

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 674. Mr. CORNYN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1105, making omnibus appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2009, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 674. Mr. CORNYN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1105, making omnibus appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2009, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title I of division F, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . No funds made available under this Act shall be used to implement the Executive Order dated January 30, 2009, entitled "Notification of Employee Rights Under Federal Labor Laws" to the extent that the implementation of such order is in conflict with Executive Order 13201, dated February 17, 2001.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Rules and Administration will meet on Wednesday, March 11, 2009, at 10:00 a.m. to receive testimony on "Voter Registration: Assessing Current Problems."

Individuals and organizations that wish to submit a statement for the hearing record are requested to contact the Chief Clerk, Lynden Armstrong, at 202-224-6352.

For further information regarding this hearing, please contact Jean Bordewich at the Rules and Administration Committee 202-224-6352.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a hearing has been scheduled before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will be held on Thursday, March 12, 2009, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider the nomination of David Hayes to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record may do so by sending it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510-6150, or by e-mail to Amanda Kelly at kelly@energy.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact Sam Fowler at (202) 224-7571 or Amanda Kelly at (202) 224-6836.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Monday, March 9, 2009, at 5 p.m., in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, to conduct a hearing entitled "Preventing Worker Exploitation: Protecting Individuals with Disabilities and Other Vulnerable Problems" on Monday, March 9, 2009. The hearing will commence at 2:30 p.m. in room 430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to make a request for the distinguished Senator of Connecticut and ask unanimous consent that Ellen Cohen, a fellow on the staff of Senator LIEBERMAN, be granted floor privileges for the duration of this debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Gustavo Delgado, Jr., be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the consideration of the omnibus bill. Mr. Delgado is a member of my staff.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection it is so ordered.

RAISING THE CASE OF ROBERT LEVINSON

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Con. Res. 4 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. 4) calling on the President and the allies of the United States to raise the case of Robert Levinson with officials of the Government of Iran at every level and opportunity, and urging officials of the Government of Iran to fulfill their promises of assistance to the family of Robert Levinson and to share information on the investigation into the disappearance of Robert Levinson with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, exactly two years ago today, Bob Levinson went missing while on a business trip to Kish Island, Iran. Bob Levinson checked out of his hotel on March 9, 2007, and got in a taxi cab to head to the airport.

But he never checked in for his flight. The authorities in Dubai and surrounding countries have verified that Mr. Levinson never arrived on any flight from Iran or passed through passport control.

I would like to recognize that Bob Levinson's wife Christine Levinson is in the Senate today with her sister Suzi Halpin.

Many of my fellow Senators and their staffs have met with Christine and cosponsored the resolution we are aiming to pass today. She is a tireless advocate of her husband's case and I thank her and her sister for coming to Washington on this sad, but important day.

So what happened to Bob Levinson? We still do not know, although a man named David Belfield, an American fugitive from justice residing in Iran, and one of the last people to see Bob Levinson on Kish Island before his disappearance, has claimed that the Government of Iran imprisoned Mr. Levinson.

Mr. Belfield himself was detained by Iranian security services after meeting Bob Levinson at the hotel on March 8, 2007, the night before Mr. Levinson vanished.

The Iranians claim they do not know what happened to Bob Levinson, but I believe they are not being completely forthcoming. They promised in December 2007 that they would share the results of their investigation into Bob Levinson's case with his family. President Ahmadinejad stated in July 2008 that Iranian authorities would cooperate with the FBI. We are still waiting for the promised assistance.

Meanwhile, Christine and the rest of the Levinson family pray every day for Bob's return. The past 2 years have been incredibly hard on the family.

In the intervening time, Bob Levinson has missed graduations and report cards and sports events. He has missed the first steps of his grandson Ryan, and the birth of his granddaughter Grace Olivia.

I want to recognize the great personal courage Christine has shown in travelling to Iran in December 2007 to seek answers from the Iranians on what happened to her husband.

She has steadfastly pursued this case for 2 years now, giving press interviews to publicize Bob's plight and seek leads on the case, engaging the Iranian Mission to the U.N., talking to Swiss diplomats, speaking at rallies, making trips to Washington to meet with Members of Congress and officials at the White House, the State Department and the FBI.

At the same time, she also had to juggle all her other duties as a mother of seven and grandmother of two. I do

want to salute Mrs. Levinson, as well as her family and friends who have supported her during these trying times.

So what is the next step? What can we do now?

President Obama has called for a renewed diplomatic effort on Iran. Our new U.N. Ambassador Susan Rice has stated that the new administration will engage in "direct diplomacy" with the Iranians. Secretary Clinton said Tehran would be invited to an Afghanistan neighbors conference in the Netherlands at the end of the month.

We obviously have serious disagreements with Tehran on a number of issues, including its nuclear program, its despicable policy towards Israel, and its support for the terrorist groups Hamas and Hezbollah.

But the U.S. and Iran have common interests as well. Peace in Iraq, as well as in Afghanistan, is in the interests of both Tehran and Washington. We can jointly confront the scourge caused by the narcotics drug trade.

Cooperation on the case of Bob Levinson a humanitarian issue in my mind—must be a top issue if any future improvement in relations is to occur. It is but one small step we can take toward working together on this range of issues of mutual concern.

During her confirmation hearing in January, I asked Secretary of State Hillary Clinton about Bob Levinson's case. She stated that "it would be an extraordinary opportunity for the government of Iran to make such a gesture to permit contact, to release him, to make it clear that there is a new attitude in Iran, as we believe there will be with the Obama administration toward engagement, carefully constructed, and with very clear outcomes attempted."

We do not have direct diplomatic relations with Iran and our relations with Iran are difficult, to say the least. But I again call on the government of Iran to work with the U.S. and our allies to ensure Bob Levinson's return to this country and allow the Levinsons to return to a normal life.

Those points are included in S. Con. Res. 4 which I introduced on February 3. I hope that we will be able to pass this resolution by this evening. I want to thank Senator VOINOVICH, as well as 16 other Senators, for joining me as cosponsors of this resolution.

We cannot and we will not forget Bob Levinson or his family.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 4) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The concurrent resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. CON. RES. 4

Whereas United States citizen Robert Levinson is a retired agent of the Federal

Bureau of Investigation, a resident of Florida, the husband of Christine Levinson, and father of their 7 children;

Whereas Robert Levinson traveled from Dubai to Kish Island, Iran, on March 8, 2007; Whereas, after traveling to Kish Island and checking into the Hotel Maryam, he disappeared on March 9, 2007;

Whereas neither his family nor the United States Government has received further information on his fate or whereabouts;

Whereas March 9, 2009, marks the second anniversary of the disappearance of Robert Levinson;

Whereas the Government of Switzerland, which has served as Protecting Power for the United States in the Islamic Republic of Iran in the absence of diplomatic relations between the United States Government and the Government of Iran since 1980, has continuously pressed the Government of Iran on the case of Robert Levinson and lent vital assistance and support to the Levinson family during their December 2007 visit to Iran;

Whereas officials of the Government of Iran promised their continued assistance to the relatives of Robert Levinson during the visit of the family to the Islamic Republic of Iran in December 2007; and

Whereas the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, stated during an interview with NBC News broadcast on July 28, 2008, that officials of the Government of Iran were willing to cooperate with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the search for Robert Levinson: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) commends the Embassy of Switzerland in Tehran and the Government of Switzerland for the ongoing assistance to the United States Government and to the family of Robert Levinson, particularly during the visit by Christine Levinson and other relatives to Iran in December 2007;

(2) expresses appreciation for efforts by Iranian officials to ensure the safety of the family of Robert Levinson during their December 2007 visit to Iran, as well as for the promise of continued assistance;

(3) urges the Government of Iran, as a humanitarian gesture, to intensify its cooperation on the case of Robert Levinson with the Embassy of Switzerland in Tehran and to share the results of its investigation into the disappearance of Robert Levinson with the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

(4) urges the President and the allies of the United States to engage with officials of the Government of Iran to raise the case of Robert Levinson at every opportunity, notwithstanding other serious disagreements the United States Government has had with the Government of Iran on a broad array of issues, including human rights, the nuclear program of Iran, the Middle East peace process, regional stability, and international terrorism; and

(5) expresses sympathy to the family of Robert Levinson during this trying period.

CONGRATULATING SAILORS OF THE U.S. SUBMARINE FORCE

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Con. Res. 10 submitted earlier today.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 10) congratulating the Sailors of the United

States Submarine Force upon the completion of 1,000 Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) deterrent patrols.

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

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I cosponsor this concurrent resolution with the Senator from Washington to congratulate the sailors of the United States submarine force upon their completion of 1,000 Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine deterrent patrols. Ballistic missile submarines serve as our Nation's primary and most secure nuclear deterrent. This milestone is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the sailors who provide our security against the rising threats that are permeating the globe. I stand here today to urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this concurrent resolution in honor of all those who made this milestone possible.

The strategic deterrence capability provided by the Ohio class remains as critical to our national security today as it did when we commissioned the first Ohio-class submarine in 1981. As result of the rapid advancements in the information and technology industries, our adversaries across the globe are developing weaponry at a much faster rate than they were two decades ago. Because of this, we must always be prepared for the next generation of threats. No other weapon can provide deterrence against these threats like the ballistic missile submarine. It is imperative that we continue to fund the research and development to maintain this fleet, thereby ensuring the future of ballistic missile submarines in our naval force. I, along with many of my colleagues, am committed to improving and embracing new technologies that will allow us to maintain and operate the finest submarine force in the world.

The successful completion of 1,000 patrols is a testament to the achievements and hard work of the sailors who support and operate this incredible fleet of submarines. At the same time, we realize that this security is not provided without cost and sacrifice. Thousands of submariners in our Navy spend months and possibly years of their lives underneath the sea to ensure our safety and our freedom. Additionally, we must remember the countless hours spent by Connecticut laborers to design and construct the Trident submarines, also made possible by vendor support from all around the country. It is extremely important that we take the time to thank those service members and those American workers for their sacrifice and their service to our great Nation.

Again, my sincerest congratulations go to all the sailors who made the successful completion of 1,000 deterrent patrols possible. I hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting this resolution in their honor.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to,