

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 444

Supporting the Global March Against Child Labor.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 1998

Mr. GEPHARDT (for himself, Mr. MILLER of California, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. VISCLOSKEY, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. VENTO, Mr. MATSUI, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. LANTOS, Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts, Mr. LAFALCE, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. OLVER, Mr. TORRES, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ, and Mr. BONIOR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Supporting the Global March Against Child Labor.

Whereas the International Labor Organization estimates that at least 250,000,000 children under the age of 15 are working around the world, many of them in dangerous jobs in industry, mining, and plantation agriculture;

Whereas nearly 50 percent of the children in Africa, 21 percent in Asia, and 17 percent in Latin America go to work without ever having seen the inside of a classroom;

Whereas the United States Secretary of Labor has conducted 4 detailed studies that document the growing scourge of

child labor in the global economy, including children as young as 5 who are making assorted products traded in the global marketplace;

Whereas many of these child laborers work long hours for little or no pay under abominable conditions, sacrificing their childhood, health, and well-being;

Whereas the number of children under age 15 who are working under horrible conditions and the scale of their suffering are increasing every year, despite the existence of international and national laws which purportedly bind virtually all national governments to prohibit the commercial exploitation of children;

Whereas Principle 9 of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations on November 20, 1959, states that “. . . the child shall not be admitted to employment before an appropriate minimum age; he shall in no case be caused or permitted to engage in any occupation or employment which would prejudice his health or education, or interfere with his physical, mental, or moral development . . .”;

Whereas children under the age of 15 in many countries still lack either the legal standing or practical means to protect themselves from exploitation in the workplace;

Whereas the prevalence of child labor in many developing countries is rooted in widespread poverty that is attributable to unemployment and underemployment among adults, precarious family incomes, low living standards, and insufficient education and training opportunities among adult workers and children;

Whereas the exploitative employment of children under the age of 15 deprives children of the opportunity for basic education and a brighter future;

Whereas the exploitative employment of children under the age of 15, often at pitifully low wages, ignores the importance of increasing jobs and purchasing power among adult workers as a catalyst to the development of internal markets and the achievement of broad-based, sustainable economic development, especially in many developing countries;

Whereas the Global March Against Child Labor has been organized by more than 700 nongovernmental organizations from all walks of life from the local to the international level as a massive global demonstration of concern and outcry for the eradication of the worst forms of child labor;

Whereas the mission of the Global March Against Child Labor is to “mobilize worldwide efforts to protect and promote the rights of all children, especially the right to receive a free, meaningful education and to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be damaging to the child’s physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development”;

Whereas portions of the Global March Against Child Labor will pass through 92 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, and Europe, reaching Washington, DC, in late May and culminating in Geneva, Switzerland in June; and

Whereas the Global March Against Child Labor promises to be the largest protest ever against the commercial exploitation of children in developed and developing countries

alike, involving millions of children and adults: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) condemns child labor exploitation wherever
3 it occurs in the United States and overseas;

4 (2) endorses and supports the Global March
5 Against Child Labor and applauds the efforts of the
6 organizers and participants in this historic undertak-
7 ing; and

8 (3) pledges to work for effective international
9 action to eradicate the worst forms of child labor by
10 the year 2000.

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