

## ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 266

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 266, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Anwar Sadat in recognition of his heroic achievements and courageous contributions to peace in the Middle East.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 708

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 708, a bill to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 926

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 926, a bill to authorize the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to establish the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

S. 1002

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1002, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 1024

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1024, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1024, *supra*.

S. 1028

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1028, a bill to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a National Family Caregiving Strategy, and for other purposes.

S. 1050

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1050, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

S. 1182

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) were added as cosponsors of S. 1182, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the 100th anniversary of The American Legion.

S. 1307

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1307, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand eligibility to receive refundable tax credits for coverage under a qualified health plan.

S. 1353

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1353, a bill to require States to automatically register eligible voters to vote in elections for Federal offices, and for other purposes.

S. 1391

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1391, a bill to amend title IV of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 to restore Medicaid coverage for citizens of the Freely Associated States lawfully residing in the United States under the Compacts of Free Association between the Government of the United States and the Governments of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

S. 1426

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1426, a bill to amend the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act to expand the purposes of the corporation, to designate the United States Center for Safe Sport, and for other purposes.

S. 1455

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1455, a bill to amend the United States Energy Storage Competitiveness Act of 2007 to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish new goals for the Department of Energy relating to energy storage and to carry out certain demonstration projects relating to energy storage.

S. 1457

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr.

RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1457, a bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to direct the Secretary of Energy to carry out demonstration projects relating to advanced nuclear reactor technologies to support domestic energy needs.

S. 1512

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1512, a bill to prohibit the Secretary of Energy, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Transportation, and the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality from considering, in taking any action, the social cost of carbon, the social cost of methane, the social cost of nitrous oxide, or the social cost of any other greenhouse gas, unless compliant with Office of Management and Budget guidance, and for other purposes.

S. 1529

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1529, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand eligibility for the refundable credit for coverage under a qualified health plan.

S. 1532

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1532, a bill to disqualify from operating a commercial motor vehicle for life an individual who uses a commercial motor vehicle in committing a felony involving human trafficking.

S. 1536

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1536, a bill to designate a human trafficking prevention coordinator and to expand the scope of activities authorized under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's outreach and education program to include human trafficking prevention activities, and for other purposes.

S. 1540

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1540, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against tax for investments in qualified production facilities.

S. RES. 211

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 211, a resolution condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya.

## STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 1552. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow individuals to designate that up to 10 percent of their income tax liability be used to reduce the national debt, and to require spending reductions equal to the amounts so designated; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I rise to speak about a critical subject too often overlooked by Congress. It is the Federal debt and our deficit.

It is no secret that our national debt will soon surpass \$20 trillion. To provide some context for that figure, \$20 trillion represents the largest amount of debt ever owed by any nation in history. This fact, coupled with the fast-approaching end to our fiscal year, will leave Congress facing an unavoidable debt debate.

Our looming debt and deficit are two of our country's most urgent challenges, but the legislative branch does not treat them like the crises they really are. Since January alone, Congress has added \$284 billion to the debt over the next 10 years. The Congressional Budget Office recently projected that if Congress continues on its current path, deficits will increase dramatically over the next decade. Specifically, by 2027, the deficit will grow from 3.6 percent of the Nation's GDP to 5.2 percent of the Nation's GDP, totaling \$1.4 trillion. Yet, as the National Debt Clock continues to click upward toward \$20 trillion, the Federal Government continues to spend money that it simply does not have.

If Congress continues to legislate in this current state of denial, one day soon, we may well wake up to discover that the financial markets have declared that the United States is no longer a good bet. We must also remember that Congress's failure to address this fiscal train wreck today will force our children and grandchildren to deal with its consequences tomorrow. Unless Congress can get this fundamental issue under control, nothing else will matter very much.

There ought to be an option that allows taxpayers to take matters into their own hands. That is why today I am reintroducing the Debt Buy-Down Act. The Debt Buy-Down Act is a commonsense bill that allows taxpayers to rein in the national debt with the simple check of a box. If passed, this bill would require the IRS to include an option on individuals' tax forms that allow them to voluntarily designate up to 10 percent of their tax liabilities to go specifically toward reducing the national debt. The bill would then require Congress to reduce Federal spending by an amount equivalent to that designated by the taxpayers. If Congress fails to make these necessary spending reductions designated by taxpayers, then across-the-board spending cuts would be imposed.

This is not a good way to reduce the Federal debt. The better way would be to make priorities as we consider our spending bills, but it is better than just

letting these spending bills go and doing nothing. We ought to use a scalpel and go in and treat these programs as we should and make sure they are doing what they were intended to. If we cannot do that, then we need to take dramatic measures to get our debt and deficit under control.

The Debt Buy-Down Act would protect Social Security benefits, benefits for those in the uniformed services, and payments for net interest on the national debt from being included in any of these across-the-board cuts.

Simply put, in the absence of responsible Federal budget solutions, this bill allows taxpayers to take matters into their own hands. In 2014, Americans paid over \$1.37 trillion in individual income taxes. If every one of these individuals had contributed 10 percent of their tax liability, Congress would have been required to have cut \$137 billion in spending. While \$137 billion does not solve our \$20 trillion debt problem, it is certainly a good place to start.

Congress has been so desensitized to the growing national debt that the word "trillion" does not even raise alarm bells anymore. In fact, after I introduced the Debt Buy-Down Act in 2010, I began sending a weekly, pun-laden press release to help put the then-\$13 trillion national debt—just in 2010—into perspective. It was called "So Just How Broke Are We?" Maybe it is time to bring it back.

So 7 years and \$7 trillion in added debt later, just how broke are we today? We are so broke that, with our \$20 trillion national debt, we could book 570,000 trips to the Moon on SpaceX. It is a pretty expensive excursion, but we could do it 570,000 times. We are so broke that, with our \$20 trillion national debt, we could buy every seat at Chase Field in Phoenix for the next 22 million Arizona Diamondbacks games. Of course, that is just a ballpark figure, but it is the last pun. I promise. We are so broke that with our \$20 trillion national debt we could buy 20 billion tickets to see Hamilton.

My love of bad puns and jokes aside, instead of thinking about how \$20 trillion could be spent, maybe we ought to start thinking about how \$20 trillion could be saved.

That is why I am calling on my colleagues to support the Debt Buy-Down Act and empower taxpayers to reduce the national debt. Just think, a simple check of a box would help save billions of dollars and preserve the strength of our national economy. It would save future generations from the consequences of our crippling national debt.

At any rate, I hope this bill makes like the debt and grows a lot of interest.

By Mr. JOHNSON:

S. 1553. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to list fentanyl analogues as schedule I controlled substances; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss an epidemic that is sweeping our Nation. From big cities to small towns, communities across our country have been ravaged by drug addiction and the multiple problems caused by it. Opioid overdoses have quadrupled since 1999 and were responsible for over 33,000 deaths in 2015 alone.

We have all seen the dangers posed by the overprescription of highly addictive prescription opioids. According to the CDC, addiction to prescription opioid painkillers is the primary gateway to heroin abuse. In fact, Michael Botticelli, President Obama's drug czar, testified in my committee last year that people who are addicted and abuse prescription opioids are 40 times more likely to abuse heroin.

Almost all of the heroin sold on the streets of the United States today enters the country illegally from Mexico. It is trafficked by drug cartels into our communities through our porous southwest border.

It is a problem that continues to grow. Even as heroin has increased, it has remained available and affordable because increased production in Mexico has ensured a reliable supply of low-cost heroin. As long as there is a demand, the enormous profit potential of the drug trade will ensure that there is a sufficient supply. A kilogram of heroin can be produced in Mexico for around \$5,000. It can be sold to dealers for as much as \$80,000—a 1,500 percent profit.

At another committee hearing, we learned that heroin has significantly dropped in price. In 1981, the nationwide average price was \$3,260 per gram of pure heroin. Today, it is between \$100 and \$150 per gram. That translates into as little as \$10 for one hit, making heroin a very affordable and very destructive addiction. While prices have dropped, the potency has increased. Heroin sold in Wisconsin has increased from 5 percent purity in the 1980s to somewhere between 20 percent and 80 percent purity today.

As awful as that reality is, imported heroin is only one front in our fight against opioids. Another equally dangerous front is synthetic or man-made opioids—particularly fentanyl and its analogs—which are now commonly mixed into the heroin sold in our communities. Since fentanyl is 50 times more potent than heroin and 100 times more potent than morphine, it only takes a minuscule amount of fentanyl—just 2 milligrams, less than one one-thousandth of the weight of a penny—to be potentially lethal.

Even more alarming, we are now beginning to see carfentanil, often used to sedate elephants, also being blended into heroin and fentanyl on the streets. Carfentanil is 100 times more potent than fentanyl and 10,000 times more potent than morphine. A dose of carfentanil the size of a grain of salt can lead to a deadly overdose.

Just as we are seeing an increase in drugs coming across our southwest border, man-made opioids are on the rise as well. The profit potential of fentanyl is even more staggering than heroin's. According to an article in the Wall Street Journal, 25 grams of fentanyl costs approximately \$810 to produce and has a market value of \$800,000.

In 2013, 3,097 people died from overdoses involving synthetic opioids. Just 1 year later, we lost 5,544 people to that same drug—a 79-percent increase in just 1 year. My home State of Wisconsin has been particularly hard hit by the introduction of fentanyl and its analogs.

In April, 2016, I met Lauri Badura. Lauri is from Oconomowoc, WI, a suburb in Milwaukee. She lost her son Archie to a heroin overdose.

Here is a picture of Archie. He doesn't exactly look like a heroin addict, does he? Archie was just 19 years old when he died. He began using marijuana during his freshman year in high school and discovered opioids the summer after his high school graduation. After overdosing multiple times and trying to quit, Archie had stayed sober for 77 days before he relapsed again and finally overdosed on May 15, 2014.

In Archie's memory, Lauri started a foundation called Saving Others For Archie, or SOFA. Her organization raises awareness throughout Wisconsin of the dangers of drug abuse. It offers support for families battling addiction. Lauri is constantly being contacted by and providing comfort to other parents coping with similar tragedies.

Lauri's story is moving, and I applaud her for being such a strong advocate for those struggling with addiction. Unfortunately, her tragedy is not unique. The scourge of addiction and overdose deaths has devastated thousands of families, including my own.

In January, 2016, I lost a nephew to a fentanyl overdose. The legislation I am introducing this afternoon is in memory of my nephew, of Archie, and of all of the families in Wisconsin and throughout America who have lost loved ones in this epidemic.

Today I am proud to introduce the Stopping Overdoses of Fentanyl Analogues Act, or SOFA Act. Sharing an acronym with Lauri Badura's organization, the SOFA Act will give law enforcement a set of enhanced tools to combat the opioid epidemic by closing a loophole that criminal drug manufacturers are exploiting.

Fentanyl is a synthetic, or man-made, opioid—the result of complex chemistry that brings together multiple building blocks. Criminal chemists need change only one small piece of the chemical bond to be one step ahead of the law. The fentanyl analogs on the street today serve no known medical purpose and are contributing to the alarming overdose rates throughout the country. My legislation would classify these analogs under schedule I and give the DEA tools to quickly schedule additional fentanyl

analogs as they are identified in our communities.

This body took a step forward last Congress when we passed the CARA legislation to improve addiction treatment programs throughout the United States. We can now take another important step forward by providing law enforcement with the tools it needs to get these dangerous synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl and carfentanil, off the streets.

In addition to Lauri Badura, I also want to thank Dr. Tim Westlake for working with me to craft this legislation. Tim has testified at a committee field hearing in Pewaukee, and he participated in an opioid roundtable in Milwaukee I convened in September. His leadership in Wisconsin and on this issue has been invaluable.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this legislation and additional opportunities to combat this serious problem that has plagued our Nation.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 1560. A bill to ensure the integrity of border and immigration enforcement efforts by requiring U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to administer law enforcement polygraph examinations to all applicants for law enforcement positions and to require post-hire polygraph examinations for law enforcement personnel as part of periodic reinvestigations; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. 1560

*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 "Integrity in Border and Immigration Enforcement Act".

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **LAW ENFORCEMENT POSITION.**—The term "law enforcement position" means any law enforcement position in U.S. Customs and Border Protection ("CBP") or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE").

(2) **POLYGRAPH EXAMINATION.**—The term "polygraph examination" means the Law Enforcement Pre-Employment Test certified by the National Center for Credibility Assessment.

#### SEC. 3. POLYGRAPH EXAMINATIONS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL.

(a) **APPLICANTS.**—Beginning not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security—

(1) shall require that polygraph examinations are conducted on all applicants for law enforcement positions; and

(2) may not hire any applicant for a law enforcement position who does not pass a polygraph examination.

(b) **TARGETED POLYGRAPH REINVESTIGATIONS.**—Beginning not later than 90 days

after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security, as part of each background reinvestigation, shall administer a polygraph examination to—

(1) every CBP law enforcement employee who is determined by the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security to be part of a population at risk of corruption or misconduct, based on an analysis of past incidents of misconduct and corruption; and

(2) every ICE law enforcement employee who is determined by the Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security to be part of a population at risk of corruption or misconduct, based on an analysis of past incidents of misconduct and corruption.

(c) **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO DETERMINE TARGETED POLYGRAPH EXAMINATIONS.**—The Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security may—

(1) delegate the authority under subsection (b)(1) to the CBP Office of Professional Responsibility; and

(2) delegate the authority under subsection (b)(2) to the ICE Office of Professional Responsibility.

(d) **RANDOM POLYGRAPH REINVESTIGATIONS.**—Beginning not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall—

(1) randomly administer a polygraph examination each year to at least 5 percent of CBP law enforcement employees who are undergoing background reinvestigations during that year and have not been selected for a targeted polygraph examination under subsection (b)(1); and

(2) randomly administer a polygraph examination each year to at least 5 percent of ICE law enforcement employees who are undergoing background reinvestigations during that year and have not been selected for a targeted polygraph examination under subsection (b)(2).

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 1561. A bill to repeal the Jones Act restrictions on coastwise trade, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to introduce the Open America's Waters Act of 2017. This bill would repeal the Merchant Marine Act of 1920, better known as the Jones Act, an archaic and burdensome law that hinders free trade, stifles the economy and ultimately hurts consumers, largely for the benefit of labor unions. If this legislation becomes law, U.S. shippers will no longer be required to patronize market inefficiency but rather, effectively leverage the global shipping market.

As many of my colleagues know, the Jones Act is one of many of laws passed over time that addresses port-to-port coastal shipping, drafted in order to protect the U.S. domestic shipping industry. While the Jones Act may have had some rationale back in the 1920s when it was enacted, today it serves only to raise shipping costs, making U.S. farmers and businesses less competitive in the global marketplace and increasing costs for American consumers. This protectionist mentality directly contradicts the lessons our nation has learned about the many benefits of a free and open market. Repeatedly, it has been proven that trade liberalization has created

jobs, expanded economic growth and provided consumers with access to lower cost goods and services.

The forced purchase of American vessels combined with the immense cost associated with U.S. shipbuilding has forced U.S. shippers to act against their best interests to the detriment of their businesses. While foreign-built coastal-sized ships typically cost between \$25–30 million, a U.S.-made ship of the same size can cost anywhere between \$190–250 million. A repeal of the Jones Act, over time, would have broad impact. According to a 2002 U.S. International Trade Commission study, repealing the Jones Act would lower shipping costs by about 22 percent. The Commission also found that repealing the Jones Act would have an annual positive effect of \$656 million on the overall U.S. economy. Though this decade-and-a-half-old study provides some of the most recent statistics available, it is not hard to imagine the modern affect that maritime deregulation would contribute to this industry.

Congress must take action to repeal laws that have outlived their usefulness and are no longer relevant to modern commerce. It is unacceptable that millions of dollars in the U.S. economy are lost every year to an antiquated policy, and unacceptable that this body is unable to disengage from special interests in order to participate in a productive debate on this issue. I encourage my colleagues to reflect on our responsibility as lawmakers and see the Jones Act for what it really is: an outdated and protectionist policy that only serves to harm the American economy and consumer.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

**SENATE RESOLUTION 219—DESIGNATING JULY 13, 2017, AS “SUMMER LEARNING DAY”, A DAY TO REFLECT ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDING YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SAFE, PRODUCTIVE, AND ENRICHING ACTIVITIES EVERY SUMMER, ENSURING THE YOUNG PEOPLE RETURN TO SCHOOL IN THE FALL WITH THE SKILLS VITAL TO SUCCEED IN THE YEAR AHEAD**

Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. HATCH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 219

Whereas summer learning loss widens an already existing achievement gap that stays constant during the 9-month school year;

Whereas summer learning loss disproportionately impacts the learning of children from lower-income households or with special educational needs;

Whereas, during the summer, students lose approximately 2 months of grade level equivalency in math computation skills and low-income students lose an additional 2 months in reading achievement;

Whereas effective summer programs can bridge the eighth to ninth grade transition and strategically decrease dropout rates of high risk students;

Whereas only 1 in 7 students received the nutrition and meals they needed during the summer of 2016;

Whereas summer learning programs contribute to the academic and social growth of students, provide safe and healthy spaces for children during the summer, and give young people the tools necessary for success in school;

Whereas summer youth employment programs provide young people with access to meaningful experiences that foster interest in potential careers, encourage financial and personal responsibility, and emphasize community engagement;

Whereas many organizations, including public agencies, schools, libraries, museums, recreation centers, camps, and businesses, assist with the personal development of young people through summer activities;

Whereas students who do not receive supervision during the summer are far more likely to receive poor grades, exhibit behavioral issues, and drop out of school;

Whereas summer learning contributes to increasing high school graduation rates; and

Whereas summer learning is a crucial component in ensuring that all students graduate from high school and emerge ready for the next endeavor, which may be to attend college or start a career: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate designates July 13, 2017, as “Summer Learning Day”.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 220—EXPRESSING SOLIDARITY WITH FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS WHO HAVE LOST LIVES, FREEDOMS, AND RIGHTS FOR ADHERING TO THEIR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES AND CONDEMNING THE PRACTICE OF NON-CONSENTING ORGAN HARVESTING, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 220

Whereas Falun Gong (also known as Falun Dafa) is a Chinese spiritual discipline founded by Li Hongzhi in 1992 that consists of spiritual and moral teachings, meditation, and exercise, and is based upon the universal principles of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance;

Whereas, during the mid-1990s, Falun Gong acquired a large and diverse following, with as many as 70,000,000 practitioners at its peak;

Whereas, on April 25, 1999, an estimated 10,000 to 30,000 Falun Gong practitioners gathered in Beijing to protest growing restrictions by the Government of the People's Republic of China on the activities of Falun Gong practitioners, and the Government of the People's Republic of China responded with an intensive, comprehensive, and unforgiving campaign against the movement that began on July 20, 1999, with the banning of Falun Gong;

Whereas the Constitution of the People's Republic of China guarantees basic rights, including the freedoms of speech, association, demonstration, and religion;

Whereas, in 1993, the Government of the People's Republic of China praised Li Hongzhi for his contributions in “safeguarding social order and security” and “promoting rectitude in society”;

Whereas, in many detention facilities and labor camps, Falun Gong prisoners of conscience have at times comprised the majority of the population, and have been said to receive the longest sentences and the worst treatment, including torture;

Whereas, according to overseas Falun Gong and human rights organizations, since 1999, from several hundred to a few thousand Falun Gong adherents have died in custody from torture, abuse, and neglect;

Whereas a review of the Government of the People's Republic of China by the United Nations Human Rights Council's Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review in October 2013 recommended that China “[s]top the prosecution and persecution of people for the practice of their religion or belief including Catholics, other Christians, Tibetans, Uyghurs, and Falun Gong”;

Whereas the United Nations Committee Against Torture and the Special Rapporteur on Torture have expressed concern over the allegations of organ harvesting from Falun Gong prisoners, and have called on the Government of the People's Republic of China to increase accountability and transparency in the organ transplant system and punish those responsible for abuses;

Whereas the killing of religious or political prisoners for the purpose of selling their organs for transplant is an egregious and intolerable violation of the fundamental right to life;

Whereas voluntary and informed consent is the precondition for ethical organ donation, and international medical organizations state that prisoners, deprived of their freedom, are not in the position to give free consent and that the practice of sourcing organs from prisoners is a violation of ethical guidelines in medicine;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China continue to deny reports that many organs are taken without the consent of prisoners, yet at the same time prevent independent verification of its transplant system;

Whereas the organ transplantation system in China does not comply with the World Health Organization's requirement of transparency and traceability in organ procurement pathways;

Whereas the United States Department of State Country Report on Human Rights for China for 2014 stated, “Advocacy groups continued to report instances of organ harvesting from prisoners.”;

Whereas Huang Jiefu, director of the China Organ Donation Committee, announced in December 2014 that China would end the practice of organ harvesting from executed prisoners by January 1, 2015, but did not directly address organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience;

Whereas Freedom House reported in 2015 that Falun Gong practitioners comprise the largest portion of prisoners of conscience in China, and face an elevated risk of dying or being killed in custody;

Whereas the Department of State Country Report on Human Rights for China for 2016 reported that “some international medical professionals and human rights researchers questioned the voluntary nature of the (transplantation) system, the accuracy of official statistics, and official claims about the source of organs”;

Whereas the Congressional-Executive Commission on China (CECC) stated in 2016 that “international observers, including the U.S. House of Representatives and the European