

the valiant members of the United States Coast Guard, who risk their lives every day to rescue and protect the American people and preserve the Nation's security. I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 866.

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. DEFAZIO. Madam 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.

#### REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 3120

Mr. FEENEY. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that my cosponsorship of the bill, H.R. 3120, be withdrawn.

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

There was no objection.

#### COMMISSION ON THE ABOLITION OF THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE ACT

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 3432) to establish the Commission on the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the Senate amendment is as follows:

Senate amendment:

On page 15, strike lines 3 through 5.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise as the sponsor of H.R. 3432 and yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would like to thank Chairman LAN-TOS and Ranking Member ROS-LEHTINEN for their leadership on this legislation. I would also like to thank my friends in the other body and the senior Senator from my home State of New Jersey for sponsoring and ensuring the passage of this bill. And finally, I would like to thank Speaker PELOSI and Representative CLYBURN for their assistance in bringing this important and timely bill to the House.

This year will mark the 200th anniversary of the act to prohibit the importation of slaves, which effectively ended the legal transatlantic slave trade.

The bill under consideration before us, H.R. 3432, the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission of the Abolition of Transatlantic Slave Trade, establishes a commission to cultivate and preserve the memory of a grave injustice in American history, the transatlantic slave trade, and to mark the trade's conclusion at the hands of President Thomas Jefferson.

As you know, the transatlantic slave trade was the capture and procurement of Africans, mostly from west and central Africa, to western colonies and new nations in America, including the United States, where they were enslaved in forced labor between the 15th and mid-19th centuries.

In the early years of this Republic, the transatlantic slave trade constituted a thriving economic vein of the United States. By 1807, millions of Africans had been captured and transported to the Americas on notorious slave ships. That ship replica can be seen at the National Great Blacks in Wax Museum in Baltimore, Maryland.

Many individuals perished as a result of torture, including rape, malnutrition, and disease. Those who survived faced the miserable prospects of a lifetime in bondage. Few Americans are aware that captured slaves resisted their enslavement until the bitter end.

During the Middle Passage, enslaved Africans defied their slave masters through nonviolent and violent means, including hunger strikes, suicide, and shipboard revolts, the most historically recognized events taking place on board the *Don Carlos* in 1732 and on board the *Amistad* in 1839.

On March 3, 1807, President Thomas Jefferson signed into law the Transatlantic Slave Trade Act, which prohibited the importation of slaves from any port or any place within the jurisdiction of the United States. This bill was nothing short of revolutionary at that time in 1806 when it was passed through this Congress. It singlehandedly outlawed the long-standing and brutal slave trade of transporting Africans to the United States.

As we know, even before this bill was passed, free and slave persons fought in the Revolutionary War, the War of Independence against Britain. In the

Boston Massacre on March 3, 1770, Crispus Attucks was the first American to shed his blood at that Boston Massacre, which was led by Major Pitcairn, at that time a British officer. Ironically, in 1775, at the famous Battle of Bunker Hill, Peter Salem and Salem Poor were two outstanding blacks who fought with the minutemen. And it was Peter Salem who fired the shot that killed Major Pitcairn, who led the Boston Massacre. So, there were blacks long before slavery was ended that fought heroically for this country.

The commission will encourage civic, historical, educational, religious, economic and other organizations, as well as the State and local governments throughout the United States, to organize and participate in anniversary activities to expand the understanding and appreciation of the transatlantic slave trade.

As we constantly admonish the prevalence of modern-day slavery worldwide, it would be hypocritical if we did not acknowledge the history of transatlantic slave trade and slavery that existed not long ago in our country.

African labor was an essential feature of economic development in Europe and our former colonies, including the United States. All of the nations involved flourished economically as a result of slave labor.

Slave trade and the legacy of slavery continues to have a profound impact on social and economic disparities, hatred, bias, racism and discrimination that continues to affect people in the Americas, particularly those of African descent.

It is important, as Americans, that we extend our highest appreciation for the contributions and struggles of African Americans to create an equitable and just society from which we all benefit today.

The commission created by this bill will be tasked with the mandate to plan, develop and execute programs and activities appropriate with the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slavery. The mission is timely and the subject is critical.

The United States is a primary voice on trafficking issues. We are also the principal advocates for human rights and freedom around the world. Our Nation's willingness to confront its past and calmly assess the impact of slavery on the United States strengthens our ability to serve as an advocate on the international stage.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this timely legislation that will embrace America's history and honor its past.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3432, an act to establish a commission on the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

The House passed this bill on October 2nd of last year, and today we take it up again as amended by the Senate, which removed three lines of authorizing language.

For over 200 years, countless Africans died appalling deaths during the so-called "Middle Passage," the inhumane overseas voyage of their lives to slavery. Many Africans never made it to the Americas because they died on the way.

In that era, as throughout history, man's inhumanity to man had a lot to do with money. The Middle Passage referred to a middle portion of a triangular trade in cargo and people that began and ended in Europe.

Portuguese, English, Spanish, French, Dutch and other traders, including Americans, arrived on the West Coast of Africa where they sold or traded European cargo of textiles, firearms and other goods for Africans, who had been enslaved or kidnapped in many cases by other Africans. From there, they began the inhumane "Middle" journey to the Caribbean Islands and the Americas, during which many of them died. In the New World, which included North and South America and the Caribbean Islands, the slaves were sold for profit and traded for colonial goods that traveled mainly back to Europe, such as rum, sugar, rice and molasses.

Most of the victims of the Atlantic slave trade ended up in the Caribbean Islands and South America. Approximately 5 percent ended up in North America. These humans served as cheap forced labor for profiteers.

As recognized in this bill, the Transatlantic Slave Act went into effect 200 years ago this month, prohibiting the importation of slaves into the United States. President Thomas Jefferson authorized this act in 1808. Sadly, in spite of the formal prohibition and the act of Congress, this shameful institution of slavery persisted in this country for nearly 6 decades afterwards.

This bill will establish a commission to ensure that this important anniversary is appropriately commemorated within the United States and abroad. It will help afford all Americans the opportunity to learn more about the institution of slavery and its vestiges so that we may understand this tragic aspect of history.

In addition to promoting greater tolerance and understanding within the United States, this commission can also help shed light on the fact that slavery still exists in the modern world 200 years after the transatlantic slave trade was abolished. It exists today as it did in the past because of greed. It exists in the form of human trafficking. It exists wherever any group is systematically robbed of their fundamental human rights. These problems are undeniably real for the hundreds and thousands of women and children

who are trafficked internationally every year.

Madam Speaker, it is appropriate, on the day after we honor the late Dr. Martin Luther King, a humanitarian and advocate of basic human rights, that we pass this legislation.

I want to thank the author of the bill, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) for his efforts.

I urge all colleagues to support this measure.

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

Mr. PAYNE. Let me thank the gentleman from Texas for his eloquent statement, very well done, and thank you very much for your support of this legislation.

As we conclude, there were two other Members who indicated they wanted to speak, but I think that our time is about expiring.

But let me, once again, thank our chairman and ranking member for assisting us in bringing this bill forward. We hope that, as has been indicated, that we will be able to deal with modern-day slavery. We have problems in our country today where people are being brought in from eastern Europe and other areas where they are being exploited, and we need to really be more vigilant about wiping some of these terrible practices away.

And so, we hope that this commission will focus not only on the past, deal with the present, but also deal with the future. And we certainly appreciate the support from the other body and the senior Senator from New Jersey.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 3432, the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade of 2007, which I am proud, along with over 95 of my colleagues, to cosponsor. This legislation recognizes the 200th anniversary of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and it establishes the rubric from which the Commission, to be known as the "Transatlantic Slave Trade 200th Anniversary Commission," shall be formed.

I would like to thank my distinguished colleague, Congressman PAYNE, for introducing this important legislation, as well as the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congressman LANTOS, for his leadership on this issue.

Madam Speaker, though 200 years have passed since the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, the legacy of slavery continues to have a profound impact on American society. The legacy of social and economic disparity lives on, as do hatred, bias, and discrimination. Despite two centuries of progress, the African American community continues to feel the impact of the transatlantic slave trade, and subsequent years of racism and persecution.

While our Nation has pursued the ideals of liberty and equality for all, there still remain steps that must be taken in order to ensure that even such a dark piece of our Nation's history be preserved and its conclusion at the

hand of President Thomas Jefferson be celebrated.

Madam Speaker, the bill before us establishes a commission to cultivate and preserve the memory of a grave injustice in American history: we must recognize and in some small way try to rectify our past. In the early years of the Republic, the transatlantic slave trade constituted a thriving economic vein of the United States. By 1807, millions of Africans had been captured and transported to the Americas, many perishing as the result of torture, rape, malnutrition, and disease. It was not until March of 1807 that President Thomas Jefferson signed into law "An Act to prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States," a Congressionally approved bill intended to end the heinous practice of the transatlantic slave trade.

It is in commemoration of President Jefferson's revolutionary act, and to explore further the impacts of the slave trade on our Nation that H.R. 3432 establishes the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission. This important commission will be composed of 11 congressionally appointed members charged with the task of planning, developing, and executing programs and activities appropriate to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. Though the Senate amendments to this bill strike the appropriation of funds for this important legislation, I still feel that this is an imperative first step in the right direction. While I am disappointed that the Senate did not see fit to allocate the necessary funds to see the formation of this unprecedented commission to fruition, I remain supportive of the significant mission of this legislation and hope to see it through to its completion.

January 1, 2008, marked the 200th anniversary of the "Act to Prohibit the Importation of Slaves." The United States today serves as a moral compass for the rest of the world and as such we must provide a voice for human trafficking issues. Our willingness to confront our Nation's past and to address the impacts of the slave trade and its legacy on the United States strengthens our undeterred commitment to serving as an advocate for human rights and freedom in the international community.

I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam 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 Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 3432.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until approximately 6:30 p.m. today.