



H.Con.Res. 435 – Authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall on December 2, 2008, for ceremonies and activities held in connection with the opening of the Capitol Visitor Center to the public

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Con.Res. 435 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Robert Brady (D-PA) on September 26, 2008. The resolution was referred to the Committee on House Administration, but was never considered.

H.Con.Res. 435 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on October 2, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Con.Res. 435 resolves that Congress authorizes the use of Emancipation Hall on December 2, 2008, for ceremonies and activities held in connection with the opening of the Capitol Visitor Center to the public.

BACKGROUND

The Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) was first envisioned in the mid 1970's when the Architect of the Capitol issued the report, "Toward a Master Plan for the United States Capitol." In 1991, Congress authorized funding for conceptual planning and design of a visitor center. In 1995, the design report was issued. Several changes were made to the initial plan after the murder of two Capitol Police Officers in 1998 and even further changes were made after the tragic events of September 11, 2001.

Ground was broken for the construction of the CVC on June 20, 2000, by the members of the Capitol Preservation Commission (CPC) and major construction began in July 2002. The project is slated to be completed in the fall of 2008.

The CVC will contain 580,000 square feet on three levels and is approximately three-quarters the size of the Capitol itself (775,000 sq. ft.). The project will include space for exhibits, food service, two orientation theaters, an auditorium, gift shops, security, a service tunnel for truck loading and deliveries, mechanical facilities, storage, and additional space for the House and Senate.

Representative Zach Wamp (R-TN) introduced legislation (H.R. 3315) naming the main hall of the CVC, Emancipation Hall. According to Representative Wamp, "Many people do not know that slave labor built the CapitolBy naming this space Emancipation Hall we will finally honor those who have gone unrecognized for far too long." ([Press Release, 6/25/07](#)) H.R. 3315 was signed into law on December 18, 2007.

The CVC is expected to be dedicated on December 2, 2008.

STAFF CONTACT

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