

Whereas, in April 2011, the Levinson family received a series of pictures of Mr. Levinson, which provided further indications that he was being held somewhere in southwest Asia;

Whereas Secretary of State John Kerry stated on August 28, 2013, “The United States respectfully asks the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to work cooperatively with us in our efforts to help U.S. citizen Robert Levinson.”;

Whereas, on September 28, 2013, during the first direct phone conversation between the heads of governments of the United States and Iran since 1979, President Barack Obama raised the case of Robert Levinson to President of Iran Hassan Rouhani and urged the President of Iran to help locate Mr. Levinson and reunite him with his family;

Whereas, on August 29, 2014, Secretary of State Kerry again stated that the United States “respectfully request[s] the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran work cooperatively with us to find Mr. Levinson and bring him home”;

Whereas, on July 14, 2015, the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, China, Germany, and Iran agreed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action;

Whereas, on January 16, 2016, the Government of Iran released five United States citizens detained in Iran, Jason Rezaian of California, Saeed Abedini of Idaho, Amir Mirzaei Hekmati of Michigan, Matthew Trevithick of Massachusetts, and Nosratollah Khosravi-Roodsari;

Whereas, on January 17, 2016, President Obama stated that “even as we rejoice in the safe return of others, we will never forget about Bob,” referring to Robert Levinson, and that “each and every day but especially today our hearts are with the Levinson family and we will never rest until their family is whole again”;

Whereas, on January 19, 2016, White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest stated that the United States Government had “secured a commitment from the Iranians to use the channel that has now been opened to secure the release of those individuals that we know were being held by Iran. . . to try and gather information about Mr. Levinson’s possible whereabouts”;

Whereas, on November 26, 2013, Mr. Levinson became the longest held United States civilian in our Nation’s history; and

Whereas the Federal Bureau of Investigation has announced a \$5,000,000 reward for information leading to Mr. Levinson’s safe return: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,
That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that Robert Levinson is the longest held United States civilian in our Nation’s history;

(2) notes the repeated pledges by and renewed commitment of officials of the Government of Iran to provide their Government’s assistance in the case of Robert Levinson;

(3) urges the Government of Iran, as a humanitarian gesture, to act on its promises to assist in the case of Robert Levinson and to immediately provide all available information from all entities of the Government of Iran regarding the disappearance of Robert Levinson to the United States Government;

(4) urges the President and the allies of the United States to continue to raise with officials of the Government of Iran the case of Robert Levinson at every opportunity, notwithstanding ongoing and serious disagreements the United States Government has with the Government of Iran on a broad array of issues, including Iran’s ballistic missile program, sponsorship of international terrorism, and human rights abuses; and

(5) expresses sympathy to the family of Robert Levinson for their anguish and expresses hope that their ordeal can be brought to an end in the near future.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported

amendment to the resolution be agreed to; the resolution, as amended, be agreed to; the committee-reported amendment to the preamble be agreed to; the preamble, as amended, be agreed to; that the committee-reported title amendment be agreed to; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 99), as amended, was agreed to.

The committee-reported amendment to the preamble in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The committee-reported title amendment was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: “A resolution calling on the Government of Iran to follow through on repeated promises of assistance in the case of Robert Levinson, the longest held United States civilian in our Nation’s history.”.

RECOGNIZING CONNECTICUT’S SUBMARINE CENTURY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 298 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 298) recognizing Connecticut’s Submarine Century, the 100th anniversary of the establishment of Naval Submarine Base New London, and Connecticut’s historic role in supporting the undersea capabilities of the United States.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask that the Senate proceed to vote on adoption of the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing none, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 298) was agreed to.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Blumenthal amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to.

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

The amendment (No. 3306) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To make technical corrections in the preamble)

In the second whereas clause in the preamble, strike “donated land and provided funding” and insert “gifted land”.

In the ninth whereas clause in the preamble, strike “Warfare” and insert “Warfighting”.

In the twelfth whereas clause of the preamble, strike “historic ship Nautilus” and insert “Historic Ship NAUTILUS (SSN 571)”.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I finally ask unanimous consent that the preamble, as amended, be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

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

S. RES. 298

Whereas, on March 2, 1867, Congress enacted a naval appropriations Act that authorized the Secretary of the Navy to “receive and accept a deed of gift, when offered by the State of Connecticut, of a tract of land with not less than one mile of shore front on the Thames River near New London, Connecticut, to be held by the United States for naval purposes”;

Whereas the people of Connecticut and the towns and cities in the southeastern region of Connecticut subsequently gifted land to establish a military installation to fulfil the Nation’s need for a naval facility on the Atlantic coast;

Whereas, on April 11, 1868, the Navy accepted the deed of gift of land from Connecticut to establish a naval yard and storage depot along the eastern shore of the Thames River in Groton, Connecticut;

Whereas, between 1868 and 1912, the New London Navy Yard supported a diverse range of missions, including berthing inactive Civil War era ironclad warships and serving as a coaling station for refueling naval ships traveling in New England waters;

Whereas Congress rejected the Navy’s proposal to close New London Navy Yard in 1912, following an impassioned effort by Congressman Edwin W. Higgins, who stated that this “action proposed is not only unjust but unreasonable and unsound as a military proposition”;

Whereas the outbreak of World War I and the enemy use of submarines to sink allied military and civilian ships in the Atlantic sparked a new focus on developing submarine capabilities in the United States;

Whereas October 18, 1915, marked the arrival at the New London Navy Yard of the submarines G-1, G-2, and G-4 under the care of the tender USS OZARK, soon followed by the arrival of submarines E-1, D-1, and D-3 under the care of the tender USS TONOPAH, and on November 1, 1915, the arrival of the first ship built as a submarine tender, the USS FULTON (AS-1);

Whereas, on June 21, 1916, Commander Yeates Stirling assumed the command of the newly designated Naval Submarine Base New London, the New London Submarine Flotilla, and the Submarine School;

Whereas in the 100 years since the arrival of the first submarines to the base, Naval Submarine Base New London has grown to occupy more than 680 acres along the east side of the Thames River, with more than 160 major facilities, 15 nuclear submarines, and more than 70 tenant commands and activities, including the Submarine Learning Center, Naval Submarine School, the Naval Submarine Medical Research Laboratory, the Naval Undersea Medical Institute, and the newly established Undersea Warfighting Development Center;

Whereas in addition to being the site of the first submarine base in the United States, Connecticut was home to the foremost submarine manufacturers of the time, the Lake Torpedo Boat Company in Bridgeport and the Electric Boat Company in Groton, which later became General Dynamics Electric Boat;

Whereas General Dynamics Electric Boat, its talented workforce, and its Connecticut-based and nationwide network of suppliers have delivered more than 200 submarines from its current location in Groton, Connecticut, including the first nuclear-powered submarine, the USS NAUTILUS (SSN 571), and nearly half of the nuclear submarines ever built by the United States;

Whereas the Submarine Force Library and Museum, located adjacent to Naval Submarine Base New London in Groton, Connecticut, is the only submarine museum operated by the United States Navy and today serves as the primary repository for artifacts, documents, and photographs relating to the bold and courageous history of the Submarine Force and highlights as its core exhibit the Historic Ship NAUTILUS (SSN 571) following her retirement from service;

Whereas reflecting the close ties between Connecticut and the Navy that began with the gift of land that established the base, the State of Connecticut has set aside \$40,000,000 in funding for critical infrastructure investments to support the mission of the base, including construction of a new dive locker building, expansion of the Submarine Learning Center, and modernization of energy infrastructure;

Whereas, on September 29, 2015, Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy designated October 2015 through October 2016 as Connecticut's Submarine Century, a year-long observance that celebrates 100 years of submarine activity in Connecticut, including the Town of Groton's distinction as the Submarine Capital of the World, to coincide with the centennial anniversary of the establishment of Naval Submarine Base New London and the Naval Submarine School;

Whereas Naval Submarine Base New London still proudly proclaims its motto of "The First and Finest"; and

Whereas Congressman Higgins' statement before Congress in 1912 that "Connecticut stands ready, as she always has, to bear her part of the burdens of the national defense" remains true today: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the longstanding dedication and contribution to the Navy and submarine force by the people of Connecticut, both through the initial deed of gift that established what would become Naval Submarine Base New London and through their ongoing commitment to support the mission of the base and the Navy personnel assigned to it;

(2) honors the submariners who have trained and served at Naval Submarine Base New London throughout its history in support of the Nation's security and undersea superiority;

(3) recognizes the contribution of the industry and workforce of Connecticut in designing, building, and sustaining the Navy's submarine fleet; and

(4) encourages the recognition of Connecticut's Submarine Century by Congress, the Navy, and the American people by honoring the contribution of the people of Connecticut to the defense of the United States and the important role of the submarine force in safeguarding the security of the United States for more than a century.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2016

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m. tomorrow, Friday, February 12; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of pro-

ceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator MARKEY.

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

The Senator from Massachusetts.

NOMINATION OF ROBERT CALIFF

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, I am here to speak in opposition to the nomination of Dr. Robert Califf to be the head of the Food and Drug Administration.

I understand that Leader MCCONNELL has asked that cloture be filed on Dr. Califf's nomination. I understand that. I appreciate it. But we need to have a debate in this country on opioids. While I am disappointed that the majority leader is taking this step, I am committed to continuing to work on this issue, and using Dr. Robert Califf's nomination is the means by which we can have a debate here on the floor of the Senate on these issues.

(Mr. MCCONNELL assumed the Chair.)

I am here to speak about a public health epidemic that every year kills more people in the United States than gun violence or motor vehicle accidents. What does this epidemic look like? Well, it looks like this: Last year 30,000 Americans died of an opioid overdose. More than 1,300 of those were from my home State of Massachusetts. In the city of Brockton, MA, last month, in January, in the span of 48 hours, 40 people overdosed on opioids. I will say that again. In Brockton, in 48 hours, 40 people overdosed on opioids.

Between 2000 and 2013, the rate of death from heroin overdoses nearly quadrupled. The United States is less than 5 percent of the world's population, but we consume 80 percent of the world's opioid pain killers. Drug overdoses are increasing the death rates of young adults in the United States to levels not experienced since the AIDS epidemic more than 20 years ago. These skyrocketing death rates make these young adults the first generation since the time of the Vietnam war to experience higher death rates in early adulthood than the generation that preceded it.

Let's compare what we did as a nation when we confronted other deadly epidemics. A bipartisan majority in Congress funded more than \$5 billion to

respond to Ebola. We dispatched the medical community and public health experts. We built entire facilities to ensure we stopped the spread of the deadly virus. Today, the Obama administration is asking Congress for \$1.8 billion in emergency funding to fight the Zika virus. Imagine if we applied the same commitment, the same urgency, the same level of resources to the prescription drug and heroin epidemic.

Yet, despite this raging epidemic, one would think the Food and Drug Administration—the agency responsible for the safety of all prescription drugs in the United States—would welcome every bit of expert advice it can get from doctors and other public health professionals. In fact, the FDA's own rules call for it to establish an independent advisory committee of experts to assist the agency when it considers a question that is controversial or of great public interest, such as whether to allow a new addictive prescription painkiller to be marketed in the United States. Instead, the FDA has put a sign in its window: No Help Wanted. That is what this nomination of Dr. Robert Califf is all about.

The FDA began turning its back on advisory committees in 2013 when an advisory panel to review the powerful opioid painkiller Zohydro voted 11 to 2 against recommending its approval. But the agency approved the drug anyway, overruling the concerns voiced by experienced physicians on the panel. Those experts criticized the agency for ignoring the growing epidemic fueled by OxyContin—the heavily abused prescription painkiller the FDA first approved back in 1995. They warned about the growing dangers of addiction, of abuse and dependence associated with this entire class of opioid painkillers. Justifiably, the FDA was lambasted for its decision to approve Zohydro by public health experts, doctors, Governors, and Members of Congress. But despite those warnings of the real-world dangers of abuse and dependence on these new, supercharged opioid painkillers, the FDA willfully blinded itself to the warning signs.

In 2014, in the wake of the Zohydro decision, the FDA twice skipped the advisory committee process altogether when it approved the new prescription opioids Targiniq and Hysingla.

Then, in August of 2015, the FDA did it again, this time by bypassing an advisory committee on the question of a new use for OxyContin for children aged 11 to 16. This time the FDA even ignored its own rules that specifically call for advisory committee advice when a question of "pediatric dosing" is involved.

At this point, it became clear that the FDA was intentionally choosing to forgo an advisory committee in order to avoid another overwhelming vote recommending against approval of a prescription opioid. And why did they do it? Well, because the FDA would then have had to ignore yet another group of experts in order to continue