

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 135

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 8, 2009

Received

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Directing the Architect of the Capitol to place a marker in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center which acknowledges the role that slave labor played in the construction of the United States Capitol, and for other purposes.

Whereas enslaved African-Americans provided labor essential to the construction of the United States Capitol;

Whereas the report of the Architect of the Capitol entitled “History of Slave Laborers in the Construction of the United States Capitol” documents the role of slave labor in the construction of the Capitol;

Whereas enslaved African-Americans performed the back-breaking work of quarrying the stone which comprised many of the floors, walls, and columns of the Capitol;

Whereas enslaved African-Americans also participated in other facets of construction of the Capitol, including carpentry, masonry, carting, rafting, roofing, plastering, glazing, painting, and sawing;

Whereas the marble columns in the Old Senate Chamber and the sandstone walls of the East Front corridor remain as the lasting legacies of the enslaved African-Americans who worked the quarries;

Whereas slave-quarried stones from the remnants of the original Capitol walls can be found in Rock Creek Park in the District of Columbia;

Whereas the Statue of Freedom now atop the Capitol dome could not have been cast without the pivotal intervention of Philip Reid, an enslaved African-American foundry worker who deciphered the puzzle of how to separate the 5-piece plaster model for casting when all others failed;

Whereas the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center was named Emancipation Hall to help acknowledge the work of the slave laborers who built the Capitol;

Whereas no narrative on the construction of the Capitol that does not include the contribution of enslaved African-Americans can fully and accurately reflect its history;

Whereas recognition of the contributions of enslaved African-Americans brings to all Americans an understanding of the continuing evolution of our representative democracy;
and

Whereas a marker dedicated to the enslaved African-Americans who helped to build the Capitol will reflect the

charge of the Capitol Visitor Center to teach visitors about Congress and its development: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring),*

3 **SECTION 1. PLACEMENT OF MARKER IN CAPITOL VISITOR**
4 **CENTER TO ACKNOWLEDGE ROLE OF SLAVE**
5 **LABOR IN CONSTRUCTION OF CAPITOL.**

6 (a) PROCUREMENT AND PLACEMENT OF MARKER.—

7 The Architect of the Capitol, subject to the approval of
8 the Committee on House Administration of the House of
9 Representatives and the Committee on Rules and Admin-
10 istration of the Senate, shall design, procure, and place
11 in a prominent location in Emancipation Hall in the Cap-
12 itol Visitor Center a marker which acknowledges the role
13 that slave labor played in the construction of the United
14 States Capitol.

15 (b) CRITERIA FOR DESIGN OF MARKER.—In devel-
16 oping the design for the marker required under subsection
17 (a), the Architect of the Capitol—

18 (1) shall take into consideration the rec-
19 ommendations developed by the Slave Labor Task
20 Force Working Group;

21 (2) shall, to the greatest extent practicable, en-
22 sure that the marker includes stone which was quar-
23 ried by slaves in the construction of the Capitol; and

1 (3) shall ensure that the marker includes a
2 plaque or inscription which describes the purpose of
3 the marker.

Passed the House of Representatives July 7, 2009.

Attest: LORRAINE C. MILLER,
Clerk.