

S. RES. 422

Whereas adherence by Ukraine to democratic, transparent, and fair election standards has been necessary for full integration into the democratic community;

Whereas steps undertaken by Ukraine in recent years, including reform of election laws and regulations, the development of a pluralistic and independent press, and the establishment of public institutions that respect human rights and the rule of law, have enhanced Ukraine's progress toward democracy and prosperity;

Whereas the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) concluded that "most OSCE and Council of Europe commitments were met" with regard to the conduct of the run-off presidential election on February 7, 2010;

Whereas international monitoring groups concluded that prior elections in Ukraine on January 17, 2010, and in 2007, 2006, and 2004, were also generally in accordance with international election norms;

Whereas the United States has closely supported the people of Ukraine in their efforts to pursue a free and democratic future since the declaration of their independence in 1991;

Whereas the NATO Freedom Consolidation Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-17; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note), signed into law by President George W. Bush on April 9, 2007, recognized the progress made by Ukraine toward meeting the responsibilities and obligations for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and designated Ukraine as eligible to receive assistance under the NATO Participation Act of 1994 (title II of Public Law 103-447; 22 U.S.C. 1928 note);

Whereas Ukraine has made steps toward integration within European institutions through a joint European Union-Ukraine Action Plan, as part of the European Neighbourhood Policy; and

Whereas the United States-Ukraine Strategic Partnership Commission was inaugurated by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Petro Poroshenko on December 9, 2009: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the important progress made by the people of Ukraine in establishing democratic institutions and carrying out peaceful elections on January 17 and February 7, 2010;

(2) supports ongoing progress by Ukraine in addressing remaining challenges in the electoral processes as identified by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international election monitoring entities;

(3) encourages all parties to respect the independence and territorial sovereignty of Ukraine, as well as the full integration of Ukraine into the international democratic community;

(4) pledges further support for the development of a fully free and open democratic system, as well as a transparent free market economy, in Ukraine; and

(5) reaffirms its commitment to engage the Government of Ukraine in further development of bilateral cooperation through the United States-Ukraine Strategic Partnership Commission.

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK WEEK

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 426, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

dered. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 426) designating the week of February 28 through March 7, 2010, as "School Social Work Week".

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

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the 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 resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 426) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 426

Whereas the importance of school social work through the inclusion of school social work programs has been recognized in the current authorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);

Whereas school social workers serve as vital members of a school educational team, playing a central role in creating a positive school climate and vital partnerships between the home, school, and community to ensure student academic success;

Whereas school social workers are especially skilled in providing services to students who face serious challenges to school success, including poverty, disability, discrimination, abuse, addiction, bullying, divorce of parents, loss of a loved one, and other barriers to learning;

Whereas there is a growing need for local educational agencies to offer the mental health services that school social workers provide when working with families, teachers, principals, community agencies, and other entities to address emotional, physical, and environmental needs of students so that students may achieve behavioral and academic success;

Whereas, to achieve the goal of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) of helping all children reach their optimal levels of potential and achievement, including children with serious emotional disturbances, schools must work to remove the emotional, behavioral, and academic barriers that interfere with student success in school;

Whereas fewer than 1 in 5 of the 17,500,000 children in need of mental health services actually receive these services, and research indicates that school mental health programs improve educational outcomes by decreasing absences, decreasing discipline referrals, and improving academic achievement;

Whereas school mental health programs are critical to early identification of mental health problems and in the provision of appropriate services when needed;

Whereas the national average ratio of students to school social workers recommended by the School Social Work Association of America is 400 to 1; and

Whereas the celebration of "School Social Work Week" highlights the vital role school social workers play in the lives of students in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of February 28 through March 7, 2010, as "School Social Work Week";

(2) honors and recognizes the contributions of school social workers to the success of students in schools across the Nation; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe "School Social Work Week" with the appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the vital role of school social workers, in schools and in the community as a whole, in helping students prepare for their futures as productive citizens.

CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AWARENESS WEEK

SUPPORTING THOSE AFFECTED BY THE NATURAL DISASTERS ON MADEIRA ISLAND

IRAQI PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions: S. Res. 434, S. Res. 435, S. Res. 436, S. Res. 437, and S. Res. 438.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

The resolutions, with their preambles, read as follows:

S. RES. 434

Whereas several national dental organizations have observed February 2010 as Children's Dental Health Month;

Whereas Deamonte Driver, a 12-year-old Marylander, died on February 25, 2007, of complications resulting from untreated tooth decay;

Whereas the passing of Deamonte Driver has led to increased awareness nationwide about the importance of access to high-quality, affordable preventative care and treatment for dental problems;

Whereas the primary purpose of Children's Dental Health Month is to educate parents, children, and the public about the importance and value of oral health;

Whereas Children's Dental Health Month showcases the overwhelmingly preventable nature of tooth decay and highlights the fact that tooth decay is on the rise among the youngest children in the Nation;

Whereas Children's Dental Health Month educates the public about the treatment of childhood dental caries, cleft-palate, oral facial trauma, and oral cancer through public

service announcements, seminars, briefings, and the pro bono initiatives of practitioners and academic dental institutions;

Whereas Children's Dental Health Month was created to raise awareness about the importance of oral health; and

Whereas Children's Dental Health Month is an opportunity for the public and health professionals to take action to prevent childhood dental problems and improve access to high-quality dental care: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate expresses support for Children's Dental Health Month and honors the life of Deamonte Driver.

S. RES. 435

Whereas multiple sclerosis can impact men and women of all ages, races, and ethnicities;

Whereas more than 400,000 people in the United States live with multiple sclerosis;

Whereas approximately 2,500,000 people worldwide have been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis;

Whereas it is estimated that between 8,000 and 10,000 children and adolescents are living with multiple sclerosis;

Whereas every hour of every day, someone is newly diagnosed with multiple sclerosis;

Whereas the exact cause of multiple sclerosis is still unknown;

Whereas the symptoms of multiple sclerosis are unpredictable and vary from person to person;

Whereas there is no laboratory test available that definitively defines a diagnosis for multiple sclerosis;

Whereas multiple sclerosis is not genetic, contagious, or directly inherited, but studies show that there are genetic factors that indicate that certain individuals are susceptible to the disease;

Whereas multiple sclerosis symptoms occur when an immune system attack affects the myelin in nerve fibers of the central nervous system, damaging or destroying it and replacing it with scar tissue, thereby interfering with, or preventing the transmission of, nerve signals;

Whereas in rare cases, multiple sclerosis is so progressive that it is fatal;

Whereas there is no known cure for multiple sclerosis;

Whereas the Multiple Sclerosis Coalition, an affiliation of multiple sclerosis organizations dedicated to the enhancement of the quality of life for all those affected by multiple sclerosis, recognizes and celebrates Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week;

Whereas the mission of the Multiple Sclerosis Coalition is to increase opportunities for cooperation and provide greater opportunity to leverage the effective use of resources for the benefit of the multiple sclerosis community;

Whereas the Multiple Sclerosis Coalition recognizes and celebrates Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week during 1 week in March every year;

Whereas the goals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week are to invite people to join the movement to end multiple sclerosis, encourage everyone to do something to demonstrate a commitment to moving toward a world free of multiple sclerosis, and to acknowledge those who have dedicated their time and talent to help promote multiple sclerosis research and programs; and

Whereas in 2010, Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week is recognized during the week of March 8th through March 14th: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week;

(2) encourages States, territories, and possessions of the United States and local com-

munities to support the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week;

(3) encourages media organizations to participate in Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week and help educate the public about multiple sclerosis;

(4) commends the efforts of the States, territories, and possessions of the United States and local communities that support the goals and ideals of Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week;

(5) recognizes and reaffirms the commitment of the people of the United States to combating multiple sclerosis by promoting awareness about the causes and risks of multiple sclerosis, and by promoting new education programs, supporting research, and expanding access to medical treatment; and

(6) recognizes all people in the United States living with multiple sclerosis, expresses gratitude to their family members and friends who are a source of love and encouragement to them, and salutes the health care professionals and medical researchers who provide assistance to those living with multiple sclerosis and continue to work to find cures and improve treatments.

S. RES. 436

Whereas on February 20, 2010, a powerful storm hit Madeira Island, the largest of the islands that comprise the Madeira Autonomous Region of Portugal, resulting in a series of devastating flash floods and mudslides;

Whereas the storm caused boulders, trees, and earth to be hurled against buildings, carried away vehicles, and washed away roads and bridges on the south side of Madeira Island, an area that includes Funchal, the capital of the Madeira Autonomous Region;

Whereas 42 people have lost their lives, 151 people have received treatment for injuries at the main hospital in Funchal, and hundreds of people have been displaced;

Whereas the storm destroyed a large portion of the water and communication infrastructure on Madeira Island;

Whereas José Sócrates, the Prime Minister of Portugal, has promised "all necessary aid" to Madeira, and Alberto João Gonçalves Jardim, the President of the Madeira Autonomous Region, has consulted with European Commission President José Manuel Barroso to seek further assistance;

Whereas a Portuguese Navy frigate has dispatched troops to Madeira Island, with Portuguese divers and a medical team also arriving to offer emergency assistance;

Whereas the Government of Portugal has announced 3 days of national mourning for those who lost their lives in this disaster;

Whereas the United States is providing assistance through the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance of the United States Agency for International Development;

Whereas there are approximately 400 citizens of the United States on Madeira Island, with United States officials continually working to ensure their safety and well-being; and

Whereas a community of approximately 1,500,000 Portuguese-Americans, strongly represented in the States of Rhode Island and Massachusetts, maintain deep and enduring ties with Portugal and Madeira Island: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) mourns the loss of life and expresses its deepest condolences to the families of those killed and injured by floods and mudslides resulting from the storm that hit Madeira Island on February 20, 2010;

(2) expresses solidarity between the people of the United States and Madeira, recognizing the historical ties between Portuguese-Americans, Portugal, and the Madeira Autonomous Region; and

(3) applauds the courageous rescue efforts of fire, medical, and military personnel and other volunteers in response to the flooding and mudslides.

S. RES. 437

Whereas on February 27th, 2009, President Obama declared that the United States' "clear and achievable goal" is "an Iraq that is sovereign, stable, and self-reliant" and that the United States will achieve that goal by working "to promote an Iraqi government that is just, representative, and accountable";

Whereas in December 2009, Iraq's elected officials ended months of deadlock, passed a new election law, and scheduled parliamentary elections for March 7, 2010;

Whereas nearly 100,000 American soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines continue to serve in Iraq, marking the United States' largest current overseas deployment;

Whereas Iraq's future sovereignty, stability, and democracy is threatened by serious internal and external challenges, including—

(1) continuing attempts by Al Qaeda in Iraq to perpetrate mass casualty terrorist attacks intended to paralyze the Iraqi state and reignite sectarian violence;

(2) some surrounding countries' malign and destabilizing interference in Iraq's internal affairs and their incomplete diplomatic recognition of Iraq;

(3) unresolved disputes over internal boundaries, including the City of Kirkuk;

(4) incomplete reintegration of Sunni Arab communities in Iraq; and

(5) ongoing incidents of civil and human rights abuses in a diverse, multiconfessional society;

Whereas while the United States appreciates the profound conviction of the Iraqi people to ensure that the Ba'ath party never returns to power in Iraq, the process by which scores of candidates have been disqualified from participating in the March 7, 2010 elections—

(1) has not met international standards of electoral transparency and fairness;

(2) was interpreted by many Iraqis as politically motivated; and

(3) risks diminishing participation in elections;

Whereas the United States has a clear, strong, and enduring national interest in helping the people of Iraq to establish a stable, representative, and democratic state;

Whereas the United States committed, in the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq On the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq (referred to in this resolution as the "Status of Forces Agreement") signed in November 2008, to redeploy—

(1) all combat forces from Iraqi cities by June 30, 2009; and

(2) all United States forces from Iraq by December 31, 2011;

Whereas United States combat forces successfully redeployed from Iraq's cities by June 30, 2009, in accordance with the Status of Forces Agreement, and are likely to early out further reductions in the number of United States military forces in Iraq during the months after the March 7, 2010 elections;

Whereas the United States and Iraq agreed in the Strategic Framework Agreement, also signed in November 2008, to "continue to foster close cooperation concerning defense and security arrangements";

Whereas the March 7, 2010 elections and the subsequent government formation process will mark a period of exceptional importance for the future of Iraq;

Whereas Iraq conducted provincial elections in January 2009 that were free from widespread violence and the results of which

were recognized as legitimate by the international community and the Iraqi people;

Whereas several of Iraq's main electoral blocs have committed to a Code of Conduct meant to ensure fair, transparent, and inclusive elections:

Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the United States' strong commitment to building a robust, long-term partnership with Iraq that strengthens Iraq's security, stability, economy, and democracy;

(2) recognizes the United States' clear and enduring interest in partnering with the people of Iraq in building a stable, representative, successful, democratic state;

(3) urges the Administration—

(A) to devote continued, high-level attention and support for the people and Government of Iraq toward these goals, in particular during the critical months after the March 7, 2010 elections;

(B) to work with the international community to provide all necessary support for Iraqi elections, including technical support for Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission and assistance for domestic and international monitoring;

(4) calls upon all parties within Iraq—

(A) to ensure that the March 7, 2010 parliamentary elections are free, fair, inclusive, and without violence or intimidation; and

(B) to refrain from rhetoric or actions that might undercut the legitimacy of such elections or inflame communal tensions;

(5) urges the countries surrounding Iraq—

(A) to refrain from exercising malign and destabilizing interference in Iraq's internal affairs; and

(B) to allow the people of Iraq to determine their own future;

(6) calls for the timely formation of an inclusive, effective, and representative new Iraqi government after the March 7, 2010 parliamentary elections;

(7) reaffirms that, while United States military forces redeploy from Iraq in the months after the March 7, 2010 elections, the United States must remain engaged in partnering with the people of Iraq to help them in building a stable, representative, and successful democratic state;

(8) expresses gratitude to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, the Foreign Service, and other Federal Government agencies, for their service, sacrifices, and heroism in Iraq; and

(9) commends the people of Iraq for—

(A) the courage they have shown;

(B) the sacrifices they have endured; and

(C) the hard-won gains they have made in fighting terrorism, finding peace, and building democracy.

S. RES. 438

Whereas reading is a basic requirement for quality education and professional success, and is a source of pleasure throughout life;

Whereas the people of the United States must be able to read if the United States is to remain competitive in the global economy;

Whereas Congress, through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) and the Reading First, Early Reading First, and Improving Literacy Through School Libraries programs, has placed great emphasis on reading intervention and providing additional resources for reading assistance; and

Whereas more than 50 national organizations concerned about reading and education have joined with the National Education Association to use March 2, the anniversary of the birth of Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, to celebrate reading: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 2, 2010, as "Read Across America Day";

(2) honors Theodor Geisel, also known as Dr. Seuss, for his success in encouraging children to discover the joy of reading;

(3) honors the 13th anniversary of Read Across America Day;

(4) encourages parents to read with their children for at least 30 minutes on Read Across America Day in honor of the commitment of the Senate to building a Nation of readers; and

(5) encourages the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Mr. BAUCUS. Madam President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TAX EXTENDERS ACT OF 2009—

Continued

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator BARRASSO and I and others be allowed to enter into a colloquy for the next 30 minutes.

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

Mr. WICKER. Thank you, Madam President.

I come from a background of having earlier been in the State senate and then, after that, the U.S. House of Representatives. Sometimes when I was a State legislator and it looked as though we were making a hash of legislation on the senate side, someone would say: Well, let's pass the bill anyway, and we will clean it up in conference. It was always tempting to send it to conference and hope that cooler heads would prevail and we would get a better work product. Sometimes that happened and worked out well, and sometimes it turned out that we didn't clean it up in conference.

I am reminded of that when I hear about what is being discussed and what now seems to be the clear plan for this Democratic majority and President Obama in moving forward with health care legislation. The House has passed a flawed bill with \$½ trillion in cuts to Medicare, with huge mandates to the States, with tax increases—the largest increase, really, in entitlement big government, in my memory—and the Senate has passed its flawed version not only with those flaws I just mentioned in the House version but also special deals: a special deal for Nebraska, a special deal for Florida and Louisiana, and on and on and on. That is where we are now.

The plan now seems to be that this mistaken bill—the flawed bill the Senate passed on Christmas Eve—is now at the desk at the House of Representatives, and leadership over there is tempted to take that flawed product, pass it without any changes whatsoever, and send it to the President for his signature. The plan there is not the

old legislative trick of we will clean it up in conference; the plan is we will clean it up in reconciliation.

As I mentioned, sometimes that works and sometimes it doesn't. The problem with cleaning it up in reconciliation is that if this Democratic scheme goes forward and we do that, we will not only have a bill in conference to be worked out where if a mistake is made we can vote against it in the end, we will have a statute.

The plan is for the President to sign this flawed Senate product with all the taxes, with all the mandates, with all the special deals and purchases, sign it into law, and then hope the Senate can correct all of those mistakes in reconciliation. If that scheme fails, we will be stuck with a very bad product, and it will be the law of the land and up to some future Congress to deal with. Certainly, it will be the key, top, paramount election issue for the next several months.

If the plan works, if the Democratic scheme works, we will still have this. Maybe the "Louisiana purchase" will be taken out, the "Cornhusker kick-back," the "Gator Aid"—all of the special deals, and then we will have the President's additional taxes and additional Federal regulation that he has recently proposed. So when it is all said and done, even at their best, most optimistic predictions, we will have massive funding mandates to the States. We will have a \$½ trillion cut to Medicare. We will have huge tax increases and a large new entitlement program.

The people don't want this. I heard a Democratic Member of the House of Representatives very articulately stating this on television just this morning. He said people must be out of their minds. This is wrong, according to this Member of the House of Representatives, a Democrat who says he has voted against it before, and he is not going to be one of those who is willing to change his mind.

So I don't want to spend the rest of this year with this flawed legislation as the only campaign issue. It may be our only choice. But I can assure everyone within the sound of my voice of this: If this scheme goes through, if the flawed Senate version is signed into law and we have this reconciliation debate, this will be the No. 1 issue, if not the only issue, and there will be devastation for my friends on the other side of the aisle if they persist in thumbing their noses at the American people and defying the clear will of the American people on this issue.

I am glad to be joined by my friend, Senator BARRASSO, a legislator in his own right with considerable experience, and a physician. So I am happy to hear the comments of my colleague from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. I thank the Senator very much.