

SENATE RESOLUTION 497—COMMEMORATING THE LIFE OF DR. LI WENLIANG AND CALLING FOR TRANSPARENCY AND COOPERATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. GARDNER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 497

Whereas Dr. Li Wenliang was a 34-year-old ophthalmologist working in Wuhan, China;

Whereas research indicates that the first patient infected with the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) exhibited symptoms on December 1, 2019;

Whereas, in December 2019, Dr. Li notified his associates in the medical community in China about the outbreak of 2019-nCoV;

Whereas, after raising concerns about the spread of 2019-nCoV, Dr. Li was summoned by Chinese officials and forced to sign a statement retracting his warnings about the virus and confessing that he had spread illegal rumors;

Whereas Chinese government authorities played down dangers to the public for weeks as 2019-nCoV continued to spread, with more than 42,000 confirmed cases in China alone and at least 1,000 deaths reported as of February 11, 2020;

Whereas Dr. Li continued to work as an ophthalmologist at Wuhan Central Hospital despite his knowledge of the outbreak, and appears to have been infected himself with 2019-nCoV after coming in contact with a patient he was treating for glaucoma;

Whereas, on the morning of February 7, 2020, in the hospital where he worked, Dr. Li Wenliang died after contracting 2019-nCoV;

Whereas, before he passed away, Dr. Li stated, "If the officials had disclosed information about the epidemic earlier, I think it would have been a lot better. There should be more openness and transparency.";

Whereas the people of China expressed their grief and anger on social media after the death of Dr. Li, with the phrase "I want freedom of speech" emerging as a top trending topic on the Weibo platform;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China continues to limit free expression, and stepped up censorship after online criticism and investigative reports by Chinese journalists suggesting that officials underestimated and underplayed the threat of 2019-nCoV;

Whereas Freedom House has listed China as the "worst abuser of internet freedom" in the world for the fourth year in a row, and in the aftermath of the outbreak of 2019-nCoV, there are numerous and well-documented instances of the "Great Firewall" of China suppressing the free flow of critical and medically important information about the pandemic;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China has endangered the people of Taiwan and people around the world by using its influence to limit Taiwan's access to the benefits of membership in the World Health Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization, particularly during the current outbreak; and

Whereas the World Health Organization has declared 2019-nCoV a Public Health Emergency of International Concern: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) honors the life and contributions of Dr. Li Wenliang, and extends heartfelt sympathy

to his family and to the families of all who have passed during this outbreak;

(2) expresses its support for the people of China as they face this unprecedented public health challenge;

(3) expresses gratitude to Dr. Li and all Chinese medical personnel and citizens for their efforts to spread awareness of 2019-nCoV and treat individuals who have contracted the disease;

(4) calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China—

(A) to be open and transparent in investigating and responding to 2019-nCoV;

(B) to ensure that Chinese citizens and the international community have free and unfettered access, without censorship or social media controls, to information about 2019-nCoV;

(C) to cooperate fully with the United States Government, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in providing medical access, sharing information, and developing treatment to combat 2019-nCoV;

(D) to cooperate fully with other governments, especially those in Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other regions whose health systems already face high burdens and are operating from a lower base of capability, as well as international health organizations in combating 2019-nCoV; and

(E) to cease efforts to exclude Taiwan from international organizations, including the World Health Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization;

(5) affirms the vital importance of Dr. Li's belief that "[t]here should be more openness and transparency" in China;

(6) affirms that freedom of expression is a social good that enables experts to sound public health warnings and helps citizens ensure that their government addresses weaknesses in crisis response; and

(7) strongly supports the people of China in their demand for freedom of speech.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 36—SUPPORTING THE FARMERS BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry:

S. CON. RES. 36

Whereas the Center for American Progress reported mergers and acquisitions have increased corporate concentration across agricultural markets, including monopolizing 85 percent market share of the corn seed market through the 4 largest firms in the seed sector;

Whereas according to the Open Markets Institute, the excessive concentration in the poultry industry has resulted in half of chicken farmers working in regions dominated by only 1 or 2 processing monopolies, leaving them with little, if any, bargaining power for better contracts or growing terms;

Whereas the Organization for Competitive Markets reported cattle prices paid to farmers from 2013 to 2016 dropped by 13 percent, while during the same period prices paid for beef by consumers at the grocery store increased by 4 percent, leading them to conclude that the prices paid to farmers and by consumers are not the result of a fair and just market;

Whereas corporate concentration and abusive practices in America's food and farm sector are at detrimental highs, harming consumers, rural communities and family

farmers and ranchers, including historically underserved farmers and ranchers, by—

(1) diminishing the availability of seed choice;

(2) limiting the accessibility of domestic farming lands;

(3) increasing food prices and market manipulation; and

(4) hindering access to traditional foodways and agricultural practices;

Whereas according to the American Farm Bureau Federation, farm loan delinquencies are at a 6-year high and have increased over the past 24 quarters;

Whereas increasing farm debt, decreasing incomes, and deteriorating overall conditions for family farmers and ranchers have caused farm foreclosures and chapter 12 bankruptcies to steadily increase over the past year;

Whereas, according to the 2019 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report, agriculture, forestry, and other land use activities accounted for 23 percent of net global anthropogenic emissions contributing to human-induced climate change, which is resulting in the ongoing deterioration of food systems, including irreversible impacts to the traditional farming practices and foodways of indigenous peoples and their lands;

Whereas, according to the Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting, the foreign acquisition of and increasing investments in American farmlands and agribusiness presents a risk to food system security and contributes to increasing prices of the country's farmland beyond the financial ability of local residents to purchase domestic farm land; and

Whereas monopolization and an increase of large corporations and foreign interests in America's farming sector, combined with a changing climate, creates an unprecedented negative impact on the regional economic strength and security of rural and Tribal communities: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),*

**SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

That—

(1) the Congress recognizes the many contributions that family farmers and ranchers, including historically underserved farmers and ranchers, have made to America's agricultural industry, local food production, food sovereignty, rich variety of the country's abundant food supply, and traditional and cultural agricultural practices; and

(2) it is the sense of the Congress that the Federal Government should encourage support for family farmers and ranchers, in rural communities and on indigenous lands, and ensure access to open and fair agricultural markets in the United States, by introducing the Farmers Bill of Rights.

**SEC. 2. FARMERS BILL OF RIGHTS.**

The Farmer's Bill of Rights is as follows:

(1) **RIGHT TO FAIR, OPEN MARKETS.**—There must be a competitive open marketplace to buy seeds, fertilizer, and other goods, and to sell produce, livestock, and meat for all people. It has become nearly impossible for independent farmers, processors, seed suppliers, mechanics, and other rural businesses to compete with multinational monopolies. Farmers need strong antitrust safeguards.

(2) **RIGHT TO FEED THEIR COMMUNITY.**—Multinational corporations have taken control of the country's food system by shutting out independent processing and distribution businesses, sequentially locking farmers out of their local markets and denying domestic consumers local, regional, and culturally traditional foods. In the United States, Native Americans suffer from the highest rates of food insecurity with African