



**H.R. 3315– To provide that the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center shall be known as Emancipation Hall**

**FLOOR SITUATION**

H.R. 3315 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 Zach Wamp (R-TN) on August 2, 2007. The bill was ordered to be reported from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, by voice vote, on October 31, 2007.

H.R. 3315 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on November 13, 2007.

**SUMMARY**

H.R. 3315 names the great hall of the Capitol Visitor Center as Emancipation Hall.

**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 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, visitor comfort, 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.

When completed, the CVC will preserve and maximize public access to the Capitol while enhancing the experience for the millions who come each year to walk its historic corridors and experience the democratic process in action.

According to Rep. Zach Wamp (R-TN), "Many people do not know that slave labor built the Capitol ....By naming this space Emancipation Hall we will finally honor those who have gone

unrecognized for far too long.” ([Press Release, 6/25/07](#))

**COST**

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that “enactment of these bills would have no significant impact on the federal budget and would not affect direct spending or revenues.”

**STAFF CONTACT**

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