

hunters live, the economic contribution of the seal hunt is marginal. In fact, exports of seal products from Newfoundland account for less than one-tenth of one percent of the Province's total exports.

Canada is fortunate to have vast and diverse wildlife populations, but these animals deserve protection, not senseless slaughter. Americans have a long history of defending marine mammals, best evidenced by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. Polls show that close to 80 percent of Americans and the vast majority of Europeans oppose Canada's seal hunt. In fact, close to 70 percent of Canadians surveyed oppose the hunt completely, with even higher numbers opposing specific aspects of the hunt, such as killing baby seals.

The U.S. Government has opposed this senseless slaughter, as noted in the attached, January 19, 2005, letter from the U.S. Department of State, in response to a letter Senator COLLINS and I wrote to President Bush, urging him to raise this issue during his November 30, 2004, visit with Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin.

The clubbing of baby seals can not be defended or justified. Canada should end it, just as we ended the Alaska seal hunt more than 20 years ago.

I ask unanimous consent that the January 19, 2005, letter from the U.S. State Department be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, DC, January 19, 2005.
Hon. CARL LEVIN,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR LEVIN: This is in response to your letter to the President of November 24, 2004, regarding Canadian commercial seal hunting. The White House has requested that the Department of State respond. We regret the delay in responding. Unfortunately, this letter was not received in the Department of State until mid-December, well after the referenced meeting between President Bush and Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada.

We are aware of Canada's seal hunting activities and of the opposition to it expressed by many Americans. Furthermore, we can assure you that the United States has a long-standing policy opposing the hunting of seals and other marine mammals absent sufficient safeguards and information to ensure that the hunting will not adversely impact the affected marine mammal population or the ecosystem of which it is a part. The United States policy is reflected in the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (MMPA) which generally prohibits, with narrow and specific exceptions, the taking of marine mammals in waters or lands subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and the importation of marine mammals and marine mammal products into the United States.

The United States has made known to the Government of Canada its objections and the objections of concerned American legislators and citizens to the Canadian commercial seal hunt on numerous occasions over recent years. The United States has also opposed Canada's efforts within the Arctic Council to promote trade in sealskins and other marine mammal products.

We hope this information is helpful to you. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of assistance in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

NANCY POWELL,
(For Paul V. Kelly, Asst. Secretary, Legislative Affairs).

SENATE RESOLUTION 116—DESIGNATING MAY 2007 AS ‘NATIONAL AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES AWARENESS MONTH’ AND SUPPORTING EFFORTS TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF AUTOIMMUNE DISEASES AND INCREASE FUNDING FOR AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE RESEARCH

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

S. RES. 116

Whereas autoimmune diseases are chronic, disabling diseases in which underlying defects in the immune system lead the body to attack its own organs and tissues;

Whereas autoimmune diseases can affect any part of the body, including the blood, blood vessels, muscles, nervous system, gastrointestinal tract, endocrine glands, and multiple-organ systems, and can be life-threatening;

Whereas researchers have identified over 80 different autoimmune diseases, and suspect at least 40 additional diseases of qualifying as autoimmune diseases;

Whereas researchers have identified a close genetic relationship and a common pathway of disease that exists among autoimmune diseases, explaining the clustering of autoimmune diseases in individuals and families;

Whereas the family of autoimmune diseases is under-recognized, and poses a major health care challenge to the United States;

Whereas the National Institutes of Health (NIH) estimates that autoimmune diseases afflict up to 23,500,000 people in the United States, 75 percent of the people affected are women, and the prevalence of autoimmune diseases is rising;

Whereas NIH estimates the annual direct health care costs associated with autoimmune diseases at more than \$100,000,000,000 and there are over 250,000 new diagnoses each year;

Whereas autoimmune diseases are among the top 10 leading causes of death in female children and adult women;

Whereas autoimmune diseases most often affect children and young adults, leading to a lifetime of disability;

Whereas diagnostic tests for most autoimmune diseases are not standardized, making autoimmune diseases very difficult to diagnose;

Whereas, because autoimmune diseases are difficult to diagnose, treatment is often delayed, resulting in irreparable organ damage and unnecessary suffering;

Whereas the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies reported that the United States is behind other countries in research into immune system self-recognition, the cause of autoimmune diseases;

Whereas a study by the American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association revealed that it takes the average patient with an autoimmune disease more than 4 years, and costs more than \$50,000, to get a correct diagnosis;

Whereas there is a significant need for more collaboration and cross-fertilization of basic autoimmune research;

Whereas there is a significant need for research focusing on the etiology of all auto-

immune-related diseases, to increase understanding of the root causes of these diseases rather than treating the symptoms after the disease has had its destructive effect;

Whereas the National Coalition of Autoimmune Patient Groups is a coalition of national organizations focused on autoimmune diseases working to consolidate the voices of patients with autoimmune diseases and to promote increased education, awareness, and research into all aspects of autoimmune diseases through a collaborative approach; and

Whereas designating May 2007 as “National Autoimmune Diseases Awareness Month” would help educate the public about autoimmune diseases and the need for research funding, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatments; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates May 2007 as “National Autoimmune Diseases Awareness Month”;

(2) supports the efforts of health care providers and autoimmune patient advocacy and education organizations to increase awareness of the causes of, and treatments for, autoimmune diseases; and

(3) supports the goal of increasing Federal funding for aggressive research to learn the root causes of autoimmune diseases, as well as the best diagnostic methods and treatments for people with autoimmune diseases.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I am happy to join the esteemed Congressman from New York, Rep. STEVE ISRAEL, and submit a resolution today to declare May 2007 as “National Autoimmune Diseases Awareness Month.”

The purpose of the resolution is to raise awareness of autoimmune diseases and the need for aggressive research to learn the root causes of autoimmune diseases, as well as the best diagnostic methods and treatments for people with autoimmune diseases.

Autoimmune diseases are chronic, disabling diseases in which underlying defects in the immune system lead the body to attack its own organs and tissues. Autoimmune diseases can affect any part of the body—blood, blood vessels, muscles, nervous system, gastrointestinal tract, endocrine glands, and multiple-organ systems—and can be life-threatening.

Researchers have identified over 80 different autoimmune diseases, including multiple sclerosis, juvenile diabetes, Crohn's disease, scleroderma, polymyositis, lupus, Sjögren's disease and Graves' disease, and suspect at least 40 additional diseases of having an autoimmune basis. The National Institutes of Health estimates that autoimmune diseases afflict more than 23 million people in the United States. Seventy-five percent of the people affected with autoimmune diseases are women, and the prevalence of autoimmune diseases is rising. However, the family of autoimmune diseases is under-recognized, and this poses a major health care challenge to the United States.

Diagnostic tests for autoimmune diseases are not standardized, which makes autoimmune diseases very difficult to diagnose. Because autoimmune diseases are difficult to diagnose, treatment is often delayed, resulting in irreparable organ damage and unnecessary suffering.

There is a significant need for more collaboration and cross-fertilization of

basic autoimmune research, with a particular focus on the etiology of all autoimmune-related diseases in order to increase understanding of the root causes of these diseases rather than treating the symptoms after the disease has had its destructive effect.

As such, I am submitting this resolution to designate May 2007 as “National Autoimmune Disease Awareness Month” to help educate the public about autoimmune diseases and the need for research funding, accurate diagnosis, and effective treatments.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 22—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS THAT THE CITIZENS’ STAMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE SHOULD RECOMMEND TO THE POSTMASTER GENERAL THAT A COMMEMORATIVE POSTAGE STAMP BE ISSUED TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF DOWN SYNDROME

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. CON. RES. 22

Whereas Down syndrome affects people of all races and economic levels;

Whereas Down syndrome is the most frequently occurring chromosomal abnormality;

Whereas 1 in every 800 to 1,000 children is born with Down syndrome;

Whereas more than 350,000 people in the United States have Down syndrome;

Whereas 5,000 children with Down syndrome are born each year;

Whereas as the mortality rate associated with Down syndrome in the United States decreases, the prevalence of individuals with Down syndrome in the United States will increase;

Whereas some experts project that the number of people with Down syndrome will double by 2013;

Whereas individuals with Down syndrome are becoming increasingly integrated into society and community organizations, such as schools, health care systems, work forces, and social and recreational activities;

Whereas more and more people in the United States interact with individuals with Down syndrome, increasing the need for widespread public acceptance and education; and

Whereas a greater understanding of Down syndrome and advancements in treatment of Down syndrome-related health problems have allowed people with Down syndrome to enjoy fuller and more active lives: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) the United States Postal Service should issue a commemorative postage stamp to promote public awareness of Down syndrome; and

(2) the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Committee should recommend to the Postmaster General that such a stamp be issued.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to submit legislation expressing support for the creation of a commemorative stamp to promote public

awareness of Down syndrome. I start by saluting those who are celebrating World Down Syndrome Day, and by thanking Senator COCHRAN for his support, as well as the National Down Syndrome Society, the Arc of the United States, the National Association for Down Syndrome, and the Central Illinois Down Syndrome Organization.

Awareness begins with facts. According to the National Association for Down Syndrome, Down syndrome is a genetic condition that causes delays in physical and intellectual development. Individuals with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes instead of the usual 46. It is the most frequently occurring chromosomal disorder. Down syndrome is not related to race, nationality, religion, or economic status. It is a condition that impacts our entire society.

Children with Down syndrome are prone to health complications such as congenital heart defects, infection, respiratory, vision and hearing problems, and other medical conditions. Yet, they have their own gifts, and can often lead independent lives. While children with Down syndrome may face relatively greater challenges in areas such as memory, they often have particular strengths in areas such as social knowledge.

A testament to the fighting spirit and abilities of individuals living with Down syndrome resides near me in Springfield, IL. Diana Braun is an amazing woman. She survived an abusive family, scattered siblings, and institutional living to emerge as an Illinois leader and advocate for people with intellectual disabilities. She is president of People First and a member of the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities. She currently serves on the board of the Illinois Arc and works as a personal assistant to her friend and fellow activist, Kathy Conour. Together, they travel to Washington almost yearly to meet with their elected officials. She is a remarkable human being by any standard, and we in Illinois are proud that she has chosen to lead and advocate in our State. She and those for whom she advocates deserve our support.

The United States Postal Service has done a remarkable job of raising awareness, and in some cases money, for many worthy causes. This cause could not be more worthy, or in greater need of attention. There are more than 350,000 people living with Down syndrome in the United States. One in every 733 babies is born with Down syndrome. These births impact millions more—parents, siblings, friends, educators, and employers.

A commemorative stamp is the least that we as a body can do to spread awareness and provide support for this universal issue. Many Down syndrome support groups make a point of noting that people with Down syndrome are more like other people than they are different. They are different in that they are gifted with that rare strength

that comes from adversity, and the compassion that comes from understanding the fight. I salute these individuals, their families, and everyone who supports them. I hope that the Citizens’ Stamp Advisory Commission will do the same.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 481. Mr. SUNUNU submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 482. Mr. DODD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 483. Mr. BUNNING (for himself and Mr. ENZI) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 484. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 485. Mr. BUNNING submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 486. Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. REID, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. SMITH) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 487. Mr. NELSON, of Florida submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 488. Mrs. BOXER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 489. Mr. DEMINT proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 490. Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. SANDERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 491. Mr. ALLARD proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 492. Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. BAYH, Mr. NELSON, of Florida, and Mr. SALAZAR) proposed an amendment to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra.

SA 493. Mr. GRASSLEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 494. Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. SMITH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 495. Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mrs. LINCOLN, and Mr. COLEMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 496. Mr. HATCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 497. Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. THOMAS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the concurrent resolution S. Con. Res. 21, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.