

THE U.S. RECOMMITMENT TO INTERNATIONAL HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS RESOLUTION

On May 1, 2008, Rep. John Lewis (D-GA) introduced a resolution calling on the United States to ratify and implement fundamental international conventions.

PURPOSE

This legislation calls on the Senate to fight discrimination, xenophobia, slavery, torture, racism, human and civil rights abuses in domestic and foreign policy.

BACKGROUND

The United States played an historic key role in building a global society. The headquarters of the United Nations is located in New York City; the headquarters of the Organization of the United States is in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Bill of Rights was referenced for the guiding principles of the Universal Declaration of Human rights. Even the name of the United Nations was brainstormed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942.

Unfortunately, there seven key United Nations conventions and six International Labor Organization conventions that the United States has not ratified. These are agreements that the majority of the rest of the world have already adopted. Many of these standards are the cornerstones of our own domestic law.

WHY MAY 1ST

May 1, 2008 is the 201st anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. On this historic day, it is important to reiterate our commitment to combat slavery, torture, racism, discrimination, and xenophobia in all forms.

The Slave Act which abolished the slave trade in the British Empire was the first step of a long effort to expand human and civil rights in the New World. This launched a nearly century-long process to abolish slavery in the Americas. It took another 25 years in the British Colonies, another 58 years in the United States, and another 80 years in Brazil, the last country in the hemisphere, to end slavery. The fight continues to this day to heal the scars in our hemisphere and expand basic human rights to all people.

BILL COSPONSORS (39)

Reps. Towns, Meek (FL), Maloney, Hinchey, Lee, Jackson-Lee, Ellison, Honda, Christensen, Rangel, Sutton, Payne, Cohen, Jackson, Conyers, Bordallo, Kucinich, Jefferson, Michaud, Kilpatrick, Butterfield, A. Davis, Wynn, A. Hastings, Fattah, Watson, Grijalva, D. Davis, B. Miller, McGovern, Frank, Gutierrez, Rush, Baca, Clyburn, Lofgren, Schakowsky, Watt, H. Johnson

WHO SUPPORTS THIS EFFORT?

The Better World Campaign, Free the Slaves, AFL-CIO, Change to Win, Human Rights Watch, the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, the Friends Committee on National Legislation,

the Washington Office on Latin America, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence,
Citizens for Global Solutions, Human Rights First, Amnesty International USA