

Calendar No. 495

113TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. RES. 502

Concerning the suspension of exit permit issuance by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for adopted Congolese children seeking to depart the country with their adoptive parents.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 15, 2014

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COATS, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHANNIS, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. KING, Mr. KIRK, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. PAUL, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WALSH, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WICKER, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HOEVEN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

JULY 29, 2014

Reported by Mr. MENENDEZ, with an amendment and an amendment to the preamble

[Strike out all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[Strike the preamble and insert the part printed in *italic*]

RESOLUTION

Concerning the suspension of exit permit issuance by the

Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for adopted Congolese children seeking to depart the country with their adoptive parents.

Whereas according to UNICEF, over 4,000,000 orphans are estimated to be living in the Democratic Republic of Congo;

Whereas cyclical and violent conflict has plagued the Democratic Republic of Congo since the mid-1990s;

Whereas the United States has made significant financial investments in the Democratic Republic of Congo, providing an estimated \$274,000,000 bilateral aid to the Democratic Republic of Congo in fiscal year 2013 and an additional \$165,000,000 in emergency humanitarian assistance;

Whereas the policy of the United States Government toward the Democratic Republic of Congo is “focused on helping the country become a nation that : : : provides for the basic needs of its citizens”;

Whereas the United Nations, the Hague Conference on Private International Law, and other international organizations have recognized a child’s right to a family as a basic human right worthy of protection;

Whereas adoption, both domestic and international, is an important child protection tool and an integral part of child welfare best practices around the world, along with family reunification and prevention of abandonment;

Whereas, on September 27, 2013, the Congolese Ministry of Interior and Security, General Direction of Migration, informed the United States Embassy in Kinshasa that effective September 25, 2013, they had suspended issuance

of exit permits to adopted Congolese children seeking to depart the country with their adoptive parents;

Whereas there are United States families with finalized adoptions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the necessary legal paperwork and visas ready to travel home with these children but are currently unable to do so; and

Whereas, on December 19, 2013, the Congolese Minister of Justice, Minister of Interior and Security, and the General Direction of Migration confirmed to members of the United States Department of State that the current suspension on the issuance of exit permits continues: Now, therefore, be it

Whereas according to UNICEF, over 4,000,000 orphans are estimated to be living in the Democratic Republic of Congo;

Whereas cyclical and violent conflict has plagued the Democratic Republic of Congo since the mid-1990s;

Whereas the United States has made significant financial investments in the Democratic Republic of Congo, providing an estimated \$274,000,000 bilateral aid to the Democratic Republic of Congo in fiscal year 2013 and an additional \$165,000,000 in emergency humanitarian assistance;

Whereas the policy of the United States Government toward the Democratic Republic of Congo is “focused on helping the country become a nation that . . . provides for the basic needs of its citizens”;

Whereas the United Nations, the Hague Conference on Private International Law, and other international organizations have recognized that a child should grow up in a family environment;

Whereas adoption, both domestic and international, is an important child protection tool and an integral part of child

welfare best practices around the world, along with family reunification and prevention of abandonment;

Whereas, on September 27, 2013, the Congolese Ministry of Interior and Security, General Directorate of Migration, informed the United States Embassy in Kinshasa that effective September 25, 2013, they had suspended issuance of exit permits to adopted Congolese children seeking to depart the country with their adoptive parents;

Whereas there are United States families with finalized adoptions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the necessary legal paperwork and visas ready to travel home with these children but are currently unable to do so; and

Whereas, on December 19, 2013, the Congolese Minister of Justice, Minister of Interior and Security, and the General Directorate of Migration confirmed to members of the United States Department of State that the current suspension on the issuance of exit permits continues: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved, That the Senate—*

2 *(1) affirms that all children deserve a safe, lov-*
3 *ing, and permanent family;*

4 *(2) recognizes the importance of ensuring that*
5 *international adoptions of all children are conducted*
6 *in an ethical and transparent manner;*

7 *(3) expresses concern over the impact on chil-*
8 *dren and families caused by the current suspension*
9 *of exit permit issuance within the Democratic Re-*
10 *public of Congo;*

1 (4) respectfully requests that the Government
2 of the Democratic Republic of Congo—

3 (A) resume processing adoption cases and
4 issuing exit permits via the Ministry of Gender
5 and Family's Interministerial Adoption Com-
6 mittee and Directorate of General Migration;

7 (B) prioritize the processing of inter-
8 country adoptions which were initiated before
9 the suspension; and

10 (C) expedite the processing of those adop-
11 tions which involve medically fragile children;
12 and

13 (5) encourages continued dialogue and coopera-
14 tion between the United States Department of State
15 and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's Min-
16 istry of Foreign Affairs to improve the intercountry
17 adoption process and ensure the welfare of all chil-
18 dren adopted from the Democratic Republic of
19 Congo.

20 *That the Senate—*

21 (1) affirms that all children deserve a safe, lov-
22 ing, and permanent family;

23 (2) recognizes the importance of ensuring that
24 international adoptions of all children are conducted
25 in an ethical and transparent manner;

1 (3) expresses concern over the impact on children
2 and families caused by the current suspension of exit
3 permit issuance within the Democratic Republic of
4 Congo;

5 (4) respectfully requests that the Government of
6 the Democratic Republic of Congo—

7 (A) resume processing adoption cases and
8 issuing exit permits via the Ministry of Gender
9 and Family’s Interministerial Adoption Com-
10 mittee and General Directorate of Migration;

11 (B) prioritize the processing of intercountry
12 adoptions which were initiated before the suspen-
13 sion; and

14 (C) expedite the processing of those adop-
15 tions which involve medically fragile children;
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17 (5) encourages continued dialogue and coopera-
18 tion between the United States Department of State
19 and the Democratic Republic of the Congo’s Ministry
20 of Foreign Affairs to improve the intercountry adop-
21 tion process and ensure the welfare of all children
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