

ISAKSON) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 294, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to clarify the Food and Drug Administration's jurisdiction over certain tobacco products, and to protect jobs and small businesses involved in the sale, manufacturing and distribution of traditional and premium cigars.

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 294, *supra*.

S. 301

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 301, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to prohibit governmental discrimination against providers of health services that are not involved in abortion.

S. 324

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 324, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

S. 341

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 341, a bill to provide for congressional oversight of actions to waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions with respect to the Russian Federation, and for other purposes.

S. 370

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) were added as cosponsors of S. 370, a bill to eliminate the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection by repealing title X of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, commonly known as the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010.

S. 377

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 377, a bill to amend the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 to clarify report dates, modify the criteria for determinations of whether countries are meeting the minimum standards for elimination of trafficking, and highlight the importance of concrete actions by countries to

eliminate trafficking, and for other purposes.

S. 379

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 379, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the five month waiting period for disability insurance benefits under such title for individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 382, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a voluntary registry to collect data on cancer incidence among firefighters.

S. 387

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 387, a bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to subject the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to the regular appropriations process, and for other purposes.

S. 397

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 397, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure fairness in Medicare hospital payments by establishing a floor for the area wage index applied with respect to certain hospitals.

S. 422

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 422, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 426

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 426, a bill to increase educational assistance provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs for education and training of physician assistants of the Department, to establish pay grades and require competitive pay for physician assistants of the Department, and for other purposes.

S. 438

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 438, a bill to encourage effective, voluntary investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the United States military with annual Federal awards to employers recognizing such efforts, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 16

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of

S.J. Res. 16, a joint resolution approving the discontinuation of the process for consideration and automatic implementation of the annual proposal of the Independent Medicare Advisory Board under section 1899A of the Social Security Act.

S.J. RES. 18

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 18, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule submitted by the Department of the Interior relating to Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska.

S.J. RES. 19

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection relating to prepaid accounts under the Electronic Fund Transfer Act and the Truth in Lending Act.

S.J. RES. 23

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 23, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to drug testing of unemployment compensation applicants.

S. RES. 60

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 60, a resolution designating May 5, 2017, as the "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls".

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. THUNE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 446. A bill to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 446

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

# SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Constitutional Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017”.

## SEC. 2. RECIPROCITY FOR THE CARRYING OF CERTAIN CONCEALED FIREARMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 926C the following:

### “§926D. Reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any provision of the law of any State or political subdivision thereof to the contrary—

“(1) an individual who is not prohibited by Federal law from possessing, transporting, shipping, or receiving a firearm, and who is carrying a government-issued photographic identification document and a valid license or permit which is issued pursuant to the law of a State and which permits the individual to carry a concealed firearm, may possess or carry a concealed handgun (other than a machinegun or destructive device) that has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce in any State other than the State of residence of the individual that—

“(A) has a statute that allows residents of the State to obtain licenses or permits to carry concealed firearms; or

“(B) does not prohibit the carrying of concealed firearms by residents of the State for lawful purposes; and

“(2) an individual who is not prohibited by Federal law from possessing, transporting, shipping, or receiving a firearm, and who is carrying a government-issued photographic identification document and is entitled and not prohibited from carrying a concealed firearm in the State in which the individual resides otherwise than as described in paragraph (1), may possess or carry a concealed handgun (other than a machinegun or destructive device) that has been shipped or transported in interstate or foreign commerce in any State other than the State of residence of the individual that—

“(A) has a statute that allows residents of the State to obtain licenses or permits to carry concealed firearms; or

“(B) does not prohibit the carrying of concealed firearms by residents of the State for lawful purposes.

“(b) CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS.—The possession or carrying of a concealed handgun in a State under this section shall be subject to the same conditions and limitations, except as to eligibility to possess or carry, imposed by or under Federal or State law or the law of a political subdivision of a State, that apply to the possession or carrying of a concealed handgun by residents of the State or political subdivision who are licensed by the State or political subdivision to do so, or not prohibited by the State from doing so.

“(c) UNRESTRICTED LICENSE OR PERMIT.—In a State that allows the issuing authority for licenses or permits to carry concealed firearms to impose restrictions on the carrying of firearms by individual holders of such licenses or permits, an individual carrying a concealed handgun under this section shall be permitted to carry a concealed handgun according to the same terms authorized by an unrestricted license of or permit issued to a resident of the State.

“(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to preempt any provision of State law with respect to the issuance of licenses or permits to carry concealed firearms.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 926C the following:

“926D. Reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms.”.

(c) SEVERABILITY.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, if any provision of this Act, or any amendment made by this Act, or the application of such provision or amendment to any person or circumstance is held to be unconstitutional, this Act and amendments made by this Act and the application of such provision or amendment to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this Act shall take effect 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. McCONNELL, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. BURR, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DAINES, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. ERNST, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. LEE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MORAN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SASSE, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. STRANGE, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. YOUNG):

S.J. Res. 24. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to balancing the budget; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, 70 years ago this May, the Senate Appropriations Committee sent to the full Senate a constitutional amendment to require a balanced Federal budget. It had been proposed by Senator Millard Tydings, a Democrat from Maryland. In its report, the committee said this: “In no other way except by an amendment to the Constitution can Congress be compelled to balance its budget in peacetime.”

Seven decades of experience proved that the Appropriations Committee was right, and we have never been in a more serious, perilous situation than we are today.

Two essential facts compel me once again to introduce a constitutional amendment to require fiscal responsibility: the gravity of the national debt crisis and the fact that neither willpower nor legislation will solve it.

The greatest challenge in describing the gravity of the national debt crisis is deciding how much of the bad news to present at one time. During the 2008 Presidential campaign, one of the candidates criticized the outgoing President for adding \$4 trillion to the national debt. That increase, Barack

Obama said, was not only irresponsible but “unpatriotic.” The national debt on inauguration day 2009 was \$10.6 trillion, and on inauguration day 2017 it was \$19.9 trillion. If a \$4 trillion increase was irresponsible and unpatriotic, what words describe a \$9.3 trillion increase?

President Obama won the 2008 election with the Government Accountability Office warning that the Nation’s long-term fiscal outlook was unsustainable. In its January 2017 assessment of the Nation’s fiscal health, GAO reports that the national debt as a share of GDP in 2016 was 75 percent higher than the average since World War II. As it had been before, GAO concluded that “the federal government’s fiscal path is unsustainable.”

One way to understand the gravity of the national debt is to compare it to the size of the economy, or the gross domestic product. In other words, we can compare what we owe to our ability to pay. When President Obama took office, the national debt was 82 percent of GDP and is now 105 percent of GDP today. Some economists prefer to evaluate the national debt as a percentage of tax revenue; that is, by comparing what we owe to what we earn. The national debt rose from approximately 350 percent of Federal revenue when President Obama took office to 600 percent of Federal revenue today.

But neither numbers nor percentages tell the whole story because the national debt crisis is becoming not only a bigger crisis but a different kind of crisis. During the last several years of skyrocketing national debt, the interest rate on that debt has been nearly zero. If interest rates had been at the historical average, annual interest costs would be more than twice what they are today and on their way to consuming more than half of all Federal revenue. And now interest rates are starting to creep up. The Concord Coalition and the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget both anticipate that over the next decade, interest payments on the national debt alone will approach \$1 trillion per year. That is interest payments. In other words, as GAO found in its new fiscal report, the growing national debt now means that the rising cost of servicing that debt becomes one of the drivers of the growing debt itself. This is becoming what one study calls a self-propelling crisis.

A national debt of this magnitude dampens the economic growth necessary to minimize borrowing to fund the government, and rising interest costs for such a monstrous debt add to the debt on which more interest must then be paid. Last month, for instance, the Treasury Department echoed this point in its financial report with the U.S. Government for fiscal year 2016. The Treasury Department concluded:

The debt-to-GDP ratio rises at an accelerating rate despite primary deficits that flatten out because higher levels of debt lead to higher net interest expenditures, and higher net interest expenditures lead to

higher debt. The continuous rise of the debt-to-GDP ratio . . . indicates that current policy is unsustainable.

We can also consider the legislative budget and economic outlook from the Congressional Budget Office. I want to highlight a few things that stood out to me.

First, annual budget deficits are on their way back up after 6 years of decline. In fact, the budget deficit for fiscal year 2016 will be one-third larger than in 2015.

Second, CBO projects that the national debt will rise by nearly \$10 trillion over the next decade. Looking beyond the next decade, CBO says that under current law, the national debt will explode to more than 150 percent of GDP—by far the highest level in American history.

Third, CBO also says that interest on the national debt is itself an increasingly forceful engine driving the debt even higher. Interest payments on the national debt are increasing nearly twice as fast as spending on Social Security and Medicare. Just last month, CBO Director Keith Hall said that over the next 10 years, interest payments are expected to triple in nominal terms and double relative to GDP.

Fourth, CBO repeated some of the serious negative consequences of this national debt for the budget, the economy, and the Nation. In addition to substantially higher interest payments, these include lower productivity and wages, less flexibility by lawmakers to respond to fiscal challenges, and increased likelihood of a fiscal crisis.

In addition to these problems, former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Michael Mullen and experts from the Heritage Foundation to the Brookings Institution warn that the national debt crisis is a serious threat to national security.

Economists tell us that national debt above 90 percent of GDP for a sustained period of time will lead to substantially slower economic growth and higher interest rates. The United States is now in the longest period in its history with the national debt above that toxic 90-percent level. Not surprisingly, since the recession ended in June 2009, the national debt has grown more than twice as fast and GDP has grown less than half as fast as during the comparable period after previous recessions.

It is no wonder to me and to many others that more than two-thirds of Americans say that their concern over the national debt is growing and more than three-quarters of Americans say that the national debt should be among Congress's top three priorities. The national debt was once such a top priority. In fact, America's Founders were so determined to avoid debt that their commitment to fiscal balance was often called our unwritten fiscal constitution. President George Washington, for example, told Congress that the regular redemption of the public debt was the most urgent fiscal pri-

ority. That was George Washington. Thomas Jefferson wrote in 1798 that if he could add a single amendment to the Constitution, it would prohibit the Federal Government from borrowing. That commitment, of course, is long gone. The Federal budget has been balanced in only a dozen of the last 80 years. And, as I said earlier, we are in the longest period in American history with a debt above 90 percent of GDP.

As its fiscal willpower failed, Congress has also tried to address the debt crisis by legislation. The first bill requiring a balanced budget was introduced in 1934 when the national debt was 40 percent of GDP. Fifty years later, Congress enacted the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act. Since then, we have enacted multiple budget control acts and budget enforcement acts, only to see the national debt climb from 42 percent of GDP in 1985 to 105 percent of GDP today.

Good intentions will not balance the Nation's checkbook. Statutes that Congress can change or ignore will not keep our fiscal house in order. Neither willpower nor legislation will tackle the national debt crisis. Pretending otherwise is the fiscal equivalent of fiddling while Rome burns.

All the evidence—every bit of it—proves true the conclusion drawn by the Appropriations Committee 70 years ago. In no other way except by amendment to the Constitution can Congress be compelled to balance its budget in peacetime. We have, as lawyers put it, exhausted our other remedies for this crisis. This would be a very different country—a freer and more prosperous country—if Congress had already proposed the only solution that exists, a constitutional amendment which requires fiscal responsibility.

The first balanced budget amendment was introduced in the House of Representatives in 1936. As you can see, the national debt as a percentage of GDP has been going up by leaps and bounds. I introduced my first balanced budget amendment in June of 1979, during my first term in the Senate when the national debt was 32 percent of GDP. That share of GDP doubled by 1997 when the Senate came within one vote of passing a balanced budget amendment that I introduced—one vote. It rose to 95 percent when the Senate last voted on a balanced budget amendment in 2011 and is 105 percent of GDP today.

Since this crisis is already so grave and getting worse, since the only way to tackle it is through the Constitution, we should propose a balanced budget amendment and let the American people decide whether to take this step. After all, Congress cannot amend the Constitution. A requirement that Congress keep its fiscal house in order cannot become part of the Constitution until that is approved by three-quarters of the States.

Congress, however, is not the only way to propose constitutional amend-

ments. Article V of the Constitution also allows the States to apply for a convention to propose constitutional amendments. Concerned citizens have been working since the mid-1970s to reach the two-thirds threshold for calling such a convention to propose a balanced budget amendment and are only six States away from that goal. Since Congress has never called an article V convention, questions remain unresolved and theories untested regarding that method of proposing an amendment. I can assure my colleagues, however, that Congress's continued failure to propose a balanced budget—and a balanced budget amendment at that—guarantees that our fellow citizens will continue working to force that course upon us.

There are two facts that we must face: the gravity of the nation's debt crisis and the failure to address it by willpower or legislation. Perhaps some of my colleagues believe that the Congressional Budget Office is wrong in its disturbing projections and dire warnings; that the Government Accountability Office is mistaken and the fiscal path we are on is sustainable after all; that the Treasury Department is wrong about the spiral of increased debt and growing interest payments—some people feel that way; that the Concord Coalition and the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget are wrong about how national debt interest payments will continue to grow and add to the debt; and that economists are wrong to warn about the impact of sustained national debt of this magnitude.

If my colleagues are convinced that everyone else is wrong and our fiscal future is just fine after all, then they should say so and then try to make that case to the American people. Even they will not do that because they know they are wrong, yet we can't seem to get them to do what is right. I, for one, think that would be a very tough sell for them to make. Americans have been polled about this issue dozens of times over the years by major polling firms and national news organizations. Three-quarters of Americans supported a balanced budget amendment in 1976, and three-quarters support it today.

Perhaps all of these polls over the last 40 years are wrong. Perhaps the American people are content watching their national debt swallow the economy. Perhaps our fellow citizens are actually OK with slower economic growth, a rising threat to national security, the greater likelihood of a fiscal crisis, and an unsustainable path to fiscal disaster. If that is what the American people actually believe, then they certainly are inclined to ratify a balanced budget amendment.

The real reason Members of Congress refuse to give the American people this choice is that they know what the American people will say. I say with respect, but as strongly as I can, that this is not a legitimate basis for refusing to propose a balanced budget

amendment. In our system of government, as Founder James Wilson once put it, the people are the masters of government. They alone have authority to set rules for government. This choice must be theirs, not ours.

Here is the heart of the matter. First, the national debt crisis poses a significant and growing threat to the economic and national security of this country. In fact, we have never been in such an extended, perilous period as we are right now. Second, Congress has tried and failed to address this crisis by either willpower or legislation and will actually do so only if the Constitution requires it. Third, the decision of whether to use the Constitution to require fiscal responsibility belongs to the American people, not to Congress.

We can either take the responsibility we were elected for and propose a balanced budget amendment or the American people may do it for us. I hope we have the guts to do what is right. Our very country is hanging in the balance. The rest of the world depends on the United States and the strong principles of the United States, and we need to do what is right.

I think it is time for us to wake up and realize this is the Congress that can make the difference. After all these years of impropriety and excessive spending, we can do it. We can live within certain constraints. It may take a period of time to wind this down, but we can do it. This amendment does provide for some ways of getting there.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 68—RAISING AWARENESS OF MODERN SLAVERY

Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 68

Whereas it is estimated that tens of millions of children, women, and men around the world are subjected to conditions of modern slavery;

Whereas the International Labour Organization estimates that modern slavery generates more than \$150,000,000,000 in criminal profits each year;

Whereas, despite being outlawed in every nation, modern slavery exists around the world, including in the United States;

Whereas, around the world, 55 percent of forced labor victims are women or girls, and nearly 1 in 5 victims of slavery is a child;

Whereas global leadership continues to coalesce around real and coordinated actions to end modern slavery, as exemplified in statements by senior officials such as U.K. Prime Minister Theresa May, who has stated, "Britain is leading the way in pioneering international efforts to crack down on modern slavery—one of the great scourges of our world—wherever it is found.";

Whereas, on December 23, 2016, the End Modern Slavery Initiative, a bipartisan initiative, was authorized to help establish a powerful effort in concert with the private sector and foreign governments to eliminate modern slavery and human trafficking around the globe; and

Whereas, each year, individuals around the world join together to call for an end to modern slavery by symbolically drawing a red "X" symbol on their hands to share the message of the END IT movement: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) commends each individual who supported the END IT movement on February 23, 2017;

(2) notes the dedication of individuals, organizations, and governments to end modern slavery; and

(3) calls for concerted, international action to bring an end to modern slavery around the world.

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 69—CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SCOTT, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CARPER, Mr. COONS, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mr. WICKER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PAUL, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BENNET, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. NELSON, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. UDALL, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. BURR, Mr. HELLER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. STRANGE, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. MURPHY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 69

Whereas in 1776, people envisioned the United States as a new nation dedicated to the proposition stated in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness . . .";

Whereas Africans were first brought involuntarily to the shores of America as early as the 17th century;

Whereas African Americans suffered enslavement and subsequently faced the injustices of lynch mobs, segregation, and denial of the basic and fundamental rights of citizenship;

Whereas in 2017, the vestiges of those injustices and inequalities remain evident in the society of the United States;

Whereas in the face of injustices, people of good will and of all races in the United States have distinguished themselves with a commitment to the noble ideals on which the United States was founded and have fought courageously for the rights and freedom of African Americans and others;

Whereas African Americans, such as Lieutenant Colonel Allen Allensworth, Maya Angelou, Arthur Ashe Jr., James Baldwin, James Beckwourth, Clara Brown, Blanche Bruce, Ralph Bunche, Shirley Chisholm, Holt Collier, Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, Ralph Ellison, Medgar Evers, Alex Haley, Dorothy Height, Lena Horne, Charles Hamilton Houston, Mahalia Jackson, Stephanie Tubbs Jones, B.B. King, Martin Luther King, Jr., Thurgood Marshall, Constance Baker Motley, Rosa Parks, Walter Payton,

Bill Pickett, Homer Plessy, Bass Reeves, Hiram Revels, Amelia Platts Boynton Robinson, Jackie Robinson, Aaron Shirley, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Booker T. Washington, the Greensboro Four, and the Tuskegee Airmen, along with many others, worked against racism to achieve success and to make significant contributions to the economic, educational, political, artistic, athletic, literary, scientific, and technological advancements of the United States;

Whereas the contributions of African Americans from all walks of life throughout the history of the United States reflect the greatness of the United States;

Whereas many African Americans lived, toiled, and died in obscurity, never achieving the recognition they deserved, and yet paved the way for future generations to succeed;

Whereas African Americans continue to serve the United States at the highest levels of business, government, and the military;

Whereas the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass inspired the creation of Negro History Week, the precursor to Black History Month;

Whereas Negro History Week represented the culmination of the efforts of Dr. Carter G. Woodson, the "Father of Black History", to enhance knowledge of Black history through the Journal of Negro History, published by the Association for the Study of African American Life and History, which was founded by Dr. Carter G. Woodson and Jesse E. Moorland;

Whereas Black History Month, celebrated during the month of February, originated in 1926 when Dr. Carter G. Woodson set aside a special period in February to recognize the heritage and achievement of Black people of the United States;

Whereas Dr. Carter G. Woodson stated: "We have a wonderful history behind us. . . . If you are unable to demonstrate to the world that you have this record, the world will say to you, 'You are not worthy to enjoy the blessings of democracy or anything else.'";

Whereas since the founding of the United States, the Nation has imperfectly progressed toward noble goals;

Whereas the history of the United States is the story of people regularly affirming high ideals, striving to reach those ideals but often failing, and then struggling to come to terms with the disappointment of that failure, before committing to trying again;

Whereas on November 4, 2008, the people of the United States elected Barack Obama, an African-American man, as President of the United States; and

Whereas on February 22, 2012, people across the United States celebrated the groundbreaking of the National Museum of African American History and Culture on the National Mall in Washington, District of Columbia, which opened to the public on September 24, 2016; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges that all people of the United States are the recipients of the wealth of history provided by Black culture;

(2) recognizes the importance of Black History Month as an opportunity to reflect on the complex history of the United States, while remaining hopeful and confident about the path ahead;

(3) acknowledges the significance of Black History Month as an important opportunity to commemorate the tremendous contributions of African Americans to the history of the United States;

(4) encourages the celebration of Black History Month to provide a continuing opportunity for all people in the United States to learn from the past and understand the experiences that have shaped the United States; and