

HONORING THE BICENTENNIAL OF THE BIRTH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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SPEECH OF
HON. DANNY K. DAVIS OF ILLINOIS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2009

- Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Madam Speaker, I Wish to take a moment to honor Abraham Lincoln's legacy as we commemorate the bicentennial of his birth this year. President Lincoln had a tremendous impact on the progression of our nation. The 16th President of the United States successfully led the country through its greatest internal crisis, the American Civil War, preserving the Union and ending slavery with the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. As a young man, Abraham Lincoln feared not achieving anything that would make men remember him. With hard work, dedication, and determination, today, Abraham Lincoln tops the list, for many, as one of the most influential--and most revered--Americans.

- The spirit that guided him was clearly that of his Second Inaugural Address, now inscribed on one wall of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC: ``With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds" Indeed, Lincoln's legacy is most alive in our continuous search for freedom, equality, and opportunity. I feel that it is only right for my fellow colleagues and I to pay homage to a great leader who helped pave the way for so many and who continues to inspire people today, two hundred years later.

- As our newly elected 44th President of the United States, Barack Obama, also from Illinois, begins his first term in office, the wounds of the nation and the world will begin to heal as he is guided and inspired by the former President Lincoln. Illinois is the state where Lincoln spent more than a quarter century of his life, serving as a lawyer and politician, leaving his mark in many towns and cities throughout the state. Long before being elected president in 1860, he served four terms in the state legislature and one in Congress. The state of Illinois honors Lincoln's legacy in a variety of ways including: The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, the Lincoln Memorial Garden, Lincoln's Journey of Remembrance, The Lincoln Home National Historic site, and the city of Lincoln. In addition, The U.S. Mint will introduce four newly-designed Lincoln pennies throughout 2009, the first being released on his birthday. A Lincoln commemorative silver dollar will also be released later this year.

- We have come a long way since the Lincoln days, but we still have a long way to go. The bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln is a great time to honor his legacy, as well as re-examine the American Dream and what it means to be an American today. It is a time of opportunity to bring together a divided nation in order to work together to fulfill Lincoln's goal of finding unity in our diversity. With a newly-elected President who shares many of the same ideals as Lincoln, there is not a better time to start this transformation, create change, and finish the work that we started so long ago. President Obama, similar to Lincoln, faces many great challenges ahead, but with hard work, dedication and determination these challenges we shall too, overcome.