

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1254

Supporting the values and goals of the “Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality”, signed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos on March 13, 2008.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 9, 2008

Mr. ENGEL (for himself, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. KUHL of New York, Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania, Mr. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. LEWIS of Georgia, Mr. SIRES, Mr. HONDA, Mr. DELAHUNT, Mr. CROWLEY, and Mr. JEFFERSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Supporting the values and goals of the “Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality”, signed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos on March 13, 2008.

Whereas the United States and Brazil have many qualities in common, such as the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of their populations and each country’s efforts to protect de-

mocracy and the civil rights and liberties of all their citizens;

Whereas the United States and Brazil share common histories of slavery and colonialism, a diverse cultural demographic of European, African, Asian, and indigenous peoples, and strong values of democracy;

Whereas these commonalities result in an extraordinary ability to jointly seek solutions to distinct issues that affect both countries, such as racial discrimination and inequality;

Whereas in comparison to the general population, minority groups in the United States and Brazil are more at risk for discrimination in the areas of employment, education, law enforcement, and access to justice and basic services, including health care, housing, and lending;

Whereas African-Americans, Afro-Brazilians, and indigenous people in the United States and Brazil have been disadvantaged due to a history of racial inequality and discrimination in each country;

Whereas due to social disparities that exist as a result of racial discrimination in the United States and Brazil, there is a continuing need to combat racial discrimination and promote equality throughout both societies;

Whereas in recognition of the need to address racial and ethnic discrimination and promote equality in both countries, the Department of State, Brazil's Ministry of Exterior Relations, and the Special Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality began formal talks in October 2007 to negotiate areas of bilateral cooperation on combating discrimination and creating opportunities for ethnic minorities in the United States and Brazil;

Whereas, on March 13, 2008, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration Edson Santos signed the “Joint Action Plan Between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the United States of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimination and Promote Equality”, also known as the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination;

Whereas the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination creates the Steering Group to Promote Equality of Opportunity, which will consist of a panel of government officials from both the United States and Brazil and facilitate the exchange of information on the best practices for antidiscrimination measures and development of ideas on how to bilaterally promote racial equality;

Whereas United States agencies and civil society members can share experiences in training educators, employers, workers, administrators of justice, such as police officers, judges, and prosecutors, and other members of society, on tolerance, equality, and antidiscrimination methods aimed at eliminating discrimination in education, housing, employment, law enforcement, and all other areas of society;

Whereas an Advisory Board, consisting of private sector representatives, government officials, civil society members, and experts on race relations and other relevant topics, will collaborate with Steering Group members at the periodic meetings of the Steering Group, to be held alternatively in Brazil and the United States;

Whereas the Inaugural Meeting of the Steering Group to Promote Equality of Opportunity will take place in July 2008 in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil;

Whereas the Government of Brazil and the Government of the United States each will determine their country's delegate members for the United States-Brazil Steering Group;

Whereas currently, United States Government participation in initiatives of the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination is supported by existing discretionary funds within the Department of State and other participating agencies;

Whereas the elimination of ethnic and racial discrimination in the United States and Brazil is an ongoing process that requires the long-term dedication of both countries;

Whereas additional resources may be needed to support future initiatives under the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination to address discrimination and promote racial and ethnic equality in the long term;

Whereas the specific areas of cooperation that the United States-Brazil Joint Action Plan Against Racial Discrimination plans to address include education, communications and culture, labor and employment, housing and public accommodation, equal protection under the law and access to legal systems, domestic enforcement of antidiscrimination laws and policies, sports and recreation, health issues prevalent among minorities, access to credit and technical training, and social, historical, and cultural factors that contribute to racial and ethnic prejudices;

Whereas the Governments of the United States and Brazil value the importance of promoting tolerance and equality by emphasizing education and promoting equal opportunities, democracy, and prosperity in both countries;

Whereas the Steering Group on Equality of Opportunity will make combating discrimination and the promotion of equality in education a main priority on primary, secondary, vocational, undergraduate, and graduate levels;

Whereas particular programs and initiatives to be considered by the Steering Group include, but are not limited to, training programs, strengthening democratic institutions, public-private partnerships with businesses and non-governmental organizations, workshops and seminars, exchanges of technical experts, scholarships and fellowships, cooperation with international organizations and civil society, and programs in third countries;

Whereas the promotion of cultural exchanges between minority groups in the two countries will create opportunities for the exchange of perspectives and experiences in race relations in both countries, as well as academic opportunities to study abroad and learn foreign languages; and

Whereas the struggle to eliminate racial discrimination is an ongoing process and requires the commitments of both countries in order to achieve equal opportunity societies for every citizen in the United States and Brazil: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) recognizes the need to promote equality and
3 continue to work towards eliminating racial discrimi-
4 nation in both the United States and Brazil;

1 (2) commends Secretary of State Condoleezza
2 Rice and Brazilian Minister of Racial Integration
3 Edson Santos for signing the “Joint Action Plan
4 Between the Government of the Federative Republic
5 of Brazil and the Government of the United States
6 of America to Eliminate Racial and Ethnic Discrimi-
7 nation and Promote Equality”;

8 (3) supports the continued involvement of the
9 Government of the United States in the bilateral
10 partnership of the United States-Brazil Joint Action
11 Plan Against Racial Discrimination through funding
12 that may be designated for programs as part of this
13 initiative;

14 (4) encourages the participation of the Depart-
15 ments of State, Labor, Justice, and Education; the
16 Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; Con-
17 gress; Federal, State, and local court systems; and
18 other agencies in the collaborative process of the
19 United States-Brazil Steering Group on Equality of
20 Opportunity; and

21 (5) urges the involvement of the private sector,
22 civil society, and experts on race relations and other
23 relevant topics to be considered as part of the Steer-
24 ing Group Advisory Board.

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