

Whereas George Springer was a union activist throughout his 20-year teaching career in New Britain;

Whereas George Springer succumbed on December 19, 2006, at the age of 74, after a long battle with cancer; and

Whereas George Springer is survived by his wife, Gerri Brown-Springer, 4 children, 10 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate honors George C. Springer, Sr. as a dedicated and pioneering leader, and a man of generous spirit who took on tough challenges with courage and compassion.

RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING ALASKA STATEHOOD

The resolution (S. Res. 49), recognizing and celebrating the 50th anniversary of the entry of Alaska into the Union as the 49th State, was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 49

Whereas July 7, 2008, marks the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Alaska Statehood Act as approved by the United States Congress and signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower;

Whereas the Alaska Statehood Act authorized the entry of Alaska into the Union on January 3, 1959;

Whereas the land once known as "Seward's Folly" is now regarded as critical to the strategic defense of the United States and important to our national and economic security;

Whereas the people of Alaska remain committed to the preservation and protection of the Union, with among the highest rates of veterans and residents in active military service of any State in the Nation;

Whereas Alaska is the northernmost, westernmost, and easternmost State of the Union, encompassing an area one-fifth the size of the United States;

Whereas the State of Alaska has an abundance of natural resources vital to the Nation;

Whereas Alaska currently provides over 16 percent of the daily crude oil production in the United States and has 44 percent of the undiscovered oil resources and 36 percent of undiscovered conventional gas in the United States;

Whereas Alaska's 34,000 miles of shoreline form a gateway to one of the world's greatest fisheries, providing over 60 percent of the country's commercial seafood harvest;

Whereas over 230 million acres of Alaska are set aside in national parks, wildlife refuges, national forests, and other conservation units for the benefit of the entire country;

Whereas over 58 million acres are designated wilderness in Alaska, representing 55 percent of the wilderness areas in the United States;

Whereas Alaska Natives, the State's first people, are an integral part of Alaska's history, and preserving the culture and heritage of Alaska's Native people is of primary importance;

Whereas the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1971 signaled a new era of economic opportunity for Alaska Natives;

Whereas Alaska's Native people have made major contributions to the vitality and success of Alaska as a State;

Whereas the people of Alaska represent the pioneering spirit that built this great Nation

and contribute to our cultural and ethnic diversity; and

Whereas the golden anniversary, on January 3, 2009, provides an occasion to honor Alaska's entry into the Union: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Congress recognizes and celebrates the 50th anniversary of the entry of Alaska into the Union as the 49th State.

NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH

The resolution (S. Res. 78), designating April 2007 as "National Autism Awareness Month" and supporting efforts to increase funding for research into the causes and treatment of autism and to improve training and support for individuals with autism and those who care for individuals with autism, was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 78

Whereas autism is a developmental disorder that is typically diagnosed during the first 3 years of life, robbing individuals of their ability to communicate and interact with others;

Whereas autism affects an estimated 1 in every 150 children in the United States;

Whereas autism is 4 times more likely to occur in boys than in girls;

Whereas autism can affect anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, or other factors;

Whereas it costs approximately \$80,000 per year to treat an individual with autism in a medical center specializing in developmental disabilities;

Whereas the cost of special education programs for school-aged children with autism is often more than \$30,000 per individual per year;

Whereas the cost nationally of caring for persons affected by autism is estimated at upwards of \$90,000,000,000 per year;

Whereas despite the fact that autism is one of the most common developmental disorders, many professionals in the medical and educational fields are still unaware of the best methods to diagnose and treat the disorder; and

Whereas designating April 2007 as "National Autism Awareness Month" will increase public awareness of the need to support individuals with autism and the family members and medical professionals who care for individuals with autism: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 2007 as "National Autism Awareness Month";

(2) recognizes and commends the parents and relatives of children with autism for their sacrifice and dedication in providing for the special needs of children with autism and for absorbing significant financial costs for specialized education and support services;

(3) supports the goal of increasing Federal funding for aggressive research to learn the root causes of autism, identify the best methods of early intervention and treatment, expand programs for individuals with autism across their lifespans, and promote understanding of the special needs of people with autism;

(4) stresses the need to begin early intervention services soon after a child has been diagnosed with autism, noting that early intervention strategies are the primary therapeutic options for young people with autism, and that early intervention signifi-

cantly improves the outcome for people with autism and can reduce the level of funding and services needed to treat people with autism later in life;

(5) supports the Federal Government's more than 30-year-old commitment to provide States with 40 percent of the costs needed to educate children with disabilities under part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.);

(6) recognizes the shortage of appropriately trained teachers who have the skills and support necessary to teach, assist, and respond to special needs students, including those with autism, in our school systems; and

(7) recognizes the importance of worker training programs that are tailored to the needs of developmentally disabled persons, including those with autism, and notes that people with autism can be, and are, productive members of the workforce if they are given appropriate support, training, and early intervention services.

200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The resolution (S. Res. 84), observing February 23, 2007, as the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire, honoring the distinguished life and legacy of William Wilberforce, and encouraging the people of the United States to follow the example of William Wilberforce by selflessly pursuing respect for human rights around the world, was considered and agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 84

Whereas, at the age of 21, William Wilberforce was elected to the House of Commons of Great Britain;

Whereas Mr. Wilberforce and his colleagues actively engaged in many initiatives with the sole purpose of renewing British culture at the turn of the 19th century in order to bring about positive social change;

Whereas Mr. Wilberforce advocated prison reform that equally respected justice and human dignity, and encouraged reconciliation;

Whereas Mr. Wilberforce sought to improve the conditions for, and minimize the use of, child laborers;

Whereas Mr. Wilberforce dedicated his life to ending the British slave trade and the abolition of slavery despite forceful opposition;

Whereas Mr. Wilberforce was mentored by former slave trader and author of the hymn "Amazing Grace," John Newton, on the horrors and inhumanity of the slave trade;

Whereas approximately 11,000,000 human beings were captured and taken from Africa to the Western Hemisphere to be sold as commodities and forced into slavery and bondage;

Whereas Mr. Wilberforce fought for 20 years in the House of Commons to pass legislation banning the slave trade;

Whereas, on February 23, 1807, Parliament passed a bill banning the slave trade in the British Empire as a direct result of the efforts of Mr. Wilberforce;

Whereas Mr. Wilberforce inspired and encouraged those who opposed slavery in the United States, including political leaders like John Quincy Adams, and spread a message of hope and freedom throughout the United States;

Whereas Mr. Wilberforce labored for 46 years to abolish the institution of slavery in

the British Empire, ceaselessly defending those without a voice in society;

Whereas, in 1833, Mr. Wilberforce was informed on his death bed that the House of Commons had voted to abolish slavery altogether;

Whereas section 102(a) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7101(a)) states that human trafficking is "a contemporary manifestation of slavery whose victims are predominantly women and children";

Whereas the scourge of human slavery continues to pollute our world and assault human dignity and freedom;

Whereas, in 2006, the United States Department of State estimated that between 600,000 and 800,000 men, women, and children were trafficked across international borders for use as bonded laborers or sex slaves, or for other nefarious purposes;

Whereas the International Labour Organization estimates that there are more than 12,000,000 people in forced labor, bonded labor, forced child labor, and sexual servitude around the world, a number that is greater than the number of slaves that existed at the time of Mr. Wilberforce's death;

Whereas all people must continue to fight, as Mr. Wilberforce fought, for the true abolition of slavery and for respect for human dignity in all aspects of modern culture; and

Whereas the people of the United States should carry on the legacy of William Wilberforce by working to end the modern slave trade, human trafficking, and the degradation of human dignity: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) observes February 23, 2007, as the 200th anniversary of the ban of the slave trade in the British Empire;

(2) recognizes the positive impact William Wilberforce had on renewing the culture of his day and ending the inhumane practice of human slavery;

(3) commends to the people of the United States the example of William Wilberforce and his commitment to the values of inherent human dignity and freedom, which reside in each and every human being;

(4) encourages the people of the United States to—

(A) observe the 200th anniversary of the ban of the slave trade in the British Empire;

(B) reflect on William Wilberforce's selfless dedication to the fight against slavery and his commitment to the neediest in society; and

(C) commit themselves to recognize the value of human life and human dignity; and

(5) unequivocally condemns all forms of human trafficking and slavery, which are an assault on human dignity that William Wilberforce would steadfastly resist.

HONORING THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

The resolution (H. Con. Res. 44), honoring and praising the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the occasion of its 98th anniversary, was considered and agreed to. The preamble was agreed to.

DIRECTING SENATE LEGAL COUNSEL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 121 that 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. 121) to direct the Senate Legal Counsel to appear as amicus curiae in the name of the Senate in support of the appellee in Office of Senator Mark Dayton v. Brad Hanson.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this resolution concerns an appeal pending before the Supreme Court of the United States in an action brought by a former Senate employee against his employing office, the Office of former Senator Mark Dayton. In 2003, the former employee sued the office under the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995. As a defense to the suit, the office asserted that the Speech or Debate Clause of the Constitution barred a suit by the employee, because during his time with the office his job included legislative duties.

The lower courts denied this argument and refused to dismiss the suit on that ground. The office has now appealed this case to the Supreme Court, placing directly before the High Court the question of the application of the Speech or Debate Clause to suits brought under the Congressional Accountability Act.

As the scope of the Speech or Debate Clause will now be considered in the merits of an appeal by the Supreme Court for the first time in almost 30 years, it is important that the Senate as an institution have a voice in those proceedings to protect the Senate's interests in that important constitutional privilege that secures the independence of this body from the other branches of Government.

It is also important that the legal counsel appear on the Senate's behalf in this action so that the Court can be presented with the Senate's understanding of the proper application of the Speech or Debate Clause to the Congressional Accountability Act. Congress passed the act to apply to Congress the same Federal workplace and employment laws that applied to the private sector and the executive branch, giving our employees the same protections enjoyed by employees elsewhere. That was done with the understanding that suits by congressional employees, even employees with legislative duties, were not automatically barred by the Speech or Debate Clause privilege of Members.

Accordingly, as the Supreme Court is now being urged to bar all Congressional Accountability Act suits that are brought for adverse personnel actions by employees with any legislative duties, it is important that the Senate present to the Court the position that suits under the Congressional Accountability Act can proceed consistent with the Speech or Debate Clause. While that Clause would provide Members with a robust evidentiary and testimonial privilege concerning their legislative activities in these lawsuits and may limit permissible relief, it does not automatically block all such suits at the outset.

In addition, the Supreme Court has directed the parties to brief the additional questions of whether the case has become moot because Senator Dayton has left office, and whether the office of Senator Dayton could appeal the case directly to the Supreme Court. On these questions, the legal counsel will describe why suits brought under the Congressional Accountability Act against the office of a Member of Congress do not become moot after the Member departs from Congress. Indeed, the contrary position would undermine the act's important protections for employees whose Members are soon to end their congressional service. The legal counsel will also argue that the appeal is not within the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court as the provision of the Congressional Accountability Act that provides for direct appeal to the Supreme Court is not satisfied here.

In sum, this resolution would direct the Senate legal counsel to appear in this action on behalf of the Senate to protect the Senate's interests in the proper application of the Speech or Debate Clause to civil suits brought under the Congressional Accountability Act.

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 be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 121) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 121

Whereas, in the case of Office of Senator Mark Dayton v. Brad Hanson, No. 06-618, pending in the Supreme Court of the United States, the application of the Speech or Debate Clause, Article I, section 6, clause I of the Constitution to suits brought under the Congressional Accountability Act, Pub. L. No. 104-1, 109 Stat. 3 (1995), has been placed in issue; and

Whereas, pursuant to sections 703(c), 706(a), and 713(a) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, 2 U.S.C. 288b(c), 288e(a), and 288l(a), the Senate may direct its counsel to appear as amicus curiae in the name of the Senate in any legal action in which the powers and responsibilities of Congress under the Constitution are placed in issue: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate Legal Counsel is directed to appear as amicus curiae on behalf of the Senate in support of Appellee Brad Hanson in Office of Senator Mark Dayton v. Brad Hanson, to protect the Senate's interest in the proper application of the Speech or Debate Clause to civil actions brought under the Congressional Accountability Act.

COMMEMORATING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CONSTRUCTION AND DEDICATION OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 122.

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