

MESSAGE  
OF THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
INFORMING

*Congress that he had approved and signed the act entitled "An act for the release of certain persons held to service or labor in the District of Columbia," and recommending an amendatory act.*

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APRIL 16, 1862.—Read, laid on the table, and ordered to be printed.

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*Fellow-citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives:*

The act entitled "An act for the release of certain persons held to service or labor in the District of Columbia" has this day been approved and signed.

I have never doubted the constitutional authority of Congress to abolish slavery in this District, and I have ever desired to see the national capital freed from the institution in some satisfactory way. Hence there has never been, in my mind, any question upon the subject except the one of expediency arising in view of all the circumstances. If there be matters within and about this act which might have taken a course or shape more satisfactory to my judgment, I do not attempt to specify them. I am gratified that the two principles of compensation and colonization are both recognized and practically applied in the act.

In the matter of compensation, it is provided that claims may be presented within ninety days from the passage of the act, "but not thereafter;" and there is no saving for minors, *femmes-covert*, insane, or absent persons. I presume this is an omission by mere oversight, and I recommend that it be supplied by an amendatory or supplemental act.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

APRIL 16, 1862.