

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet on Thursday, June 19, at 9:30 a.m. in room 562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a business meeting to consider pending legislative issues, to be followed immediately by a hearing to receive comments on a discussion draft bill to address law and order in Indian Country.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at 224-2251.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 17, 2008, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 17, 2008 at 10:30 a.m. in room 192 of the Dirksen Senate office building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing on Tuesday, June 17, 2008, at 10 a.m., in room SD366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing on Tuesday, June 17, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 17, 2008, at 10 a.m., in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on

Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 17, 2008, at 2:15 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, June 17, 2008, at 4:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that three law clerks from my Judiciary Committee staff, Erin Mallard, Matt Welling, and Arif Panju, be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of this session.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JUNETEENTH INDEPENDENCE DAY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 584 and that the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 584) recognizing the historical significance of Juneteenth Independence Day and expressing the sense of the Senate that history should be regarded as a means for understanding the past and solving the challenges of the future.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this week we commemorate the 143rd anniversary of Juneteenth, the day our Nation's moral pendulum swung from slavery to freedom.

On June 19, 1865, our Nation turned a significant corner. We ushered in what President Lincoln called in his Gettysburg address a "new birth of freedom." We ended an oppression endured by generations of Americans and threw off the chains that shackled our common bond of freedom. We laid the roots for a constitutional revolution that, through the Civil War Amendments, transformed our founding charter from one that defended oppression, to one that embraced equal rights and human dignity.

Over a century later we have made significant progress, but the struggle to secure basic rights for all remains unfulfilled. Just a few months ago, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination found that racial disparities continue to challenge our commitment to equality. I was not surprised to see that the U.N. report rebuked this administration's poor civil rights record.

After 9/11, the Bush administration eroded many of the most precious rights and liberties held by all Americans. Just last week, the Supreme Court in the Boumediene opinion, beat back one of these most egregious attempts, restoring the Great Writ of habeas corpus to its rightful place as a mechanism to guarantee liberty from arbitrary confinement. But this administration has also played politics with critical voting laws, and failed to protect our most vulnerable citizens. The Bush administration's poor civil rights record has damaged America's prestige around the world, and undermined our tradition of progress on civil rights.

Vermont is a State that holds a unique place in America's march toward equal justice. It was the first to outlaw slavery. Vermonters offered shelter to runaway slaves seeking refuge while in transit to Canada. Indeed, in just the tiny town of Brandon, 17 homes were stations on the Underground Railroad. I am proud that this month Vermont joined the States recognizing Juneteenth as a State holiday. It is important for our children and grandchildren to know our history, and to know that ordinary people can make a difference.

As we reflect on the sacrifices of past generations, their example should inspire us all in our present day struggle to secure human and civil rights. We must reaffirm our faith in our cherished freedoms and restore our commitment to protect basic rights. I hope all Americans will celebrate Juneteenth by working towards building the more perfect union we want for generations to come.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements related to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 584) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 584

Whereas news of the end of slavery did not reach frontier areas of the United States, and in particular the Southwestern States, for more than 2 years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, and months after the conclusion of the Civil War;

Whereas, on June 19, 1865, Union soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas, with news that the Civil War had ended and that the enslaved were free;

Whereas African-Americans who had been slaves in the Southwest celebrated June 19, commonly known as "Juneteenth Independence Day", as the anniversary of their emancipation;

Whereas African-Americans from the Southwest continue the tradition of celebrating Juneteenth Independence Day as inspiration and encouragement for future generations;