

of their efforts with the core functions of other department components, such as the export-promotion activities of the International Trade Administration, the economic analysis of the Economics and Statistics Administration, and the stewardship of technological innovation by the National Telecommunications & Information Administration.

That is why I am today introducing bipartisan legislation with my Commerce Committee colleague Senator Begich to establish a Job Creation Coordinator at the department. Answering directly to the Secretary of Commerce, the Coordinator would not only ensure that each agency is carrying out its primary mission in a way that maximizes U.S. employment, but also would identify and implement opportunities to link separate programs being carried out by the agencies in a way that ensures that department resources are being spent in a manner which guarantees the utmost job creation per dollar appropriated.

Specifically, the Jobs Coordinator would be responsible for making an initial assessment of the private sector jobs currently being maintained or created by Commerce Department programs; formulating an action plan for improving these figures under existing statutory authority; liaising with Congress about additional authority which would enhance the job maintaining and creating abilities of Commerce Department programs; and, overseeing the implementation of new department policies or statutory authorities intended to enhance the department's job maintenance and creation potential.

The millions of Americans who have lost their livelihoods to the economic downturn, or whose jobs are at risk amidst the turmoil, deserve the utmost effort by their government to put an end to the lay-offs and get people back to work. I urge my colleagues to join me in this vital effort by supporting this legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 98—DESIGNATING EACH OF APRIL 15, 2009, AND APRIL 15, 2010, AS “NATIONAL TEA PARTY DAY”

Mr. VITTER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 98

Whereas the taxpayers of the United States understand that the so-called “stimulus bill”, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5; 123 Stat. 115), included a laundry list of spending projects;

Whereas the taxpayers of the United States understand that the bailouts of Wall Street by the United States Government have been ineffective and a waste of taxpayer funding;

Whereas the taxpayers of the United States agree that the United States Government should stop wasteful spending, reduce

the tax burden on families and businesses, and focus on policies that will lead to job creation and economic growth; and

Whereas taxpayers in the United States are expressing their opposition to high taxes and skyrocketing spending by the United States Government by organizing “Taxed Enough Already” parties, also known as “TEA” parties: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates each of April 15, 2009, and April 15, 2010, as “National TEA Party Day”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 99—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF UZBEKISTAN SHOULD IMMEDIATELY ENFORCE ITS EXISTING DOMESTIC LEGISLATION AND FULFILL ITS INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS AIMED AT ENDING STATE-SPONSORED FORCED AND CHILD LABOR

Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. BINGAMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 99

Whereas the United States has a growing strategic involvement in Central Asia;

Whereas the interests of the United States in Central Asia, including the operations in Afghanistan, can only be secured by the presence in the region of viable, vigorous democracies that fully guarantee the economic and social rights of all people, including children;

Whereas the Government of Uzbekistan continues to commit serious human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrest and detention, torture in custody, and the severe restriction of freedom of speech, the press, religion, independent political activity, and nongovernmental organizations;

Whereas the Government of Uzbekistan detains thousands of people for political or religious reasons;

Whereas Uzbekistan is the third largest exporter of cotton in the world, and cotton is 1 of the largest sources of export revenue for Uzbekistan;

Whereas Uzbekistan has signed and properly deposited with the International Labour Organization (ILO) the Minimum Age Convention, convened at Geneva June 6, 1973 (International Labour Organization Convention Number 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, convened at Geneva June 1, 1999 (International Labour Organization Convention Number 182);

Whereas the Government of Uzbekistan issued a decree in September 2008 that ostensibly prohibited the practice of forced and child labor, but the Government of Uzbekistan sent schoolchildren to harvest cotton within weeks after issuing the decree;

Whereas the 2008 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices by the Department of State stated that large-scale compulsory mobilization of youth and students to harvest cotton continued in most rural areas of Uzbekistan and that the students and youths were poorly paid, living conditions were poor, and children were exposed to harmful chemicals and pesticides applied in the cotton fields;

Whereas research by the Environmental Justice Foundation indicates that each year hundreds of thousands of schoolchildren from Uzbekistan, some as young as 7 years old, are forced by the Government of Uzbekistan to work in the national cotton harvest for up to 3 months;

Whereas a policy briefing published by the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in 2008, entitled “Invisible to the World”, used extrapolations based on surveys in 6 areas that took place in 2006 and 2007 to conclude that approximately 2,400,000 schoolchildren from Uzbekistan between the ages of 10 and 15 are forcibly recruited into the annual cotton harvest;

Whereas the British Broadcasting Company undertook an investigation in late 2007 and found that the Government of Uzbekistan continues to rely on the state-orchestrated mass mobilization of children to bring in the cotton harvest;

Whereas, in 2008, reports of child labor in the cotton fields were received by multiple media outlets and local human rights activists from the major cotton-growing regions in Uzbekistan, including Djizzak, Namangan, Samarkand, and Ferghana, among others;

Whereas a report by the Rapid Reaction Group indicates that schoolchildren who cannot fulfill their daily picking quotas are forced to make up the difference in cash from the pockets of their own families;

Whereas the Government of Uzbekistan detained and harassed an independent journalist who accompanied a diplomat from the United States on a research trip to Syr Daria province, where the diplomat photographed children working in the cotton fields;

Whereas the children working in the cotton fields are stressed by the pressure to fulfill cotton quotas, physically abused by arduous work in the cotton fields, and subjected to poor and hazardous living conditions during the harvest period;

Whereas international brands such as Gap, H&M, Levi Strauss, Limited Brands, Target, Tesco, and Wal-Mart have banned cotton from Uzbekistan from their products and instructed their suppliers to comply with the ban;

Whereas the Government of Uzbekistan allowed a survey to be conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), under the strict supervision of the Government of Uzbekistan, yet the survey was not conducted during the fall harvest season (a time when the likelihood of children working in the fields is significantly greater);

Whereas the Government of Uzbekistan refused to fully cooperate with the ILO and the International Cotton Advisory Committee to undertake an independent technical assessment of forced child labor during the fall 2008 harvest season; and

Whereas the ILO has conducted independent investigations into forced and child labor in more than 60 countries around the world, including developing and developed countries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the Government of Uzbekistan should—

(1) immediately enforce its existing domestic legislation and fulfill its international commitments aimed at ending state-sponsored forced and child labor;

(2) allow a comprehensive independent investigation into forced and child labor in the cotton sector during the fall 2009 harvest season by the International Labour Organization;

(3) in consultation and cooperation with the International Labour Organization, develop a credible and comprehensive action plan based on the findings of the International Labour Organization and commit the resources necessary to end forced and child labor in the cotton sector; and

(4) take concrete steps towards systemic reform that will—

(A) ensure greater freedom and better returns from their labor for cotton-producing farmers; and

(B) enable such farmers to employ adults in the cotton sector.