

sector and by local governments. I know you get requests from everyone to do something, but we need to control our activities and control our spending and yet do the things that are there that need to be done.

We have a great challenge and a great opportunity. Hopefully, we will be away for a year or so from the real intense politics in this body. The election is over. We might consider that for a year or so and really move ahead on those things that have merit rather than political impact.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

(Mr. THOMAS assumed the chair.)

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CHAMBLISS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONDEMNING REPRESSION OF THE IRANIAN BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY AND CALLING FOR EMANCIPATION OF IRANIAN BAHÁ'IS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of S. Con. Res. 78 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 78) condemning the repression of the Iranian Bahá'í community and calling for the emancipation of Iranian Bahá'ís.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment to the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the concurrent resolution, as amended, be agreed to, the amendment to the preamble be agreed to, the preamble, as amended, be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to this measure be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 4082) was agreed to, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 4082

(Purpose: To amend the resolution to update and reflect current events)

Beginning with page 5, line 22, strike all through page 6, line 7, and insert the following:

“(A) assert the concerns of the United States Government regarding violations by the Iranian Government of the rights of Iranian citizens, including members of the Bahá'í community;”.

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 78), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment (No. 4083) was agreed to, as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 4083

(Purpose: To update the preamble to reflect current events)

Insert after the fourth whereas clause the following:

“Whereas Iranian authorities destroyed a Bahá'í holy site, the tomb of Quddus, in February 2004, and the historic house of the father of the founder of the Bahá'í faith in June 2004, marking the first time in 25 years that Bahá'í sites have been destroyed;”.

Strike the tenth whereas clause that begins “Whereas as of June 2003” and insert the following:

“Whereas as of November 2004, one Bahá'í remains in an Iranian prison for converting from Islam to the Bahá'í faith in 1995;”.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to. The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. CON. RES. 78

Whereas in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, and 2000, Congress, by concurrent resolution, declared that it holds the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Bahá'í Faith;

Whereas in those resolutions and in numerous other appeals, Congress has deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Bahá'í community and has condemned the execution by Iran of more than 200 Bahá'ís and the disruptive imprisonment of thousands of others solely on account of their religious beliefs;

Whereas Iranian Bahá'ís are not permitted to elect their leaders, assemble or organize as a community, operate religious schools, or conduct other religious community activities that are guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217(A)(III) of December 10, 1948;

Whereas the continued denial of Bahá'í property rights by the Iranian Government is demonstrated by the confiscation by the Iranian Government of a multitude of Bahá'í community and private properties;

Whereas Iranian authorities destroyed a Bahá'í holy site, the tomb of Quddus, in February 2004, and the historic house of the father of the founder of the Bahá'í faith in June 2004, marking the first time in 25 years that Bahá'í sites have been destroyed;

Whereas the Government of Iran continues to deny individual Bahá'ís access to higher education and government employment, in addition to denying recognition and religious rights to the Bahá'í community;

Whereas because Bahá'ís have been banned from teaching and studying at Iranian universities since the Islamic Revolution, Bahá'ís established the Bahá'í Institute of Higher Education, or Bahá'í Open University, to provide educational opportunities to Bahá'í youth using volunteer faculty and a network of classrooms, libraries, and laboratories in private homes and buildings throughout Iran;

Whereas in September and October of 1998, officers of the Ministry of Information, the intelligence agency of the Iranian Government, arrested 36 faculty members of the Open University;

Whereas on July 19, 2002, Iranian Revolutionary Guards systematically disrupted student qualifying examinations for the Open University in 9 different districts by videotaping the proceedings, questioning the students, and confiscating examination papers and Bahá'í books;

Whereas the use of arbitrary arrests, suspended sentences, and short-term detentions against the Iranian Bahá'ís have become widespread;

Whereas as of November 2004, one Bahá'í remains in an Iranian prison for converting from Islam to the Bahá'í faith in 1995;

Whereas on October 10, 2003, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2003 to Shirin Ebadi for her efforts involving democracy and human rights, including advocating equal rights for the Bahá'í community in Iran;

Whereas the conclusions contained in the report of October 13, 2003, by the General Affairs and External Relations Council of the European Union, conveyed the continuing concern of the European Union about the violations of the Bahá'ís' right to freedom of religion, and urged the Iranian Government to comply with both the recommendations made in June 2003 by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and with the recommendations made in August 2003 by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination concerning injustice, particularly in relation to education, property rights, and employment; and

Whereas in the 2003 General Affairs and External Relations Council report, the European Union urged the Government of Iran to expedite reform on many fronts, while recognizing the meetings held in 2003 and the planned meetings that have been welcomed by the Government of Iran, to be an important step toward progress: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), that Congress—

(1) continues to hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding all the rights of its nationals, including members of the Bahá'í community, in a manner consistent with Iran's obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217(A)(III) of December 10, 1984, and other international agreements guaranteeing the civil and political rights of Iranian citizens;

(2) condemns the repressive anti-Bahá'í policies and actions of the Government of Iran, including the denial of legal recognition to the Bahá'í community and the basic rights to organize, elect leaders, educate youth, and conduct the normal activities of a law-abiding religious community;

(3) expresses concern that individual Bahá'ís continue to suffer from severely repressive and discriminatory government actions, solely on account of their religion;

(4) urges the Government of Iran to permit Bahá'í students to attend Iranian universities and Bahá'í faculty to teach at Iranian universities, to return the property confiscated from the Bahá'í Open University, and to permit the Open University to continue to function;

(5) urges the Government of Iran to implement fully the conclusions and recommendations on the emancipation of the Iranian Bahá'í community made by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and also to comply with the recommendations made in August 2003 by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination;

(6) urges the Government of Iran to extend to the Bahá'í community the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217(A)(III) of December 10, 1984, and other international covenants of human rights, including the freedoms of thought, conscience, and religion, and equal protection of the law;

(7) calls upon the President to continue to—

(A) assert the concerns of the United States Government regarding violations by the Iranian Government of the rights of Iranian citizens, including members of the Bahá'í community;

(B) emphasize that the United States regards the human rights practices of the Government of Iran, including its treatment of the Bahá'í community and other religious minorities, as a significant factor in the development of relations between the United States and Iran;

(C) urge the Government of Iran to emancipate the Bahá'í community by granting those rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 217(A)(III) of December 10, 1984, and other international covenants on human rights; and

(D) cooperate with international organizations, including the United Nations and its agencies, in efforts to protect the religious rights of the Bahá'ís and other minorities through joint appeals to the Government of Iran; and

(8) calls upon the President to—

(A) initiate an active and consistent dialogue with other governments who are influential with Iran in order to persuade the Government of Iran to rectify its human rights practices; and

(B) urge the European Union to use its relationship with Iran to address and advance these fundamental human rights issues.

PROVIDING FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEE ELECTIONS TO MAKE, MODIFY, AND TERMINATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THRIFT SAVINGS FUND

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4324, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4324) to amend chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code, to provide for Federal employees to make elections to make, modify, and terminate contributions to the Thrift Savings Fund at any time, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to this bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 4324) was read the third time and passed.

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. THOMAS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak

for up to 20 minutes to deliver a farewell address.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CRAPO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

A FOND FAREWELL

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, my 18-year tenure in the Senate has capped an extremely satisfying personal experience with great rewards and gratification of public service. These have been some of the most significant influences on my life. The greatest influence, of course, has been my family.

I was born into a family with good values and an admiration for education and an interest in politics. In February of 1936, my mother and father made two significant decisions. First, my father, who was a mining engineer by education and a dairy farmer by occupation, a man who had become extremely distressed at the level of underworld corruption in Dade County, FL, decided to run for the Florida State Senate to represent that county on a platform of cleaning up underworld corruption.

The second decision my parents made in February of 1936 was to have a baby. I was the happy result of that second decision. My mother says that I came by my political instincts from the womb, that she spent her whole pregnancy going to political activities and that I became addicted.

Throughout my public career, I have had the love and support of my partner of 45 years, Adele. No person in public life could have a more loving, a more caring, and a more contributing partner than I.

At one point, Adele used to be nervous in public settings. Today, I wish I had her calm, her persuasiveness, her effectiveness in public settings. Together, we have had the privilege of raising four wonderful daughters, two of whom were born after our first election to public office.

All of those qualities have been enhanced during my Senate years, including the addition of 11 grandchildren. On Thanksgiving Day I shared a special tradition with 9 of those 11 grandchildren when they joined me here at this desk on the Senate floor and observed and critiqued my skills—and lack of skills—as I carved my name into the Senate desk.

The second greatest influence is my home, the State of Florida. I thought I knew a lot about Florida as a native and as a two-term Governor, but I have learned so much more during the last 18 years. Since 1974, I have been taking different jobs, jobs alongside fellow Floridians, and as of last Thursday I have done 406 of these workdays; 214 of them have been done since I became a Member of the Senate. Even though my day job is 1,000 miles away from where many Floridians live, these workdays have been an important part of maintaining a close relationship with my

fellow Floridians and reminding me what our priorities should be on their behalf here in Washington. Workdays and my experiences in Congress have taught me ways in which the Federal Government affects the lives of typical Americans and, most acutely, Floridians.

I come from a State which is marked with dramatic growth in a very fragile environment, with a close affiliation with the countries to the south of the United States, a State in which one out of five of our citizens is over the age of 65, and therefore programs such as Medicare and Social Security take on a very special significance. How we conduct a law-based immigration system with humanity intimately affects many of our people, as does the obligation to use power responsibly. All of these issues I have learned about at greater depth during my service in the Senate.

What I have also gained in my three terms here is an appreciation of the institution of the Senate and the unique role it plays in balancing our Government in order to avoid excessive power falling into the hands of any one person or governmental institution.

One of our greatest responsibilities as Members of the Senate is to assure an independent judiciary. I am especially pleased that I was able to join my Florida colleagues in the Senate in establishing and maintaining a bipartisan, merit-based process by which we recommended and confirmed applicants for the Federal judiciary.

Particularly, I am gratified by the work I did with former Senator Connie Mack. As a Democrat and as a Republican, we forwarded outstanding judicial candidates to both Democratic and Republican Presidents. Because this process was based on judicial merit, Florida nominees have been uniformly and expeditiously accepted for nomination and confirmation.

I also came to see the Senate as our country's best graduate school, offering access to private seminars with the best and the brightest, supplemented by outside organizations such as the Aspen Institute's congressional program and the InterAmerican Dialog's Focus on Hemispheric Issues.

Finally, Mr. President, as with you and your father, I came to appreciate the people of the Senate. Simply put, I enjoy being around politicians and the people who love politics, including my staff and the family of the Senate, and including the journalists who cover our activities. I value my relationship with each of my colleagues, and I wish I had the time to tell a story about each of you.

Mr. President, your father was one of the first people I met when I came into the Senate. We had a number of things in common in our background and quickly formed a friendship which was one of the most significant parts, particularly, of my early years in the Senate. My grief at his loss is diluted by the knowledge not only that he has