

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 50

Providing for enclosing the visitors' galleries of the House of Representatives with a clear and bomb-proof material.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 24, 2011

Mr. BURTON of Indiana submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on House Administration

RESOLUTION

Providing for enclosing the visitors' galleries of the House of Representatives with a clear and bomb-proof material.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

3 Congress finds the following:

4 (1) In 2007, outgoing Senate Sergeant-at-Arms
5 Bill Pickle warned about the potential of a terrorist
6 attack on the United States Capitol. Specifically,
7 Mr. Pickle warned that: “Nothing has changed since
8 9/11. The Capitol is the symbol of America all over
9 the world, and it’s clearly the No. 1 or No. 2 target
10 of terrorists, as it was on 9/11”.

1 (2) The first bombing of the Capitol occurred
2 in the Senate in 1915 by a man protesting United
3 States involvement in World War I.

4 (3) On March 1, 1954, 4 Puerto Rican nation-
5 alists armed with .38 caliber revolvers entered the
6 visitors' gallery of the House of Representatives and
7 fired a total of 19 shots at Members and staff while
8 the House was in session and conducting a vote, and
9 5 Members were struck by the gunfire.

10 (4) In 1971, a group named the Weather Un-
11 derground planted an explosive device in a first-floor
12 restroom in the Senate to protest United States mili-
13 tary involvement in the Vietnam War. The device
14 detonated early in the morning when the building
15 was closed, causing extensive damages but no inju-
16 ries.

17 (5) In 1983, a man carrying an improvised ex-
18 plosive device strapped to his body entered the visi-
19 tors' gallery of the House of Representatives while
20 the House was in session. He was able to construct
21 the device in such a manner as to avoid detection
22 during security screening. During a floor debate, the
23 man attempted to detonate the device until United
24 States Capitol Police officers restrained him, re-
25 moved him from the gallery, and secured the device.

1 (6) Also in 1983, a group named the Armed
2 Resistance Unit planted an explosive device on the
3 second floor of the Senate, outside the Senate
4 Chamber, to protest United States military involve-
5 ment in Central America. The device detonated at
6 11:00 p.m. causing extensive damage to the area
7 around the Chamber. At the time, the Senate had
8 already recessed and no one was in the area when
9 the blast occurred.

10 (7) On July 24, 1998, a lone gunman entered
11 the Document Door of the Capitol and immediately
12 shot and killed the officer posted at location. The
13 gunman then exchanged gunfire with another officer
14 before fleeing further into the building where he en-
15 gaged in another gunfight in which a second officer
16 was killed. The gunman was shot several times dur-
17 ing this incident.

18 (8) On the terrible and fateful morning of Sep-
19 tember 11, 2001, the people of the United States be-
20 came painfully aware of the destructive intent of ter-
21 rorists as well as the increasingly sophisticated and
22 devastating methods by which they conduct their
23 deadly work. Evidence strongly suggests Members of
24 Congress were and continue to remain a terrorist
25 target.

1 (9) On December 25, 2009, Umar Farouk
2 Abdulmutallab successfully smuggled a non-metallic
3 explosive onto a Detroit-bound commercial flight
4 from Amsterdam. The inability of walk-through
5 metal detectors to screen for nonmetallic weapons
6 and explosives is a critical weakness in aviation secu-
7 rity and a critical weakness in Capitol security.

8 (10) One of the Capitol's most vulnerable loca-
9 tions is the House of Representatives Visitors' Gal-
10 lery because of its wide open access to the House
11 Floor.

12 (11) The visitors' galleries of the House of Rep-
13 resentatives and the Senate are the frequent target
14 of demonstrators. Whenever the House or Senate is
15 debating a subject that is controversial or polarizing,
16 it is not uncommon for disturbances and acts of civil
17 disobedience to occur in the galleries.

18 (12) The importance of the House Chamber to
19 our Government's identity is profound. It is the one
20 place where the entire Legislative Branch, Rep-
21 resentatives and Senators, along with Supreme
22 Court Justices, Cabinet officials, and foreign dig-
23 nitarries gather together to hear the President give
24 the State of the Union Address.

1 **SEC. 2. ENCLOSURE OF VISITORS' GALLERIES OF THE**
2 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.**

3 (a) ENCLOSURE.—The Architect of the Capitol shall
4 enclose the visitors' galleries of the House of Representa-
5 tives with a clear and bomb-proof material, and shall in-
6 stall audio equipment so that the proceedings on the floor
7 of the House of Representatives will be clearly audible in
8 the galleries.

9 (b) AUTHORIZATION.—There are authorized to be ap-
10 propriated from the applicable accounts of the House of
11 Representatives such sums as may be reasonably nec-
12 essary to carry out this section.

○