

112TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. CON. RES. 34

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 31, 2012

Referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress in honor of the life and legacy of Václav Havel.

Whereas Václav Havel, former President of the Czech Republic, passed away on December 18, 2011, at 75 years of age, at his country home in Hrádeček in the Czech Republic;

Whereas Václav Havel was widely recognized and respected throughout the world as a defender of democratic principles and human rights;

Whereas through his extensive writings, Václav Havel courageously challenged the ideology and legitimacy of the authoritarian communist regimes that ruled Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War;

Whereas Václav Havel, who was imprisoned 3 times by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia for his advocacy of universal human rights and democratic principles, maintained his convictions in the face of repression;

Whereas Václav Havel was one of the leading organizers of Charter 77, a group of 242 individuals who called for the human rights guaranteed under the 1975 Helsinki accords to be realized in Czechoslovakia;

Whereas Václav Havel was a cofounder of the Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted, an organization dedicated to supporting dissidents and their families, which helped to advance the cause of freedom and justice in Czechoslovakia;

Whereas Václav Havel, as leader of the Civic Forum movement, was a key figure in the 1989 peaceful overthrow of the Czechoslovakian communist government known as the Velvet Revolution;

Whereas following the Velvet Revolution, Václav Havel was democratically elected as President of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic in 1990, and after a peaceful partition forming 2 separate states, democratically elected President of the Czech Republic in 1993;

Whereas under the leadership of Václav Havel, the Czech Republic became a prosperous, democratic country and a respected member of the international community;

Whereas under the leadership of Václav Havel, the Czech Republic became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on March 12, 1999, and continues to be a valued friend and treasured ally of the United States;

Whereas during his lifetime, Václav Havel received praise as one of the world's great democratic leaders and awarded many international prizes recognizing his commitment to peace and democratic principles;

Whereas on July 23, 2003, President George W. Bush honored Václav Havel with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award of the United States Government, for being “one of liberty’s great heroes”;

Whereas, after leaving office as president of the Czech Republic in February 2003, Václav Havel remained a voice on behalf of democratic dissidents worldwide and against authoritarian regimes, including Belarus, Iran, Cuba, and Burma:

Now, therefore, be it

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

3 (1) mourns the loss of Václav Havel and offers
4 its heartfelt condolences to the Havel family and the
5 people of the Czech Republic;

6 (2) recognizes Václav Havel’s courage and com-
7 mitment to democratic values in the face of com-
8 munist repression;

9 (3) recognizes Václav Havel’s pivotal historical
10 legacy in defeating the ideology of communism,
11 peacefully ending the Cold War, and building a Eu-
12 rope that is democratic, united, and at peace;

13 (4) recognizes Václav Havel’s solidarity with
14 democratic dissidents throughout the world and sup-
15 port for the expansion of freedom, including in
16 Belarus, Iran, Cuba, and Burma; and

1 (5) reaffirms the commitment of the United
2 States to the causes of freedom, democracy, and
3 human rights for which Václav Havel stood.

Passed the Senate January 30, 2012.

Attest: NANCY ERICKSON,
Secretary.