

**SENATE RESOLUTION 116—CON-
DEMNING THE ASSAD REGIME
FOR ITS CONTINUED USE OF
CHEMICAL WEAPONS AGAINST
THE SYRIAN PEOPLE**

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. CORKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. UDALL, Mr. COONS, and Mr. GARDNER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 116

Whereas on August 21, 2013, the Assad regime launched rockets carrying sarin gas, a deadly nerve agent, against Ghouta, a rebel-held suburb of Damascus, killing 1,429 men, women, and children, according to United States Government estimates, while injuring another 3,600 people;

Whereas, on September 14, 2013, the Assad regime agreed to enter the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, done at Paris January 13, 1993, and entered into force April 29, 1997 (referred to in this Resolution as the “Chemical Weapons Convention”) and to allow a joint mission between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (referred to in this Resolution as the “OPCW-UN”) to oversee the removal and elimination of Syria’s chemical weapons program;

Whereas, on September 27, 2013, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2118, which endorsed the destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons program and agreed that in the event of non-compliance, it would take action under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations;

Whereas, on October 16, 2013, the OPCW-UN was formally established to investigate and destroy Syria’s chemical weapons program and stockpiles;

Whereas, on June 23, 2014, the OPCW-UN announced that the last of Syria’s declared chemical weapon stockpile had been shipped out of Syria for destruction;

Whereas, on September 30, 2014, the OPCW-UN announced that it had completed its mandate and officially ended operations;

Whereas on October 14, 2013, the Syria Government entered into the Chemical Weapons Convention;

Whereas the Chemical Weapons Convention has 192 member states and bans all chemical weapons;

Whereas, the Assad regime was subsequently accused of committing more chemical weapons attacks on Syrian civilians in opposition-held areas by using chlorine-based chemical weapons, in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention;

Whereas on August 7, 2015, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2235, which established the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism to identify which individuals and entities were responsible for the use of chlorine-based chemical weapons attacks in Syria;

Whereas, on October 27, 2016, the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism definitively confirmed that the Assad regime was responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria in Talmenes in April 2014, in Qmenas in March 2015, and in Sarmin in March 2016;

Whereas, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2319 on November 17, 2016, which renewed the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism mandate for one year;

Whereas, the Russian Federation, along with China, blocked a United Nations Security

Council Resolution on February 28, 2017, which would have implemented a sanctions regime against the Assad regime for its use of chemical weapons;

Whereas, on the morning of April 4, 2017, another chemical weapons attack took place in the town of Khan Sheikhoun in Idlib Province, killing at least 58 people, including 11 children, according to the Syrian Observatory For Human Rights;

Whereas Human Rights Watch reported that dozens of people showed symptoms consistent with exposure to chemicals after aircraft attacked the town;

Whereas the Assad regime is the only entity operating in Syria that the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism has confirmed use of aircraft to launch chemical weapons attacks;

Whereas, United States Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley announced that the United Nations Security Council would hold an emergency meeting on April 5, 2017, to discuss the chemical weapons attack in Idlib province;

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) holds the Assad regime responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including its confirmed use of chemical weapons;

(2) condemns Russia for repeatedly blocking collective response to Bashar al-Assad’s confirmed use of chemical weapons through the United Nations Security Council;

(3) calls on the United Nations Security Council to take immediate, decisive action in response to the Assad regime’s continued use of chemical weapons;

(4) supports the critical work of the United Nations-Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons Joint Investigative Mechanism;

(5) expresses alarm that the continued use of chemical weapons by the Assad regime undermines the integrity of the Chemical Weapons Convention;

(6) reiterates that Bashar al-Assad has lost legitimacy as Syria’s leader; and

(7) insists that Bashar al-Assad must be held accountable for his war crimes and crimes against humanity.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 117—DESIG-
NATING THE WEEK OF APRIL 15,
2017, THROUGH APRIL 23, 2017, AS
“NATIONAL PARK WEEK”**

Mr. DAINES (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. UDALL, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. HEINRICH, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. WARNER, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. NELSON, Mr. PORTMAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BARASSO, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. ENZI, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. REED, Mr. COTTON, Mr. TESTER, Mr. CORKER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. KING, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. LEAHY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 117

Whereas, on March 1, 1872, Congress established Yellowstone National Park as the first national park for the enjoyment of the people of the United States;

Whereas, on August 25, 1916, Congress established the National Park Service with the mission to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, edu-

cation, and inspiration of current and future generations;

Whereas, in 2017, the National Park Service began its second century of stewardship of the National Park System after the 2016 National Park Service Centennial, which celebrated 100 years of the work of the National Park Service to protect and manage the majestic landscapes, hallowed battlefields, and iconic cultural and historical sites of the United States;

Whereas the units of the National Park System span from Maine to Hawaii and Alaska and many of the units embody the rich natural heritage of the United States, reflect a unique national story through people and places, and offer countless opportunities for recreation, volunteerism, cultural exchange, education, civic engagement, and exploration;

Whereas the national parks of the United States attracted record-breaking visitation during the National Park Service Centennial, with 331,000,000 recreational visits to these incredible places in 2016;

Whereas the dedicated employees of the National Park Service carry out their mission to protect the national parks of the United States so that the vibrant culture, diverse wildlife, and priceless resources of the parks will endure for perpetuity; and

Whereas the people of the United States have inherited the remarkable legacy of the National Park System and are entrusted with its preservation as the United States marks the beginning of the second century of the National Park System: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of April 15, 2017, through April 23, 2017, as “National Park Week”; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States and the world to visit and experience the treasured national parks of the United States.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, as a fifth-generation Montanan who grew up just a short drive from our Nation’s first national park, Yellowstone National Park, and as chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, I am excited to introduce this resolution to reassure the public that Congress recognizes the remarkable value that our National Parks bring to our national heritage. From America’s hallowed battlefields in Gettysburg and Fredericksburg, to the glacial peaks, geysers, and big game in my home State of Montana, to the ancient cultural resources, volcanoes, and marine life of Hawaii and all across the plains, many of the units of the National Park System bring remarkable opportunities for cultural education and outdoor recreation for people from around the world to enjoy. I am excited to be joined by ranking member MAZIE HIRONO and over 30 of our bipartisan colleagues from Alaska to Maine and Florida in introducing this resolution. The support of this resolution is a reflection that our National Parks bridge political divides and make our Nation uniquely American. As the National Park System begins its second century this year, we have seen record visitation with 331 million visits in 2016, but record visitation also brings additional strain on the National Park Service’s failing infrastructure. I am hopeful

that Congress, the Trump administration and future administrations will continue to invest in our National parks to ensure their legacy endures for our children and generations to come.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 118—CON-
DEMNING HATE CRIME AND ANY
OTHER FORM OF RACISM, RELI-
GIOUS OR ETHNIC BIAS, DIS-
CRIMINATION, INCITEMENT TO
VIOLENCE, OR ANIMUS TAR-
GETING A MINORITY IN THE
UNITED STATES**

Ms. HARRIS (for herself, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 118

Whereas, in the past several years, violent crimes, threats of violence, and other incidents of hate-motivated targeting of religious, racial, and ethnic minorities have increased across the United States;

Whereas, in 2015, hate crimes targeting Muslims in the United States increased by 67 percent, reaching a level of violence targeting Muslim Americans that the United States had not experienced since the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

Whereas, in 2015, anti-Semitic incidents increased in the United States for the second straight year, according to the Anti-Defamation League's 2015 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents, which describes trends such as the tripling of assaults targeting Jews since 2012 and the rise of online harassment and hate speech directed at Jewish journalists and individuals through social media;

Whereas, in 2015, anti-Semitic incidents at institutions of higher education nearly doubled compared to the number of those incidents in 2014, and during the 2016-2017 school year there has been an increase in white supremacist activity on college campuses across the United States, according to the Anti-Defamation League;

Whereas, in 2015, among single-bias hate crime incidents in the United States, 59.2 percent of victims were targeted due to racial, ethnic, or ancestry bias, and among those victims, 52.2 percent were victims of crimes motivated by their offenders' anti-Black or anti-African American bias, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

Whereas, in 2017, there have been more than 100 reported bomb threats against Jewish community centers, Jewish day schools, and other Jewish organizations and institutions in more than 38 States;

Whereas, in 2017, Islamic centers and mosques have been burned in the States of Texas, Washington, and Florida, and Jewish cemeteries have been desecrated in the States of Missouri and Pennsylvania;

Whereas, in 2017, there has been harassment and hate-based violence against individuals who are perceived to be Arab or Muslim, including members of South Asian communities in the United States, and Hindu and Sikh Americans have been the target of hate-based violence targeting religious minorities; and

Whereas, on February 28, 2017, President Donald Trump, before a joint session of Congress, acknowledged threats targeting Jewish community centers and the vandalism of Jewish cemeteries, and stated that "we are a country that stands united in condemning hate and evil in all of its very ugly forms": Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) affirms that the United States stands united in condemning hate and evil in all forms;

(2) rejects hate-motivated crime as an attack on the fabric of the society of the United States and the ideals of pluralism and respect;

(3) condemns hate crime and any other form of racism, religious or ethnic bias, discrimination, incitement to violence, or animus targeting a minority in the United States;

(4) calls on Federal law enforcement officials, working with State and local officials—

(A) to expeditiously investigate all credible reports of hate crimes and incidents and threats against minorities in the United States; and

(B) to hold the perpetrators of those crimes, incidents, or threats accountable and bring the perpetrators to justice;

(5) encourages the Department of Justice and other Federal agencies—

(A) to work to improve the reporting of hate crimes; and

(B) to emphasize the importance of the agencies' collection and reporting of data pursuant to Federal law;

(6) encourages the development of an inter-agency task force led by the Attorney General to collaborate on the development of effective strategies and efforts to detect and deter hate crime in order to protect minority communities; and

(7) calls on the executive branch—

(A) to continue to offer Federal assistance that may be available for victims of hate crimes; and

(B) to continue to carry out safety and preparedness programs for religious institutions, places of worship, and other institutions that have been targeted because of the affiliation of the institutions with any particular religious, racial, or ethnic minority in the United States.

**AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO
MEET**

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I have 7 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 ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 5, 2017, at 2:30 p.m.

**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold an Executive Session during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 5, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building.

**COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC
WORKS**

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 5, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS**

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, in order to conduct a hearing entitled "Nomination of Scott Gottlieb, MD, to serve as Commissioner of Food and Drugs" on Wednesday, April 5, 2017, at 10 a.m., in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 5, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in order to conduct a hearing entitled "Improving Border Security and Public Health."

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC POLICY

The Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Policy is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 at 3 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "The Current State of Retirement Security in the United States."

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA AND GLOBAL HEALTH

The Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 5, 2017, at 2 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled "A Progress Report on Conflict Minerals."

**MEASURES READ THE FIRST
TIME—S. 861 AND H.R. 1301**

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I understand there are two bills at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the first time en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 861) to provide for the compensation of Federal employees affected by lapses in appropriations.

A bill (H.R. 1301) making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017, and for other purposes.

Mr. GARDNER. I now ask for a second reading, and I object to my own request, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bills will receive their second reading on the next legislative day.

**CONDEMNING HATE CRIME AND
ANY OTHER FORM OF RACISM,
RELIGIOUS OR ETHNIC BIAS, DIS-
CRIMINATION, INCITEMENT TO
VIOLENCE, OR ANIMUS TAR-
GETING A MINORITY IN THE
UNITED STATES**

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 118, submitted earlier today.