

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 540

Recognizing Human Rights Day on December 10, 2025, and commemorating the 77th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Celebration of “Human Rights Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 10, 2025

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Recognizing Human Rights Day on December 10, 2025, and commemorating the 77th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Celebration of “Human Rights Day”.

Whereas the Senate passed S. Res. 731 during the 115th Congress, which designated December 10, 2018, as “Human Rights Day”;

Whereas December 10, 2025, marks the 77th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948;

Whereas the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a landmark document that represents the first comprehen-

sive agreement among countries regarding the inalienable rights and freedoms of all human beings;

Whereas the state of global human rights and civil liberties has declined during the past 2 decades, with Freedom House notably tracking 19 consecutive years of decline in rights and freedoms around the world;

Whereas Freedom House reports that political rights and civil liberties diminished in 2024 in 60 countries and improved in only 34 countries;

Whereas the Human Rights Funders Network reported that major cuts to foreign aid programs promoting human rights is projected to decline by up to \$1,900,000,000 annually by 2026;

Whereas conflict and suffering continues in Sudan, Yemen, the Central African Republic, Ukraine, the Middle East, Haiti, and other countries and territories;

Whereas the Department of State estimates that 1,000,000 individuals are unjustly behind bars as political prisoners for exercising human rights and fundamental freedoms because of their race, religion, or ethnicity, or due to their private relationships;

Whereas authoritarian regimes continue to imprison innocent civilians;

Whereas religious minorities, religious freedom advocates, and missionaries are unjustly targeted, detained, and repressed for exercising their freedom to believe or not to believe;

Whereas, in many countries, political opposition figures and civil society members continue to be unjustly detained for their role in demanding free and fair elections and lead-

ing peaceful democratic protests in opposition to illiberal regimes;

Whereas anti-corruption prosecutors and pro-democracy activists are arbitrarily imprisoned on baseless charges for their advocacy of greater judicial independence and transparency in countries where judicial systems are weaponized against human rights advocates;

Whereas authoritarian governments and non-state actors around the world enforce systems of impunity and discrimination to systematically dismantle women's and girls' access to their civil liberties and imprison female human rights defenders;

Whereas journalists face political imprisonment for fighting to report the truth, advocating for greater protections for the freedom of the press, and holding governments accountable to their citizens;

Whereas awareness of human rights—

- (1) is essential to the realization of fundamental freedoms;
- (2) promotes equality among all people;
- (3) contributes to preventing conflict and human rights violations;
- (4) leads to communities that are more stable, more secure, and safer; and
- (5) enhances participation in, and resilience of, fellow democracies;

Whereas Congress has a proud and consistent bipartisan history of promoting internationally recognized human rights; and

Whereas December 10 of each year is celebrated globally as “Human Rights Day”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates December 10, 2025, as “Human
3 Rights Day” and recognizes its global significance;

4 (2) recognizes the 77th anniversary of the Uni-
5 versal Declaration of Human Rights;

6 (3) reaffirms the Universal Declaration of
7 Human Rights;

8 (4) supports the work of civil society leaders
9 and human rights defenders globally;

10 (5) condemns the use of political imprisonment
11 as a tool of repression to restrict civil liberties and
12 human rights;

13 (6) calls upon governments around the world to
14 immediately and unconditionally release political
15 prisoners who are being unjustly detained for advo-
16 cating for human rights and civil society; and

17 (7) encourages the people of the United
18 States—

19 (A) to observe “Human Rights Day”; and

20 (B) to continue their commitment to up-
21 holding freedom, democracy, and human rights
22 around the world.

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