

urban areas in far-off eastern provinces, resulting in tens of thousands of Uyghur women being separated from their families and placed into substandard working conditions thousands of miles from their homes;

Whereas the legal system of the People's Republic of China is used as a tool of repression, including to arbitrarily detain and torture Uyghurs who have only voiced discontent with the Government of the People's Republic of China;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China continues to charge innocent Uyghurs with political crimes and to impose the death penalty on those Uyghurs and other political dissidents, contrary to international humanitarian standards;

Whereas the People's Republic of China is implementing a monolingual Chinese language education system that undermines the linguistic basis of Uyghur culture by transitioning minority students from education in their mother tongue to education in Chinese, shifting dramatically away from past policies that provided choice for the Uyghur people; and

Whereas there have been recent armed crackdowns throughout the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region against the entire Uyghur population; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that the Government of the People's Republic of China should—

(1) recognize, and seek to ensure, the linguistic, cultural, and religious rights of the Uyghur people of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region;

(2) immediately release all Uyghur political and religious prisoners that are being held without good cause or evidence, whether those prisoners are held in prisons or are under house arrest;

(3) cease harassment and intimidation of family members and innocent associates of peaceful Uyghur political activists; and

(4) immediately cease all Government-sponsored violence and crackdowns against people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, including against people involved in peaceful protests or religious or political expression.

SENATE RESOLUTION 156—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT REFORM OF OUR NATION'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM SHOULD INCLUDE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FEDERALLY-BACKED INSURANCE POOL

Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. DODD, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. HARKIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. REED, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KAUFMAN, Mr. BURRIS, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mrs. McCASKILL, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. CARDIN, and Mr. AKAKA) submitted the following resolution, which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 156

Whereas in the presence of a federally-backed insurance pool, those Americans who have become unemployed, live in rural and other traditionally underserved areas, or have been unable to attain affordable health insurance would benefit from consumer choice; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes that any efforts to reform our Nation's health care system should include as an option the establishment of a federally-backed insurance pool to create options for American consumers.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, in my approaching 2½ years in the Senate, I have held some 140 roundtables across my State—from Bryan, to Saint Clairsville, to Ashtabula, to Cincinnati—where I have had the opportunity to listen to health care professionals and advocates and their families speak about their circumstances and struggles. Through these discussions, one thing has become painfully obvious: Health care reform must include insurance reform, and health insurance reform must include the option of a federally backed health insurance plan. That is why I am here today to introduce a resolution, along with 26 of my Senate colleagues, to express the importance of including a federally backed health insurance plan in health care reform.

As we work to reform our health care system, we must protect what works and fix what is broken. It is important that we preserve access to employer-sponsored coverage for those who want to keep their current plan. That is what President Obama is insisting on. If you are satisfied, you keep what coverage you have. But with more and more Americans losing jobs and seeing their health insurance scaled back, it is important that people have access to something else. Americans deserve the chance to go with a private or a federally backed health insurance plan. It is their choice, and this choice is good policy. This choice is good common sense.

Americans are tired of trying to get health insurance coverage and being turned down because they have a pre-existing condition. They are tired of premiums and deductibles and copays that they simply can no longer afford. They are tired of having to fight for every penny when they have paid their insurance premium month after month. They are tired of having to fight for every penny that the insurer owes them when they try to use their insurance and waiting all too often for months to get their claims paid. They are tired of wondering whether their insurance will pay for them at all to see the specialist they need, to get the medicine they need, or to have the operation they need. That is not what insurance should be.

They are tired mostly of the uncertainty surrounding health insurance. If they lose their job, they lose insurance. If they get sick, they can't get insurance. If they submit a claim, it may be paid in 2 or 6 months, or sometimes, even though they are fighting their insurance company and asking and pleading and begging, they may not get the claim paid at all.

To be meaningful, health care reform must be responsive to all of these shortcomings in our current system.

To be responsive, health care reform must address insurance affordability, reliability, and insurance continuity. To achieve these goals, health care reform must provide Ohioans and every American with more options. People should be able to choose whether to keep the coverage they have or to purchase coverage backed by the Federal Government.

A federally backed plan would provide continuity. It would be available in every part of the country, no matter how rural, in western North Carolina or in southeast Ohio. Its benefits would be guaranteed, and its cost sharing would be affordable because of the problems of cost shifting—no ifs, no ands, and no buts. A federally backed plan would be an option but certainly not the only option. Americans who have employer-sponsored coverage would still have that coverage. Americans who have individual coverage through a private insurer would still have that coverage. A federally backed plan would be an option, not a mandate. Some will choose it; others will not. That is the kind of choice we ask for.

One reason such an option is important is because hundreds of thousands of Americans are losing their jobs and have no affordable coverage option. This would give them one. If you have ever tried to purchase affordable coverage in the individual insurance market—and I have—you understand why a federally backed insurance program is so important. If you live in a rural area where quality, affordable coverage is unavailable, you know why a federally backed insurance option is so important. There needs to be an option for people who can't find what they need in the private insurance market, just as Medicare is there for seniors. The federally backed option will give those under 65, if not yet eligible for Medicare, a place to turn.

The resolution I am introducing today, with half of the Democrats in the Senate already signed on as cosponsors—there will be more later—demonstrates broad support for a federally backed insurance option and health care reform. I encourage all colleagues to support this resolution.

The majority of the HELP Committee are cosponsors of this bill. That is the committee that will help to write the health insurance bill with the Finance Committee. If consumers have more options, including the option to purchase federally backed coverage designed to provide the three things that matter most—affordability, reliability, and continuity, the three things that too often are absent from private insurance plans—we will have gone a long way toward making the U.S. health care system work for every American. That is why this resolution matters. That is why the option of a federally backed insurance plan makes so much sense.

SENATE RESOLUTION 157—RECOGNIZING BREAD FOR THE WORLD, ON THE 35TH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDING, FOR ITS FAITHFUL ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF POOR AND HUNGRY PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD

Mr. LUGAR (for himself, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KOHL, Mr. BROWN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KERRY, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 157

Whereas Bread for the World, now under the leadership of the Reverend David Beckmann, has grown in size and influence, and is now the largest grassroots advocacy network on hunger issues in the United States and on behalf of impoverished people overseas;

Whereas members of Bread for the World believe that by addressing policies, programs, and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist, they are providing help and opportunity far beyond the communities in which they live;

Whereas Bread for the World has inspired the engagement of hundreds of thousands of individuals, more than 8,000 congregations, and more than 50 denominations across the religious spectrum to seek justice for hungry and poor people by making our Nation's laws more fair and compassionate to people in need;

Whereas members of Bread for the World use hand-written letters and other personalized forms of communication to convey to their legislators their moral concern for the needs of mothers, children, small farmers, and other hungry and poor people; and

Whereas Bread for the World has a strong record of success in working with Congress to—

(1) strengthen our national nutrition programs;

(2) establish and fund the Child Survival account that has helped reduce child mortality rates worldwide;

(3) increase and improve the Nation's poverty-focused development assistance to help developing countries in Africa and other underprivileged parts of the world;

(4) pass the Africa: Seeds of Hope Act of 1998 that redirected United States resources toward small-scale farmers and struggling rural communities in Africa;

(5) lead an effort to provide debt relief to the world's poorest countries and tie debt relief to poverty reduction; and

(6) establish an emergency grain reserve to improve the Nation's response to humanitarian crises; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and commends Bread for the World, on the 35th anniversary of its founding, for its encouragement of citizen engagement, its advocacy for poor and hungry people, and its successes as a collective voice; and

(2) challenges Bread for the World to continue its work to address world hunger.

SENATE RESOLUTION 158—TO COMMEND THE AMERICAN SAIL TRAINING ASSOCIATION FOR ADVANCING INTERNATIONAL GOODWILL AND CHARACTER BUILDING UNDER SAIL

Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted the following reso-

lution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 158

Whereas the American Sail Training Association (ASTA) is an educational nonprofit corporation whose declared mission is “to encourage character building through sail training, promote sail training to the North American public and support education under sail”;

Whereas, since its founding in 1973, ASTA has supported character-building experiences aboard traditionally-rigged sail training vessels and has established a program of scholarship funds to support such experiences;

Whereas ASTA has a long history of tall ship races, rallies, and maritime festivals, dating back as far as 1976;

Whereas, each year since 2001, ASTA has held the “Tall Ships Challenge”, a series of races and maritime festivals that involve sail training vessels, trainees, and crews from all the coasts of the United States and around the world;

Whereas the Tall Ships Challenge series has reached an audience of approximately 8,000,000 spectators and brought more than \$400,000,000 to more than 30 host communities;

Whereas ASTA supports a membership of more than 200 sail training vessels, including barks, barques, barkentines, brigantines, brigs, schooners, sloops, and full-rigged ships, which carry the flags of the United States, Canada, and many other nations and have brought life-changing adventures to thousands of young trainees;

Whereas ASTA has held a series of more than 30 annual sail training conferences in cities throughout the United States and Canada, including the Safety Under Sail Forum and the Education Under Sail Forum;

Whereas ASTA has collaborated extensively with the Coast Guard and with the premier sail training vessel of the United States, the square-rigged barque *USCGC Eagle*;

Whereas ASTA publishes “Sail Tall Ships”, a periodic directory of sail training opportunities;

Whereas, in 1982, ASTA supported the enactment of the Sailing School Vessel Act of 1982, title II of Public Law 97-322 (96 Stat. 1588);

Whereas ASTA has ably represented the United States as a founding member of the national sail training organization in Sail Training International, the recognized international body for the promotion of sail training, which has hosted a series of international races of square-rigged and other traditionally-rigged vessels since the 1950s; and

Whereas ASTA and Sail Training International are collaborating with port partners around the Atlantic Ocean to produce the “Tall Ships Atlantic Challenge 2009”, in which an international fleet of sail training vessels will sail from Europe to North America and return to Europe; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the American Sail Training Association for advancing character building experiences for youth at sea in traditionally-rigged sailing vessels and the finest traditions of the sea;

(2) commends the American Sail Training Association for acting as the national sail training association of the United States and representing the sail training community of the United States in the international forum; and

(3) encourages all people of the United States and the world to join in the celebration of the “Tall Ships Atlantic Challenge 2009” and in the character-building and educational experience that it represents for the youth of all nations.

SENATE RESOLUTION 159—RECOGNIZING THE HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF JUNETEENTH INDEPENDENCE DAY AND EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT HISTORY SHOULD BE REGARDED AS A MEANS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE PAST AND SOLVING THE CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

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

S. RES. 159

Whereas news of the end of slavery did not reach frontier areas of the United States, and in particular the southwestern States, for more than 2 years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, and months after the conclusion of the Civil War;

Whereas on June 19, 1865, Union soldiers led by Major General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Texas with news that the Civil War had ended and that the enslaved were free;

Whereas African Americans who had been slaves in the Southwest celebrated June 19, commonly known as “Juneteenth Independence Day”, as the anniversary of their emancipation;

Whereas African Americans from the Southwest continue the tradition of celebrating Juneteenth Independence Day as inspiration and encouragement for future generations;

Whereas for more than 140 years, Juneteenth Independence Day celebrations have been held to honor African-American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures;

Whereas although Juneteenth Independence Day is beginning to be recognized as a national, and even global, event, the history behind the celebration should not be forgotten; and

Whereas the faith and strength of character demonstrated by former slaves remains an example for all people of the United States, regardless of background, religion, or race; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate—

(A) recognizes the historical significance of Juneteenth Independence Day to the Nation;

(B) supports the continued celebration of Juneteenth Independence Day to provide an opportunity for the people of the United States to learn more about the past and to understand better the experiences that have shaped the Nation; and

(C) encourages the people of the United States to observe Juneteenth Independence Day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs; and

(2) it is the sense of the Senate that—

(A) history should be regarded as a means for understanding the past and solving the challenges of the future; and

(B) the celebration of the end of slavery is an important and enriching part of the history and heritage of the United States.