

Of course, parties subject to disciplinary proceedings have no incentive to consent to publicizing their alleged wrongdoing and thus these proceedings typically remain cloaked behind a veil of secrecy. In addition, the Board cannot publicize the results of its disciplinary proceedings until after the appeals process has been completely exhausted, which can often take several years.

Concealing PCAOB disciplinary proceedings from the public creates a lack of transparency that invites abuse and undermines the Congressional intent behind the PCAOB, which was to shine a bright light on auditing firms and practices, and to bolster the accountability of auditors of public companies to the investing public.

Over the years, some bad actors have used this loophole to shield themselves from public scrutiny and accountability. Former PCAOB Chairman James Doty repeatedly stated in testimony provided to both the Senate and House of Representatives that the secrecy of the proceedings “has a variety of unfortunate consequences” and that such secrecy is harmful to investors, the auditing profession, and the public at large.

For example, an accounting firm continued to issue no fewer than 29 additional audit reports on public companies without those companies knowing that it was subject to a PCAOB disciplinary proceeding. Disturbingly, these investors and the public company clients of that audit firm were deprived of important information about the proceeding against the firm and the substance of any violations. There are other critical reasons why the Board’s enforcement proceedings should be open and transparent.

First, the incentive to litigate cases in order to shield conduct from public scrutiny as long as possible frustrates the process and requires both litigants and the PCAOB to expend needless resources.

Second, agencies such as the SEC have found that open and transparent disciplinary proceedings can be valuable because they inform peer audit firms of the type of activity that could lead to enforcement action by the regulator. In effect, transparent proceedings can serve as a deterrent to misconduct because of a perceived increase in the likelihood of “getting caught.” Accordingly, the audit industry as a whole would also benefit from timely, public, and non-secret enforcement proceedings.

Our bill will make hearings by the PCAOB, and all related notices, orders, and motions, transparent and available to the public unless otherwise ordered by the Board. This would more closely align the PCAOB’s procedures with those of the SEC for analogous matters.

Increasing transparency and accountability of audit firms subject to PCAOB disciplinary proceedings bolsters investor confidence in our financial markets

and better protects companies from problematic auditors. I hope our colleagues will join Senator GRASSLEY and me in supporting this legislation to enhance transparency in the PCAOB’s enforcement process.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 174—EX-PRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE WEEK OF JUNE 1, 2019, THROUGH JUNE 9, 2019, AS “NATIONAL FISHING AND BOATING WEEK”

Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. PETERS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 174

Whereas more than 141,600,000 people in the United States go boating each year, including approximately 71,100,000 adults and 70,500,000 children;

Whereas, in 2018, the recreational boating industry contributed an estimated \$170,300,000,000 to the national economy in direct, indirect, and induced spending, supporting more than 35,000 businesses and 691,000 direct and indirect jobs in the United States;

Whereas the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the Department of Commerce estimated that recreational boating and fishing accounted for \$36,900,000,000 of real gross output in the United States in 2016;

Whereas 95 percent of boats sold in the United States are made in the United States;

Whereas there are approximately 1,300 active marine manufacturers in the United States, using materials and services contributed from all 50 States;

Whereas boaters are stewards of the environment, contributing approximately \$600,000,000 in excise taxes annually to the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, which funds habitat conservation and restoration efforts, preserving the natural resources of the United States for future generations; and

Whereas boating provides opportunities for families to be together, appeals to all age groups, and has a beneficial effect on the physical fitness and scholastic performance of those who participate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of the week of June 1, 2019, through June 9, 2019, as “National Fishing and Boating Week”; and

(2) recognizes that the recreational boating community and the boating industry of the United States should be commended for their numerous contributions to the economy of the United States, the well-being of United States citizens, and responsible environmental stewardship of water resources of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 175—SUPPORTING INCREASED AWARENESS OF SEPSIS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND APPROPRIATE INTERVENTION

Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. BLUNT) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 175

Whereas sepsis is a medical condition resulting from an immune system response to an infection;

Whereas the overwhelming response of the immune system to an infection can rapidly lead to tissue damage, organ failure, and death;

Whereas more than 1,700,000 individuals in the United States develop sepsis each year;

Whereas more than 270,000 individuals in the United States die from sepsis each year, which is more than the number of individuals who die from prostate cancer, breast cancer, and HIV/AIDS combined;

Whereas the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 1 in 3 patients who die in a hospital have sepsis;

Whereas, according to the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, sepsis is the most common diagnosis for inpatient hospital stays in the United States;

Whereas sepsis is the most expensive condition treated in hospitals in the United States, costing more than \$24,000,000,000 each year;

Whereas sepsis is the number 1 cause of hospital readmissions, generating more than \$2,000,000,000 in costs annually;

Whereas more than 80 percent of septic patients are septic upon admission to the hospital;

Whereas mortality rates from septic shock increase by up to 8 percent for every hour that treatment is delayed;

Whereas rapid diagnosis and treatment can prevent up to 80 percent of fatalities from sepsis; and

Whereas the combination of early detection of sepsis and appropriate interventions can significantly improve the chances of survival for patients with all types of sepsis: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) is committed to increasing awareness of sepsis and encouraging the education of patients, families, health care professionals, and government agencies on the critical importance of early diagnosis as the key for patients to survive sepsis; and

(2) supports innovative public-private partnerships and the pursuit of innovative financing tools, incentives, and other mechanisms to accelerate the pursuit of improved early detection and appropriate intervention for patients with sepsis.

SENATE RESOLUTION 176—CONDEMNING THE TERRORIST ATTACKS ON CHRISTIAN WORSHIPERS IN SRI LANKA ON EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2019, AND STANDING WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA TO ENCOURAGE THE PROTECTION AND PRESERVATION OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTIES

Mr. HAWLEY (for himself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. PERDUE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 176

Whereas, on the morning of April 21, 2019, Easter Sunday, 7 Islamist suicide bombers carried out coordinated attacks on—

(1) the Shrine of St. Anthony Church in Colombo, Sri Lanka;

(2) St. Sebastian’s Church in Negombo, Sri Lanka;

(3) Cinnamon Grand Hotel in Colombo, Sri Lanka;