

of S. 2758, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Air Force to modernize C-130 aircraft using alternative communication, navigation, surveillance, and air traffic management program kits and to ensure that such aircraft meet applicable regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration.

S.J. RES. 41

At the request of Mr. MURPHY, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 41, a joint resolution approving the location of a memorial to commemorate the more than 5,000 slaves and free Black persons who fought for independence in the American Revolution.

S. RES. 466

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 466, a resolution designating the week of October 27 through November 2, 2014, as "National Drug Take-Back Week", and designating October 2014 as "National Prescription Opioid and Heroin Abuse Awareness Month".

S. RES. 538

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 538, a resolution expressing the condolences of the Senate to the families of James Foley and Steven Sotloff, and condemning the terrorist acts of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. Kaine (for himself, Mrs. Boxer, Mr. Casey, and Mr. Warner):

S. 2788. A bill to provide support for the development of middle school career exploration programs linked to career and technical education programs of study; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, the key to America's continued success lies in improving our Nation's educational system to meet the demands of the 21st century job market. Today, many students enter high school and college with little knowledge of the careers available to them outside of traditional pathways. With college costs continuing to rise, it is critical that students have exposure to the wide range of available work and career choices early in their academic careers so that, by the time they enter high school, they are more informed about future paths and what they need to do to pursue them.

Career and technical education, CTE, are a proven way to help students explore their own strengths and preferences, as well as how they match up with potential future careers. However, limited funding for middle school CTE programming often means students have to wait until high school for this exposure.

Studies have found that middle school students greatly benefit from career and technical education development programs that promote career exploration skills, as well as increase knowledge of career options and career pathways. Middle school is an important time for students to explore their own strengths, likes, and dislikes, and career and technical education exploration programs are great tools to educate them about the type of course or training that goes into a career field that matches their interests.

This is why I am pleased to introduce the Middle School Technical Education Program Act, which establishes a pilot program for middle schools to partner with postsecondary institutions and local businesses to develop and implement career and technical exploration programs. This legislation will provide support for middle schools to create career and technical education programs that will provide students with introductory courses, hands-on learning, or afterschool programs. Career guidance and academic counseling is vital to ensuring that our students understand the educational requirements for high-growth, in-demand career fields. Many times students receive this information too late in their academic careers.

We need to make middle school more career-relevant and expose students to the career pathways they may choose. This legislation also requires that programs help students draft a high school graduation plan that demonstrates what courses would prepare them for a given career field. If we give students at a younger age applied career and technical opportunities, they will be more informed about future paths and what they need to do to pursue them. I hope this bill spurs discussion on how vital middle school is for exposing students to career choices.

By Mr. Harkin (for himself, Mr. Leahy, Mr. Durbin, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Reed, Mr. Johnson of South Dakota, Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Shaheen, Mr. Casey, Mr. Blumenthal, Ms. Warren, and Mrs. Hagan):

S. 2789. A bill to amend part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to provide full Federal funding of such part; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. Harkin. Mr. President, throughout my career in public service I have focused on ensuring that each and every child with a disability is ensured the right to a good education. To this end, I have fought tirelessly to safeguard the rights of children with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA, landmark legislation that has been improving the educational outcomes of millions of students across the nation since 1975 on the bedrock principles of inclusion and equality.

When Congress passed IDEA, we understood that our commitment to pro-

vide high-quality educational opportunities and serve the needs of students with disabilities in our classrooms entailed excess costs compared to others students, which would have a significant financial impact on States and school districts. That is why Congress committed to covering up to 40 percent of the excess cost of educating students with disabilities. However, we have failed to deliver on that promise, and the law has been consistently and grossly underfunded.

This is why I am pleased to introduce the IDEA Full Funding Act, which will allow us to make good on the full federal commitment. Given the current financial difficulties that many state and local governments are facing, this legislation is more essential than ever for ensuring that students with disabilities get the high-quality education and services they need in order to fulfill their potential.

Since enactment of IDEA, students with disabilities across the United States have made tremendous progress. Today, nearly 6.6 million students receive special education services designed to meet their individual needs. Ninety-five percent of students with disabilities attend a neighborhood school, and almost two-thirds of those students spend at least 80 percent of their day in the regular school environment. Nearly 350,000 infants and toddlers receive early intervention services. More than 6 out of 10 students with disabilities graduate high school with a regular diploma—twice the percentage of 25 years ago. Moreover, approximately half of students with disabilities enroll in postsecondary education. We must do our best to continue this progress and make good on our 39-year-old promise because there is still a long way to go. For instance, students with disabilities who graduate from high school have an employment rate that is less than half the employment rate of the general population.

Today, the Federal Government provides about 16 percent of the additional cost of educating a student with a disability, less than half the 40 percent that Congress committed to when we passed IDEA. In the current fiscal year, this means Federal funding for IDEA is almost \$24 billion short, which forces states and school districts to make up the federal shortfall at a time when they are cash strapped.

The IDEA Full Funding Act will fully fund the federal commitment to IDEA by gradually increasing the federal government's share of the excess costs of educating students with disabilities to its committed level over 10 years. Specifically, this legislation will increase the Federal dollars appropriated from \$11.5 billion in fiscal year 2014 to \$35.6 billion in fiscal year 2023.

This bill is supported by 34 organizations including: ACCSES, the Association of Assistive Technology Act Programs, the Autism National Committee, the Autism Society of America, the Council of Parent Attorneys

and Advocates, the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination, the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, the Epilepsy Foundation, Easter Seals, the Kentucky Protection and Advocacy Division, the Jonathan Foundation for Children with Learning Disabilities, the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the National Center for Learning Disabilities, the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools, the National Down Syndrome Congress, the National Down Syndrome Society, the National Disability Rights Network, Perkins School for the Blind, TASH, the School Superintendents Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the American Speech Language Hearing Association, the Association of Educational Service Agencies, the Council of Great City Schools, the Council for Exceptional Children, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the National Education Association, the National School Boards Association, the National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition, and the National Rural Education Association.

By making good on our 39-year-old promise, we will supply schools with the necessary funding to enhance the quality and range of services available to students with disabilities. The funding increase will help to raise salaries for teachers and related services personnel, thereby allowing districts to enhance recruitment and retention high-quality staff. It will support school districts in increasing graduation rates and postsecondary enrollment rates of students with disabilities.

In these difficult times, it is essential for Congress to provide these revenues without increasing the deficit. The IDEA Full Funding Act is fully paid for by increasing income taxes for those with an adjusted gross income greater than \$1,000,000 per year. This increase in funding for schools will have a powerful impact on the lives of children with disabilities by improving their educational and future employment outcomes.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this long-overdue legislation.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 2790. A bill to amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to permit a prevailing party in an action or proceeding brought to enforce the Act to be awarded expert witness fees and certain other expenses; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President: Ensuring that all students, regardless of

background or ability, have access to an education that gives them the opportunity to live a successful and fulfilling life has always been a major focus of my career in public service. To achieve this goal, I have fought hard for students with disabilities to have access to the general education curriculum and the services and supports they need to succeed, and to safeguard their rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA. That is why I am pleased to reintroduce the IDEA Fairness Restoration Act. This critical legislation will remove the financial barrier that families, especially low- and middle-income families, face when they pursue their children's rights to the free, appropriate public education they deserve and are entitled to under the Fourteenth Amendment.

When Congress originally passed IDEA, we recognized the vital importance of parent and school collaboration in special education and required they jointly develop an Individualized Education Plan, IEP, to identify goals to promote the academic achievement of students with disabilities. Usually, this partnership serves students well. There are, however, times when parents believe schools have not fulfilled their responsibilities to provide an appropriate education to their children. In these cases, IDEA provides parents the right to challenge the schools through mediation and due process. The educational needs of children with disabilities can be quite complex and when there is a disagreement between the family and the school it may be necessary for experts to lend their help in determining what interventions and supports are best for the child. For families asking for mediation or a due process hearing, the use of expert services can be costly, ranging on average from \$100 to \$300 per hour. In one case, a single mother whose son struggled with dyslexia and written expression disorders had to borrow \$1,400 to pay an independent evaluator to testify at a hearing. She also had to pay for the expert's time spent being cross-examined by the school district for two days. Without access to expert witnesses, families may be unable to make an argument for the educational needs of their children.

When Congress amended IDEA in 1986, it recognized the financial barriers that parents face in pursuing due process to resolve disagreements with their school and specified in the Conference Committee Report that when the court finds in favor of the parents a judge could award attorney's fees, including "reasonable expenses and fees of expert witnesses and the reasonable costs of any test or evaluation which is found to be necessary for the preparation of the parent or guardian's case." For years, parents who prevailed in judicial proceedings were awarded these fees, as Congress intended. But in 2006, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Arlington Central School District v. Murphy* that courts could no longer award

these fees because Congress made its intention explicit in the Conference Report rather than in statute. As a result, many parents are discouraged and even prevented from pursuing meritorious cases to secure the rights of their children. Low- and middle-income families are particularly put at a disadvantage by this ruling.

The IDEA Fairness Restoration Act clarifies Congress' express intent that parents should recover expert witness fees, as they currently can do with attorneys' fees, if they prove that the school system has wrongfully denied their child an appropriate education as defined by IDEA. By including "reasonable expenses and fees of expert witnesses and the reasonable costs of any test or evaluation which is found to be necessary for the preparation of the parent or guardian's case" and reestablishing the right of judges to award such fees to parents who prevail in IDEA cases, as Congress intended, this legislation will level the playing field and restore the ability of low- and middle-income parents to be effective advocates for their children's educational needs.

This bill is supported by 18 advocacy organizations including: ACCSES, the Autism National Committee, the Autism Society of America, the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf, Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination, the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, the Epilepsy Foundation, Easter Seals, the Kentucky Protection and Advocacy Division, the Jonathan Foundation for Children with Learning Disabilities, Our Children Left Behind, the National Center for Learning Disabilities, the National Center for Special Education in Charter Schools, the National Down Syndrome Congress, the National Down Syndrome Society, the National Disability Rights Network, and TASH.

This legislation is an essential step for protecting the rights of students with disabilities and ensuring that all families, regardless of their financial resources, can advocate for and protect their children's rights through due process, consistent with Congressional intent and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 540—RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER 15, 2014, AS THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DEMOCRACY, AFFIRMING THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AS A CORNERSTONE OF DEMOCRACY, AND ENCOURAGING ALL GOVERNMENTS TO STAND WITH CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE FACE OF MOUNTING RESTRICTIONS ON CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 540

Whereas in 2007, September 15 of each year was established by the United Nations as the International Day of Democracy, a day set aside to review the state of democracy in the world;

Whereas democracy is a means of government that makes manifest the free exercise of certain inalienable rights, among them being the freedom of assembly, the freedom of association, the freedom of the press, and the freedom of speech;

Whereas democracy allows for participatory governance, mobilizing citizens to strive for their version of the good and instilling hope that the aspirations of the people may one day be realized;

Whereas an analysis of 84 independent studies shows that democracy has a favorable impact on the formation of human capital, the rate of inflation, the level of economic freedom, and the stability of political institutions;

Whereas democracy promotes tolerance and respect by recognizing the human dignity of all people and is necessary to the full realization of the values enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

Whereas the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines “civil society” as associations around which society voluntarily organizes itself and which represent a wide range of interests and ties, including community-based organizations, indigenous peoples’ organizations, and non-government organizations (NGOs);

Whereas a vibrant civil society is an essential element of democratic societies and plays a key role in providing transparency, ensuring the legitimacy of elections, advocating for marginalized groups, and making clear the will of the people;

Whereas, since 2012, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law has identified 69 new restrictive measures in over 50 countries hindering the ability of civil society organizations (CSOs) to freely operate;

Whereas of the 98 countries for which data is available, research presented in a 2013 article for the Journal of Democracy explains that 12 prohibit and 39 restrict foreign funding of domestic NGOs;

Whereas in 2000, the Community of Democracies was founded “to bring together governments, civil society, and the private sector in the pursuit of a common goal: supporting democratic rules and strengthening democratic norms and institutions around the world”;

Whereas in 2011, the United States joined other like-minded governments to establish the “Lifeline: Embattled Civil Society Organizations Fund” to provide small grants to CSOs for immediate needs and to support short-term advocacy projects;

Whereas, through the Open Government Partnership, 63 countries have committed to

protecting the ability of CSOs to operate in a manner that is consistent with the rights to freedom of expression, association, and opinion;

Whereas in September 2013, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, the United States launched a coordinated multilateral effort encouraging countries to stand with civil society and push back against growing restrictions on CSOs;

Whereas the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association stands on the front lines of civil society protection, documenting extensive global threats to civil society and strengthening international norms; and

Whereas the United States remains committed to its stand with civil society by developing new mechanisms to combat restrictions on civil society and bolster civil society’s efforts to support democracy around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of the International Day of Democracy;

(2) recognizes the importance of civil society to the healthy development of nations;

(3) celebrates the invaluable contributions civil society has made to the creation, strength, and preservation of vibrant democracies and democratic institutions;

(4) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to the protection, advancement, health, and sustainability of democracy throughout the world;

(5) condemns the use of restrictions, coercion, threats, or force to impede the activities of civil society organizations;

(6) recognizes the important multilateral work of the Community of Democracies, the “Lifeline: Embattled Civil Society Organizations Fund”, the Open Government Partnership, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association to protect global civil society;

(7) recognizes the important role diplomacy plays in defending global civil society and creating new openings for civic space;

(8) emphasizes the value of programs of the United States Government in protecting civil society and defending civic space, including the work by the Senior Advisor for Civil Society and Emerging Democracies and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor of the United States Department of State, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID);

(9) calls on private sector partners and other governments to develop new tools and leverage existing technologies to support the efforts of civil society; and

(10) encourages the people of the United States and the world to observe the International Day of Democracy, September 15, 2014, with appropriate programs and activities.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize the important role civil society plays in the promotion of democracy as we observe International Day of Democracy this September 15.

Twenty-five years ago, I stood in Berlin as the wall was coming down. I will never forget that moment when the will of the people was finally recognized. It’s true that we have seen extraordinary progress over the years. But in too many parts of the globe, basic rights continued to be denied to those fighting for democratic ideals.

Today, there is an unprecedented global crackdown on civil society organizations seeking to express their voice

and exercise their rights. We’ve seen pervasive restrictions on civil society organizations enforced around the globe. Russia, in its worst political crackdown in post-Soviet history, has stamped the label of “foreign agent” on any civil society organization that receives support from other countries. Ethiopia’s 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation continues to hinder the work of human rights organizations and other civil society groups that receive more than 10 percent of their funding from foreign organizations. In 2012, Sudanese security forces violently attacked civil society representatives who were protesting against government restrictions. Egypt has prosecuted over 40 international aid implementers, sentencing them to prison for up to five years. In Laos, activist Sombath Somphone—a leader who dedicated his career to expanding civic space in Laos—has been missing for nearly two years after video footage documented his abduction at a police checkpoint. In 2013, government harassment in Sri Lanka forced the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation to close its office.

The developments that we see today have several notable features. First, the pushback against democracy is a global phenomenon and countries like Russia have established antidemocratic practices that are being emulated elsewhere. Second, global democratic reversals are not merely temporary aberrations but are likely to pose challenges for years to come. Finally, the global response has thus far been inadequate to meet these threats.

Moreover, democratic achievements cannot be taken for granted. A few days ago, Hungary’s National Investigative Office raided the offices of two organizations which help distribute civil society funds from the government of Norway. Thirteen NGOs are currently under investigation in Budapest, including the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union, HCLU, the local office of Transparency International, and the Roma Media Centre. These raids signal further deterioration of good governance, the rule of law, and human rights in Hungary.

I regret that the Hungarian government is pursuing practices at odds with the historic path to freedom Hungary pursued 25 years ago when that country opened the door for East German refugees and courageously helped pave the way for the end of communism. At a time when we need more democracy in Europe, not less, Hungary’s actions are not only harmful for democracy in Hungary, they undermine efforts to build democratic institutions throughout the region.

To call attention to widespread infringements upon civil society, I, as Chair of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, introduced the International Day of Democracy resolution. This resolution urges the recognition of the International Day of Democracy,