

RONALD H. BROWN UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE
UNITED NATIONS BUILDING

MARCH 10, 2009.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed

Mr. OBERSTAR, from the Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 837]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 837) to designate the Federal building located at 799 United Nations Plaza in New York, New York, as the “Ronald H. Brown United States Mission to the United Nations Building”, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

H.R. 837 designates the Federal building at 799 United Nations Plaza in New York, New York, as the “Ronald H. Brown United States Mission to the United Nations Building”.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Ronald Harmon Brown was born on August 1, 1941. His early school days were spent at Hunter College Elementary School, a public school on Manhattan’s East Side. He subsequently attended high school at White Plains High School and the Rhodes School in Manhattan. In 1962, Brown graduated from Middlebury College in Vermont. After college, he served in the Army from 1962 to 1967, commanding several units in the United States, Germany, and South Korea. Brown was discharged from the Army in 1967. After serving in the Army, he attended St. John’s Law School and began working as a job developer and trainee adviser for the National Urban League. By 1976, Brown served as the National Urban League’s Deputy Executive Director for programs and governmental affairs.

He left the National Urban League in 1979 to work for Senator Edward M. Kennedy, who sought the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. In 1981, Brown began a career as a lawyer and lobbyist. In 1988, he was elected Chairman of the Democratic National Committee. From 1989 to 1992, he served as Chairman and used his skills as a negotiator and pragmatic bridge builder to help reunite the Democratic Party after its defeat in the 1988 presidential election.

In 1993, President William J. Clinton appointed Ronald H. Brown as Secretary of Commerce. During his tenure, Secretary Brown effectively utilized and expanded the role of the U.S. Department of Commerce. Secretary Brown was known for his amiable political style and his deft skill in negotiations and, as Secretary, he used these qualities effectively to promote U.S. trade, expand foreign markets for American businesses, and spur domestic job growth and economic development.

Tragically, on April 3, 1996, while on an official Department of Commerce trade mission, Secretary Brown and 34 others were killed in an airplane crash in Croatia. The Department of State had requested that Secretary Brown personally undertake the trade mission to highlight and find opportunities for U.S. businesses to boost economic reconstruction of the war torn region of former Yugoslavia. The trip itinerary included stops in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia; visiting American troops in Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina; and Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. The trade mission was on its way to Dubrovnik, Croatia, when the plane crashed on the coast of the Adriatic Sea.

Throughout his life, Secretary Brown broke many barriers. He was the first African-American to serve as Secretary of Commerce and the first African-American Chairman of a national political party.

Congress has previously designated Federal buildings that serve as Department of State facilities on four separate occasions. In 2000, Congress designated the Department of State headquarters as the "Harry S. Truman Federal Building". P.L. 106-218. In 2004, Congress designated the Foreign Service Institute as the "George P. Schultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center". P.L. 108-136. In 2005, Congress designated the United States Embassy Annex in Rome, Italy, as the "Mel Sembler Building". P.L. 108-447. In 2005, Congress also designated the Federal building in Kingston, Jamaica, as the "Colin L. Powell Residential Plaza" P.L. 109-89.

Secretary Brown died in service to his country on a mission undertaken at the request of the Department of State. It is fitting and proper to honor Secretary Brown's extraordinary service to his country by designating the Federal building being constructed at 799 First Avenue in New York, New York, as the "Ronald H. Brown United States Mission to the United Nations Building".

SUMMARY OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Designation

Section 1 designates that the Federal building at 799 First Avenue in New York, New York, shall be known and designated as the

“Ronald H. Brown United States Mission to the United Nations Building”.

Section 2. References

Section 2 declares any reference in law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the Federal building referred to in Section 1 shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Ronald H. Brown United States Mission to the United Nations Building”.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

Representative Rangel first introduced this bill (H.R. 1702) in the 108th Congress. On October 1, 2003, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure ordered the bill reported favorably to the House by voice vote (H. Rpt. 108–315). No further action was taken on the bill.

In the 109th Congress, Representative Rangel reintroduced the bill (H.R. 1434). No further action was taken on the bill.

In the 110th Congress, Representative Rangel introduced H.R. 735 on January 30, 2007. On March 1, 2007, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure met in open session, and ordered the bill reported favorably to the House by voice vote with a quorum present. On July 11, 2007, the Committee reported the bill to the House. H. Rept. 110–386. On July 30, 2007, the House passed H.R. 735 by voice vote. No further action was taken on the bill.

In the 111th Congress, Representative Rangel introduced H.R. 837 on February 3, 2009. On February 12, 2009, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure met in open session, and ordered the bill reported favorably to the House by voice vote with a quorum present.

RECORD VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the House of Representatives requires each committee report to include the total number of votes cast for and against on each record vote on a motion to report and on any amendment offered to the measure or matter, and the names of those members voting for and against. There were no recorded votes taken in connection with consideration of H.R. 837 or ordering the bill reported. A motion to order H.R. 837 reported favorably to the House was agreed to by voice vote with a quorum present.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee’s oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in this report.

COST OF LEGISLATION

Clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives does not apply where a cost estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 has been timely submitted prior to the filing of the report and is included in the report. Such a cost estimate is included in this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, and 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee references the report of the Congressional Budget Office included in the report.

2. With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the performance goals and objective of this legislation are to designate the Federal building being constructed at 799 First Avenue in New York, New York, as the “Ronald H. Brown United States Mission to the United Nations Building”.

3. With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 837 from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, February 17, 2009.

Hon. JAMES L. OBERSTAR,
*Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has reviewed the following legislation as ordered reported by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on February 12, 2009:

- H.R. 887, a bill to designate the United States courthouse located at 131 East 4th Street in Davenport, Iowa, as the “James A. Leach United States Courthouse”;
- H.R. 869, a bill to designate the federal building and United States courthouse located at 101 Barr Street in Lexington, Kentucky, as the “Scott Reed Federal Building and United States Courthouse”;
- H.R. 842, a bill to designate the United States courthouse to be constructed in Jackson, Mississippi, as the “R. Jess Brown United States Courthouse”;
- H.R. 837, a bill to designate the federal building located at 799 United Nations Plaza in New York, New York, as the “Ronald H. Brown United States Mission to the United Nations Building”; and
- H.R. 813, a bill to designate the federal building and United States courthouse located at 306 East Main Street in Elizabeth City, North Carolina, as the “J. Herbert W. Small Federal Building and United States Courthouse.”

CBO estimates that enacting those pieces of legislation would have no significant impact on the federal budget and would not affect direct spending or revenues. The bills contain no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Matthew Pickford.

Sincerely,

DOUGLAS W. ELMENDORF,
Director.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XXI

Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, H.R. 837 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(d), 9(e), or 9(f) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause (3)(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, committee reports on a bill or joint resolution of a public character shall include a statement citing the specific powers granted to the Congress in the Constitution to enact the measure. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure finds that Congress has the authority to enact this measure pursuant to its powers granted under article I, section 8 of the Constitution.

FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of Federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (Public Law 104–4).

PREEMPTION CLARIFICATION

Section 423 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 requires the report of any Committee on a bill or joint resolution to include a statement on the extent to which the bill or joint resolution is intended to preempt state, local, or tribal law. The Committee states that H.R. 837 does not preempt any state, local, or tribal law.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act are created by this legislation.

APPLICABILITY TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act (Public Law 104–1).

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

H.R. 837 makes no changes in existing law.