

(3) calls on the people of the United States to—

(A) observe the week of September 24, 2006, by focusing on the needs of the children and youths of the United States;

(B) recognize the efforts of children's charities and youth-serving organizations to enrich and better the lives of the children and youths of the United States; and

(C) support the efforts of the children's charities and youth-serving organizations of the United States as an investment for the future of the United States.

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA

The resolution (S. Res. 611) supporting the efforts of the Independent National Electoral Commission of the Government of Nigeria, political parties, civil societies, religious organizations, and the people of Nigeria from one civilian government to another in the general elections to be held in April 2007 was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 611), with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 611

Whereas the United States maintains strong and friendly relations with Nigeria and values the leadership role that Nigeria plays throughout the continent of Africa, particularly in the establishment of the New Partnership for African Development and the African Union;

Whereas Nigeria is an important strategic partner with the United States in combating terrorism, promoting regional stability, and improving energy security;

Whereas Nigeria has been, and continues to be, a leading supporter of the peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations and the Economic Community of West African States by contributing troops to operations in Lebanon, Yugoslavia, Kuwait, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Rwanda, and Sudan;

Whereas past corruption and poor governance have resulted in weak political institutions, crumbling infrastructure, a feeble economy, and an impoverished population;

Whereas political aspirants and the democratic process of Nigeria are being threatened by increasing politically-motivated violence, including the assassination of 3 gubernatorial candidates in different states during the previous 2 months; and

Whereas the Chairperson of the Independent National Electoral Commission has—

(1) announced that governorship and state assembly elections will be held on April 14, 2007;

(2) stated that voting for the president and national assembly will take place on April 21, 2007; and

(3) vowed to organize free and fair elections to facilitate a smooth democratic transition: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the importance of Nigeria as a strategic partner and long-time friend of the United States;

(2) acknowledges the increasing significance of the leadership of Nigeria throughout the region and continent;

(3) commends the decision of the National Assembly of Nigeria to reject an amendment to the constitution that would have lifted the existing 2-term limit and allowed for a third presidential term;

(4) encourages the Government of Nigeria and the Independent National Electoral Commission to demonstrate a commitment to successful democratic elections by—

(A) developing an aggressive plan for voter registration and education;

(B) addressing charges of past or intended corruption in a transparent manner; and

(C) conducting objective and unbiased recruitment and training of election officials;

(5) urges the Government of Nigeria to respect the freedoms of association and assembly, including the right of candidates, members of political parties, and others—

(A) to freely assemble;

(B) to organize and conduct public events; and

(C) to exercise those and other rights in a manner free from intimidation or harassment;

(6) urges a robust effort by the law enforcement and judicial officials of Nigeria to enforce the rule of law, particularly by—

(A) preventing and investigating politically-motivated violence; and

(B) prosecuting those suspected of such acts;

(7) urges—

(A) President Bush to ensure that the United States supports the democratic gains made in Nigeria during the last 8 years; and

(B) the Government of Nigeria to actively seek the support of the international community for democratic, free, and fair elections in April 2007; and

(8) expresses the support of the United States for coordinated efforts by the Government of Nigeria and the Independent National Electoral Commission to work with political parties, civil society, religious organizations, and other entities to organize a peaceful political transition based on free and fair elections in April 2007 to further consolidate the democracy of Nigeria.

ESPERANZA INCIDENT FIRE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA IN OCTOBER 2006

The resolution (S. Res. 614) honoring the firefighters and other public servants who responded to the devastating Esperanza incident fire in southern California in October 2006 was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 614), with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 614

Whereas, in late October 2006, the mountain communities west of Palm Springs, California were struck by a vast wildfire, which came to be known as the Esperanza Incident and which authorities believe was started by an arsonist;

Whereas the Esperanza Incident fire tragically claimed lives, homes and other buildings, and more than 40,000 acres of terrain;

Whereas nearly 3,000 firefighters from dozens of fire crews courageously battled the fast-spreading blaze, which was fanned by Santa Ana wind gusts up to 60 miles per hour;

Whereas 4 firefighters—Mark Loutzenhiser, Jess McLean, Jason McKay, and Daniel Hoover-Najera—made the ultimate sacrifice by giving their lives when flames overtook them as they tried to protect a home;

Whereas an additional firefighter, Pablo Cerda, joined them in that sacrifice when he too lost his life, after fighting to survive for 6 days in a hospital before succumbing to burns he had received fighting alongside his fallen colleagues;

Whereas firefighters honored the spirit of their fallen colleagues by completing the job

they started and controlling the blaze, even while recognizing considerable danger to their own well-being;

Whereas skilled and courageous aircraft personnel and additional emergency personnel, including law enforcement and medical personnel, also responded to the threat posed by the fire; and

Whereas law enforcement personnel are aggressively pursuing the conviction of the arsonist, and generous Californians have offered additional funds, on top of those offered by the Riverside County Board of Supervisors, to help bring the arsonist to justice: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and honors—

(A) all of the firefighters who responded to the devastating Esperanza Incident fire in southern California in October 2006; and

(B) all others, including emergency, law enforcement, and medical personnel and aircraft crews, who contributed to controlling the fire, keeping Californians safe, and finding and arresting the suspected arsonist; and

(2) commends the firefighters and other personnel who responded to the fire for dedicated service to the people of California.

ALPHA PHI ALPHA FRATERNITY, INCORPORATED

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 384) recognizing and honoring the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, the first intercollegiate Greek-letter fraternity established for African Americans, was considered and agreed to.

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS THAT PUBLIC POLICY SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN THE ABILITY OF FARMERS AND RANCHERS TO JOIN TOGETHER IN COOPERATIVE SELF-HELP EFFORTS

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 119) expressing the sense of the Congress that public policy should continue to protect and strengthen the ability of farmers and ranchers to join together in cooperative self-help efforts was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 119), with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. CON. RES. 119

Whereas the ability of farmers and ranchers in the United States to join together in cooperative self-help efforts is vital to their continued economic viability;

Whereas Federal laws have long recognized the importance of protecting and strengthening the ability of farmers and ranchers to join together in cooperative self-help efforts, including to cooperatively market their products, ensure access to competitive markets, and help achieve other important public policy goals;

Whereas farmer- and rancher-owned cooperatives play an important role in helping farmers and ranchers improve their income from the marketplace, manage their risk, meet their credit and other input needs, and compete more effectively in a rapidly changing global economy;

Whereas farmer- and rancher-owned cooperatives also play an important role in

providing consumers in the United States and abroad with a dependable supply of safe, affordable, high-quality food, fiber, and related products;

Whereas farmer- and rancher-owned cooperatives also help meet the energy needs of the United States, including through the production and marketing of renewable fuels such as ethanol and biodiesel;

Whereas there are nearly 3,000 farmer- and rancher-owned cooperatives located throughout the United States with a combined membership representing a majority of the nearly 2 million farmers and ranchers in the United States; and

Whereas farmer- and rancher-owned cooperatives also contribute significantly to the economic well being of rural America as well as the overall economy, including accounting for as many as 250,000 jobs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the Sense of the Congress that public policy should continue to protect and strengthen the ability of farmers and ranchers to join together in cooperative self-help efforts—

(1) to improve their income from the marketplace and their economic well-being;

(2) to capitalize on new market opportunities; and

(3) to help meet the food and fiber needs of consumers, provide for increased energy production, promote rural development, maintain and create needed jobs, and contribute to a growing United States economy.

ADOPTION AND SAFE FAMILIES ACT OF 1997

The resolution (S. Res. 547) recognizing and supporting the successes of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 in increasing adoption, observing the efforts that the act has spurred, including National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month, and encouraging citizens of the United States to consider adoption throughout the year was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 547), with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 547

Whereas, since the passage of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (42 U.S.C. 1305 note; Public Law 105-89), the number of children adopted from the foster care system has increased significantly, with approximately 51,000 children adopted from the foster care system in fiscal year 2004 alone;

Whereas, despite that remarkable progress, approximately 118,000 children in the foster care system of the United States are waiting to be adopted, and 49 percent of those children are at least 9 years old;

Whereas adoptive families make an important difference in the lives of the children they adopt by providing a stable, nurturing environment for those children;

Whereas National Adoption Day is a collective national effort to find permanent, loving families for children in the foster care system;

Whereas both National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month occur in November;

Whereas, in 2002, the Department of Health and Human Services launched a series of public service announcements promoting the adoption of children aged 8 and older;

Whereas more than 6,000 children have been placed into adoptive homes since the Department of Health and Human Services launched www.adoptuskids.org, a national

photo listing service for children awaiting adoption across the United States;

Whereas, in 2005, judges, attorneys, adoption professionals, child welfare agencies, and child advocates in 45 States and the District of Columbia participated in 227 events in conjunction with National Adoption Day; and

Whereas those events finalized the adoptions of more than 3,300 children from the foster care system: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and supports—

(A) the success of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (42 U.S.C. 1305 note; Public Law 105-89) and the efforts that the Act has spurred; and

(B) the goals and ideals of National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month; and

(2) encourages the citizens of the United States to consider adoption throughout the year.

ACKNOWLEDGING AFRICAN DESCENDANTS OF THE TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 175) acknowledging African descendants of the transatlantic slave trade in all of the Americas with an emphasis on descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean, recognizing the injustices suffered by these African descendants, and recommending the United States and the international community work to improve the situation of Afro-descendant communities in Latin America and the Caribbean was considered and agreed to.

CONDEMNING THE REPRESSION OF THE IRANIAN BAHAI COMMUNITY

The Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 101) condemning the repression of the Iranian Baha'i community and calling for the emancipation of Iranian Baha'is.

The amendment (No. 5193) was agreed to, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 5193

On page 3, lines 3 and 4, strike "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" and insert "International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights".

The concurrent resolution, as amended, was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 101), as amended, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. CON. RES. 101

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, and 2000, Congress, by concurrent resolution, declared that it deplores the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and holds the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i Faith;

Whereas on March 20, 2006, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Ms. Asma Jahangir, revealed the existence of a confidential letter dated October 29, 2005, from the Chairman of the Command Headquarters of Iran's Armed Forces to the Ministry of Information, the Revolutionary Guard, and the Police Force, stating that the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, had instructed the Command

Headquarters to identify members of the Baha'i Faith in Iran and monitor their activities;

Whereas the United Nations Special Rapporteur expressed "grave concern and apprehension" about the implications of this letter for the safety of the Baha'i community;

Whereas in 2005 the Iranian Government initiated a new wave of assaults, homes raids, harassment, and detentions against Baha'is, and in December 2005, Mr. Zabihullah Mahrami died after 10 years of imprisonment on charges of apostasy due to his membership in the Baha'i Faith; and

Whereas beginning in October 2005, an anti-Baha'i campaign has been conducted in the state-sponsored Kayhan newspaper and in broadcast media: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) condemns the Government of Iran for the October 29, 2005 letter, calls on the Government of Iran to immediately cease such activities and all activities aimed at the repression of the Iranian Baha'i community, and continues to hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding all the rights of its nationals, including members of the Baha'i community; and

(2) requests the President to—

(A) call for the Government of Iran to emancipate the Baha'i community by granting those rights guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international covenants on human rights;

(B) emphasize that the United States regards the human rights practices of the Government of Iran, including its treatment of the Baha'i community and other religious minorities, as a significant factor in the foreign policy of the United States Government regarding Iran; and

(C) initiate an active and consistent dialogue with other governments and the European Union in order to persuade the Government of Iran to rectify its human rights practices.

DRIVE SAFER SUNDAY

The resolution (S. Res. 618) designating November 26, 2006, as "Drive Safer Sunday" was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 618), with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 618

Whereas motor vehicle travel is the primary means of transportation in the United States;

Whereas everyone on the roads and highways needs to drive more safely to reduce deaths and injuries resulting from motor vehicle accidents;

Whereas the death of almost 43,000 people a year in more than 6 million highway crashes in the United States has been called an epidemic by Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta;

Whereas according to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, wearing a seat belt saved 15,434 lives in 2004 and 15,632 lives in 2005; and

Whereas the Sunday after Thanksgiving is the busiest highway traffic day of the year: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) encourages—

(A) high schools, colleges, universities, administrators, teachers, primary schools, and secondary schools to launch campus-wide