

(Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2479, a bill to withhold United States contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and for other purposes.

S. 2493

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2493, a bill to extend the deadline for eligible health care providers to use certain funds received from the COVID-19 Provider Relief Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 2520

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2520, a bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide for engagements with State, local, Tribal, and territorial governments, and for other purposes.

S. 2552

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2552, a bill to promote long-term economic recovery and job creation in underserved communities by providing for investment in catalytic local predevelopment projects for resilient climate infrastructure innovation and to provide assistance to support State and local project development, and for other purposes.

S. 2660

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSOFF) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2660, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to authorize grants for toxic substances remediation in schools, to reauthorize healthy high-performance schools, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 334

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 334, a resolution memorializing those impacted by and lost to the COVID-19 virus

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 344—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL JOINING THE AFRICAN UNION UNDER OBSERVER STATUS

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

S. RES. 344

Whereas the State of Israel enjoyed observer status in the predecessor organization

to the African Union known as the Organization of African Unity until its dissolution in 2002;

Whereas the late Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi blocked Israel from obtaining observer status at the African Union in 2002;

Whereas Israel, in the span of a few decades, has emerged as a developed nation and therefore offers an example of a path to economic progress for developing countries;

Whereas Israel has long been an active and valuable partner to many African nations, cultivating numerous strong bilateral relationships across the continent;

Whereas Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made a historic visit to Africa in July 2016 and became the first leader outside of Africa to address the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in June 2017;

Whereas many African leaders subsequently visited Israel, including those from the Republic of Chad, the Kingdom of Eswatini, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of Sierra Leone, the Togolese Republic, and the Republic of Zambia;

Whereas the Abraham Accords paved the way for further normalization agreements between Israel and other nations;

Whereas Israel has supported African nations through economic investments and humanitarian assistance; and

Whereas, on July 22, 2021, the African Union announced that Israel will join the African Union under observer status: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) encourages heightened cooperation between the State of Israel and African nations, particularly in areas that are significant in progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, such as economic growth, sustainable agriculture, and humanitarian development;

(2) expects Israel's observer status in the African Union will help enable such cooperation to develop between Israel and the African Union;

(3) commends the African Union for granting Israel observer status in the African Union; and

(4) thanks Felix Tshisekedi, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Chair of the African Union, for his leadership in strengthening Israel-African relations by ensuring the recognition of Israel under observer status occurred during his tenure as Chair of the African Union.

SENATE RESOLUTION 345—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN BELARUS

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. VAN HOLLEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 345

Whereas the United States Senate has long maintained strong bipartisan concern regarding the troubling lack of democracy in Belarus, highlighted by the passing of the Belarus Democracy Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-347; 22 U.S.C. 5811 note);

Whereas the 116th Congress, as referenced in H.R. 8438, the Belarus Democracy, Human

Rights, and Sovereignty Act of 2020, and Senate Resolution 658, which both passed with unanimous support, stated its deep concern regarding the fraudulent election in Belarus on August 9, 2020;

Whereas on September 17, 2020, the Moscow Mechanism of the human dimension of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was invoked by 17 participating states with regard to credible reports of human rights violations before, during, and after the presidential election of August 9, 2020, in Belarus;

Whereas, following Alyaksandr Lukashenka's inauguration on September 23, 2020, the United States, the European Union, numerous European Union member states, the United Kingdom, and Canada announced they did not recognize the legitimacy of the election results;

Whereas after the August 9, 2020 presidential election, the Government of Belarus responded to the resulting peaceful protests, the largest in the country's history, with a violent crackdown, including the detention of more than 10,000 peaceful protectors, according to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus;

Whereas the Government of Belarus, under the misrule of the Lukashenka regime, continues to engage in a pattern of clear and persistent violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and disrespects the basic principles of democratic governance by subjecting tens of thousands of pro-democracy political activists, peaceful protesters, and ordinary citizens to harassment, beatings, abductions, forced deportations, and imprisonment and by committing acts of transnational repression to punish any dissent expressed by Belarusian citizens;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime continues to silence independent media, such as Nasha Niva, tut.by, and Belsat, and has unlawfully raided the offices of media outlets, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and arrested journalists;

Whereas on September 11, 2020, then-Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said that "we stand by our long-term commitment to support the sovereignty of Belarus as well as its territorial integrity, as the aspirations of the Belarusian people to determine their own path remains in front of us";

Whereas on May 23, 2021, the Lukashenka regime forced a commercial airliner flying between two European Union member states to land in Minsk in order for the regime to arrest journalist Raman Pratasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, an action that resulted in near universal condemnation from the international community and coordinated sanctions by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union;

Whereas on May 28, 2021, the White House announced the re-imposition of full blocking sanctions against nine Belarusian state-owned enterprises and announced a new Executive order to increase sanctions on elements of the Lukashenka regime;

Whereas the Lukashenka regime has actively encouraged over 4,000 migrants from other countries to cross through Belarus into European Union member state Lithuania, amounting to people smuggling and obliging Lithuania to declare a state of emergency;

Whereas on June 9, 2021, the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate held a hearing regarding the political situation in Belarus, in which United States Ambassador to Belarus Julie Fisher testified that "Despite the oppression, the violence, and the turmoil that followed the events of the past year provide glimmers of hope. A new generation of brave Belarusians, with courageous women at the front, have emerged. They represent a Belarus determined to

chart its own path. They represent a Belarus in which wearing a red and white dress, hanging a flag, or playing a particular song will not result in torture, forced confessions, or even death.”;

Whereas on July 27, 2021, President Biden met Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya at the White House and declared that “The United States stands with the people of Belarus in their quest for democracy and universal human rights.”;

Whereas on August 9, 2021, President Biden—

(1) announced an Executive order authorizing the imposition of blocking sanctions on certain sectors of the Belarus economy, including the potash, tobacco products, and construction sectors; and

(2) pursuant to such executive order and Executive Order 13405, issued additional sanctions on Belarusian individuals and entities, including Belaruskali (a state-owned potash fertilizer company) and the Belarus National Olympic Committee; and

Whereas Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya continues to represent the widely shared desire of the Belarusian people for free and fair elections and democracy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) continues, on the first anniversary of the illegitimate presidential election in Belarus on August 9, 2020, to refuse to recognize Alyaksandr Lukashenka as the legitimately elected leader of Belarus;

(2) condemns Lukashenka’s ongoing crack-down on members of the pro-democracy movement, senior members of the Coordination Council, peaceful protesters, employees from state-owned enterprises participating in strikes, independent election observers, independent journalists and bloggers, medical professionals, professors, teachers, athletes, and cultural leaders;

(3) continues to call for the fulfillment by the Government of Belarus of Belarus’ freely undertaken obligations as an Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) member and accept the OSCE’s offer to facilitate a national dialogue and fully participate in the OSCE process;

(4) calls for new presidential and parliamentary elections to be held in Belarus, conducted in a manner that is free and fair according to OSCE standards and under the supervision of OSCE observers and independent domestic observers;

(5) welcomes the United States Government’s close coordination with the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, other allied and partner countries, and international organizations to promote the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights in Belarus and encourages continued coordination to apply maximal pressure on the Lukashenka regime;

(6) continues to call for the immediate release, without preconditions, of all political prisoners in Belarus;

(7) welcomes the recent release of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) journalists Aleh Hruzdilovich and Ina Studzinskaya and calls for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and journalists detained on dubious charges, including opposition candidates Sergei Tikhanovsky and Viktor Babaryka, pro-democracy activist Maria Kalesnikava, and RFE/RL journalist Ihar Losik;

(8) condemns the forced diversion of Ryanair Flight 4978 to arrest Raman Pratasevich and his partner Sofia Sapega, which violated international civil aviation law and risked the lives of innocent passengers and crew, and calls for their immediate unconditional release;

(9) commends the bravery of Belarusians who have created innovative ways to protest

Lukashenka’s autocracy and applauds the Belarusian diaspora’s efforts to maintain international focus on the deteriorating political situation;

(10) lauds the extraordinary support offered by the Governments of Lithuania, Ukraine, and Poland to support the people of Belarus, including support for the political opposition, accommodation of political refugees, and backing a free media;

(11) calls on the Lukashenka regime to immediately halt exploiting and instrumentalizing migrants and to stop directing individuals to Lithuania’s borders;

(12) welcomes the Executive order announced on August 9, 2021, that applies additional sanctions on the Lukashenka regime and urges the Biden Administration to consider all economic, political, and diplomatic tools at its disposal to support democracy in Belarus;

(13) welcomes the European Union sanctions imposed on the Lukashenka regime and urges the United States to continue to coordinate additional measures with the European Union; and

(14) emphasizes that the United States supports the people of Belarus in their quest to maintain their sovereignty, choose their own leadership, and live in freedom, and recognizes the extensive efforts of the Belarusian opposition to coordinate efforts with the United States, the European Union, the OSCE, and the United Nations to bring free and fair elections to its people.

SENATE RESOLUTION 346—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2021 AS “NATIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT MONTH”

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BRAUN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. WICKER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAMER, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. DAINES, Ms. SMITH, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. ERNST) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 346

Whereas investment in the education, training, and career advancement of the workforce in the United States, known as “workforce development”, is crucial to the ability of the United States to compete in the global economy;

Whereas collaboration among Governors, local governments, State and local education, workforce, and human services agencies, community colleges, local businesses, employment service providers, community-based organizations, and workforce development boards provides for long-term, sustainable, and successful workforce development across traditional sectors and emerging industries;

Whereas jobs that require more than a high school diploma but not a 4-year degree comprise 52 percent of the labor market, but only 42 percent of workers in the United States have been able to access training at that level, creating a discrepancy that may limit growth in changing industries such as health care, manufacturing, and information technology;

Whereas 76 percent of business leaders say greater investment in skills training would help their businesses;

Whereas, as of summer 2021 in the United States—

(1) nearly 10,000,000 individuals are unemployed;

(2) unemployment rates for Black and Hispanic adults are well above the unemployment rates for White adults;

(3) workers without a bachelor’s degree are nearly 2 times more likely to be unemployed;

(4) more than ½ of the jobs lost due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic were by workers earning less than \$40,000 per year; and

(5) according to a recent poll, nearly ½ of workers said they will need to learn new skills in the next year to do their jobs, while more than ½ said they would retrain for a career in a different field or industry if they had the opportunity;

Whereas, as of June 2021, employment rates among workers with lower levels of educational attainment remained far below pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels, including 7.2 percent below those levels for workers with a high school diploma and 10.1 percent below those levels for workers without a high school diploma, even as workers with higher levels of educational attainment have nearly returned to pre-COVID-19 pandemic employment levels;

Whereas, in 2014, Congress reauthorized the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) with overwhelming bipartisan support in recognition of the need to strengthen the focus of the United States on the skills necessary to fill jobs in local and regional industries;

Whereas the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) supports employment, training, and support services for individuals with barriers to employment, including—

(1) individuals who earn low incomes;

(2) individuals who are out of work, including the long-term unemployed;

(3) individuals displaced by outsourcing;

(4) individuals living in rural areas or areas with persistently high unemployment;

(5) individuals looking to learn new skills;

and

(6) individuals with disabilities;

Whereas the more than 550 workforce development boards and 2,400 American Job Centers are a driving force behind growing regional economies by providing training, resources, and assistance to workers who aim to compete in the 21st century economy;

Whereas ongoing State and local implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) provides unprecedented opportunities to develop the skills of workers in the United States through access to effective, quality workforce education and training, including the development and delivery of proven strategies such as sector partnerships, career pathways, integrated education and training, work-based learning models, and paid internships;

Whereas, in 2019, programs authorized under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.)—

(1) served nearly 6,300,000 young people and adults; and

(2) exceeded employment targets across all programs;

Whereas State programs established under the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.)—

(1) ensured that more than 3,400,000 workers, including more than 212,000 veterans, had access to career services through American Job Centers in 2019; and

(2) are a foundational part of the workforce development system;

Whereas workforce development programs will play a critical role in addressing the 500,000 additional jobs that remain open in manufacturing industries compared to pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels;