



H.R. 5235 – RONALD REAGAN CENTENNIAL COMMISSION ACT

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 5235 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 Elton Gallegly (R-CA) on February 6, 2008. The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform agreed to the bill, as amended, by voice vote on July 17, 2008.

H.R. 5235 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 22, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 5235 establishes the 'Ronald Reagan Centennial Commission.' The Commission will plan, prepare, and carry out activities to honor and commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of President Reagan. The Commission is also to provide assistance and advice to other Federal, State, and local governmental agencies, as well as civic groups that plan to carry out activities to mark the occasion.

The Commission is to be composed of 16 members, which must include: the U.S. Archivist; the Secretary of the Interior; three members appointed by the President; six members appointed by the Board of Trustees of the Ronald Reagan Library and Foundation from among individuals who have biographical knowledge of the life of President Reagan; the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; two Members of the House of Representatives (appointed by the Speaker and the minority leader); two senators (appointed by the majority leader and the minority leader). Members of the Commission serve for life terms and without compensation.

The Commission may appoint and compensate an executive director as well as a staff charged with implementing the Commission's plans for the celebration. The bill also allows for the Commission to accept volunteers to assist in the project, and allows the Secretary of the Interior and the Archivist to provide assistance to the Commission on a reimbursable basis.

Among the powers of the Commission are holding hearings to prepare for the celebration, contracting with government and private entities as well as soliciting, accepting, and using gifts of money, services, and donations of real and personal property for the 100th anniversary celebration.

The Commission is to report to the President and Congress annually on all revenues and expenditures, and include a list of all gifts given to the commission valued at more than \$2,500 as well as the name of the donor. A final report to the President and Congress, detailing a summary of event and a final accounting of receipts and expenditures, must be submitted by April 30, 2011. The Commission must terminate after it submits its final report, but no later than May 30, 2011.

H.R. 5235 authorizes \$1 million for fiscal years 2009-2011, with no more than \$500,000 to be spent in any single fiscal year.

BACKGROUND

Ronald Reagan, the fortieth President of the United States, was born in 1911 in Illinois. Reagan moved to California in 1937 and became an actor and eventually the president of the Screen Actors Guild. Reagan was elected Governor of California in 1967 and served two terms. In 1980, Ronald Reagan defeated Jimmy Carter to become the 40th President of the U.S. He received 489 electoral votes compared to Carter's 49.

During his two terms as President of the United States, Reagan promoted individual freedom and expanded the military. President Reagan also cut taxes and implemented supply-side economic policies.



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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Reagan appointed the first female to the Supreme Court - Sandra Day O'Connor. Presiding over the Cold War, President Reagan revived the B-1 bomber program and produced the MX "Peacekeeper" missile. Reagan also strongly advocated for the Strategic Defense Initiative, also known as "Star Wars". President Reagan is famously remembered for dubbing the Soviet Union the "Evil Empire" and correctly predicting it would be consigned to the "ash heap of history." In 1987, President Reagan spoke at the Berlin Wall and challenged Gorbachev to "tear down this wall!"

Ronald Reagan died in California on June 5, 2004, after a lengthy battle with Alzheimer's Disease. President Reagan, "the Great Communicator", is survived by his wife Nancy and their children.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office did not have a cost estimate available for H.R. 5235 as of July 21, 2008.

STAFF CONTACT

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