

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 515

Commemorating the life and work of Dith Pran.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 15, 2008

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. BIDEN, and Mr. CORNYN)
submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee
on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the life and work of Dith Pran.

Whereas, between 1975 and 1979, Dith Pran dedicated his life and journalistic career to preventing genocide by exposing the atrocities perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge regime in his native Cambodia;

Whereas Dith Pran, the subject of the Academy Award-winning film “The Killing Fields”, survived the genocide in Cambodia in which up to 2,000,000 men, women, and children, including most of Dith Pran’s extended family, were killed by the Khmer Rouge;

Whereas Dith Pran assisted many of his fellow journalists who were covering the impending takeover of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge to escape unharmed from the country when the capital of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, fell to the Khmer Rouge in 1975;

Whereas Dith Pran was subsequently imprisoned by the Khmer Rouge, and for 4 years endured forced labor, beatings, and unconscionable conditions of human suffering;

Whereas, in 1979, Dith Pran escaped from forced labor past the Khmer Rouge's "killing fields", a term Mr. Dith created to describe the mass graveyards he saw on his 40-mile journey to a refugee camp in Thailand;

Whereas Dith Pran, in the words of New York Times Executive Editor Bill Keller, "reminds us of a special category of journalistic heroism, the local partner, the stringer, the interpreter, the driver, the fixer, who knows the ropes, who makes your work possible, who often becomes your friend, who may save your life, who shares little of the glory, and who risks so much more than you do";

Whereas Dith Pran moved to New York in 1980 and devoted the remainder of his life and journalistic career to advocating against genocide and for human rights worldwide;

Whereas Dith Pran educated people around the world about the horrors of genocide in general, and the genocide in Cambodia in particular, through his creation of the Dith Pran Holocaust Awareness Project;

Whereas, in 1985, Dith Pran was appointed a United Nations Goodwill Ambassador by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;

Whereas Dith Pran lost his battle with cancer on March 30, 2008, leaving behind a world that better understands the tragedy of the genocide in Cambodia and the need to prevent future genocides, largely due to his compelling story, reporting, and advocacy;

Whereas Dith Pran said, “Part of my life is saving life. I don’t consider myself a politician or a hero. I’m a messenger. If Cambodia is to survive, she needs many voices.”; and

Whereas the example of Dith Pran should endure for generations: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) Dith Pran is a modern day hero and an ex-
3 emplar of what it means to be a citizen of the
4 United States and a citizen of the world;

5 (2) the United States owes a debt of gratitude
6 to Dith Pran for his tireless work to prevent geno-
7 cide and violations of fundamental human rights;
8 and

9 (3) teachers throughout the United States
10 should spread Dith Pran’s message by educating
11 their students about his life, the genocide in Cam-
12 bodia, and the collective responsibility of all people
13 to prevent modern-day atrocities and human rights
14 abuses.

○