

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 53

Recognizing the achievement of parity among African-Americans in computer science.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 12, 2009

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (for herself and Mr. MEEKS of New York) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Recognizing the achievement of parity among African-Americans in computer science.

Whereas the National Center for Education Statistics reports that since 1997, the number of black students receiving baccalaureates in computer science has more than doubled, from 2,463 to 5,875;

Whereas the percentage of blacks among computer science bachelor's degree holders has been rising since 1998, and in 2006, blacks made up 12.4 percent of the candidates receiving those degrees, a proportion almost equal to that of blacks in the United States population, which is 12.8 percent;

Whereas in other areas such as engineering, blacks do not have parity, because they earned only 5 percent of bachelor's degrees in engineering in 2006;

Whereas the total number of students receiving degrees in computer science has shrunk by more than 12,000 over the past two years for which the Federal Government has data: from 59,488 in 2003 to 47,480 in 2005;

Whereas computer science is the bedrock of a great variety of future technologies;

Whereas the National Society of Black Engineers has more than 4575 collegiate members who have or are pursuing degrees in computer sciences since 2001;

Whereas Clarence "Skip" Ellis, born in 1943 in south Chicago, Illinois, is the first African-American to attain a Ph.D. in computer science;

Whereas when he was 15, Dr. Ellis took a job at a local company and worked the "graveyard shift", during which he guarded and educated himself about computers, which in 1958 were very uncommon;

Whereas Dr. Ellis won a scholarship and matriculated at Beloit College in 1960, and he discovered that he was the only African-American on campus;

Whereas Dr. Ellis graduated from Beloit College in 1964 with a double major in math and physics, and he went on to earn a Ph.D. in computer science in 1969 at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana where he worked on one of the world's first supercomputers, the Iliac 4;

Whereas Dr. Ellis is a trailblazer who symbolizes perseverance and success in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges;

Whereas the offshoring of jobs, and the H-1B visa program—which allows non-U.S. citizens in high-skill professions to live in the U.S. as temporary workers—are contributing to salary stagnation in domestic technology jobs;

Whereas to remain competitive, computer scientists must continue to innovate, learn new skills, and think creatively;

Whereas enrichment programs for middle school students are of critical importance to retaining their interest in math and science, and an example of a successful program is the Summer Engineering Experience for Kids (SEEK) Camp, sponsored by the National Society of Black Engineers, which since 2007 has included the participation of more than 900 third, fourth, and fifth graders; and

Whereas the National Science Foundation, Department of Energy Office of Science, National Institutes of Health, and other Federal agencies are well positioned to increase the diversity of our Nation's science and technology workforce through a variety of research and educational programs: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That the Congress recognizes the achieve-
 3 ment of parity among African-Americans in degrees con-
 4 ferred in computer science and celebrates this victory
 5 among persons of color, especially during Black History
 6 Month.

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