

110TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3432

To establish the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission of the
Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 3, 2007

Mr. PAYNE (for himself, Mr. JEFFERSON, Ms. LEE, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Ms. CLARKE, Mr. RUSH, Mr. CONYERS, and Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To establish the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “200th Anniversary
5 Commemoration Commission of the Abolition of the
6 Transatlantic Slave Trade Act of 2007”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) On March 3, 1807, President Thomas Jef-
2 ferson signed into law a bill approved by Congress
3 “An Act to prohibit the importation of slaves into
4 any port or place within the jurisdiction of the
5 United States” and made it unlawful “to import or
6 bring into the United Sates or territories thereof
7 from any foreign kingdom, place or country, any
8 negro, mulatto, or person of colour, with intent to
9 hold, sell, or dispose of such ... as a slave, or to be
10 held to service or labour”.

11 (2) Article I, Section 9 of the United States
12 Constitution clearly spelled out that the inter-
13 national slave trade could not be banned before
14 1808, and it is only on January 1, 1808, that the
15 American Act went into effect.

16 (3) An Act entitled “An Act to continue in
17 force ‘An act to protect the commerce of the United
18 States, and punish the crime of piracy,’ and also to
19 make further provisions for punishing the crime of
20 piracy”, enacted May 15, 1820, made it unlawful for
21 any citizen of the United States to engage “in the
22 slave trade, or ... , being of the crew or ship’s com-
23 pany of any ship ... , seize any negro or mulatto ...
24 with the intent to make ... a slave ... or forcibly
25 bring ... on board any such ship”.

1 (4) The transatlantic slave trade was the cap-
2 ture and procurement of Africans, mostly from West
3 Africa, in order to bring them to the United States
4 and the colonies that became the United States, for
5 the purpose of enslavement between the sixteenth
6 and late nineteenth centuries.

7 (5) The Middle Passage was the forced migra-
8 tion through overseas transport of millions of Afri-
9 cans to the Americas, many of whom suffered abuses
10 of rape and perished as a result of torture, malnutri-
11 tion, disease, and resistance in transit, with those
12 who survived sold into slavery.

13 (6) During the transatlantic slave trade more
14 than 12,000,000 Africans were transported in bond-
15 age from their African homelands to the Americas.

16 (7) The thirteenth amendment to the Constitu-
17 tion of the United States recognizes that “Neither
18 slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a pun-
19 ishment for crime whereof the party shall have been
20 duly convicted, shall exist within the United States,
21 or any place subject to their jurisdiction.”.

22 (8) The slave trade and the legacy of slavery
23 continue to have a profound impact on social and
24 economic disparity, hatred, bias, racism, and dis-

1 crimination, and continue to affect people of African
2 descent today.

3 (9) In 2007, the British Parliament marked the
4 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade
5 in the former British Empire with plans launched by
6 the Department for Education and Skills which pro-
7 vided joint funding of £910,000 (\$1,800,000) for
8 the understanding slavery initiative, and the Herit-
9 age Lottery Fund announced awards of over
10 £20,000,000 (\$40,000,000) for projects to com-
11 memorate the anniversary.

12 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to estab-
13 lish the 200th Anniversary Commemoration Commission
14 of the Abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to—

15 (1) ensure a suitable national observance of the
16 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-
17 atlantic slave trade by sponsoring and supporting
18 commemorative programs;

19 (2) cooperate with and assist the programs and
20 activities throughout the United States in observ-
21 ance of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the
22 transatlantic slave trade;

23 (3) assist in ensuring that the observations of
24 the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-
25 atlantic slave trade are inclusive and appropriately

1 recognize the experiences of all people during this
2 period in history; and

3 (4) support and facilitate international involve-
4 ment in observances of the 200th anniversary of the
5 abolition of the transatlantic slave trade act.

6 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.**

7 There is established a commission to be known as the
8 “Transatlantic Slave Trade 200th Anniversary Commis-
9 sion” (referred to in this Act as the “Commission”).

10 **SEC. 4. THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE 200TH ANNI-
11 VERSARY COMMISSION.**

12 (a) MEMBERSHIP.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall be
14 composed of 9 members, of whom—

15 (A) 4 shall be appointed by the Speaker of
16 the House of Representatives;

17 (B) 3 shall be appointed by the majority
18 leader of the Senate;

19 (C) 1 shall be appointed by the minority
20 leader of the House of Representatives; and

21 (D) 1 shall be appointed by the minority
22 leader of the Senate.

23 (2) QUALIFICATIONS.—Members of the Com-
24 mission shall be individuals with demonstrated ex-
25 pertise or experience in the study and program fa-

1 cilitation on the transatlantic slave trade and the in-
2 stitution of slavery as it relates to the United States,
3 or both.

4 (3) TERM; VACANCIES.—

5 (A) TERM.—A member of the Commission
6 shall be appointed for the life of the Commis-
7 sion.

8 (B) VACANCIES.—

9 (i) IN GENERAL.—A vacancy on the
10 Commission shall be filled in the same
11 manner in which the original appointment
12 was made.

13 (ii) PARTIAL TERM.—A member ap-
14 pointed to fill a vacancy on the Commis-
15 sion shall serve for the remainder of the
16 term for which the predecessor of the
17 member was appointed.

18 (4) MEETINGS.—

19 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall
20 meet—

21 (i) as many times as necessary; or

22 (ii) at the call of the Chairperson or
23 the majority of the members of the Com-
24 mission.

1 (B) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 30
2 days after the date on which all members of the
3 Commission have been appointed, the Commis-
4 sion shall hold its initial meeting.

5 (C) APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON AND
6 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—Not later than 60 days
7 after the date on which all members of the
8 Commission have been appointed, the Commis-
9 sion shall—

10 (i) designate 1 of the members as
11 Chairperson; and

12 (ii) select an executive director as de-
13 scribed under subsection (d)(2).

14 (5) VOTING.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall
16 act only on an affirmative vote of a majority of
17 the members of the Commission.

18 (B) QUORUM.—A majority of the members
19 of the Commission shall constitute a quorum
20 for conducting business but fewer members may
21 meet or hold hearings.

22 (b) DUTIES.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall—

24 (A) plan, develop, and execute programs
25 and activities appropriate to commemorate the

1 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-
2 atlantic slave trade;

3 (B) facilitate commemoration-related ac-
4 tivities throughout the United States;

5 (C) encourage civic, historical, educational,
6 religious, economic, and other organizations, as
7 well as State and local governments, throughout
8 the United States to organize and participate in
9 anniversary activities to expand the under-
10 standing and appreciation of the significance of
11 the transatlantic slave trade and the institution
12 of slavery particularly as it relates to the
13 United States, or both;

14 (D) coordinate and facilitate for the public
15 scholarly research on, publication about, and in-
16 terpretation of, the transatlantic slave trade
17 and the institution of slavery particularly as it
18 relates to the United States, or both;

19 (E) assist in the development of appro-
20 priate programs and facilities to ensure that the
21 200th anniversary of the abolition of the trans-
22 atlantic slave trade provides a lasting legacy
23 and long-term public benefit;

24 (F) support and facilitate marketing ef-
25 forts for the issuance of a commemorative coin,

1 postage stamp, and related activities for observ-
2 ances;

3 (G) facilitate the convening of a joint
4 meeting or joint session of the Congress for
5 ceremonies and activities relating to the trans-
6 atlantic slave trade and the institution of slav-
7 ery particularly as it relates to the United
8 States, or both;

9 (H) promote the sponsorship of con-
10 ferences, exhibitions, or public meetings con-
11 cerning the transatlantic slave trade and the in-
12 stitution of slavery particularly as it relates to
13 the United States, or both;

14 (I) coordinate and facilitate the sponsor-
15 ship of high school and collegiate essay contests
16 concerning the transatlantic slave trade and the
17 institution of slavery particularly as it relates to
18 the United States, or both;

19 (J) examine reports of modern-day slavery
20 and human trafficking to raise the public's
21 awareness of these matters and ensure such
22 atrocities do not go unnoticed by the people of
23 the United States.

24 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 11 months after
25 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commis-

1 sion shall submit to the Congress a report con-
2 taining a summary of the activities of the Commis-
3 sion.

4 (c) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.—The Commission
5 may—

6 (1) recommend to the Congress the activities
7 that the Commission considers most fitting and
8 proper to commemorate the anniversary of the aboli-
9 tion of the transatlantic slave trade and the entity
10 in the Federal Government that the Commission
11 considers most appropriate to carry out such activi-
12 ties;

13 (2) accept donations and gifts, and make dis-
14 persions of money, personal services, and real and
15 personal property related to the transatlantic slave
16 trade, the institution of slavery, and the significance
17 of slavery to the history of the United States;

18 (3) appoint such advisory committees as the
19 Commission determines necessary to carry out this
20 Act;

21 (4) authorize any member or employee of the
22 Commission to take any action that the Commission
23 is authorized to take under this Act;

24 (5) procure supplies, services, and property, and
25 make or enter into contracts, leases, or other legal

1 agreements, to carry out this Act (except that any
2 contracts, leases, or other legal agreements made or
3 entered into by the Commission shall not extend be-
4 yond the date of the termination of the Commis-
5 sion); and

6 (6) use the United States mails in the same
7 manner and under the same conditions as other
8 Federal agencies;

9 (d) PERSONNEL MATTERS.—

10 (1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COM-
11 MISSION.—

12 (A) BASIC PAY.—Members of the Commis-
13 sion shall not receive compensation for the per-
14 formance of their duties on behalf of the Com-
15 mission.

16 (B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—A member of the
17 Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, in-
18 cluding per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates
19 authorized for an employee of an agency under
20 subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United
21 States Code, while away from their homes or
22 regular place of business in the performance of
23 the duties on behalf of the Commission.

24 (2) STAFF.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the
2 Commission may, without regard to the civil
3 service laws (including regulations), appoint
4 and terminate an executive director and such
5 other additional personnel as are necessary to
6 enable the Commission to perform its duties.

7 (B) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—

8 (i) QUALIFICATIONS.—The Chair-
9 person shall appoint an executive director
10 with demonstrated expertise or experience
11 in the study and program facilitation on
12 the transatlantic slave trade and the insti-
13 tution of slavery particularly as it relates
14 to the United States, or both.

15 (ii) CONFIRMATION.—The employ-
16 ment of an executive director shall be sub-
17 ject to confirmation by the members of the
18 Commission.

19 (C) COMPENSATION.—The Chairperson of
20 the Commission may fix the compensation of
21 the executive director and other personnel with-
22 out regard to the provision of chapter 51 and
23 subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United
24 States Code, relating to classification of posi-
25 tions and General Schedule pay rates, except

1 that the rate of pay for the executive director
2 and other personnel may not exceed the rate
3 payable for level V of the Executive Schedule
4 under section 5316 of such title.

5 (D) VOLUNTEER AND UNCOMPENSATED
6 SERVICES.—Notwithstanding section 1342 of
7 title 31, United States Code, the Commission
8 may accept and use voluntary and uncompen-
9 sated services as the Commission determines
10 necessary.

11 (e) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMIT-
12 TENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Commission
13 may procure temporary and intermittent services in ac-
14 cordance with section 3109(b) of title 5, United States
15 Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily
16 equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for
17 level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of
18 that title.

19 (f) NON-APPLICABILITY OF FACA.—Section 14(b) of
20 the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall
21 not apply to the Commission.

22 **SEC. 5. TERMINATION.**

23 (a) DATE OF TERMINATION.—The Commission shall
24 terminate on December 31, 2009.

1 (b) FINAL REPORT.—Upon termination, the Com-
2 mission shall submit to the Congress a report con-
3 taining—

4 (1) a detailed statement of the activities of the
5 Commission; and

6 (2) a final accounting of the funds received and
7 expended by the Commission.

8 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

9 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
10 as may be necessary to carry out this Act

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