

of many peoples who, blended together on a benignant basis of political and race equality, combine to form the Kingdom of Hawaii . . ." The Akaka Bill would thus represent a wretched regression in race relations that would occasion equally wretched racial ills.

JUNETEENTH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. OBAMA. Madam. President, I was pleased to join the Senator from Michigan, Senator LEVIN, in submitting a resolution on the Juneteenth Independence Day.

I have heard people ask, "Why celebrate Juneteenth?" We have so many holidays and remembrances already—why add more history to the calendar?

But of course, Juneteenth is not just about celebrating history. It is about learning from it. Just like the day when the greatest civil rights leader of our time was born or the day when we finally gave African Americans a ballot and a voice, Juneteenth is a day when we can look back on a time when everyday Americans faced the most daunting challenges and the slimmest odds and still persevered. When they said "we shall overcome," and they did. When the hopes held by so many for so long finally led to the victory of freedom over servitude; of independence over enslavement.

Juneteenth is a day that allows us to remember that America is still the place where anything is possible. It has been that place in the past, and it can be that place in the future when it comes to the challenges we have yet to meet.

And so when we think of those challenges—when we think of the injustice we still face and the miles we have left to march—when we think of the millions without health care, the children without good schools, the families without jobs, and the disparities that still exist between black and white, rich and poor, educated and uneducated—when we think about all these challenges, we can also think "Juneteenth."

We can think of a day when the word began to spread from town to plantation to city to farm that after more than a hundred years of slavery, millions were now free. That after so many hopeless days and years of despair, the impossible was now truth; the shackles were now broken and a new day was finally here.

In the memory of this day, I believe we can find hope for all the trying days we have yet to face as a people and as a nation. And as we continue to overcome, we will continue to celebrate those victories as historical markers that give future generations the same hope we have today.

I commend Senator LEVIN for his longtime leadership on civil rights issues and urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the upcoming Juneteenth celebration that will occur this Sunday, June 19, 2005. This celebration

commemorates the end of slavery throughout the United States. Although the Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863, the information had not been passed to the most rural parts of the South until some two and a half years later when General Gordon Granger entered Galveston, TX on June 19, 1865, and issued the proclamation, officially freeing the town.

There are a number of theories to explain why it took so long for the message of freedom to reach many slaves throughout the South. While there is yet to be a definitive explanation for the delay, as we continue to recognize the importance of this date, we can be assured that scholars will continue to research this part of our Nation's history.

Annual Juneteenth celebrations have long been a part of our Nation's history. Although they were held in the years immediately following 1865, they were not popular in the Jim Crow-era South. In fact, they were banned from public property, and, in order to continue the celebrations, churches throughout the South held fundraisers to sponsor Juneteenth events. This was common until the Great Depression, when people could no longer afford the necessities of everyday life, let alone celebrations of our past. At the same time, in many public schools, teachers often focused discussion on the day of the Emancipation Proclamation, even though it had no immediate impact for slaves in many parts of the South. Thus, there was limited recognition of the importance of Juneteenth until the Texas legislature recognized it as an official holiday on January 1, 1980.

This weekend we recognize this important celebration. In so doing, we take time to reflect on the evil of slavery. This is a time to learn from the past and to redouble our efforts to ensure that the values of freedom and liberty in this country are afforded to all its citizens. Juneteenth is a day for reflection, for prayer and for hope that our country will continue to grow together in the spirit of liberty, equality and justice.

I am proud to honor the 140th commemoration of the African American emancipation day, Juneteenth, June 19, 1865.

"HEROES AMONG US" AWARD RECIPIENTS

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, all of us in New England are proud of the Boston Celtics. They led the Atlantic Division of the NBA this season, but they are also leaders in the community. Each year, the Celtics honor outstanding persons in New England as "Heroes Among Us"—men and women who have made an especially significant impact on the lives of others.

The award, now in its 8th year, recognizes men and women who stand tall in their commitment to their community. The extraordinary achievements of the

honorees this year include: saving lives, sacrificing for others, overcoming obstacles to achieve goals, and lifelong commitments to improving the lives of those around them. The winners include persons of all ages and all walks of life—students, community leaders, founders of nonprofit organizations, members of the clergy, and many others.

At home games during this season, the Celtics and their fans salute the efforts of an honoree in a special presentation on the basketball court. So far, over 300 individuals have received the "Heroes Among Us" award.

The award has become one of the most widely recognized honors in New England. I commend each of the honorees for the 2004-2005 season, and I ask unanimous consent that their names and communities be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD as follows:

Bill Annino, Scituate, RI
 Mattie Arkord, Brighton, MA
 Suzin Bartley, Milton, MA
 Boston MedFlight, Bedford, MA
 Andrea Casanova, Boston, MA
 Mike Cataruzolo, Watertown, MA
 Marisol Chalas, Lynn, MA
 Erika Ebbel, Cambridge, MA
 Jini Fairley, Dorchester, MA
 Judi Fanger, Needham, MA
 Autumn Faucher, Pelham, NH
 Students from Fenway High School, Boston, MA
 Sue Fitzsimmons, Wellesley, MA
 Officer Steven Fogg, Waltham, MA
 Lauren Fox, Brookline, MA
 Gladys Aquino Gaines, Andover, MA
 Sean Gavin, Brighton, MA
 The Giangrande Family, Andover, MA
 Manna Heshe, Brookline, MA
 Deborah Jackson, Milton, MA
 Hubie Jones, Newton, MA
 Kirk Joselin, Holliston, MA
 Paula Kane, Westborough, MA
 Rick De Muinck Keizer, Belmont, MA
 Dr. Punyamurtula Kishore, Chestnut Hill, MA
 Sotun Krouch, Lynn, MA
 Iwona and Emily Londono, Dorchester, MA
 George Mazareas, Nahant, MA
 Jake Mazza, Newton, MA
 Jane Melchionda, Reading, MA
 Kimo Murphy and David Dorriety, Hillsboro, NH
 Kyle Power, Methuen, MA
 Pat Pumphret, Winthrop, MA
 Jerry Quinn, Brighton, MA
 Margie Rabinovitch, Newton, MA
 Sergeant Steve Roche, Worcester, MA
 Freddie Rodrigues, Dorchester, MA
 Dick Rogers, Waltham, MA
 Jothy Rosenberg, Newton, MA
 The Sammis Family, Rehoboth, MA
 The Schoen Family, Weston, MA
 Peter Trovato, North Attleboro, MA
 Three members of the original Tuskegee Airmen: Jack Bryant, Cohasset, MA; James McLaurin, Weymouth, MA; Enoch Woodhouse, Boston, MA.
 Nancy Tyler Schoen, Franklin, MA
 Steven Vellucci, Jr., Tyngsboro, MA

NOMINATION OF THOMAS GRIFFITH

Mr. BIDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in