

(2) commits to supporting programs that engage women “as key stakeholders in preventing and countering violent extremism in their communities”;

Whereas, despite the historical underrepresentation of women in conflict resolution processes, women in conflict-affected regions have nevertheless achieved significant success in—

- (1) moderating violent extremism;
- (2) countering terrorism;
- (3) resolving disputes through nonviolent mediation and negotiation; and
- (4) stabilizing societies by improving access to peace and security—
  - (A) services;
  - (B) institutions; and
  - (C) venues for decisionmaking;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, peace negotiations are more likely to end in a peace agreement when women’s groups play an influential role in the negotiation process;

Whereas, according to a study by the International Peace Institute, a peace agreement is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years if women participate in the development of the peace agreement;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the Department of State, the full and meaningful participation of women in security forces vastly enhances the effectiveness of the security forces;

Whereas, on August 30, 2015, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom highlighted, “our goal must be to build societies in which sexual violence is treated—legally and by every institution of authority—as the serious and wholly intolerable crime that it is. We have seen global campaigns and calls to action draw attention to this issue and mobilize governments and organizations to act. But transformation requires the active participation of men and women everywhere. We must settle for nothing less than a united world saying no to sexual violence and yes to justice, fairness and peace.”;

Whereas approximately 15,000,000 girls are married every year before they reach the age of 18, which means that—

- (1) 41,000 girls are married every day; or
- (2) 1 girl is married every 2 seconds;

Whereas, according to UNICEF—

(1) approximately ¼ of girls between the ages of 15 and 19 are victims of physical violence; and

(2) it is estimated that 1 in 3 women around the world has experienced some form of physical or sexual violence;

Whereas, according to the 2016 report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime entitled “Global Report on Trafficking in Persons”—

(1) 79 percent of all detected trafficking victims are women and children; and

(2) while trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor are the most prominently detected forms of trafficking, the trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of forced marriage is emerging as a more prevalent form of trafficking;

Whereas 603,000,000 women live in countries in which domestic violence is not criminalized;

Whereas, on August 10, 2012, the Federal Government launched a strategy entitled “United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally”, which is the first interagency strategy that—

- (1) addresses gender-based violence around the world;
- (2) advances the rights and status of women and girls;
- (3) promotes gender equality in United States foreign policy; and

(4) works to bring about a world in which all individuals can pursue their aspirations without the threat of violence;

Whereas, in June 2016, the Department of State released an update to the strategy entitled “United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-Based Violence Globally”, based on internal evaluations, lessons learned, and consultations with civil society, that underscores that “preventing and responding to gender-based violence is a cornerstone of the U.S. government’s commitment to advancing human rights and promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”;

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve—

- (1) strong and lasting economic growth; and
- (2) political and social stability;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization—

- (1) ⅔ of the 778,000,000 illiterate individuals in the world are female; and
- (2) 130,000,000 girls worldwide are not in school;

Whereas, according to the United States Agency for International Development, as compared to uneducated women, educated women are—

- (1) less likely to marry as children; and
- (2) more likely to have healthier families;

Whereas, although the United Nations Millennium Project reached the goal of achieving gender parity in primary education in most countries in 2015, more work remains to be done to achieve gender equality in primary education worldwide by addressing—

- (1) discriminatory practices;
- (2) cultural norms;
- (3) inadequate sanitation facilities; and
- (4) other factors that favor boys;

Whereas, according to the United Nations, women have access to fewer income earning opportunities and are more likely to manage the household or engage in agricultural work than men, making women more vulnerable to economic insecurity caused by—

- (1) natural disasters; and
- (2) long term changes in weather patterns;

Whereas women around the world—

(1) face a variety of constraints that severely limit their economic participation and productivity; and

(2) are underrepresented in the labor force;

Whereas closing the global gender gap in labor markets could increase worldwide gross domestic product by as much as \$28,000,000,000,000 by 2025;

Whereas despite the achievements of individual female leaders—

- (1) women around the world remain vastly underrepresented in—
  - (A) high-level positions; and
  - (B) national and local legislatures and governments; and
- (2) according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women account for only 22 percent of national parliamentarians and 17.7 percent of government ministers;

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, during the period beginning in 1990 and ending in 2015, global maternal mortality decreased by approximately 44 percent, but approximately 830 women die from preventable causes relating to pregnancy or childbirth each day, and 99 percent of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries;

Whereas according to the World Health Organization—

- (1) suicide is the leading cause of death for girls between the ages of 15 and 19; and
- (2) complications from pregnancy or childbirth is the second-leading cause of death for those girls;

Whereas the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that

women and girls comprise approximately ½ of the 65,300,000 refugees and internally displaced or stateless individuals in the world;

Whereas it is imperative—

(1) to alleviate violence and discrimination against women; and

(2) to afford women every opportunity to be full and productive members of their communities;

Whereas violence, discrimination, and harmful practices against women and girls are a direct result of negative social norms that undervalue females in society; and

Whereas March 8, 2017, is recognized as International Women’s Day, a global day—

(1) to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women in the past, present, and future; and

(2) to recognize the obstacles that women face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals of International Women’s Day;

(2) recognizes that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of a country to generate—

- (A) economic growth;
- (B) sustainable democracy; and
- (C) inclusive security;

(3) recognizes and honors individuals in the United States and around the world, including women human rights defenders and civil society leaders, that have worked throughout history to ensure that women are guaranteed equality and basic human rights;

(4) recognizes the unique cultural, historical, and religious differences throughout the world and urges the United States Government to act with respect and understanding toward legitimate differences when promoting any policies;

(5) reaffirms the commitment—

(A) to end discrimination and violence against women and girls;

(B) to ensure the safety and welfare of women and girls;

(C) to pursue policies that guarantee the basic human rights of women and girls worldwide; and

(D) to promote meaningful and significant participation of women in every aspect of society and community;

(6) supports sustainable, measurable, and global development that seeks to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women; and

(7) encourages the people of the United States to observe International Women’s Day with appropriate programs and activities.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I have 6 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

#### COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate office building, to conduct a hearing entitled, “Legislative Hearing on S512 the Nuclear Energy Innovation and Modernization Act.”

COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
COMMITTEE

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room SH-216 of the Hart Senate Office Building. The Committee will hold a Hearing on "Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission."

HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL  
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., on the nomination of Hon. Elaine C. Duke to be Deputy Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

## COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, in room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:15 p.m. to conduct an oversight hearing on "Identifying Indian Affairs Priorities for the Trump Administration."

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON CYBERSECURITY

The Subcommittee on Cybersecurity of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., to receive a briefing on Cyber Security from the Defense Science Board.

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 8, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., to receive testimony on the Global Nuclear Weapons Environment.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dr. Mary Schuh, a fellow in my Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 115th Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator SHAHEEN of New Hampshire, I ask unanimous consent that Sonia Tarantolo, a foreign policy fellow in her office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 115th Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Tim Abram, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges through July 31, 2017.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
COORDINATION AND  
PLANNING AREA REFORM REPEAL ACT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Com-

mittee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 496 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title. The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 496) to repeal the rule issued by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration entitled "Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 496) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 496

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

## SECTION 1. REPEAL.

The rule issued by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration entitled "Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform" (81 Fed. Reg. 93448 (December 20, 2016)) shall have no force or effect, and any regulation revised by that rule shall be applied as if that rule had not been issued.

APPROVING THE LOCATION OF A  
MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE  
AND HONOR THE MEMBERS OF  
THE ARMED FORCES WHO  
SERVED ON ACTIVE DUTY IN  
SUPPORT OF OPERATION  
DESERT STORM OR OPERATION  
DESERT SHIELD

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Energy and Natural Resources Committee be discharged from further consideration of and the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S.J. Res. 1.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the joint resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (S.J. Res. 1) approving the location of a memorial to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the joint resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the joint resolution be read a third time and passed, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 1) was ordered to be engrossed for a third

reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The preamble was agreed to.

The joint resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S.J. RES. 1

Whereas section 8908(b)(1) of title 40, United States Code, provides that the location of a commemorative work in Area I, as depicted on the map entitled "Commemorative Areas Washington, DC and Environs", numbered 869/86501 B, and dated June 24, 2003, shall be deemed to be authorized only if a recommendation for the location is approved by law not later than 150 calendar days after the date on which Congress is notified of the recommendation;

Whereas section 3093 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (40 U.S.C. 8903 note; Public Law 113-291) authorized the National Desert Storm Memorial Association to establish a memorial on Federal land in the District of Columbia, to honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield; and

Whereas the Secretary of the Interior has notified Congress of the determination of the Secretary of the Interior that the memorial should be located in Area I: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the location of a commemorative work to commemorate and honor the members of the Armed Forces who served on active duty in support of Operation Desert Storm or Operation Desert Shield authorized by section 3093 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. "Buck" McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (40 U.S.C. 8903 note; Public Law 113-291), within Area I, as depicted on the map entitled "Commemorative Areas Washington, DC and Environs", numbered 869/86501 B, and dated June 24, 2003, is approved.

SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF  
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 84, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 84) supporting the goals of International Women's Day.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, on this International Women's Day, we celebrate the remarkable social, economic, and political achievements of women around the world, but we also take stock of the barriers that continue to prevent hundreds of millions of women from contributing their talents as equal members of the human family.

As in years past, this year I am again joining with Senator SUSAN COLLINS in submitting a bipartisan resolution commemorating International Women's Day and highlighting its goal of advancing the equality and empowerment of women all across the globe. I especially appreciate Senator COLLINS'