

SENATE RESOLUTION 79—DESIGNATING MARCH 2, 2017, AS “READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY”

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. REED, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TILLIS, and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 79

Whereas reading is a basic requirement for quality education and professional success and a source of pleasure throughout life;

Whereas the people of the United States must be able to read if the United States is to remain competitive in the global economy;

Whereas Congress has placed great emphasis on reading intervention and providing additional resources for reading assistance, including through the programs authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) and through annual appropriations for library and literacy programs; and

Whereas more than 50 national organizations concerned about reading and education have joined with the National Education Association to designate March 2, the anniversary of the birth of Theodor Geisel (commonly known as “Dr. Seuss”), as a day to celebrate reading: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 2, 2017, as “Read Across America Day”;

(2) honors—

(A) Theodor Geisel (commonly known as “Dr. Seuss”) for his success in encouraging children to discover the joy of reading; and

(B) the 20th anniversary of Read Across America Day; and

(3) encourages—

(A) parents to read with their children for at least 30 minutes on Read Across America Day in honor of the commitment of the Senate to building a country of readers; and

(B) the people of the United States to observe Read Across America Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 80—DESIGNATING MARCH 3, 2017, AS “WORLD WILDLIFE DAY”

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. INHOFE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 80

Whereas wildlife has provided numerous economic, environmental, social, and cultural benefits during the course of human history and wildlife conservation will secure these gifts for future generations;

Whereas plant and animal species play an important role in the stability of diverse ecosystems around the world and the conservation of this biodiversity is critical to maintain the delicate balance of nature and keep complex ecosystems thriving;

Whereas observation of wild plants and animals in their natural habitat provides individuals with a more enriching world view and a greater appreciation of the wonders of the natural environment;

Whereas tens of millions of individuals in the United States strongly support the conservation of wildlife, both domestically and abroad, and wish to ensure the survival of species in the wild, such as rhinoceroses, tigers, elephants, pangolins, turtles, seahorses, sharks, ginseng, mahogany, and cacti;

Whereas the trafficking of wildlife, including timber and fish, comprises the fourth

largest global illegal trade after narcotics, the counterfeiting of products and currency, and human trafficking and has become a major transnational organized crime with an estimated worth of as much as \$19,000,000,000 annually;

Whereas increased demand in Asia for high-value illegal wildlife products, particularly elephant ivory and rhinoceros horns, has recently triggered substantial and rapid increases in poaching of these species, particularly in Africa;

Whereas trafficking of wildlife is a primary threat to many wildlife species, including elephants, rhinoceroses, tigers, pangolins, and sharks;

Whereas many different kinds of criminals, including some terrorist entities and rogue security personnel, often in collusion with corrupt government officials, are involved in wildlife poaching and the movement of ivory and rhinoceros horns across Africa;

Whereas wildlife poaching presents significant security and stability challenges for military and police forces in African nations that are often threatened by heavily armed poachers and the criminal and extremist allies of those poachers;

Whereas wildlife poaching negatively impacts local communities that rely on natural resources for economic development, including tourism;

Whereas penal and financial deterrents can improve the ability of African governments to reduce poaching and trafficking and enhance their capabilities of managing their resources;

Whereas assisting institutions in developing nations, including material, training, legal, and diplomatic support, can reduce illegal wildlife trade;

Whereas wildlife provides a multitude of benefits to all nations and wildlife crime has wide-ranging economic, environmental, and social impacts;

Whereas the African elephant population has declined by 27 percent in the last decade, primarily as a result of poaching, and only approximately 415,000 such elephants remain in Africa;

Whereas, from 2007 to 2012, the number of elephants killed in Kenya increased by more than 800 percent, from 47 to 387 elephants killed;

Whereas, as a result of poaching, forest elephant populations in Minkébé National Park in Gabon have declined by 78 to 81 percent;

Whereas the number of forest elephants in the Congo Basin in Central Africa declined by approximately ⅓ between 2002 and 2012, placing forest elephants on track for extinction in the next decade;

Whereas the number of rhinoceroses killed by poachers in South Africa—

(1) increased by more than 9,000 percent between 2007 and 2014, from 13 to more than 1,200 rhinoceroses killed; and

(2) was 1,175 in 2015;

Whereas fewer than 4,000 tigers remain in the wild throughout all of Asia;

Whereas pangolins are often referred to as the most trafficked mammal in the world;

Whereas all 8 pangolin species spanning Africa and Asia are faced with extinction because pangolin scales are sought after in the practice of traditional Chinese medicine and pangolin meat is considered a delicacy;

Whereas approximately 100,000,000 sharks are killed annually, often targeted solely for their fins, and unsustainable trade is the primary cause of serious population decline in several shark species, including scalloped hammerhead sharks, great hammerhead sharks, and oceanic whitetip sharks;

Whereas the United States is developing and implementing measures to address the criminal, financial, security, and environmental aspects of wildlife trafficking;

Whereas Congress has allocated specific resources to combat wildlife trafficking and address the threats posed by poaching and the illegal wildlife trade;

Whereas, in December 2013, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 3 as World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the wild fauna and flora around the world;

Whereas March 3, 2017, represents the fourth annual celebration of World Wildlife Day;

Whereas, in 2017, the theme of World Wildlife Day is “Listen to the Young Voices”; and

Whereas, in 2017, World Wildlife Day commemorations will encourage young people, as the future leaders and decision makers of the world, to act at both local and global levels to protect wildlife and to rally together to address the ongoing overexploitation and illicit trafficking of wildlife: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 3, 2017, as “World Wildlife Day”;

(2) supports raising awareness of the benefits that wildlife provides to people and the threats facing wildlife around the world;

(3) supports escalating the fight against wildlife crime, including wildlife trafficking;

(4) applauds the domestic and international efforts to escalate the fight against wildlife crime;

(5) commends the efforts of the United States to mobilize the entire Government in a coordinated, efficient, and effective manner for dramatic progress in the fight against wildlife crime; and

(6) encourages continued cooperation between the United States, international partners, local communities, nonprofit organizations, private industry, and other partner organizations in an effort to conserve and celebrate wildlife, preserving this precious resource for future generations.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 7—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT TAX-EXEMPT FRATERNAL BENEFIT SOCIETIES HAVE HISTORICALLY PROVIDED AND CONTINUE TO PROVIDE CRITICAL BENEFITS TO THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CARDIN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. CON. RES. 7

Whereas the fraternal benefit societies of the United States are long-standing mutual aid organizations created more than a century ago to serve the needs of communities and provide for the payment of life, health, accident, and other benefits to their members;

Whereas fraternal benefit societies represent a successful, modern-day model under which individuals come together with a common purpose to collectively provide charitable and other beneficial activities for society;

Whereas fraternal benefit societies operate under a chapter system, creating a nationwide infrastructure, combined with local energy and knowledge, which positions fraternal benefit societies to most efficiently address unmet needs in communities, many of which the government cannot address;

Whereas the fraternal benefit society model represents one of the largest member-

volunteer networks in the United States, with close to 8,000,000 people of the United States belonging to nearly 25,000 local chapters across the country;

Whereas research has shown that the value of the work of fraternal benefit societies to society is more than \$3,800,000,000 per year, accounting for charitable giving, educational programs, and volunteer activities, as well as important social capital that strengthens the fabric, safety, and quality of life in thousands of local communities in the United States;

Whereas, in 1909, Congress recognized the value of fraternal benefit societies and exempted those organizations from taxation, as later codified in section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

Whereas fraternal benefit societies have adapted since 1909 to better serve the evolving needs of their members and the public;

Whereas the efforts of fraternal benefit societies to help people of the United States save money and be financially secure relieves pressure on government safety net programs; and

Whereas Congress recognizes that fraternal benefit societies have served their original purpose for over a century, helping countless individuals, families, and communities through their fraternal member activities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the fraternal benefit society model is a successful private sector economic and social support system that helps meet needs that would otherwise go unmet;

(2) the provision of payment for life, health, accident, or other benefits to the members of fraternal benefit societies in accordance with section 501(c)(8) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is necessary to support the charitable and fraternal activities of the volunteer chapters within the communities of fraternal benefit societies;

(3) fraternal benefit societies have adapted since 1909 to better serve their members and the public; and

(4) the exemption from taxation under section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 of fraternal benefit societies continues to generate significant returns to the United States, and the work of fraternal benefit societies should continue to be promoted.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 8—CLARIFYING ANY POTENTIAL MISUNDERSTANDING AS TO WHETHER ACTIONS TAKEN BY PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP CONSTITUTE A VIOLATION OF THE EMOLUMENTS CLAUSE, AND CALLING ON PRESIDENT TRUMP TO DIVEST HIS INTEREST IN, AND SEVER HIS RELATIONSHIP TO, THE TRUMP ORGANIZATION

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. REED, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. UDALL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BENNETT, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following concurrent resolution;

which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. CON. RES. 8

Whereas article I, section 9, clause 8 of the United States Constitution (commonly known as the “Emoluments Clause”) declares, “No title of Nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no Person holding any Office of Profit or Trust under them, shall, without the Consent of the Congress, accept of any present, Emolument, Office, or Title, of any kind whatever, from any King, Prince, or foreign State.”;

Whereas, according to the remarks of Governor Edmund Randolph at the 1787 Constitutional Convention, the Emoluments Clause “was thought proper, in order to exclude corruption and foreign influence, to prohibit any one in office from receiving or holding any emoluments from foreign states”;

Whereas the issue of foreign corruption greatly concerned the Founding Fathers of the United States, such that Alexander Hamilton in *Federalist No. 22* wrote, “In republics, persons elevated from the mass of the community, by the suffrages of their fellow-citizens, to stations of great pre-eminence and power, may find compensations for betraying their trust, which, to any but minds animated and guided by superior virtue, may appear to exceed the proportion of interest they have in the common stock, and to overbalance the obligations of duty. Hence it is that history furnishes us with so many mortifying examples of the prevalence of foreign corruption in republican governments.”;

Whereas the President of the United States is the head of the executive branch of the Federal Government and is expected to have undivided loyalty to the United States, and clearly occupies an “office of profit or trust” within the meaning of article I, section 9, clause 8 of the Constitution, according to the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice;

Whereas the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice opined in 2009 that corporations owned or controlled by a foreign government are presumptively foreign states under the Emoluments Clause;

Whereas President Donald J. Trump has a business network, the Trump Organization, that has financial interests around the world and negotiates and concludes transactions with foreign states and entities that are extensions of foreign states;

Whereas the very nature of a “blind trust,” as defined by former White House Ethics Counsels Richard Painter and Norm Eisen in an opinion piece in the *Washington Post* entitled, “Trump’s ‘blind trust’ is neither blind nor trustworthy”, dated November 15, 2016, and the Congressional Research Service report “The Use of Blind Trusts By Federal Officials”, is such that the official will have no control over, will receive no communications about, and will have no knowledge of the identity of the specific assets held in the trust, and that the manager of the trust is independent of the owner;

Whereas on January 11, 2017, President-elect Donald J. Trump and his lawyers held a press conference to announce that he would be placing his assets in a trust and turning over management of the Trump Organization to his two adult sons, Donald Trump Jr. and Eric Trump, and executive Allen Weisselberg; that there will be no communication with President Trump and no new overseas business deals; that an ethics advisor will be appointed to the management team to fully vet any new proposed domestic deals; and that the Trump Organization will donate any profits from any foreign governments that use Trump hotels to the Department of the Treasury;

Whereas this arrangement is not sufficient because of its utter lack of independent accountability and transparency, such that the director of the Office of Government Ethics has stated that “[t]he plan the [President] has announced doesn’t meet the standards that the best of his nominees are meeting and that every president in the last four decades have met”;

Whereas the director of the Office of Government Ethics has characterized the promise to limit President Trump’s direct communication about the Trump Organization as “wholly inadequate” because President Trump would still be well-aware of the specific assets held and could receive communications about and take actions to affect the value of those assets, especially when those running the business are his own children, whom Trump will see often;

Whereas the promise that no new overseas business deals will be agreed to by the Trump Organization fails to explain what constitutes a deal, and whether expansions to existing properties, licensing or permitting fee agreements, or loans from foreign banks like Deutsche Bank AG would qualify as “deals”;

Whereas the promise that the Trump Organization will donate profits from any foreign governments that use Trump hotels does not include Trump golf courses and other properties; does not explain whether the promise covers foreign government officials who register under their own names or third-party vendors hired by foreign governments to do business with the Trump Organization; does not explain whether foreign organizations signing tenant agreements with domestic Trump businesses, such as the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, which is Trump Tower’s biggest tenant, qualifies; does not define what constitutes “profits”; does not address the fact that revenue received by a failing business still provides value to that business even if there is no net profit; and has no mechanism for the public to verify that the promise is being fulfilled;

Whereas President Trump’s lawyer claimed that “it would be impossible to find an institutional trustee that would be competent to run the Trump Organization” when there are dozens if not hundreds of highly qualified trustees who handle complicated business situations like the disposition of the Trump Organization;

Whereas, at the January 11, 2017, press conference, President-elect Trump’s lawyer implied that the only reason people have raised the Emoluments Clause is over “routine business transactions like paying for hotel rooms” and claimed that “[p]aying for a hotel room is not a gift or a present, and it has nothing to do with an office. It’s not an emolument.”;

Whereas a comprehensive study of the Emoluments Clause written by Richard Painter, Norman Eisen, and Lawrence Tribe, two of whom are former ethics counsels to past Presidents, has concluded that “since emoluments are properly defined as including ‘profit’ from any employment, as well as ‘salary,’ it is clear that even remuneration fairly earned in commerce can qualify”;

Whereas numerous legal and constitutional experts, including several former White House ethics counsels, have also made clear that the arrangement announced on January 11, 2017, in which the President fails to exit the ownership of his businesses through use of a blind trust or equivalent, will leave the President with a personal financial interest in businesses that collect foreign government payments and benefits, which raises both constitutional and public interest concerns;

Whereas Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George