

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 3432

To establish the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission of the  
Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 3, 2007

Mr. PAYNE (for himself, Mr. JEFFERSON, Ms. LEE, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. RUSH, Mr. CONYERS, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

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## A BILL

To establish the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “200th Anniversary  
5 Commemoration Commission of the Abolition of the  
6 Transatlantic Slave Trade Act of 2007”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1           (1) On March 3, 1807, President Thomas Jef-  
2           ferson signed into law a bill approved by Congress  
3           “An Act to prohibit the importation of slaves into  
4           any port or place within the jurisdiction of the  
5           United States” and made it unlawful “to import or  
6           bring into the United Sates or territories thereof  
7           from any foreign kingdom, place or country, any  
8           negro, mulatto, or person of colour, with intent to  
9           hold, sell, or dispose of such ... as a slave, or to be  
10          held to service or labour”.

11          (2) Article I, Section 9 of the United States  
12          Constitution clearly spelled out that the inter-  
13          national slave trade could not be banned before  
14          1808, and it is only on January 1, 1808, that the  
15          American Act went into effect.

16          (3) An Act entitled “An Act to continue in  
17          force ‘An act to protect the commerce of the United  
18          States, and punish the crime of piracy,’ and also to  
19          make further provisions for punishing the crime of  
20          piracy”, enacted May 15, 1820, made it unlawful for  
21          any citizen of the United States to engage “in the  
22          slave trade, or ... , being of the crew or ship’s com-  
23          pany of any ship ... , seize any negro or mulatto ...  
24          with the intent to make ... a slave ... or forcibly  
25          bring ... on board any such ship ... .”.

1           (4) The transatlantic slave trade was the cap-  
2           ture and procurement of Africans, mostly from West  
3           Africa, in order to bring them to the United States  
4           and the colonies that became the United States, for  
5           the purpose of enslavement between the sixteenth  
6           and late nineteenth centuries.

7           (5) The Middle Passage was the forced migra-  
8           tion through overseas transport of millions of Afri-  
9           cans to the Americas, many of whom suffered abuses  
10          of rape and perished as a result of torture, malnutri-  
11          tion, disease, and resistance in transit, with those  
12          who survived sold into slavery.

13          (6) During the transatlantic slave trade more  
14          than 12,000,000 Africans were transported in bond-  
15          age from their African homelands to the Americas.

16          (7) The thirteenth amendment to the Constitu-  
17          tion of the United States recognizes that “Neither  
18          slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a pun-  
19          ishment for crime whereof the party shall have been  
20          duly convicted, shall exist within the United States,  
21          or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”.

22          (8) The slave trade and the legacy of slavery  
23          continue to have a profound impact on social and  
24          economic disparity, hatred, bias, racism, and dis-

1       crimination, and continue to affect people of African  
2       descent today.

3               (9) In 2007, the British Parliament marked the  
4       200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade  
5       in the former British Empire with plans launched by  
6       the Department for Education and Skills which pro-  
7       vided joint funding of £910,000 (\$1,800,000) for  
8       the understanding slavery initiative, and the Herit-  
9       age Lottery Fund announced awards of over  
10      £20,000,000 (\$40,000,000) for projects to com-  
11      memorate the anniversary.

12      (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to estab-  
13      lish the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission  
14      of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to—

15              (1) ensure a suitable national observance of the  
16      200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-  
17      atlantic slave trade by sponsoring and supporting  
18      commemorative programs;

19              (2) cooperate with and assist the programs and  
20      activities throughout the United States in observ-  
21      ance of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the  
22      transatlantic slave trade;

23              (3) assist in ensuring that the observations of  
24      the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-  
25      atlantic slave trade are inclusive and appropriately

1 recognize the experiences of all people during this  
2 period in history; and

3 (4) support and facilitate international involve-  
4 ment in observances of the 200th anniversary of the  
5 abolition of the transatlantic slave trade act.

6 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.**

7 There is established a commission to be known as the  
8 “Transatlantic Slave Trade 200th Anniversary Commis-  
9 sion” (referred to in this Act as the “Commission”).

10 **SEC. 4. THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE 200TH ANNI-  
11 VERSARY COMMISSION.**

12 (a) MEMBERSHIP.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall be  
14 composed of 9 members, of whom—

15 (A) 4 shall be appointed by the Speaker of  
16 the House of Representatives;

17 (B) 3 shall be appointed by the majority  
18 leader of the Senate;

19 (C) 1 shall be appointed by the minority  
20 leader of the House of Representatives; and

21 (D) 1 shall be appointed by the minority  
22 leader of the Senate.

23 (2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Members of the Com-  
24 mission shall be individuals with demonstrated ex-  
25 pertise or experience in the study and program fa-

1 cilitation on the transatlantic slave trade and the in-  
2 stitution of slavery as it relates to the United States,  
3 or both.

4 (3) TERM; VACANCIES.—

5 (A) TERM.—A member of the Commission  
6 shall be appointed for the life of the Commis-  
7 sion.

8 (B) VACANCIES.—

9 (i) IN GENERAL.—A vacancy on the  
10 Commission shall be filled in the same  
11 manner in which the original appointment  
12 was made.

13 (ii) PARTIAL TERM.—A member ap-  
14 pointed to fill a vacancy on the Commis-  
15 sion shall serve for the remainder of the  
16 term for which the predecessor of the  
17 member was appointed.

18 (4) MEETINGS.—

19 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall  
20 meet—

21 (i) as many times as necessary; or

22 (ii) at the call of the Chairperson or  
23 the majority of the members of the Com-  
24 mission.

1 (B) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 30  
2 days after the date on which all members of the  
3 Commission have been appointed, the Commis-  
4 sion shall hold its initial meeting.

5 (C) APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND  
6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—Not later than 60 days  
7 after the date on which all members of the  
8 Commission have been appointed, the Commis-  
9 sion shall—

10 (i) designate 1 of the members as  
11 Chairperson; and

12 (ii) select an executive director as de-  
13 scribed under subsection (d)(2).

14 (5) VOTING.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall  
16 act only on an affirmative vote of a majority of  
17 the members of the Commission.

18 (B) QUORUM.—A majority of the members  
19 of the Commission shall constitute a quorum  
20 for conducting business but fewer members may  
21 meet or hold hearings.

22 (b) DUTIES.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

24 (A) plan, develop, and execute programs  
25 and activities appropriate to commemorate the

1           200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-  
2           atlantic slave trade;

3           (B) facilitate commemoration-related ac-  
4           tivities throughout the United States;

5           (C) encourage civic, historical, educational,  
6           religious, economic, and other organizations, as  
7           well as State and local governments, throughout  
8           the United States to organize and participate in  
9           anniversary activities to expand the under-  
10          standing and appreciation of the significance of  
11          the transatlantic slave trade and the institution  
12          of slavery particularly as it relates to the  
13          United States, or both;

14          (D) coordinate and facilitate for the public  
15          scholarly research on, publication about, and in-  
16          terpretation of, the transatlantic slave trade  
17          and the institution of slavery particularly as it  
18          relates to the United States, or both;

19          (E) assist in the development of appro-  
20          priate programs and facilities to ensure that the  
21          200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-  
22          atlantic slave trade provides a lasting legacy  
23          and long-term public benefit;

24          (F) support and facilitate marketing ef-  
25          forts for the issuance of a commemorative coin,

1 postage stamp, and related activities for observ-  
2 ances;

3 (G) facilitate the convening of a joint  
4 meeting or joint session of the Congress for  
5 ceremonies and activities relating to the trans-  
6 atlantic slave trade and the institution of slav-  
7 ery particularly as it relates to the United  
8 States, or both;

9 (H) promote the sponsorship of con-  
10 ferences, exhibitions, or public meetings con-  
11 cerning the transatlantic slave trade and the in-  
12 stitution of slavery particularly as it relates to  
13 the United States, or both;

14 (I) coordinate and facilitate the sponsor-  
15 ship of high school and collegiate essay contests  
16 concerning the transatlantic slave trade and the  
17 institution of slavery particularly as it relates to  
18 the United States, or both;

19 (J) examine reports of modern-day slavery  
20 and human trafficking to raise the public's  
21 awareness of these matters and ensure such  
22 atrocities do not go unnoticed by the people of  
23 the United States.

24 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 11 months after  
25 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commis-

1       sion shall submit to the Congress a report con-  
2       taining a summary of the activities of the Commis-  
3       sion.

4       (c) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.—The Commission  
5       may—

6               (1) recommend to the Congress the activities  
7       that the Commission considers most fitting and  
8       proper to commemorate the anniversary of the aboli-  
9       tion of the transatlantic slave trade and the entity  
10       in the Federal Government that the Commission  
11       considers most appropriate to carry out such activi-  
12       ties;

13              (2) accept donations and gifts, and make dis-  
14       persions of money, personal services, and real and  
15       personal property related to the transatlantic slave  
16       trade, the institution of slavery, and the significance  
17       of slavery to the history of the United States;

18              (3) appoint such advisory committees as the  
19       Commission determines necessary to carry out this  
20       Act;

21              (4) authorize any member or employee of the  
22       Commission to take any action that the Commission  
23       is authorized to take under this Act;

24              (5) procure supplies, services, and property, and  
25       make or enter into contracts, leases, or other legal

1 agreements, to carry out this Act (except that any  
2 contracts, leases, or other legal agreements made or  
3 entered into by the Commission shall not extend be-  
4 yond the date of the termination of the Commis-  
5 sion); and

6 (6) use the United States mails in the same  
7 manner and under the same conditions as other  
8 Federal agencies;

9 (d) PERSONNEL MATTERS.—

10 (1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COM-  
11 MISSION.—

12 (A) BASIC PAY.—Members of the Commis-  
13 sion shall not receive compensation for the per-  
14 formance of their duties on behalf of the Com-  
15 mission.

16 (B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the  
17 Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, in-  
18 cluding per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates  
19 authorized for an employee of an agency under  
20 subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United  
21 States Code, while away from their homes or  
22 regular place of business in the performance of  
23 the duties on behalf of the Commission.

24 (2) STAFF.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the  
2 Commission may, without regard to the civil  
3 service laws (including regulations), appoint  
4 and terminate an executive director and such  
5 other additional personnel as are necessary to  
6 enable the Commission to perform its duties.

7 (B) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—

8 (i) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Chair-  
9 person shall appoint an executive director  
10 with demonstrated expertise or experience  
11 in the study and program facilitation on  
12 the transatlantic slave trade and the insti-  
13 tution of slavery particularly as it relates  
14 to the United States, or both.

15 (ii) CONFIRMATION.—The employ-  
16 ment of an executive director shall be sub-  
17 ject to confirmation by the members of the  
18 Commission.

19 (C) COMPENSATION.—The Chairperson of  
20 the Commission may fix the compensation of  
21 the executive director and other personnel with-  
22 out regard to the provision of chapter 51 and  
23 subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United  
24 States Code, relating to classification of posi-  
25 tions and General Schedule pay rates, except

1           that the rate of pay for the executive director  
2           and other personnel may not exceed the rate  
3           payable for level V of the Executive Schedule  
4           under section 5316 of such title.

5           (D) VOLUNTEER AND UNCOMPENSATED  
6           SERVICES.—Notwithstanding section 1342 of  
7           title 31, United States Code, the Commission  
8           may accept and use voluntary and uncompen-  
9           sated services as the Commission determines  
10          necessary.

11          (e) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMIT-  
12          TENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Commission  
13          may procure temporary and intermittent services in ac-  
14          cordance with section 3109(b) of title 5, United States  
15          Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily  
16          equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for  
17          level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of  
18          that title.

19          (f) NON-APPLICABILITY OF FACA.—Section 14(b) of  
20          the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall  
21          not apply to the Commission.

22       **SEC. 5. TERMINATION.**

23          (a) DATE OF TERMINATION.—The Commission shall  
24          terminate on December 31, 2009.

1 (b) FINAL REPORT.—Upon termination, the Com-  
2 mission shall submit to the Congress a report con-  
3 taining—

4 (1) a detailed statement of the activities of the  
5 Commission; and

6 (2) a final accounting of the funds received and  
7 expended by the Commission.

8 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

9 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums  
10 as may be necessary to carry out this Act

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