

111TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. RES. 53

Authorizing a plaque commemorating the role of enslaved African-Americans in the construction of the Capitol.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 24, 2009

Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CHAMBLISS, and Mr. BENNETT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration

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## RESOLUTION

Authorizing a plaque commemorating the role of enslaved African-Americans in the construction of the Capitol.

Whereas enslaved African-Americans provided labor essential to 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 toiled in the Aquia Creek sandstone quarry in Stafford County, Virginia and in a marble quarry in Montgomery County, Maryland to produce the stone that would be used in the Capitol;

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 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 enslaved African-Americans labored on the Nation's Capitol while they, themselves, were not free;

Whereas the contributions of enslaved African-Americans in the construction of the Capitol have not been acknowledged nor adequately represented in the Capitol;

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

Whereas recognition of the contributions of enslaved African-Americans brings to all people of the United States an understanding of the continuing evolution of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the Senate authorizes and directs—

2               (1) the Senate Commission on Art to procure  
3       an appropriate plaque acknowledging the role of  
4       enslaved African-Americans in the construction of  
5       the Capitol; and

6               (2) that, under the direction of the Committee  
7       on Rules and Administration of the Senate, the  
8       plaque shall be placed near the original exterior wall  
9       that was constructed between 1793 and 1800 in the

- 1 East Front corridor on the third floor of the Senate
- 2 wing of the Capitol.

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