

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WICKER). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 160.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on House Concurrent Resolution 160.

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

There was no objection.

#### COMMEMORATING THE 205TH ANNIVERSARY OF POLAND'S FIRST CONSTITUTION

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution 165 saluting and congratulating Polish people around the world as, on May 3, 1996, they commemorate the 205th anniversary of the adoption of Poland's first constitution.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 165

Whereas, on May 3, 1996, Polish people around the world, including Americans of Polish descent, will celebrate the 205th anniversary of the adoption of the first Polish constitution;

Whereas American Revolutionary War hero Thaddeus Kosciuszko introduced the concept of constitutional democracy to his native country of Poland;

Whereas the Polish constitution of 1791 was the first liberal constitution in Europe and represented Central-Eastern Europe's first attempt to end the feudal system of government;

Whereas this Polish constitution was designed to protect Poland's sovereignty and national unity and to create a progressive constitutional monarchy;

Whereas this Polish constitution was the first constitution in Central-Eastern Europe to secure individual and religious freedom for all persons in Poland;

Whereas this Polish constitution formed a government composed of distinct legislative, executive, and judicial powers;

Whereas this Polish constitution declared that "all power in civil society should be derived from the will of the people";

Whereas this Polish constitution revitalized the parliamentary system by placing preeminent lawmaking power in the House of Deputies, by subjecting the Sejm to majority rule, and by granting the Sejm the power to remove ministers, appoint commissars, and choose magistrates;

Whereas this Polish constitution provided for significant economic, social, and political reforms by removing inequalities between the nobility and the bourgeoisie, by recognizing town residents as "freemen" who had judicial autonomy and expanded rights, and by extending the protection of the law to

the peasantry who previously had no recourse against the arbitrary actions of feudal lords;

Whereas, although this Polish constitution was in effect for less than 2 years, its principles endured and it became the symbol around which a powerful new national consciousness was born, helping Poland to survive long periods of misfortune over the following 2 centuries; and

Whereas, in only the last 5 years, Poland has realized the promise held in the Polish constitution of 1791, has emerged as an independent nation after its people led the movement that resulted in historic changes in Central-Eastern Europe, and is moving toward full integration with the Euro-Atlantic community of nations: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That—*

(1) the people of the United States salute and congratulate Polish people around the world, including Americans of Polish descent, on the adoption of the first Polish constitution;

(2) the people of the United States recognize Poland's rebirth as a free and independent nation in the spirit of the legacy of the Polish constitution of 1791; and

(3) the Congress authorizes and urges the President of the United States to call upon the Governors of the States, the leaders of local governments, and the people of the United States to join in this recognition with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN] and the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MORAN] will each be recognized for 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York [Mr. GILMAN].

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

(Mr. GILMAN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 165, a resolution noting the 205th anniversary of the adoption of Poland's first Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, the Polish Constitution of 1791 stands as the first liberal Constitution in Europe, creating a constitutional monarchy.

Its adoption by the Polish nation marked an important step away from the feudal system of government that then prevailed throughout Eastern Europe.

Unfortunately, Poland soon fell victim to the imperialism of the Prussian, Russian, and Austrian empires, which divided the territory of Poland and ruled the Polish people for more than a century.

The Polish Constitution of 1791 became a symbol around which the Polish people rallied, however, and today—with the independence they regained earlier in this century and with the end of Communist dictatorship in Poland 7 years ago—the Polish people are now engaged in building a new constitutional democracy.

The Polish nation has undergone times of great difficulty and great destruction since 1791, but it has survived and, as a new democracy in Eastern Europe, appears to be well on its way toward integration into the trans-At-

lantic community of democratic States.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution, not just as a recognition of Poland's historical striving toward democracy, but as a statement about Poland's future as a free, independent, and democratic State.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution and commend the chairman of the committee for bringing it before the House, and the strong supporter of Polish interests, the gentleman from Buffalo, NY, Mr. JACK QUINN; and the other cosponsors, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. BORSKI, the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. FLANAGAN, the gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. KLECZKA, and others.

It is appropriate that the House and the people of the United States congratulate the Polish people around the world, including Americans of Polish descent, on the 205th anniversary of the adoption of the first Polish constitution.

The, as now, Poland has been a leader in Europe. In 1989, Poland took the first steps toward breaking up the Warsaw Pact and held the first free elections in Eastern Europe. That led the way on comprehensive economic reform.

Poland is now striving to integrate itself fully into the family of western nations. All of us can take a measure of pride in Poland's achievements, which serve the U.S. interests in peace, security, and prosperity in Europe.

Mr. Speaker, I urge adoption of the resolution, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from New York [Mr. QUINN], the original sponsor of this measure.

(Mr. QUINN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. QUINN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the proud sponsor of House Concurrent Resolution 165, a resolution honoring an important event in the development of democracy in Central-Eastern Europe and the world; the 205th anniversary of Poland's first Constitution of 1791.

On the third day of May, 1996, Polish people and Americans of Polish descent around the world celebrated the 205th anniversary of Poland's first Constitution.

The Polish Constitution of 1791, which became the first liberal constitution in Europe was preceded only by our own Constitution in 1787.

The 1791 Constitution sought an end to the feudal system of government, where a few monarchs and aristocrats governed Poland's majority.

American Revolutionary War hero Thaddeus Kosciuszko introduced the concept of a constitutional democracy to his native country of Poland, which