

President Vladimir Voronin has recently expressed his desire to sign an accord to strengthen relations between Moldova and the European Union this year. Until the United States terminates application of Jackson-Vanik on Moldova, the U.S. will not benefit from Moldova's market access commitments nor can it resort to WTO dispute resolution mechanisms. While all other WTO members currently enjoy these benefits, the U.S. does not.

The Republic of Moldova has been evaluated every year and granted normal trade relations with the United States through annual presidential waivers from the effects of Jackson-Vanik. The Moldovan constitution guarantees its citizens the right to emigrate and this right is respected in practice. Most emigration restrictions were eliminated in 1991 and virtually no problems with emigration have been reported in the 16 years since independence. More specifically, Moldova does not impose emigration restrictions on members of the Jewish community. Synagogues function openly and without harassment. As a result, the administration finds that Moldova is in full compliance with Jackson-Vanik's provisions.

Since declaring independence from the Soviet Union in 1992, Moldova has enacted a series of democratic and free market reforms. Parliamentary elections in 2005 and local elections in 2007 generally complied with international standards for democratic elections.

Moldova has also contributed constructively towards a resolution of the long-standing separatist conflict in the country's Transnistria region, most recently by proposing a series of confidence-building measures and working groups. In addition, trade increased between the two parties by 30 percent in 2007.

The United States and Moldova have established a strong record of achievement in security cooperation. In 1997 the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction Program responded to a Moldovan request for assistance. The U.S. purchased and secured 14 nuclear-capable MiG-29Cs from Moldova. These fighter aircraft were built by the former Soviet Union to launch nuclear weapons. Moldova expressed concern that these aircraft were unsecure due to the lack of funds and equipment necessary to ensure they were not stolen or smuggled out of the country. Specifically, emissaries from Iran had shown great interest and had attempted to acquire the aircraft. These planes were not destroyed. They were disassembled and shipped to Wright Patterson Air Force Base because they can be used by American experts for research purposes.

Moldova has made small, but important, troop contributions in Iraq. These contributions include significant demining capabilities and contingents of combat troops. I am pleased that the United States remains prepared to assist in weapons and ammunition dis-

posal and force relocation assistance to help deal with the costs of military realignments in Moldova and to assist with military downsizing and reforms.

One of the areas where we can deepen U.S.-Moldovan relations is bilateral trade. In light of its adherence to freedom of emigration requirements, compliance with threat reduction and cooperation in the global war on terrorism, the products of Moldova should not be subject to the sanctions of Jackson-Vanik. The U.S. must remain committed and engaged in assisting Moldova in pursuing economic and development reforms. The government in Chisinau still has important work to do in these critical areas. The support and encouragement of the U.S. and the international community will be key to encouraging the Government of Moldova to take the necessary steps to initiate reform. The permanent waiver of Jackson-Vanik and establishment of permanent normal trade relations will be the foundation on which further progress in a burgeoning economic and energy partnership can be made.

I am hopeful that my colleagues will join me in supporting this important legislation. It is essential that we act promptly to bolster this important relationship and promote stability in this region.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 22—RECOGNIZING THE GOALS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK AND HONORING THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. VITTER (for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 22

Whereas Catholic schools in the United States have received international acclaim for academic excellence while providing students with lessons that extend far beyond the classroom;

Whereas Catholic schools present a broad curriculum that emphasizes the lifelong development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in the young people of the United States;

Whereas Catholic schools in the United States today educate 2,270,913 students and maintain a student-to-teacher ratio of 14 to 1;

Whereas the faculty members of Catholic schools teach a highly diverse body of students;

Whereas the graduation rate for all Catholic school students is 95 percent;

Whereas 83 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college;

Whereas Catholic schools produce students strongly dedicated to their faith, values, families, and communities by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual character and moral development; and

Whereas in the 1972 pastoral message concerning Catholic education, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated, "Education is one of the most important ways by

which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny, but also the destinies of the many communities in which he lives." Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the goals of Catholic Schools Week, an event cosponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that recognizes the vital contributions of thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States; and

(2) commends Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the United States for their ongoing contributions to education, and for the vital role they play in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 23—HONORING THE LIFE OF ANDREW WYETH

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. SPECTER, Ms. SNOWE, and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 23

Whereas Andrew Wyeth was one of the most popular American artists of the twentieth century, whose paintings presented to the world his impressions of rural American landscapes and lives;

Whereas Andrew Wyeth was born in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania on July 12, 1917, where he spent much of his life and where today stands the Brandywine River Museum, a museum dedicated to the works of the Wyeth family;

Whereas Andrew Wyeth died the morning of January 16, 2009, at the age of 91, in his home in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania;

Whereas it is the intent of the Senate to recognize and pay tribute to the life of Andrew Wyeth, his passion for painting, his contribution to the world of art, and his deep understanding of the human condition;

Whereas Andrew Wyeth was born the son of famed illustrator N.C. Wyeth and grew up surrounded by artists in an environment that encouraged imagination and free-thinking;

Whereas Andrew Wyeth became an icon who focused his work on family and friends in Chadds Ford and in coastal Maine, where he spent his summers and where he met Christina Olson, the subject of his famed painting 'Christina's World';

Whereas Andrew Wyeth's paintings were immensely popular among the public but sometimes disparaged by critics for their lack of color and bleak landscapes portraying isolation and alienation;

Whereas Andrew Wyeth's works could be controversial, as they sparked dialogue and disagreement in the art world concerning the natures of realism and modernism;

Whereas Andrew Wyeth was immensely patriotic and an independent thinker who broke with many of his peers on the issues of the day;

Whereas Andrew Wyeth was a beloved figure in Chadds Ford and had his own seat at the corner table of the Chadds Ford Inn, where reproductions of his art line the walls;

Whereas Andrew Wyeth received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1963 and the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor in 1988;