

WASHINGTON, DC- With the annual Greater Washington Soap Box Derby set to take place this Saturday, June 16, on Capitol Hill, Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) issued a statement applauding the participation of so many area youth in the annual affair that brings “the greatest amateur racing event in the world” to the National Capital Region. For the last 17 years, Rep. Hoyer has sponsored a resolution to permit the derby race to take place on the grounds of the United States Capitol. The Greater Washington Soap Box Derby will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Constitution Avenue, NW, between New Jersey and Louisiana Avenues.

“The Soap Box Derby has been called ‘the greatest amateur racing event in the world,’ and is an excellent opportunity for contestants from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia to experience the joy of competition while being introduced to the world of science and engineering,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “I applaud the record involvement in this year’s competition, and wish all of this year’s racers the best of luck.”

This year’s derby includes a record 80 teams with drivers between the ages of 8 and 17, many of whom are sponsored by local businesses and organizations. Racers are divided into three divisions: Stock, Super Stock, and Masters. The local winner of each division will automatically qualify to compete with racers from around the world in the 70th All-American Soap Box Derby in Akron, Ohio on July 26.

“This is an excellent opportunity for participants to learn basic building skills while gaining a real sense of accomplishment,” Hoyer stated. “I am confident that this year’s race will be another tremendous success, and I look forward to working with the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby in the years ahead to ensure that this race continues to thrive.”

The origin of soap box derby racing dates back to 1934 when a photographer for the Dayton Daily News, Myron E. Scott, saw boys racing engineless cars down a hill, inspiring him to organize a race and award the winner with a “loving cup.” While the first race took place in Dayton, OH, in the following years, the venue moved to Akron on account of the numerous hills. With the hard work of countless civic organizations, a permanent track site for the youth racing classic was created with the assistance of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).

Soap box derby racing in the Nation’s Capital has a long and rich tradition as well. In 1938, Norman Rocca beat out 223 other racers to win the inaugural Greater Washington Soap Box Derby, which was held on New Hampshire Avenue. Over the years thousands of the region’s

young people have participated in this great race. The location has since moved from the original site on New Hampshire Avenue to Capitol Hill.

For more information see the All-American Soap Box Derby Web site at

www.aasbd.com

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