how strongly I recommend this resolution to all of us to sign, and I call upon all of us to support it today, by our votes; but I also ask each one of my colleagues to seek signatures from their constituents and, most importantly, to live the pledge.

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

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

In considering this resolution, we should all keep in mind one thing: we are not born with prejudice or bigotry. These are things that are learned. In

fact, psychologists call it learned behavior. By word or by action, we teach our children daily. We teach them either to be tolerant or to be intolerant, to have prejudice or bias against people because of their race, or origin, or not to be. We teach them these things many times even before they are old enough to choose for themselves. We can teach our children to love, or we can teach our children to hate. Intolerance is learned. Therefore, it can be unlearned. The pledge can be a part of that process.

This is the message we will send to Americans today about race relations. Each of us needs to take personal responsibility to conduct ourselves in a way that will achieve greater racial harmony in our own communities. It has been said that events in Birmingham during the early 1960s, and my colleague referred to many of those, stirred the conscience of the Nation and influenced the course of civil rights around the world.

I know of no city that has worked harder to overcome its missteps and its mistakes than my native city, Birmingham. The Birmingham that has emerged is one built upon a foundation of racial sensitivity and strength and diversity. Today's Birmingham is dedicated not only to preserving the history of its struggle, but, more importantly, to ending racial intolerance, bigotry and prejudice, not only in Birmingham, but around the world.

Mr. Speaker, by passing House Resolution 102, the House will show its support for this commendable effort. In closing, I urge all of my colleagues to support this resolution.

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

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

I would like to recite the Birmingham Pledge:

I believe that every person has worth as an individual.

I believe that every person is entitled to dignity and our respect, regardless of race or color.

I believe that every thought and every act of racial prejudice is harmful; if it is my thought or act, then it is harmful to me as well as to others.

Therefore, from this day forward I will strive daily to eliminate racial prejudice from my thoughts and actions.

I will discourage racial prejudice by others at every opportunity.

I will treat all people with dignity and respect; and I will strive daily to honor this pledge, knowing that the world will be a better place because of my effort.

Mr. Speaker, this is the Birmingham Pledge. I urge my colleagues to sign it, to vote for it, and to live it.

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

Mr. BACHUS. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleague from Birmingham in inviting all Members not only to support this resolution, but to support this pledge and to live this pledge on a daily basis.

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 Alabama (Mr. BACHUS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the joint resolution, H.J. Res. 102.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING THE SERVICE AND SACRIFICE OF THE UNITED STATES MERCHANT MARINE

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 327) honoring the service and sacrifice during periods of war by members of the United States merchant marine.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 327

Whereas throughout the history of the United States, the United States merchant marine has served the Nation during periods of war;

Whereas vessels of the United States merchant marine fleet, such as the S.S. LANE VICTORY, provided critical logistical support to the Armed Forces by carrying equipment, supplies, and personnel necessary to maintain war efforts;

Whereas numerous members of the United States merchant marine have died to secure peace and freedom; and

Whereas at a time when the people of the United States are recognizing the contributions of the Armed Forces and civilian personnel to the national security, it is appropriate to recognize the service of the United States merchant marine: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) honors the service and sacrifice during periods of war by members of the United States merchant marine;

(2) recognizes the critical role played by vessels of the United States merchant marine fleet, such as the S.S. LANE VICTORY, in transporting equipment, supplies, and personnel necessary to support war efforts; and

(3) encourages—
(A) the American people, through appropriate ceremonies and activities, to recognize and commemorate the service and sacrifices of the United States merchant marine; and

(B) all government agencies to take appropriate steps to commemorate the United States merchant marine.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. KUYKENDALL) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. TAYLOR) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. KUYKENDALL).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. KUYKENDALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within