

(2) encourages States, territories, and possessions of the United States and local communities 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.

SENATE RESOLUTION 436—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE NATURAL DISASTERS ON MADEIRA ISLAND

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. REED, and Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

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.

SENATE RESOLUTION 437—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE POSITIVE EFFECT OF THE UPCOMING IRAQI PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS ON IRAQ'S POLITICAL RECONCILIATION AND DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. CASEY, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. KAUFMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

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 carry 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.

SENATE RESOLUTION 438—DESIGNATING MARCH 2, 2010, AS “READ ACROSS AMERICA DAY”

Mr. REED (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

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.

SENATE RESOLUTION 439—RECOGNIZING THE EXEMPLARY SERVICE, DEVOTION TO COUNTRY, AND SELFLESS SACRIFICE OF SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATORS 2ND CLASS MATTHEW McCABE AND JONATHAN KEEFE AND SPECIAL WARFARE OPERATOR 1ST CLASS JULIO HUERTAS IN CAPTURING AHMED HASHIM ABED, ONE OF THE MOST-WANTED TERRORISTS IN IRAQ, AND PLEDGING TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES SERVING IN HARM’S WAY

Mr. ENSIGN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 439

Whereas in September 2009, Special Warfare Operators 2nd Class Matthew McCabe and Jonathan Keefe and Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Julio Huertas successfully

captured Ahmed Hashim Abed, one of the most-wanted terrorists in Iraq;

Whereas Ahmed Hashim Abed is the alleged planner of the March 21, 2004, ambush of a supply convoy in Fallujah, Iraq, which resulted in the brutal killing of 4 Blackwater security contractors;

Whereas Ahmed Hashim Abed evaded capture in Iraq for more than 5 years until his capture by the 3 Navy SEALs;

Whereas Special Warfare Operators 2nd Class Matthew McCabe and Jonathan Keefe and Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Julio Huertas are exceptional sailors who accomplished their mission in the finest tradition of the Navy SEALs and the United States Armed Forces while defending their country and protecting the citizens of Iraq;

Whereas the capture of Ahmed Hashim Abed serves as an important reminder that the United States is still engaged in a Global War on Terror; and

Whereas it is because of the efforts of these courageous Navy SEALs and other members of the Armed Forces that Americans continue to be free: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the exemplarily service, devotion to country, and selfless sacrifice of Special Warfare Operators 2nd Class Matthew McCabe and Jonathan Keefe and Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Julio Huertas; and

(2) pledges to continue to support members of the United States Armed Forces serving in harm’s way.

SENATE RESOLUTION 440—IMPROVING THE SENATE CLOTURE PROCESS

Mr. BENNET submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 440

Whereas the Senate rules regarding cloture serve the legitimate purpose of protecting the rights of the minority;

Whereas the Senate has never been intended to operate solely on the basis of majority rule; and

Whereas the Senate rules should not be abused for the purpose of delaying or otherwise preventing the business of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. MOTIONS TO PROCEED.

Paragraph 2 of rule VIII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended to read as follows:

“2. All motions to proceed to the consideration of any matter shall be determined without debate, except motions to proceed to a proposal to change the Standing Rules which shall be debatable.”.

SEC. 2. PROCESS FOR ENDING THE DEBATE.

(a) MOTION TO REDUCE TIME FOR CLOTURE PETITION TO RIPEN.—The first sentence of paragraph 2 of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended by inserting after “but one” the following: “(unless by two-thirds affirmative vote of the Senators duly chosen and sworn the Senate has agreed to a motion to reduce time)”.

(b) ALLOWING FOR A MOTION TO REDUCE TIME POSTCLOTURE.—The fourth undesignated paragraph of paragraph 2 of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended by striking the second and third sentences and inserting: “The thirty hours may be increased or decreased by the adoption of a motion, decided without debate, by a three-fifths affirmative vote of the Senators present and voting, and any such time

thus agreed upon shall be equally divided and controlled by the Majority and Minority Leaders or their designees. However, only one motion to reduce or extend time, specified above, may be made in any one calendar day.”.

(c) MINORITY MUST VOTE IN THE NEGATIVE, OR ELSE CLOTURE IS INVOKED.—The second undesignated paragraph of paragraph 2 of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended by striking “And if that question shall be decided in the affirmative by three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn” and inserting “And if that question is decided in the affirmative and there are not negative votes by at least forty-one hundredths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn”.

(d) ENCOURAGING BIPARTISAN NEGOTIATIONS AND BIPARTISAN COALITION BUILDING.—Paragraph 2 of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended by inserting at the end the following:

“In the event that 3 attempts to bring the debate to a close on any particular measure, motion, other matter pending before the Senate, or the unfinished business, have not received the requisite number of votes to bring the debate to a close under this paragraph, then for any subsequent attempt to bring the debate to a close on that particular measure, motion, other matter pending before the Senate, or the unfinished business, the threshold required of those voting in the negative in order to prevent the debate from coming to a close shall be 45 hundredths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn, unless at least one of the Senators present and voting in the negative, caucuses with the party of the Majority Leader, in which case the threshold required of those voting in the negative in order to prevent the debate from coming to a close shall remain 41 hundredths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn. If there is one member of the Majority voting to maintain the filibuster for purposes of the preceding sentence maintaining the threshold for blocking cloture at 41 hundredths, the threshold shall be raised to 45 hundredths if 3 of those voting in the affirmative to bring debate to a close caucus with the party of the Minority Leader. For purposes of this undesignated paragraph, only those Senators permitted to caucus with the party of the Majority Leader, by the Majority Leader, shall be considered to caucus with the party of the Majority Leader. The Majority Leader shall request that a list of Senators caucusing with the party of the Majority Leader be listed in the Congressional Record, and any time that the Majority Leader shall regard composition of such list as having changed, the Majority Leader shall request that a new and updated list be printed in the Congressional Record.”.

SEC. 3. HOLDS.

The Standing Rules of the Senate are amended by inserting at the end the following:

“RULE XLV

“PROCESS FOR HOLDS

“1. A Senator who provides notice either to leadership or during open public debate in the full Senate of intention to object to proceeding to a motion or matter shall disclose the objection in the Congressional Record not later than 2 session days after the date of such notice. Upon the placement of the disclosure of objection in the Congressional Record, the Senate shall only continue to recognize the objection if the objection is raised as provided in this paragraph at least by one Senator who caucuses with the party of the Majority Leader and by one Senator who caucuses with the party of the Minority Leader. Under no circumstance shall a particular objection to a nomination be recognized for more than 30 days.