

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

Mr. REID. 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.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

NATIONAL DYSPHAGIA AWARENESS MONTH

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of H. Con. Res. 195, 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 (H. Con. Res. 195) expressing the sense of the Congress that a National Dysphagia Awareness Month should be established.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to; the preamble be agreed to; the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table; and any statements relating to this measure be printed in the RECORD.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 195) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREE- MENT—SENATE RESOLUTIONS

Ms. LANDRIEU. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 690, S. Res. 691, S. Res. 692, S. Res. 693, and S. Res. 694.

I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to; the preambles, where applicable, be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc.

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

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

CONFLICT BETWEEN RUSSIA AND GEORGIA

The resolution (S. Res. 690) expressing the sense of the Senate concerning the conflict between Russia and Georgia, was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 690

That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) irrespective of the origins of the recent conflict in Georgia, the disproportionate military response by the Russian Federation on the sovereign, internationally recognized territory of Georgia, including the South Ossetian Autonomous Region (referred to in this resolution as “South Ossetia”) and the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (referred to in this resolution as “Abkhazia”), is in violation of international law and commitments of the Russian Federation;

(2) the actions undertaken by the Government of the Russian Federation in Georgia have diminished its standing in the international community and should lead to a review of existing, developing, and proposed multilateral and bilateral arrangements;

(3) the United States recognizes significant interests in common with the Russian Federation, including combating the proliferation of nuclear weapons and fighting terrorism, and these interests can, over time, serve as the basis for improved long-term relations;

(4) the Government of the Russian Federation should immediately comply with the September 8, 2008, follow-on agreement to the 6-point cease-fire agreement negotiated on August 12, 2008;

(5) the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of Georgia should—

(A) refrain from the future use of force to resolve the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; and

(B) work with the United States, Europe, and other concerned countries and through the United Nations Security Council, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and other international fora to identify a political settlement that addresses the short-term and long-term status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in accordance with prior United Nations Security Council resolutions;

(6) the United States should—

(A) provide humanitarian and economic assistance to Georgia;

(B) seek to improve commercial relations with Georgia; and

(C) working in tandem with the international community, continue to support the development of a strong, vibrant, multiparty democracy in Georgia;

(7) the President should consult with Congress on future security cooperation and assistance to Georgia, as appropriate;

(8) the United States continues to support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization declaration reached at the Bucharest Summit on April 3, 2008; and

(9) the United States should work with the European Union, Georgia, and its neighbors to ensure the free flow of energy to Europe and the operation of key communication and trade routes.

FEED AMERICA DAY

The resolution (S. Res. 691) designating Thursday, November 20, 2008, as “Feed America Day,” was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 691

Whereas Thanksgiving Day celebrates the spirit of selfless giving and an appreciation for family and friends;

Whereas the spirit of Thanksgiving Day is a virtue upon which the Nation was founded;

Whereas, according to the Department of Agriculture, roughly 35,000,000 people in the United States, including 12,000,000 children, continue to live in households that do not have an adequate supply of food; and

Whereas selfless sacrifice breeds a genuine spirit of thanksgiving, both affirming and restoring fundamental principles in our society: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates Thursday, November 20, 2008, as “Feed America Day”; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to sacrifice 2 meals on Feed America Day and to donate the money that they would have spent on food to a religious or charitable organization of their choice for the purpose of feeding the hungry.

NATIONAL VETERANS AWARENESS WEEK

The resolution (S. Res. 692) designating the week of November 9 through November 15, 2008, as “National Veterans Awareness Week” to emphasize the need to develop educational programs regarding the contributions of veterans to the country was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 692

Whereas tens of millions of Americans have served in the Armed Forces of the United States during the past century;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of Americans have given their lives while serving in the Armed Forces during the past century;

Whereas the contributions and sacrifices of the men and women who served in the Armed Forces have been vital in maintaining the freedoms and way of life enjoyed by the people of the United States;

Whereas the advent of the all-volunteer Armed Forces has resulted in a sharp decline in the number of individuals and families who have had any personal connection with the Armed Forces;

Whereas this reduction in familiarity with the Armed Forces has resulted in a marked decrease in the awareness by young people of the nature and importance of the accomplishments of those who have served in the Armed Forces, despite the current educational efforts of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans service organizations;

Whereas the system of civilian control of the Armed Forces makes it essential that the future leaders of the Nation understand the history of military action and the contributions and sacrifices of those who conduct such actions; and

Whereas in each of the years 2000 through 2007 the Senate has recognized the need to increase the understanding of the contributions of veterans among school-aged children by approving a resolution recognizing the week containing Veterans Day as “National Veterans Awareness Week”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of November 9 through November 15, 2008, as “National Veterans Awareness Week” for the purpose of emphasizing educational efforts directed at elementary and secondary school students concerning the contributions and sacrifices of veterans; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe National Veterans Awareness Week with appropriate educational activities.

NATIONAL HOMELESS YOUTH AWARENESS MONTH

The resolution (S. Res. 693) recognizing the month of November 2008 as

"National Homeless Youth Awareness Month" was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 693

Whereas between 1,600,000 and 2,800,000 children and teens are homeless in the United States each year, with many staying on the streets or in emergency shelters;

Whereas families with children are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population and now make up approximately 1/3 of that population;

Whereas many homeless youth experience isolation and trauma while residing on the streets or in precarious housing situations and may eventually develop depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder;

Whereas homeless youth are typically too poor to secure basic needs and are unable to access adequate medical or mental health care;

Whereas many youth become homeless due to a lack of financial and housing resources as they exit juvenile corrections and foster care;

Whereas 12 to 36 percent of foster youth experience homelessness at least once after exiting foster care;

Whereas homeless youth are most often expelled from their homes by their guardians after physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or separated from their parents through death or divorce without adequate resources; and

Whereas awareness of the tragedy of youth homelessness and its causes must be heightened so that greater support for effective programs involving businesses, families, law enforcement agencies, schools, and community and faith-based organizations, aimed at helping youth remain off the streets becomes a national priority: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the values and efforts of businesses, organizations, and volunteers dedicated to meeting the needs of homeless children and teens;

(2) applauds the initiatives of businesses, organizations, and volunteers that employ time and resources to build awareness of the homeless youth problem, its causes, and potential solutions, and work to prevent homelessness among children and teens; and

(3) should recognize the month of November 2008 as "National Homeless Youth Awareness Month" and encourages these businesses, organizations, and volunteers to continue to intensify their efforts during the month of November.

NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK

The resolution (S. Res. 694) designating the week beginning October 19, 2008, as "National Character Counts Week" was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 694

Whereas the well-being of the United States requires that the young people of the United States become an involved, caring citizenry with good character;

Whereas the character education of children has become more urgent as violence by and against youth increasingly threatens the physical and psychological well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas more than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including

schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, and civic groups;

Whereas the character of a nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens;

Whereas the public good is advanced when young people are taught the importance of good character and the positive effects that good character can have in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace;

Whereas scholars and educators agree that people do not automatically develop good character and that, therefore, conscientious efforts must be made by institutions and individuals that influence youth to help young people develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character;

Whereas, although character development is, first and foremost, an obligation of families, the efforts of faith communities, schools, and youth, civic, and human service organizations also play an important role in fostering and promoting good character;

Whereas Congress encourages students, teachers, parents, youth, and community leaders to recognize the importance of character education in preparing young people to play a role in determining the future of the United States;

Whereas effective character education is based on core ethical values, which form the foundation of democratic society;

Whereas examples of character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, and honesty;

Whereas elements of character transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences;

Whereas the character and conduct of our youth reflect the character and conduct of society, and, therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character;

Whereas Congress encourages individuals and organizations, especially those who have an interest in the education and training of the young people of the United States, to adopt the elements of character as intrinsic to the well-being of individuals, communities, and society;

Whereas many schools in the United States recognize the need, and have taken steps, to integrate the values of their communities into their teaching activities; and

Whereas the establishment of National Character Counts Week, during which individuals, families, schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, civic groups, and other organizations focus on character education, is of great benefit to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning October 19, 2008, as "National Character Counts Week"; and

(2) calls upon the people of the United States and interested groups—

(A) to embrace the elements of character identified by local schools and communities, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship; and

(B) to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

NATIONAL VETERANS AWARENESS WEEK

• Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise in support of a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the week including Veterans Day—November 9-15, 2008—be designated as "National Veterans Awareness Week." This marks the ninth year I have introduced such a resolution, which has been adopted unanimously by the Senate on all previous occasions, and has been recog-

nized by the President as an important objective. With our military men and women continuing to be on the front lines in Iraq and Afghanistan, it is no doubt appropriate that we recognize and honor the service and sacrifice of those who are currently serving to protect our freedom, as well as those who have served in the past.

The idea behind National Veterans Awareness Week actually came from a Delaware student, Samuel I. Cashdollar. In 2000, as a 13-year-old seventh grader at Lewes Middle School, Samuel won the Delaware VFW's Youth Essay Contest with a powerful presentation titled "How Should We honor America's Veterans?" Samuel's essay pointed out that we have Nurses' Week, Secretaries' Week, and Teachers' Week to rightly emphasize the importance of these occupations, but no comparable week to encourage, and honor, service in the military. That is why, every year since 2000, I have introduced a resolution designating National Veterans Awareness Week to focus on educating our youth on the contributions, heroism, and service of our veterans.

The reality is, during both World Wars and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, families were more likely to have a relative serving in the military. That is not the case today; tremendous advances in military technology, an all-volunteer force, and increases in productivity have greatly reduced the number of families with relatives who are active servicemembers or recent veteran. Coupled with the fact that the number of veterans who served in major conflicts like World War II is declining, it is more important than ever that we take the time to make sure students comprehend and appreciate the service and sacrifice of our veterans. National Veterans Awareness Week provides us with an opportunity to do just that. Additionally, with soldiers returning from the front lines with service-connected injuries, National Veterans Awareness Week reminds us how important it is that we keep our promise to veterans by providing them with the proper support and services they need once they return home. This promise is the most sacred obligation we have, and it is imperative that our children are also aware of the debt we owe our veterans.

In closing, let me add that, although many of us will not have the opportunity to serve our country in uniform, we must not forget our responsibility as citizens to fulfill the obligations we owe, both tangible and intangible, to those who have served and sacrificed on our behalf. By passing along this shared responsibility and recognition to future generations, our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren will continue to appreciate and honor what our veterans have accomplished in order to appropriately confront the many challenges they are sure to encounter. •