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CONGRESSIONAL RECORD
PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 99TH CONGRESS

SENATE

BILL	DATE	PAGE(S)
S.J.Res.169	JUL 23 '85 (99)	S9900

ACTION: INTRODUCED BY MR. MATHIAS, et al.

By Mr. MATHIAS (for himself, Mr. THURMOND, Mr. DOLE, Mr. LAXALT, Mr. DENTON, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DECONCINI, Mr. GOLDWATER, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. STAFFORD, Mr. ZORINSKY, and Mr. LEAHY):

S.J. Res. 169. Joint resolution to commemorate the bicentennial anniversary of the first patent and the first copyright laws; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

BICENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST PATENT AND COPYRIGHT LAWS

● Mr. MATHIAS. Mr. President, today I introduce a joint resolution to provide for the commemoration in 1990 of the bicentennial anniversary of the first Patent Act and the first Copyright Act, which were enacted on April 10 and May 31, 1790, respectively.

Such a celebration will help remind us that the guarantee of rights to intellectual property for limited times contributes to economic progress and cultural vitality.

The Founding Fathers recognized that such a protection would help to develop a new nation. Aware of this principle, they included a provision in the Constitution that empowers Congress "* * * to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries."

The commemoration that the resolution contemplates will follow a tradition set in 1890, when we marked the centennial of the patent and copyright laws with lectures and galas, winding up with a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue. A host of famous authors and inventors, including Thomas Alva Edison, Alexander Graham Bell and Mark Twain, marched in that parade.

During the 98th Congress, I introduced a similar proposal to commemorate the constitutional foundation of the patent and copyright laws. It received broad support among the scientific, business, academic and creative communities. Although 29 Senators joined me as cosponsors and the Senate passed the joint resolution without amendment, the House failed to act before we adjourned sine die in October.

During the present session, I hope that we will act quickly. As Mark Twain wrote in "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," "A country without a patent office and good patent laws is just a crab and can't travel any way but sideways and backways." Celebrating the bicentennial of the first patent and the first copyright laws will emphasize the importance of these laws to our economic health and our cultural diversity.

I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the joint resolution be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the joint resolution was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S.J. RES. 169

Whereas the Constitution empowers Congress "To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries";

Whereas the enforcement of this constitutional principle through specific patent and copyright laws merits special recognition;

Whereas the first patent bill was signed to law on April 10, 1790, and the first copyright bill was signed into law on May 31, 1790, and we will recognize the bicentennial anniversary of these laws in 1990: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That special recognition be given during 1990, the bicentennial year of the first patent and the first copyright laws, and the President is authorized and requested to isssue a proclamation upon the enactment of this joint resolution calling upon the people of the United States to foster such recognition through appropriate educational and cultural programs and activities.●