

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 53

Authorizing a plaque commemorating the role of enslaved African-Americans in the construction of the Capitol.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 24, 2009

Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CHAMBLISS, and Mr. BENNETT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration

RESOLUTION

Authorizing a plaque commemorating the role of enslaved African-Americans in the construction of the Capitol.

Whereas enslaved African-Americans provided labor essential to the construction of the Capitol;

Whereas enslaved African-Americans performed the back-breaking work of quarrying the stone which comprised many of the floors, walls, and columns of the Capitol;

Whereas enslaved African-Americans toiled in the Aquia Creek sandstone quarry in Stafford County, Virginia and in a marble quarry in Montgomery County, Maryland to produce the stone that would be used in the Capitol;

Whereas the marble columns in the Old Senate Chamber and the sandstone walls of the East Front corridor remain as

the lasting legacies of the enslaved African-Americans who worked the quarries;

Whereas enslaved African-Americans also participated in other facets of construction of the Capitol, including carpentry, masonry, carting, rafting, roofing, plastering, glazing, painting, and sawing;

Whereas enslaved African-Americans labored on the Nation's Capitol while they, themselves, were not free;

Whereas the contributions of enslaved African-Americans in the construction of the Capitol have not been acknowledged nor adequately represented in the Capitol;

Whereas no narrative on the construction of the Capitol that does not include the contributions of enslaved African-Americans can fully and accurately reflect the history of the Capitol; and

Whereas recognition of the contributions of enslaved African-Americans brings to all people of the United States an understanding of the continuing evolution of democracy: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate authorizes and directs—

2 (1) the Senate Commission on Art to procure
3 an appropriate plaque acknowledging the role of
4 enslaved African-Americans in the construction of
5 the Capitol; and

6 (2) that, under the direction of the Committee
7 on Rules and Administration of the Senate, the
8 plaque shall be placed near the original exterior wall
9 that was constructed between 1793 and 1800 in the

- 1 East Front corridor on the third floor of the Senate
- 2 wing of the Capitol.

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