

House Resolution 779

By: Representatives Thomas of the 43rd, Post 1, Jackson of the 124th, Post 1, Thomas of the 33rd, Post 2, Sinkfield of the 50th, Beasley-Teague of the 48th, Post 2, and others

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the President and Congress of the United States of America to reaffirm our nation's
2 commitment to respecting world history and cultural heritage by protecting and restoring the
3 cultural and historical resources of ancient Mesopotamia, the cradle of civilization in the
4 Fertile Crescent, known in the modern world as Iraq; and for other purposes.

5 WHEREAS, the Wall Street Journal of Monday, April 14, 2003, page 1, reported that the
6 United States government is budgeting over \$1.2 billion for the rebuilding of Iraq and that
7 the associated contracts may increase to several billions of dollars; and

8 WHEREAS, in Georgia, the Augusta Chronicle of Wednesday, April 16, 2003, on page 7A,
9 reported that looters and arsonists had ransacked and gutted Iraq's National Library on
10 Tuesday, April 15, 2003, and that a nation's intellectual legacy had gone up in smoke; and

11 WHEREAS, the Augusta Chronicle of Wednesday, April 16, 2003, on page 7A reported that
12 during the week of April 7, 2003, thieves swept through the National Museum in Baghdad
13 and stole or smashed treasures that chronicled the region's role as the "cradle of civilization";
14 and

15 WHEREAS, the Atlanta Journal Constitution of Wednesday, April 16, 2003, reported this
16 destruction has drawn condemnation worldwide, with many expecting the United States
17 forces to prevent and stop the looting; and

18 WHEREAS, the Atlanta Journal Constitution of Wednesday, April 16, 2003, reported that
19 the United Nations cultural agency, the British Museum, and the Director General of the
20 United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are
21 collaborating on responsive efforts to address this crisis by sending in expert teams to restore
22 ransacked museums and are calling on customs officials, police, art dealers, neighboring
23 countries, and various nations to block the trading of stolen antiquities; and

1 WHEREAS, Science Magazine of July 6, 2001, pages 32 - 43, reported that modern day Iraq
2 is ancient Mesopotamia and is endowed with thousands of important archeological sites,
3 stretching across 10,000 years, including the ancient kingdoms and civilizations of Assyria
4 and Sumeria (the biblical birthplace of the prophet Abraham), as well as the city of Babylon;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Science Magazine of July 6, 2001, reported that a spectacular collection of royal
7 gold objects dating from Assyrian royal courts of 8th Century BC and rivaling the royal gold
8 collection of King Tut's tomb were scheduled to be put on display at Baghdad's Iraq
9 Museum in the fall of 2001; and

10 WHEREAS, the National Museum's treasures included the tablets with Hammurabi's Code,
11 one of mankind's earliest codes of law, from which much of the legal systems in Europe, the
12 United States of America, and the State of Georgia have been derived.

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that
14 the members of this body urge the President and Congress of the United States of America
15 to reaffirm our country's commitment to respecting world history by authorizing the use of
16 all resources and military and civilian authorities necessary (including the announcement of
17 financial rewards) to secure, protect, reclaim, recover, and restore recognized historic sites
18 and buildings throughout Iraq, including Baghdad, as well as historic artifacts and documents
19 lost at historic sites throughout Iraq, including the National Museum and the National Library
20 in Baghdad and that such authorities and duties exercised should extend to seeking out
21 looters and those disturbing the public order.

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized
23 and directed to transmit appropriate copies of this resolution to the President of the United
24 States, the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United
25 States House of Representatives, and each member of the Georgia delegation to the Congress
26 of the United States of America.