

112TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. 378

Expressing the sense of the Senate that children should have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family and that it is the policy of the United States that family reunification, kinship care, or domestic and intercountry adoption promotes permanency and stability to a greater degree than long-term institutionalization and long-term, continually disrupted foster care.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 15, 2012

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. LUGAR, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. LEVIN, and Mr. NELSON of Nebraska) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate that children should have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family and that it is the policy of the United States that family reunification, kinship care, or domestic and intercountry adoption promotes permanency and stability to a greater degree than long-term institutionalization and long-term, continually disrupted foster care.

Whereas the family is the basic unit of society and contributes to the emotional, financial, and material support essential for the healthy growth and development of children;

Whereas children without a family or connections to siblings and relatives or a permanent relationship with a caring adult are at risk of being homeless, growing up in sub-standard institutional care, and are vulnerable to sexual and labor exploitation and abuse;

Whereas research has shown that children who are abandoned, abused, or severely neglected can face significant risks that are costly to society, including lower individual lifetime earnings, poorer educational achievement, and higher consumption of health services, which in turn could lead to a greater risk of criminal activity and greater risk of incarceration;

Whereas there is scientific evidence that children deprived of a family, including connections with siblings, often experience trauma, which can have a detrimental impact on the development of a child;

Whereas some estimates show that there are approximately 18 million children in the world who have lost both parents and at least 2 million children in the world who are in institutional care;

Whereas there are approximately 408,000 children in the United States foster-care system and 107,000 of them are awaiting adoption;

Whereas within the current foster-care system, many children are overmedicated, housed in inadequate group homes, denied the ability to engage in age-appropriate activities, such as afterschool activities, and often denied access to their siblings or placement with a relative guardian due to insufficient efforts to locate family members;

Whereas thousands of children who “age out” of the foster-care system in the United States every year lack the se-

curity or support of a biological or adoptive family, connections with siblings and relatives, or a permanent relationship with a caring adult and struggle to secure affordable housing, health insurance, higher education, and adequate employment;

Whereas current governmental efforts to assist these highly vulnerable children in the United States and around the world do not include an effective strategy for securing a protective family, connections with siblings and relatives, or a permanent relationship with a caring adult for every child; and

Whereas while there have been several bipartisan laws enacted in the past several years that have made progress on a number of needed child-welfare reforms, much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) the Senate—

3 (A) affirms that all children in the world,
4 including those with special needs, deserve a
5 safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family,
6 connections with siblings and relatives, or a
7 permanent relationship with a caring adult;

8 (B) acknowledges that the United States
9 Government can and should do more by work-
10 ing with the private sector, nonprofit organiza-
11 tions, and faith-based communities to imple-
12 ment cost effective strategies that connect chil-

1 dren living outside of family care with a perma-
2 nent, supportive family, or connections with sib-
3 lings and relatives, or a permanent relationship
4 with a caring adult;

5 (C) encourages States, counties, cities, and
6 to the extent appropriate, other governments to
7 invest resources in family preservation, reunifi-
8 cation services, services to help older youth
9 transition out of care with a connection to sib-
10 lings, relatives or a caring adult, kinship adop-
11 tion, domestic adoption, and intercountry adop-
12 tion and post adoption strategies to ensure that
13 more children in the United States are provided
14 with safe, loving, and permanent family place-
15 ments or a permanent relationship with a car-
16 ing adult; and

17 (D) recognizes the United States Agency
18 for International Development and the Depart-
19 ment of State for recent efforts to develop a
20 strategy for meeting the unique needs of chil-
21 dren living outside of family care;

22 (2) it is the sense of the Senate that children
23 should have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent
24 family; and

1 (3) it is the policy of the United States that
2 family reunification, kinship care, or domestic and
3 intercountry adoption promotes permanency and sta-
4 bility to a greater degree than long-term institu-
5 tionalization and long-term, continually disrupted
6 foster care.

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