

a demonstration program to encourage rural community stakeholders to partner together to help students go on to college or obtain some other postsecondary education, complete this education, and enter the workforce. These partnerships would draw on the talents of local school districts, institutions of higher education, regional economic development entities, rural community organizations, and the private sector. The bill encourages these partnerships to develop and implement strategies to help students and their families navigate higher education opportunities and addresses the barriers to their achievement.

For example, the bill calls for partnerships to coalesce around approaches that boost higher education enrollment rates for referral students by exposing students and their families to college campuses, courses, internships, and career pathways to jobs at home. These partnerships could also focus on rural incompletion rates of nontraditional students who may need additional credentials or who once began but did not finish higher education.

To meet the demands of today's workforce, many employees will need a credential beyond a high school diploma—perhaps a college degree, a skilled trade credential, or a professional certificate. The Success for Rural Students and Communities Act encourages schools and employers to forge partnerships that will put students on pathways into the high-demand jobs available where they live. That helps the rural communities. It helps them keep their young people. It helps them keep people who have the education and the skills those communities need to be vibrant and successful and to have strong economies.

The bill highlights a number of strategies that could be developed and tested, including work-based learning opportunities, such as apprenticeships, internships, and stackable credentials that make up a sequence of courses on the path to a certain skill or job. I have toured apprenticeship programs in Maine, including one that helps to train people for jobs in forestry, and I have seen firsthand how successful those apprenticeship programs are.

When rural students enroll in college, they often face barriers that prevent them from graduating, and that is why I have been a big promoter of student success programs. I have seen a very effective one at the Eastern Maine Community College in Bangor, where students are helped with whatever the barrier is that is preventing them from completing community college. In some cases, it is the need for some mentoring; in others, tutoring in some areas. In other cases, it is simply a short-term loan in order for them to fix their automobile so they can get to class. In another case, it is childcare needs. Whatever the barrier is, if we can help these students, they will be able to complete their education.

Many are the first in their families to attend college, which means they

may have a more difficult time finding information about financial aid or selecting an education program that meets their needs. With the right supports in place, more and more rural students can complete their postsecondary education.

Let me give a great example of the type of program I am talking about that would fulfill the goals of this legislation. In Maine's Aroostook County, where I was born and raised and where much of my family still lives, the Aroostook Aspirations Initiative is using this kind of model to help put students on pathways to academic and career success. Launched with a generous donation from local philanthropic partners, Aroostook Aspirations provides scholarships to high school students in Aroostook County who are seeking postsecondary education. The initiative collaborates with local colleges and universities, including the University of Maine at Presque Isle, the University of Maine at Fort Kent, Northern Maine Community College, and Husson University. It works with the area businesses and entrepreneurs to offer seminars that guide students throughout their college educations—the kind of mentoring I was referring to.

Students can also team up with Aroostook County employers through internships that give them experience in jobs they wish to pursue or simply try out to see if the jobs fit them. They create relationships with professional mentors, who help put them on the right path to entering the workforce.

The Success for Rural Students and Communities Act would support dynamic programs such as the Aroostook Aspirations Initiative and encourage other communities in rural America to innovate in similar ways. The Success for Rural Students and Communities Act would make a meaningful investment in the educational aspirations of rural students and their families and would strengthen the economy in rural America. By helping students succeed in reaching their education and career goals, we can also enhance the skills of our workforce in rural America. I urge my colleagues to support the Collins-Hassan bill.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

##### SENATE RESOLUTION 465—CONDEMNING THREATS BY PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP TO VIOLATE THE LAW OF ARMED CONFLICT WITH RESPECT TO IRAN

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Ms. HARRIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 465

Whereas President Donald J. Trump threatened to destroy sites “important

to . . . the Iranian culture” and threatened future retaliation in “a disproportionate manner” on January 4 and January 5, 2020, respectively;

Whereas Article 53 of Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions prohibits any act of hostility against cultural objects, including making such objects the target of reprisals;

Whereas destruction of cultural sites violates the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, which the United States ratified during the administration of President George W. Bush;

Whereas the Department of Defense Law of War Manual states that “[c]ultural property, the areas immediately surrounding it, and appliances in use for its protection should be safeguarded and respected”;

Whereas the United States Government has condemned the Taliban, the Islamic State, al Qaeda and its affiliates, and the Government of the People's Republic of China, among others, for the destruction of cultural heritage;

Whereas the Trump Administration supported the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2347 (2017) condemning “the unlawful destruction of cultural heritage, including the destruction of religious sites and artefacts”;

Whereas, on March 24, 2017, the United States Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations stated, “The United States seeks to hold accountable . . . the perpetrators of deliberate cultural heritage destruction.”;

Whereas the destruction of cultural sites in Iran could include damage to one or more of the 22 cultural sites in Iran inscribed on the World Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization;

Whereas, on January 6, 2020, Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper expressed that the United States would not target Iranian cultural sites, as the United States “follow[s] the laws of armed conflict”;

Whereas military actions conducted “in a disproportionate manner” violate international law, including Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions, as well as the United States Department of Defense guidelines whether in reference to the conduct of armed conflict or the resort to war;

Whereas the Department of Defense Law of War Manual states that the principle of proportionality in the conduct of war “generally refers to the obligation to take feasible precautions in planning and conducting attacks and to refrain from attacks in which the expected loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, and damage to civilian objects incidental to the attack would be excessive.”;

Whereas the Department of Defense Law of War Manual states, “Proportionality is also a requirement for reprisals, which must respond in a proportionate manner to the preceding illegal act by the party against which they are taken”;

Whereas military action that disregards proportionality would further exacerbate the suffering of the Iranian people, who have endured—

(1) their own government's systematic and longstanding human rights violations, restrictions on political freedoms, and brutal suppression of their democratic aspirations; and

(2) the arbitrary reimposition of United States sanctions that have negatively affected livelihoods of ordinary Iranians and restricted economic activity; and

Whereas the destruction of cultural sites and the disproportionate use of military force are among the actions that could needlessly escalate the crisis with Iran: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) affirms that efforts to defend United States security and interests must take into account potential harm to civilians and other protected persons and objects in foreign countries, consistent with international legal principles and our common humanity;

(2) affirms that the destruction of cultural heritage is morally wrong, is a violation of international law, and that even threats of such destruction undermine years of public diplomacy demonstrating that the American people do not seek conflict with any cultural or religious group;

(3) affirms that no violation of the law of armed conflict or human rights violation by Iran or its proxies permits or justifies similar violations by any other state;

(4) urges President Donald J. Trump to use his bully pulpit to promote de-escalation of tensions with Iran rather than to threaten acts of war and violations of international law;

(5) strongly condemns the President's threats to destroy sites important to Iranian culture and to retaliate against Iran in a disproportionate manner; and

(6) demands that the President avoid needless escalation with Iran and refrain from violating the law of armed conflict.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I have 2 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

##### COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on

Wednesday, January 8, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

##### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 8, 2020, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

##### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, December 10, 2019, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: William Scott Hardy, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Pennsylvania, John F. Heil III, to be United States District Judge for the Northern, Eastern and Western Districts of Oklahoma, David Cleveland Joseph, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana, Cory T. Wilson, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Mississippi, and Edward Hulvey Meyers, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims.

#### PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to grant floor privileges to a new Department of Defense fellow in my office, Keith Griefer, for the remainder of the Congress.

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

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Amy Hafez, Andrew Bremer, and Emily Beagle, fellows in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 116th Congress.

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

#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Thursday, January 9; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Ray nomination.

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

#### ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:26 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, January 9, 2020, at 10 a.m.

#### CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate January 8, 2020:

##### THE JUDICIARY

MATTHEW H. SOLOMONSON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

ELENI MARIA ROUMEL, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A JUDGE OF THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS FOR A TERM OF FIFTEEN YEARS.

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MICHAEL GEORGE DESOMBRE, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND.