

CT Delegation Honors Freedom Schooner Amistad's 14-month 2007 Atlantic Freedom Tour

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Marks 200th Anniversary of the Elimination of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Washington, D.C. The entire Connecticut delegation introduced a resolution to applaud the Freedom Schooner Amistad's 14-month 2007 Atlantic Freedom Tour, which will recognize the critical role the Amistad played in ending the transatlantic slave trade. This journey will preserve the ship's legacy and in doing so will help promote multi-cultural dialogue, education, and cooperation.

As the freedom Schooner Amistad sets sail on a 14-month journey, its voyage serves as an opportunity to remind us of our history and the struggle for freedom and the elimination of slavery. The Amistad is a strong symbol that even the darkest hours of our nation's history can ultimately provide the tools for change. I hope that this anniversary voyage will begin dialogues around the country and around the globe about the struggle for liberty that continues today," said Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro.

Thanks to the hard work of AMISTAD America, Inc., people across the globe will have the opportunity to learn the historical and current significance of the story of the Amistad, firsthand. The Amistad's voyage will confront a dark history of slavery and human degradation, but will also promote the Amistad's ongoing legacy of intercultural cooperation, human rights, and the struggle for freedom. The Amistad's history lives on and its legacy has paved a path for progress towards equality in the United States and the world," said Congressman John Larson.

While nothing can restore justice to the individuals whose freedom was stolen by the horrors of slavery, and nothing can duly commemorate the struggles they endured, the launch of the Amistad on its Atlantic Freedom Tour provides a meaningful gesture to remember Connecticut's role in our history and preserve the ship's legacy of hope and freedom," said Senator Chris Dodd. Her journey is a powerful reminder of our past, but it also serves as a symbol of hope that nations worldwide will embrace our common humanity."

The launch of the Freedom Schooner Amistad is an important tribute to the beginning of the end of the slave trade in the United States. I am proud to represent a state that so strongly valued human life and dignity at a time when external pressures steered away from those principles. I commend Amistad America for their tireless work and dedication to making this voyage a reality," said Senator Joseph Lieberman.

The Freedom Schooner Amistad has made an outstanding impression on the communities the ship has visited along the Eastern seaboard," said Congressman Chris Shays. "Commemorating the fight against slavery and the freedom that was won, the Freedom schooner has been an educational ambassador teaching lessons of history, cooperation, and leadership."

This historic voyage will commemorate a tragic era in our history, but it is a part of our nation's story that we can't forget. It is so important for the students who take part in this 14-month tour to share this unique experience when they return so that the struggle for freedom fought by those on the original Amistad is honored," said Congressman Chris Murphy.

The Freedom Schooner Amistad's 14-month 2007 Atlantic Freedom Tour will serve as recognition of the progress we as a nation have made in defending equality and social justice, but the voyage is also a reminder of how much farther the world must journey to value life and freedom. I honor the legacy of those who suffered through the brutal transatlantic slave trade and will continue to fight such prejudice and cruelty," said Rep. Joe Courtney.

Below is the text of the resolution:

Recognizing the historical and educational significance of the Freedom Schooner Amistad's 14-month 2007 Atlantic Freedom Tour, and expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that preserving the legacy of the Amistad story is important in promoting multi-cultural dialogue, education, and cooperation.

Whereas the 1807 Act of the British Parliament was the first major initiative that abolished the slave trade and began the march to end slavery;

Whereas, in 1839, 53 Africans were illegally kidnapped from Sierra Leone and sold into the transatlantic slave trade;

Whereas the captives were brought to Havana, Cuba aboard the Portuguese vessel Tecora, where they were fraudulently classified as native-born Cuban slaves;

Whereas the African captives were sold to Spaniards Jose Ruiz and Pedro Montez, who transferred them to the coastal cargo schooner, La Amistad;

Whereas the African captives, while being transferred from Havana, Cuba up the coast in the Amistad, revolted after 3 days and ordered the schooner head east back to their native Africa;

Whereas, on the evening of the rebellion, the Amistad was secretly directed back west and up the coast of North America, where after 2 months the Africans were seized and arrested in New London, Connecticut;

Whereas, the captives were jailed and awaited trial in New Haven, Connecticut, and the case became historic when former President John Quincy Adams argued on behalf of the enslaved Africans before the United States Supreme Court and won their freedom;

Whereas, in 2007, the Freedom Schooner Amistad will embark on its first transatlantic voyage to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade; and

Whereas the Amistad case represents an opportunity to call to public attention the evils of slavery, the struggle for freedom, and the restoration of human dignity:

Now, therefore, be it Resolved, That

(1) the House of Representatives

(A) recognizes the historical and educational significance of the Freedom Schooner Amistad's Atlantic Freedom Tour; and

(B) encourages the people of the United States to learn about United States history and better understand the experiences that have shaped the United States; and

(2) it is the sense of the House of Representatives that preserving the legacy of the Amistad should be regarded as a means in fostering multi-cultural dialogue, education, and cooperation.

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