

of religious freedom for the broader relationship between our two countries, and it expresses the sense of Congress that the President and his representatives should raise these human rights issues both publicly and privately.

In 1864, Abraham Lincoln wrote a grieving mother who had lost 5 sons in a single day in battle. He sought to offer her consolation for “so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.” Two hundred and eighty-two Americans have made that sacrifice in Afghanistan. Countless Afghans died in the struggle against Soviet invaders and others in resistance against the brutal regime of the Taliban. It is my fervent hope that Afghanistan lives up to the promise of its own pledge to uphold human rights: freedom of worship must be part of any true enduring freedom.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD as if read.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 421) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 421

Whereas under the Taliban Government of Afghanistan, individuals convicted of promoting faiths other than Islam, or expressing interpretations of Islam differing from the prevailing orthodoxy, could be imprisoned and those converting from Islam could be tortured and publicly executed;

Whereas the United States has more than 22,000 members of the Armed Forces stationed in Afghanistan and whereas 282 members of the Armed Forces have given their lives in Afghanistan since Operation Enduring Freedom began in that country;

Whereas Abdul Rahman, a citizen of Afghanistan, was arrested and accused of apostasy for converting to Christianity 16 years ago and threatened with execution;

Whereas the prosecutor in this case, Abdul Wasi, stated in court that Abdul Rahman “is known as a microbe in society, and he should be cut off and removed from the rest of Muslim society and should be killed.”;

Whereas, while it was a welcome development that charges against Abdul Rahman were dropped, he was forced to seek asylum in Italy;

Whereas, despite his release, religious freedom and those who would practice it in Afghanistan remain in jeopardy;

Whereas religious freedom is a fundamental principle of democracy;

Whereas the Constitution of Afghanistan does not fully guarantee freedom of thought, conscience, religion, or belief;

Whereas, on several occasions throughout Afghanistan’s constitution drafting process, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom raised concerns that the constitution’s ambiguity on issues of conversion and religious expression could lead to unjust criminal accusations against Muslims and non-Muslims alike;

Whereas charges of blasphemy since 2002 have justified those concerns;

Whereas the International Religious Freedom Report 2005 published by the Depart-

ment of State does not list Afghanistan among those countries cited for “State Hostility Toward Minority or Nonapproved Religions”, “State Neglect of Societal Discrimination or Abuses Against Religious Groups”, or “Discriminatory Legislation or Policies Prejudicial to Certain Religions” and notes that “[t]he new Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice”;

Whereas the International Religious Freedom Report 2005 states that conversion from Islam is “in theory – punishable by death” in Afghanistan;

Whereas the case of Abdul Rahman, other instances of religious persecution or discrimination against minorities, and ambiguities within the Constitution of Afghanistan appear to warrant closer scrutiny in the International Religious Freedom Report 2006; and

Whereas Afghanistan is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which reads in part, “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate—

(A) recognizes freedom of religion as a central tenet of democracy;

(B) respects the right of the people of Afghanistan to self-government, while strongly urging the Government of Afghanistan to respect all universally recognized human rights;

(C) condemns the arrest of Abdul Rahman and other instances of religious persecution in Afghanistan;

(D) commends the dropping of charges against Abdul Rahman; and

(E) strongly urges the Government of Afghanistan to consider the importance of religious freedom for the broader relationship between the United States and Afghanistan; and

(2) it is the sense of the Senate that the President and the President’s representatives should—

(A) in both public and private fora, raise concerns at the highest levels with the Government of Afghanistan regarding the violations of internationally recognized human rights, including the right to freedom of religion or belief, in Afghanistan; and

(B) ensure that the International Religious Freedom Report 2006 for Afghanistan fully addresses the issue of religious persecution in that country, including the arrest of Abdul Rahman.

NATIONAL AND GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 422, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 422) designating April 21, 2006, as National and Global Youth Service Day, and for other purposes.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise to support a resolution designating

April 21, 2006, as National and Global Youth Service Day. This resolution recognizes and commends the significant community service efforts that youth are making in communities across the country and around the world on April 21 and every day. This resolution also encourages the citizens of the United States to acknowledge and support these volunteer efforts.

National and Global Youth Service Day is an annual public awareness and education campaign that highlights the valuable contributions that young people make to their communities throughout the year. On this day, youth from across the United States and the world will carry out community service projects in areas ranging from hunger to literacy to the environment. Through this service, many will embark on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement in more than 100 countries around the world.

In Alaska, the following groups will engage youth in community service activities in observance of National and Global Youth Service Day:

One, Anchorage’s Promise, which works to mobilize all sectors of the community to build the character and competence of Anchorage’s children and youth by fulfilling Five Promises: Caring Adults, Safe Places, Healthy Start, Equitable Education for Marketable Skills, and Opportunities to Serve, is sponsoring the annual Kids’ Day event. Over 20 interactive exhibits will be staffed by youth, including booths where young people can see how easily an egg cracks without wearing a seatbelt, discover why bike helmets are important, and see just how clean their hands really are.

Two, eighth graders from the Neon Team at Goldenview Middle School in Anchorage are creating colorful cards with spring-themed haiku poems. At least 120 students will donate cards to social service agencies, hospitals, and community support organizations throughout Anchorage. The purpose of this project is to spread Springtime cheer to those in the Anchorage community who may not otherwise experience a joyful Spring.

Three, members of Alaska Youth for Environmental Action, a statewide youth organization associated with the National Wildlife Federation, are developing a project to inform and involve youth in the use of energy efficient light bulbs. Young people throughout the State will petition their local communities for support and will encourage the use of energy efficient light bulbs.

Many similar and wonderful activities will be taking place all across the Nation.

I thank my colleagues—Senators AKAKA, ALLEN, BAUCUS, BAYH, BOXER, BUNNING, BURR, CANTWELL, CLINTON, COCHRAN, COLEMAN, COLLINS, CORNYN, CRAIG, DODD, DOLE, DOMENICI, DORGAN, DURBIN, FEINGOLD, FEINSTEIN, HAGEL, ISAKSON, JOHNSON, KENNEDY, KERRY, LANDRIEU, LAUTENBERG, LEVIN, LIEBERMAN, LOTT, MARTINEZ, MENENDEZ, MIKULSKI, MURRAY, NELSON of Florida, NELSON of Nebraska, SALAZAR, SANTORUM, SNOWE, SPECTER, STABENOW, and STEVENS—for standing with me as original cosponsors of this worthwhile legislation, which will ensure that youth across the country and the world know that all of their hard work is greatly appreciated.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 422) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 422

Whereas National and Global Youth Service Day is an annual public awareness and education campaign that highlights the valuable contributions that young people make to their communities throughout the year;

Whereas the goals of National and Global Youth Service Day are to—

(1) mobilize the youth of the United States to identify and address the needs of their communities through service and service-learning;

(2) encourage young citizens to embark on a lifelong path of service and civic engagement; and

(3) educate the public, the media, and policymakers about contributions made by young people as community leaders throughout the year;

Whereas National and Global Youth Service Day, a program of Youth Service America, is the largest service event in the world and is being observed for the 18th consecutive year in 2006;

Whereas young people in the United States and in many other countries are volunteering more than any other generation in history;

Whereas the children and youth of the United States not only represent the future of the Nation, but also are leaders and assets today;

Whereas the children and youth of the United States should be valued for the idealism, energy, creativity, and unique perspective that they use when addressing challenges found in their communities;

Whereas a fundamental and conclusive correlation exists between youth service, lifelong adult volunteering, and philanthropy;

Whereas through community service, young people of all ages and backgrounds build character and learn valuable skills sought by employers, including time management, decision-making, teamwork, needs-assessment, and leadership;

Whereas service-learning, an innovative teaching method that combines community service with curriculum-based learning, increases student achievement while strengthening civic responsibility;

Whereas several private foundations and corporations in the United States support service-learning because they understand that educated, civically-engaged communities tend to be economically prosperous and good places to do business;

Whereas sustained investments by the Federal Government, business partners, schools, and communities fuel the positive, long-term cultural change that will make service and service-learning a common expectation and a common experience for all young people;

Whereas National and Global Youth Service Day, with the support of 51 lead agencies, hundreds of grant winners, and thousands of local partners, engages millions of young people worldwide;

Whereas National and Global Youth Service Day will involve 38 international organizations and 110 national partners, including 8 Federal agencies and 6 organizations that offer grants to support National and Global Youth Service Day;

Whereas National Youth Service Day has inspired Global Youth Service Day, which occurs concurrently in more than 100 countries and is now in its 7th year; and

Whereas both young people and their communities will benefit greatly from expanded opportunities to engage the youth of the United States in meaningful volunteer service and service-learning: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and commends the significant contributions of United States youth and encourages the cultivation of a common civic bond between young people dedicated to serving their neighbors, their communities, and the Nation;

(2) designates April 21, 2006, as “National and Global Youth Service Day”; and

(3) calls on the citizens of the United States to—

(A) observe the day by encouraging and engaging youth to participate in civic and community service projects;

(B) recognize the volunteer efforts of the young people of the United States throughout the year; and

(C) support the volunteer efforts of young people and engage them in meaningful decision-making opportunities today as an investment for the future of the United States.

NATIONAL CUSHING'S SYNDROME AWARENESS DAY

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to consideration of S. Res. 423, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 423) designating April 8, 2006 as National Cushing's Syndrome Awareness Day.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I rise today along with my colleague, TOM COBURN, to proudly support a resolution designating April 8, 2006, as National Cushing's Syndrome Awareness Day. I have long been dedicated to quality health care and therefore seek to raise awareness of this debilitating disorder that affects an estimated 10 to 15 people per million.

My desire to see my Oklahoma constituents and all Americans receive the best possible health care is evidenced by my involvement in various health related issues. I have always been a champion of rural health care providers. In 1997, I was one of the few Republicans to vote against the Balanced Budget Act because of its lack of support for rural hospitals. At that time, I made a commitment to not allow our rural hospitals to be closed and am pleased we finally addressed that important issue in the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 by providing great benefits for rural health care providers as well as a voluntary prescription drug benefit to seniors. In 2003, I also cosponsored the Health Care Access and Rural Equity Act, to protect and preserve access of Medicare beneficiaries to health care in rural regions.

I am a strong advocate of medical liability reform and am an original co-

sponsor of S. 11, the Patients First Act, to protect patients' access to quality and affordable health care by reducing the effects of excessive liability costs. There are solutions to alleviate the burden placed on physicians and patients by excessive medical malpractice lawsuits, and I am committed to this vital reform.

I have also worked with officials from the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services to expand access to life-saving implantable cardiac defibrillators. I supported legislation to increase the supply of pancreatic islet cells for research and co-sponsored a bill to take the abortion pill RU-486 off the market in the United States.

I also introduced S. 96, the Flu Vaccine Incentive Act, to help prevent any future shortages in flu vaccines. My bill removes suffocating price controls from government purchasing of the flu vaccine while encouraging more companies to enter the market. Also, my bill frees American companies to enter the flu vaccine industry by giving them an investment tax credit towards the construction of flu vaccine production facilities.

Additionally, I have consistently co-sponsored yearly resolutions designating a day in October as National Mammography Day and a week in August as National Health Center Week to raise awareness regarding both these issues.

As the Federal Government invests in improving hospitals and healthcare initiatives, I have fought hard to ensure that Oklahoma gets its fair share. Specifically, over the past 3 years, I have helped to secure \$5.2 million in funding for the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, the Oklahoma State Department of Health planning initiative for a rural telemedicine system, the INTEGRIS Healthcare System, the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology, St. Anthony's Heart Hospital, the Hillcrest Healthcare System, and the Morton Health Center.

I rise before the Senate to seek your help in raising awareness of Cushing's Syndrome, which is an endocrine or hormonal disorder caused by prolonged exposure of the body's tissue to high levels of the hormone cortisol. Though it can lead to death, Cushing's Syndrome often goes undiagnosed or misdiagnosed because the initial symptoms are shared with a number of milder ailments. These symptoms include, but are not limited to, abnormal weight gain, skin changes, fatigue, diabetes, high blood pressure, depression and osteoporosis.

Cushing's Syndrome can take a variety of forms. Normally, the hypothalamus, a part of the brain which is about the size of a small sugar cube, stimulates the pituitary gland, the adrenal glands, and then the kidneys which release cortisol into the bloodstream. High levels of cortisol can result from overproducing cortisol