

S. 4832

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 “Increase Reliable Services Now Act”.

SEC. 2. TEMPORARY PROHIBITION ON ADDITIONAL TAX ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the Internal Revenue Service may not hire any person for the purpose of conducting enforcement activities during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the first date after such date on which—

(1) the Internal Revenue Service has maintained, for 6 consecutive months—

(A) a level of service for accounts management phone lines of not less than 70 percent; and

(B) an average speed of answering calls in 5 minutes or less; and

(2) not less than 90 percent of the regular employees of the Internal Revenue Service perform work in person at their job sites.

(b) ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.—For purposes of this section, the term “enforcement activities” means activities described in section 10301(a)(1)(A)(ii) of Public Law 117-169.

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON USE OF ADDITIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE FUNDS FOR TAXPAYER AUDITS.

Section 10301(a)(1)(A)(ii) of Public Law 117-169 is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: “: *Provided further*, That the Internal Revenue Service shall not audit taxpayers with taxable incomes below \$400,000 at a greater rate than such taxpayers were audited for the most recent taxable year beginning before the date of the enactment of this Act”.

SEC. 4. TEMPORARY PROHIBITION ON INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE HIRING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the Internal Revenue Service may not hire any person (other than for activities related to return processing and call center operations) during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the first date after such date on which the Internal Revenue Service meets the requirements of subsection (b).

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements specified in this subsection are the following:

(1) With respect to the processing of taxpayer correspondence, tax forms, and payments, the Internal Revenue Service has a backlog not in excess of 1,000,000 cases.

(2) With respect to tax returns eligible for a refund, refunds are issued to taxpayers on average within six weeks or less of the receipt of the return.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 4833. A bill to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of legislation that I introduced today along with Senator PADILLA to preserve the enduring legacy of California’s giant sequoias: the Save Our Sequoias Act. I thank Senator PADILLA for working with me on this important bill, as well as the bipartisan sponsors of similar legislation in the House.

The Save Our Sequoias Act would charge a dedicated group of Federal, State, local, and Tribal land managers

known as the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition with developing wildfire resilience projects to help save these magnificent trees.

The bill would also provide Federal Agencies with narrow, targeted authorities to implement these projects quickly and protect our remaining sequoias, as well as create a strategy to enhance sequoia reforestation.

Giant sequoias are one of the most iconic plants in the world. The sequoia known as General Sherman is the largest tree on Earth at more than 100 feet in circumference and 275 feet tall.

Sequoias grow quickly, producing a 50-foot tree’s worth of wood each year, yet can live to be thousands of years old. They are also remarkably fire-adapted, with spongy bark that can be up to 2-feet thick.

Perhaps most importantly to me, these incredible trees only grow in my home State of California. Just being around these trees is a humbling experience. Their immensity puts them in a class by themselves, and it is no wonder that they have been the source of reverence and amazement.

For many years, sequoias were considered nearly immune to the effects of wildfires, but unfortunately devastating fires in recent years have overwhelmed even their potent defenses. Officials have estimated that 20 percent of all mature giant sequoias have been destroyed just since 2020.

Scientific research has additionally suggested that without significant action, another 20 percent could be lost in the next 3 years. This would be a staggering tragedy and demands action. As former President Theodore Roosevelt himself put it, “A grove of giant redwood or sequoias should be kept just as we keep a great and beautiful cathedral.”

The vast majority of giant sequoias live on Federal land, and I thank President Biden and his administration for using existing authorities to try to save these magnificent trees. Nevertheless, Congress can and should enact legislation to protect sequoias long into the future.

Our bill would accomplish this goal by first codifying the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, an existing group of public land managers with jurisdiction over sequoia groves, and requiring it to develop a strategy to make sequoia groves more resilient to wildfire. It would also provide congressional support for the Biden Administration’s current actions under an emergency declaration to expedite sequoia wildfire resilience projects.

Federal agencies should not be reliant on emergency authorities, however, in order to implement necessary wildfire resilience projects in the future. To that end, our bill provides those Agencies with narrow, targeted authorities to continue making progress on those projects and authorizes funding for dedicated personnel. It also establishes a grant program for sequoia resilience projects that occur off of Federal land.

Lastly, our bill ensures that we do not simply mitigate future sequoia losses but also begin the process of regrowth. Since sequoias can live to be thousands of years old, it is never too early to begin rejuvenating these majestic trees.

Mr. President, giant sequoias are one of the great treasures of the world, not just of California. It is incumbent upon Congress to pass our bill to ensure they are protected and can be cherished for thousands of years to come.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS**SENATE RESOLUTION 757—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE IN SUPPORT OF THE PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC AND ECONOMIC ASPIRATIONS OF THE SRI LANKAN PEOPLE**

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 757

Whereas Sri Lanka gained its independence peacefully in 1948, bringing an end to British colonial rule;

Whereas, more than 100,000 Sri Lankans died or went missing in subsequent decades of ethnic conflict, most acutely at the end of the civil war in May 2009;

Whereas the roots of the conflict, including historical inequalities, remain largely unresolved;

Whereas the period of peace, which began in 2009, contributed to Sri Lanka’s high growth and economic development, building on a tourism-based economy;

Whereas Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected as Sri Lanka’s President on November 16, 2019, and on November 21, 2019, he appointed his brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa, as Prime Minister;

Whereas Sri Lanka’s governance under President Rajapaksa was highly corrupt, nepotistic, and lacked transparency;

Whereas on August 8, 2020, Human Rights Watch described President Rajapaksa’s rule in 2020 as “a campaign of fear and intimidation against human rights activists, journalists, lawyers, and others challenging government policy”;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka declined \$480,000,000 in United States assistance in 2020 in the form of a grant from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which was designed to reduce poverty through economic growth;

Whereas, the Government of Sri Lanka, under the rule of President Rajapaksa—

(1) devoted state resources for personal political purposes with little transparency;

(2) implemented misguided agricultural policies; and

(3) borrowed billions of dollars from China to develop economically unviable mega projects;

Whereas, since 2019, Sri Lanka has faced an economic crisis, only further exacerbated by predatory loans from the People’s Republic of China as part of its debt trap diplomacy;

Whereas Sri Lanka’s economic crisis caused millions of Sri Lankan citizens to live in extremely dire conditions, with severe shortages of medicine, food, and fuel;

Whereas many Sri Lankans have immigrated in search of income to support their

families as a result of the ongoing crises, often separating spouses and parents from children;

Whereas, beginning in March 2022, the citizens of Sri Lanka courageously exercised their fundamental freedoms of speech and assembly to peacefully protest the government's failed economic policies and repression;

Whereas, the Government of Sri Lanka failed to make its bond and loan payments in April 2022, resulting in the country's first financial default in May 2022;

Whereas tens of thousands of Sri Lankan citizens rallied in largely peaceful protests on July 9, 2022, to which the government responded with live fire and tear gas;

Whereas the events of July 9, 2022, demonstrated that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has lost the confidence of the Sri Lankan people;

Whereas, on July 20, 2022, the parliament of Sri Lanka elected Ranil Wickremesinghe as President of Sri Lanka;

Whereas the current Government of Sri Lanka has thus far failed to respond to public concerns, including establishment of transparent investigations into credible allegations of corruption;

Whereas, on July 13, 2022, amid mounting public protests, Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled Sri Lanka for Singapore where he formally resigned as president, only to return to Sri Lanka on September 3, 2022;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka has used the country's Prevention of Terrorism Act to target peaceful political opposition;

Whereas the United States sponsored United Nations Human Rights Council resolution, HRC 46/1 (2021), includes strengthening the capacity of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to collect, analyze, and preserve information and evidence for future accountability processes for gross violations of human rights in Sri Lanka;

Whereas the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, issued a report on February 25, 2022, noting setbacks in efforts to hold individuals accountable for human rights violations in Sri Lanka and highlighting the need for "deeper institutional and security sector reforms that will end impunity and prevent the recurrence of violations of the past";

Whereas the September 2022 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Report on Sri Lanka stated, "[f]or sustainable improvements to take place, however, it is vital to recognize and address the underlying factors which have contributed to the economic crisis, including embedded impunity for past and present human rights violations, economic crimes, and endemic corruption";

Whereas the United Nations Human Rights Council will discuss the human rights situation in Sri Lanka at its upcoming 51st regular session in September 2022; and

Whereas President Wickremesinghe announced that Sri Lanka—

(1) would restart bailout negotiations with the International Monetary Fund in August 2022; and

(2) had reached an initial agreement on September 1, 2022: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the peaceful democratic and economic aspirations of the Sri Lankan people;

(2) urges Sri Lankan security forces to respect the legitimate rights of Sri Lankans, including to protest peacefully;

(3) urges Sri Lankan President Wickremesinghe to work with opposition parties on behalf of all Sri Lankans, including Tamils, Muslims, and other religious and ethnic minorities;

(4) commends the United States Agency for International Development for announcing more than \$92,000,000 in economic and humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka since June 2022;

(5) commends the International Monetary Fund for calling for structural reforms to address corruption vulnerabilities that hamper Sri Lanka's long-term potential growth;

(6) commends the Government of India for providing more than \$3,500,000,000 in lines of credit to the Government of Sri Lanka for food, medicine, and fuel;

(7) commends the Government of Japan and the Government of Australia for providing urgent medicine, food, and health care assistance for the Sri Lankan people;

(8) calls on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue nations to mobilize additional humanitarian assistance, provide desperately needed fuel, and offer economic support and advice to the Government of Sri Lanka;

(9) urges the United Nations Human Rights Council and the Government of Sri Lanka to implement the recommendations detailed in the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights report that was published on February 25, 2022; and

(10) calls on the United National Human Rights Council to extend and reinforce the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' mandate from HRC 46/1 (2021) for an additional 2 years and to fully resource the Sri Lanka Accountability Project.

SENATE RESOLUTION 758—DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2022 AS "MACEDONIAN AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH" AND CELEBRATING THE LANGUAGE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE OF MACEDONIAN AMERICANS AND THEIR INCREDIBLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES

Mr. BRAUN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 758

Whereas there is evidence that the earliest Macedonians in the continental United States arrived on or around the year 1492;

Whereas, since the 1880s, tens of thousands of Macedonians fled to the United States seeking civil liberties, human rights, religious freedom, and economic opportunities and in response to the 1903 Ilinden Uprising against the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Wars, the 2 World Wars, the Greek Civil War, and the communist policies of Yugoslavia;

Whereas the Macedonian community in the United States is a vibrant community that is embedded within the mosaic of the United States, partaking in all walks of life, business, medicine, law, technology, civic engagement, government, the military, education, the arts, culinary world, athletics, and more;

Whereas the United Macedonian Diaspora estimates there are 500,000 individuals of Macedonian heritage living in the United States, with sizeable communities in Michigan, New York, Ohio, New Jersey, Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Florida, California, Arizona, Texas, and Virginia;

Whereas Macedonian-American immigrants contributed to building monumental transportation routes in the United States, including the Great Northern Railroad;

Whereas, in 1922, Macedonian-American immigrants Tom and John Kiradjieff, using old Macedonian recipes passed down by their parents and grandparents, developed the recipe for Cincinnati chili, a beloved dish in the

United States, which, in 2013, was named one of the "20 Most Iconic Foods in America" by Smithsonian magazine;

Whereas, in the early 20th century, Macedonian immigrants created their own version of the famous Coney Island hot dog, which remains a staple dish at Coney Island-style restaurants throughout the Midwest;

Whereas Macedonian-American Stoyan Christowe, who immigrated to the United States in 1911, was an author, journalist, World War II intelligence officer, Vermont State Representative from 1961 to 1962, and Senator from 1963 to 1972 and wrote the book entitled "This is My Country", which was a favorite of President Franklin D. Roosevelt;

Whereas Macedonian-American Michael Alexander (Lazaroff) of Pittsburgh and New York City was a renowned international attorney who served as a legal adviser to many British and Irish government organizations and corporations for which he was honored by Her Majesty Elizabeth II as a Commander of the British Empire and, as a nonalcoholic, served in Alcoholics Anonymous from the mid-1950s through 1993 as legal adviser, chairman of general services board, trustee, and trustee chairman;

Whereas Macedonian-American Judge Jimmy N. Dimos served as a district judge for the 4th Judicial District Court of Louisiana from 1999 to 2006 and member of the Louisiana House of Representatives from 1976 to 1999, serving as Speaker of the House from 1988 to 1992;

Whereas, in 2018, Macedonian-American Judge Phillip Naumoff of Mansfield, Ohio, was elected as Richland County Common Pleas Court Judge;

Whereas, in 1995, Macedonian-American Ljubica Z. Acevska of Mansfield, Ohio, and Washington, D.C., became the first Ambassador of North Macedonia to the United States;

Whereas Macedonian Americans have greatly contributed to the economy of the United States, creating countless jobs for the people of the United States in Macedonian-American communities;

Whereas Macedonian-Americans Mike Ilitch, recipient of the Ellis Island Medal of Honor, and Marian Bayoff Ilitch, who played a significant role in the civil rights movement and paid rent in Detroit for activist Rosa Park for more than a decade—

(1) opened the first mom-and-pop Little Caesars pizza shop in 1959, which grew into the third-largest pizza chain in the world;

(2) are owners of the Detroit Red Wings—coining Detroit as "Hockeytown"—and the Detroit Tigers; and

(3) in 2015, made history by giving Wayne State University \$50,000,000, the largest donation ever made to the school, highlighting their lifelong dedication to promoting entrepreneurship, education, and the revitalization of Detroit;

Whereas Macedonian-American Christopher Ilitch, president and chief executive officer of Ilitch Holdings, Inc., and chairman of Ilitch Charities, which has given more than \$220,000,000 in grants since 2000 for causes from youth development to community revitalization, has continued the tradition and vision of his parents Mike and Marian Ilitch to further the global standing of Detroit by developing The District Detroit, which has grown into a dynamic sports and entertainment district featuring award-winning theaters, 4 professional sports teams, and 3 multi-use sports venues, including the state-of-the-art Little Caesars Arena, home of the Detroit Red Wings and the Detroit Pistons, and world-class entertainment and community events;

Whereas 4 of the 8 names of women ever engraved on the Stanley Cup are Macedonian-Americans Marian Ilitch, Denise Ilitch,