

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 312

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Urging the Government of the Russian Federation to withdraw the first draft of the proposed legislation as passed in its first reading in the State Duma that would have the effect of severely restricting the establishment, operations, and activities of domestic, international, and foreign nongovernmental organizations in the Russian Federation, or to modify the proposed legislation to entirely remove these restrictions.

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Whereas Russian Federation President Putin has stated that “modern Russia’s greatest achievement is the democratic process (and) the achievements of our civil society”;

Whereas the unobstructed establishment and free and autonomous operations and activities of nongovernmental organizations and a robust civil society free from excessive

government control are central and indispensable elements of a democratic society;

Whereas the free and autonomous operations of nongovernmental organizations in any society necessarily encompass activities, including political activities, that may be contrary to government policies;

Whereas domestic, international, and foreign nongovernmental organizations are crucial in assisting the Russian Federation and the Russian people in tackling the many challenges they face, including in such areas as education, infectious diseases, and the establishment of a flourishing democracy;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has proposed legislation that would have the effect of severely restricting the establishment, operations, and activities of domestic, international, and foreign nongovernmental organizations in the Russian Federation, including erecting unprecedented barriers to foreign assistance;

Whereas the State Duma of the Russian Federation is considering the first draft of such legislation;

Whereas the restrictions in the first draft of this legislation would impose disabling restraints on the establishment, operations, and activities of nongovernmental organizations and on civil society throughout the Russian Federation, regardless of the stated intent of the Government of the Russian Federation;

Whereas the stated concerns of the Government of the Russian Federation regarding the use of nongovernmental organizations by foreign interests and intelligence agencies to undermine the Government of the Russian Federation and the security of the Russian Federation as a whole

can be fully addressed without imposing disabling restraints on nongovernmental organizations and on civil society;

Whereas there is active debate underway in the Russian Federation over concerns regarding such restrictions on nongovernmental organizations;

Whereas the State Duma and the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly play a central role in the system of checks and balances that are prerequisites for a democracy;

Whereas the first draft of the proposed legislation has already passed its first reading in the State Duma;

Whereas President Putin has indicated his desire for changes in the first draft that would “correspond more closely to the principles according to which civil society functions”; and

Whereas Russia’s destiny and the interests of her people lie in her assumption of her rightful place as a full and equal member of the international community of democracies: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) urges the Government of the Russian Fed-
4 eration to withdraw the first draft of the proposed
5 legislation that would have the effect of severely re-
6 stricting the establishment, operations, and activities
7 of domestic, international, and foreign nongovern-
8 mental organizations in the Russian Federation, or

1 to modify the proposed legislation to entirely remove
2 these restrictions; and

3 (2) in the event that the first draft of the pro-
4 posed legislation is not withdrawn, urges the State
5 Duma and the Federation Council of the Federal
6 Assembly to modify the legislation to ensure the un-
7 obstructed establishment and free and autonomous
8 operations and activities of such nongovernmental
9 organizations in accordance with the practices uni-
10 versally adopted by democracies, including the provi-
11 sions regarding foreign assistance.

Passed the House of Representatives December 15,
2005.

Attest:

Clerk.