

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks in the RECORD on Senate Concurrent Resolution 15.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE NEGRO BASEBALL LEAGUES AND THEIR PLAYERS

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 162) recognizing the contributions of the Negro Baseball Leagues and their players, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 162

Whereas even though African Americans were excluded from playing in the major leagues of their time with their white counterparts, the desire of many African Americans to play baseball could not be repressed;

Whereas Major League Baseball did not fully integrate its leagues until July 1959;

Whereas African Americans began organizing their own professional baseball teams in 1885;

Whereas the skills and abilities of Negro League players eventually made Major League Baseball realize the need to integrate the sport;

Whereas six separate baseball leagues, known collectively as the "Negro Baseball Leagues", were organized by African Americans between 1920 and 1960;

Whereas the Negro Baseball Leagues included exceptionally talented players who played the game at its highest level;

Whereas on May 20, 1920, the Negro National League, the first successful Negro League, played its first game;

Whereas Andrew "Rube" Foster, on February 13, 1920, at the Paseo YMCA in Kansas City, Missouri, founded the Negro National League and also managed and played for the Chicago American Giants, and later was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Leroy "Satchel" Paige, who began his long career in the Negro Leagues and did not make his Major League debut until the age of 42, is considered one of the greatest pitchers the game has ever seen, and during his long career thrilled millions of baseball fans with his skill and legendary showboating, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Josh Gibson, who was the greatest slugger of the Negro Leagues, tragically died months before the integration of baseball, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Jackie Robinson, whose career began with the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League, became the first African American to play in the Major Leagues in April 1947, was named Major League Baseball Rookie of the Year in 1947, subsequently led the Brooklyn Dodgers to 6 National League pennants and a World Series championship, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas Larry Doby, whose career began with the Newark Eagles of the Negro Na-

tional League, became the first African American to play in the American League in July 1947, was an All-Star 9 times in the Negro Leagues and Major League Baseball, and was later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame;

Whereas John Jordan "Buck" O'Neil was a player and manager of the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League, became the first African American coach in the Major Leagues with the Chicago Cubs in 1962, served on the Veterans Committee of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, chaired the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum Board of Directors, and worked tirelessly to promote the history of the Negro Leagues;

Whereas the talents of such players as James Thomas "Cool Papa" Bell and Oscar Charleston earned them recognition in the Baseball Hall of Fame as well as the Sporting News List of Baseball's Greatest Players, but were all denied admission to the Major Leagues due to the color of their skin;

Whereas Minnie Miñoso played in the Negro Leagues for several years before being allowed to play in the Major League and was denied admission to the Hall of Fame, because during his prime years, he was a victim of racial discrimination;

Whereas Autozone Park in Memphis, Tennessee, has been designated to host on March 31, 2007, the inaugural Civil Rights Game between World Series champions, the St. Louis Cardinals and the Cleveland Indians in commemoration of the Civil Rights Movement; and

Whereas by achieving success on the baseball field, African American baseball players helped break down color barriers and integrate African Americans into all aspects of society in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the teams and players of the Negro Baseball Leagues for their achievements, dedication, sacrifices, and contributions to both baseball and our Nation; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation recognizing "Negro Leaguers Recognition Day".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, in 1872, Bud Fowler became the first African American to enter organized baseball. At the time, *Sporting Life* magazine called him "one of the best general players in the country. If he had had a white face," they said, "he would be playing with the best of them." There were only a handful of black players during that time.

By the end of the 1800s, the door to organized baseball was slammed shut to African Americans, and as a result, in 1920, Andrew "Rube" Foster managed a Negro baseball team and organized seven other team owners to join

him to form the Negro National Baseball League. Mr. Foster is known by many people to be the father of the Negro Baseball League.

For his efforts and contributions to baseball, he was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York. Since 1920, many teams were formed to expand the Negro Baseball Leagues. He produced many extraordinary players like Satchel Paige, "Cool Papa" Bell, "Double-Duty" Radcliffe, "Groundhog" Thompson and many others.

Presently, there are 278 members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame, 18 whom had played in the Negro League. These greats include Willie Mays and Jackie Robinson, who first played in the Negro Leagues and then entered Major League Baseball.

Indeed, the players in the Negro Leagues were of such high caliber that many of them later moved to other major leagues and enjoyed better statistics playing there than they did in the Negro Leagues.

The opening of the doors of the major leagues to Negro League players often is attributed to Branch Rickey, who made a bold decision to sign Jackie Robinson to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Unfortunately, many owners of Negro baseball teams could not compete in the recruitment and financial compensation for African American players, which later caused many African American teams to fold in the early 1960s.

Some people shake their heads and say that the Negro Leagues' players came along too early. I think "Cool Papa" Bell had it right when he said "they opened the door, just too late."

But then it is never too late to right what has been a wrong, to create equal opportunity and to open the doors for the Luke Easters, the Minnie Minosos, the Kirby Picketts, the Barry Bonds, the Frank Thomases, and countless others who have thrilled and delighted us with their skills.

The achievement and success of African American baseball players on the baseball field have helped break down color barriers and integrate African Americans into all aspects of society.

□ 1515

This bill recognizes the teams and the players of the Negro Baseball Leagues for their achievements, their sacrifices, their dedication, and their contributions to baseball and the Nation. I commend the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for introducing the bill, and I urge its swift passage.

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

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Res. 162, which honors the Negro Baseball League.

Those of us who love baseball relish the comparisons between players of different eras that our rich statistical records permit. Nobody who witnessed