

S. RES. 458

Whereas Article 18 of the International Declaration of Human Rights states that “[e]veryone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance”;

Whereas many countries continue to have criminal blasphemy laws and punish people who engage in expression deemed by the government to be blasphemous, heretical, apostate, defamatory of religion, or insulting to religion or to religious symbols, figures, or feelings, and such punishment can include fines, imprisonment, and capital punishment including by beheading;

Whereas blasphemy laws have affected Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Bahá’í, secularists, and many other groups, are inconsistent with international human rights standards because they establish and promote official religious orthodoxy and dogma over individual liberty, and often result in violations of the freedoms of religion, thought, and expression that are protected under international instruments, including Articles 18 and 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);

Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Committee stated in General Comment 34 that “[p]rohibitions of displays of lack of respect for a religion or other belief system, including blasphemy laws, are incompatible with the [ICCPR].”;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has found that blasphemy charges are often based on false accusations, are used for sectarian or political purposes, and foster religious intolerance, discrimination, and violence;

Whereas USCIRF has found that at least 70 countries had blasphemy laws as of 2018;

Whereas these laws were present in 18 Middle East and North African countries, 8 countries in the Americas, 18 Asia-Pacific countries, 14 European countries, and 12 Sub-Saharan African countries;

Whereas the Pew Research Center found that countries with laws against blasphemy, apostasy, or defamation of religion were more likely to have severe governmental restrictions on religion, and to experience social hostilities based on religion, than countries that did not have such laws;

Whereas restrictive laws beyond those penalizing blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy further limit religious freedom, such as extremism laws—

(1) in Russia that have been used to ban Jehovah’s Witnesses as an extremist organization and fueled persecution of this religious group;

(2) in China, to arbitrarily detain an estimated 800,000 to 2,000,000 Uighur Muslims in internment camps because they followed Islamic rituals and practices; and

(3) in North Korea, to detain an estimated 50,000 to 70,000 Christians in labor camps because they followed the tenets of Christianity;

Whereas an international group of experts convened by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights recommended in 2012 that “[s]tates that have blasphemy laws should repeal the[m] as such laws have a stifling impact on the enjoyment of freedom of religion or belief and healthy dialogue and debate about religion.”;

Whereas blasphemy laws are inconsistent with United Nations resolutions adopted by consensus since 2011 recognizing that religious intolerance is best fought through positive measures, such as education, out-

reach, and counter-speech, and that criminalization of speech is warranted only for the prevention of imminent violence;

Whereas, according to the annual religious freedom report published by the Department of State in 2015, attackers in Bangladesh killed five allegedly anti-Islamic or secularist writers and publishers, and injured three others;

Whereas, in response to these killings, the Home Minister of Bangladesh, rather than condemning the murders, called on bloggers and others to refrain from writings that could hurt the religious feelings of others and added that violators of the warning would be subject to prosecution under the restrictive religious freedom laws of Bangladesh;

Whereas a 2016 report by USCIRF on Bangladesh found that religious and civil society groups fear that increasing religious extremism will result in more criminal attacks and threats;

Whereas restrictive religious freedom laws validate and promote social violence targeted at religious minorities and dissenters, whether Christian, Muslim, secularist, or other;

Whereas USCIRF has found that in Pakistan, blasphemy laws have been used to prosecute and persecute Muslims, Christians, secularists, and others;

Whereas, according to a Pew Center report on religion and public life, Pakistan stands out for having one of the highest levels of restrictions on religion when both government restrictions and social hostilities are taken into account;

Whereas USCIRF has found egregious examples of the enforcement of blasphemy laws and vigilante violence connected to blasphemy allegations in Pakistan, where blasphemy charges are common and numerous individuals are in prison, with a high percentage sentenced to death or to life in prison;

Whereas, as of May 2018, USCIRF was aware of approximately 40 individuals on death row for blasphemy in Pakistan or serving life sentences;

Whereas Asia Bibi was sentenced to death for blasphemy in 2010 and was held on death row for 8 years, until the Supreme Court of Pakistan overturned her conviction in 2018, and has since received asylum in Canada;

Whereas Pakistan selectively enforces the blasphemy law against minority religious groups, including specifically targeting the Ahmadis, such as Abdul Shakoor, an 82-year-old bookseller who was recently released after serving four years in prison on blasphemy charges;

Whereas blasphemy laws in Pakistan have fostered a climate of impunity, as those who falsify evidence go unpunished and allegations often result in violent mob attacks or assassinations, with little to no police response;

Whereas, in 2017, the Christian Governor of Jakarta, Indonesia, was convicted for blasphemy of Islam and sentenced to two years in jail;

Whereas several countries that maintained blasphemy laws have recently taken steps towards removing these provisions, including Greece, Ireland and Canada;

Whereas blasphemy laws in the United States were invalidated by the adoption of the First Amendment to the Constitution, which protects the freedoms of thought, conscience, expression, and religious exercise; and

Whereas the United States has become a beacon of religious freedom and tolerance around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved. That the Senate—

(1) recognizes that blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws inappropriately position gov-

ernments as arbiters of religious truth and empower officials to impose religious dogma on individuals or minorities through the power of the government or through violence sanctioned by the government;

(2) calls on the President and the Secretary of State to make the repeal of blasphemy, heresy, and apostasy laws a priority in the bilateral relationships of the United States with all countries that have such laws, through direct interventions in bilateral and multilateral fora;

(3) encourages the President and the Secretary of State to oppose—

(A) any efforts, by the United Nations or by other international or multilateral fora, to create an international anti-blasphemy norm, such as the “defamation of religions” resolutions introduced in the United Nations between 1999 and 2010; and

(B) any attempts to expand the international norm on incitement to include blasphemy or defamation of religions;

(4) supports efforts by the United Nations to combat intolerance, discrimination, or violence against persons based on religion or belief without restricting expression, including United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 (2011) and the Istanbul Process meetings pursuant to such resolution, that are consistent with the First Amendment to the Constitution;

(5) calls on the President and the Secretary of State to designate countries that enforce blasphemy, heresy, or apostasy laws as “countries of particular concern for religious freedom” under section 402(b)(1)(A)(ii) of the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 (22 U.S.C. 6442(b)(1)(A)(ii)) for engaging in or tolerating severe violations of religious freedom, as a result of the abuses flowing from the enforcement of such laws and from unpunished vigilante violence often generated by blasphemy allegations;

(6) urges the governments of countries that enforce blasphemy, heresy, or apostasy laws to amend or repeal such laws, as they provide pretext and impunity for vigilante violence against religious minorities; and

(7) urges the governments of countries that have prosecuted, imprisoned, and persecuted people on charges of blasphemy, heresy, or apostasy to release such people unconditionally and, once released, to ensure their safety and that of their families.

SENATE RESOLUTION 459—TO CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY PARTY’S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS, OR UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS ARE CHOSEN

Mr. McCONNELL submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 459

Resolved. That the following shall constitute the majority party’s membership on the following committee for the One Hundred Sixteenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen:

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mr. Lankford (Chairman), Mr. Roberts, Mr. Risch.

SENATE RESOLUTION 460—CONGRATULATING THE AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION ON THE OCCASION OF ITS CENTENNIAL

Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following

resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 460

Whereas, in December 1919, the National Research Council organized the American Geophysical Union—

(1) to represent the United States in the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics of the International Research Council; and

(2) to serve as the Committee on Geophysics of the National Research Council to promote work in the fields of astronomy, geodesy, geology, meteorology, seismology, terrestrial electricity and magnetism, and volcanology;

Whereas, in 1972, the American Geophysical Union was incorporated as an independent organization;

Whereas, in 2019, the American Geophysical Union has more than 60,000 members in 137 countries;

Whereas the mission of the American Geophysical Union is to promote discovery in Earth and space sciences for the benefit of humanity;

Whereas Earth and space sciences are international endeavors that transform human understanding of the planet, from the core through the atmosphere of the planet and into the universe beyond;

Whereas Earth and space sciences drive basic and applied research that has led to critical health, environmental, commercial, and technological breakthroughs that have inspired individuals throughout the world, strengthened economies, and raised standards of living;

Whereas Earth and space sciences help individuals—

(1) understand and formulate solutions for the critical challenges facing the planet;

(2) become better stewards of natural resources, such as energy, water, and minerals, for current and future generations; and

(3) comprehend and mitigate the effects of terrestrial, manmade, and space disasters, which protects communities worldwide;

Whereas Earth and space sciences are critical components of a science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (in this preamble referred to as “STEAM”) education and inspire students of all ages to become citizen scientists and future leaders in STEAM fields;

Whereas Earth and space sciences seek to discover the origins of humanity, the planet, and the universe, and are a source of awe for past, current, and future generations; and

Whereas December 2019 marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the American Geophysical Union: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the American Geophysical Union on the occasion of its centennial;

(2) supports increasing the understanding of and interest in Earth and space sciences at the local, national, and international levels;

(3) encourages the scientific community to engage in public outreach so that individuals of all ages and backgrounds gain a better understanding of and appreciation for the value of Earth and space sciences to daily life and quality of life;

(4) expresses support for the free and open exchange of ideas in Earth and space sciences;

(5) recognizes the important role of governments in fostering Earth and space scientific research, including contributing to higher-risk and longer-term investigations and providing funding for the basic and applied research necessary for human welfare;

(6) encourages international cooperation in efforts relating to Earth and space sciences to foster the global exchange of knowledge and collaboration among scientists worldwide for the benefit of humanity; and

(7) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the executive director and chief executive officer of the American Geophysical Union.

SENATE RESOLUTION 461—CONGRATULATING SEATTLE SOUNDERS FC ON WINNING THE 2019 MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER CUP

Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mrs. MURRAY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 461

Whereas, on November 10, 2019, Seattle Sounders FC won the 2019 Major League Soccer Cup;

Whereas that win on November 10, 2019, is the second Major League Soccer championship won by Seattle Sounders FC in the 11 years that Seattle Sounders FC has been in Major League Soccer;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC beat the Toronto Football Club 3–1 in the 2019 Major League Soccer Cup;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC—

(1) dominated the competition in the regular season, with 16 wins and 10 losses;

(2) qualified for the Major League Soccer Cup Playoffs for an unprecedented 11th straight season; and

(3) earned the number 2 seed in the Major League Soccer Western Conference;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC plays home games at CenturyLink Field in Seattle, Washington, and, on November 10, 2019, 69,274 Seattle Sounders FC fans from across the State of Washington packed CenturyLink Field and set the record for the largest crowd at a sporting event in the 17-year history of the stadium;

Whereas the 2019 roster of Seattle Sounders FC players includes—

- (1) Saad Abdul-Salaam;
- (2) Xavier Arreaga;
- (3) Will Bruin;
- (4) Handwalla Bwana;
- (5) Jonathan Campbell;
- (6) Emanuel Cecchini;
- (7) Jordy Delem;
- (8) Justin Dhillon;
- (9) Stefan Frei;
- (10) Bheem Goyal;
- (11) Joevin Jones;
- (12) Kim Kee-hee;
- (13) Kelvin Leerdam;
- (14) Danny Leyva;
- (15) Nicolás Lodeiro;
- (16) Chad Marshall;
- (17) Bryan Meredith;
- (18) Jordan Morris;
- (19) Trey Muse;
- (20) Alfonso Ocampo-Chavez;
- (21) Víctor Rodriguez;
- (22) Cristian Roldan;
- (23) Alex Roldan;
- (24) Raúl Ruidíaz;
- (25) Harry Shipp;
- (26) Luis Silva;
- (27) Brad Smith;
- (28) Gustav Svensson;
- (29) Nouhou;
- (30) Román Torres;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC defender Kelvin Leerdam scored the first goal in the 57th minute of the championship game;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC midfielder Víctor Rodriguez—

(1) scored the second goal in the 76th minute; and

(2) received the 2019 Major League Soccer Cup Most Valuable Player award;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC forward Raúl Ruidíaz scored the third and final goal in the 90th minute;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC forward Jordan Morris—

(1) scored a career-high 13 goals and a career-high 8 assists throughout the 2019 season; and

(2) received the 2019 Major League Soccer Comeback Player of the Year award after suffering a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in 2018;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC Head Coach Brian Schmetzer won his second Major League Soccer Cup;

Whereas the 2019 Seattle Sounders FC coaching and technical staff includes—

- (1) Head Coach Brian Schmetzer;
- (2) Assistant Coach Gonzalo Pineda;
- (3) Assistant Coach Djimi Traore;
- (4) Assistant Coach Preki;
- (5) Club Director of Goalkeeping Tom Dutra;
- (6) General Manager and President of Soccer Garth Lagerwey; and
- (7) Vice President of Soccer Chris Henderson;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC is owned by Adrian Hanauer, Drew Carey, Jody Allen, and Peter Tomozawa, and the 11 families that joined the ownership contingent in 2019, namely—

- (1) Terry Myerson and Katie Myerson;
- (2) Russell Wilson and Ciara;
- (3) Benjamin Haggerty “Macklemore” and Tricia Davis;
- (4) Satya Nadella and Anu Nadella;
- (5) Amy Hood and Max Kleinman;
- (6) Joe Belfiore and Kristina Belfiore;
- (7) Soma Somasegar and Akila Somasegar;
- (8) Chee Chew and Christine Chew;
- (9) David Nathanson and Sabina Nathanson;
- (10) Brian McAndrews and Elise Holschuh; and

(11) Mark Agne and Tomoko Agne; Whereas the owners of Seattle Sounders FC have built a culture of success and contributed greatly to Seattle, Washington, and the surrounding region through philanthropy;

Whereas Seattle Sounders FC has exhibited dedication to positive social impacts by strengthening communities through the RAVE Foundation partnership with organizations in Seattle, Washington, and the surrounding region; and

Whereas the dedication and hard work of Seattle Sounders FC has inspired and empowered girls, boys, women, and men of all ages: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes Seattle Sounders FC for winning the 2019 Major League Soccer Cup;

(2) applauds the people of Seattle, Washington, and the surrounding region for their enthusiastic support of Seattle Sounders FC;

(3) supports equity in men’s and women’s professional sports; and

(4) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to Seattle Sounders FC Head Coach Brian Schmetzer, General Manager and President of Soccer Garth Lagerwey, and Vice President of Soccer Chris Henderson.