

S. RES. 150

Whereas thousands of children have been abducted from the United States by parents, separating those children from their parents who remain in the United States;

Whereas it is illegal under section 1204 of title 18, United States Code, to remove, or attempt to remove, a child from the United States or to retain a child (who has been in the United States) outside of the United States with the intent to obstruct the lawful exercise of parental rights;

Whereas 9,816 children were reported abducted from the United States between 2010 and 2020;

Whereas, during 2023, 1 or more cases of international parental child abduction involving children who are citizens of the United States were identified in 105 countries around the world;

Whereas the United States is a party to the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, done at The Hague, October 25, 1980 (TIAS 11670) (referred to in this preamble as the “Hague Convention on Abduction”), which—

(1) supports the prompt return of wrongly removed or retained children; and

(2) calls for all participating parties to respect parental custody rights;

Whereas the majority of children who were abducted from the United States have yet to be reunited with their custodial parents;

Whereas, in 2023, Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Bulgaria, Ecuador, Egypt, Honduras, India, Jordan, the Republic of Korea, Montenegro, Peru, Poland, Romania, the Russian Federation, and the United Arab Emirates were identified pursuant to the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2014 (22 U.S.C. 9101 et seq.) as engaging in a pattern of non-compliance (as defined in section 3 of that Act (22 U.S.C. 9101));

Whereas, between 2015 and 2023, a total of 19 countries were previously identified as engaging in a pattern of non-compliance (as so defined), including Austria, the Bahamas, the People’s Republic of China, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Japan, Lebanon, Morocco, Nicaragua, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Trinidad and Tobago, and Tunisia, showing the importance of continued enforcement of United States law by the executive branch to ensure the return of abducted children;

Whereas the Supreme Court of the United States has recognized that family abduction—

(1) is a form of child abuse with potentially “devastating consequences for a child”, which may include negative impacts on the physical and mental well-being of the child; and

(2) may cause a child to “experience a loss of community and stability, leading to loneliness, anger, and fear of abandonment”;

Whereas, according to the 2010 Report on Compliance with the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction by the Department of State, an abducted child is at risk of significant short- and long-term problems, including “anxiety, eating problems, nightmares, mood swings, sleep disturbances, and aggressive behavior”;

Whereas international parental child abduction has devastating emotional consequences for the child and for the parent from whom the child is separated;

Whereas the United States has a history of promoting child welfare through institutions, including—

(1) the Children’s Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services; and

(2) the Office of Children’s Issues of the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the Department of State;

Whereas the Coalition to End International Parental Child Abduction, through dedicated advocacy and regular testimony, has highlighted the importance of this issue to Congress and called on successive administrations to take concerted action to stop international parental child abduction and repatriate kidnapped United States children;

Whereas Bring Abducted Children Home, Bring Our Kids Home, iStand Parent Network, and the Coalition to End International Parental Child Abduction have been recognized by the Department of Justice as non-profit organizations specializing in international parental child abduction;

Whereas Congress has signaled a commitment to ending international parental child abduction by enacting—

(1) the International Child Abduction Remedies Act (22 U.S.C. 9001 et seq.);

(2) the International Parental Kidnapping Crime Act of 1993 (Public Law 103-173; 107 Stat. 1998), which enacted section 1204 of title 18, United States Code; and

(3) the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2014 (22 U.S.C. 9101 et seq.);

Whereas the Senate adopted Senate Resolution 543 (112th Congress), agreed to December 4, 2012, condemning the international abduction of children;

Whereas the Senate adopted Senate Resolution 431 (115th Congress), agreed to April 19, 2018, to raise awareness of, and opposition to, international parental child abduction;

Whereas the Senate adopted Senate Resolution 23 (116th Congress), agreed to April 11, 2019, to raise awareness of the harm caused by international parental child abduction;

Whereas the Senate adopted Senate Resolution 568 (117th Congress), agreed to July 21, 2022, to raise awareness of the harm caused by international parental child abduction;

Whereas the Senate adopted Senate Resolution 115 (118th Congress), agreed to May, 10 2023, to raise awareness of the harm caused by international parental child abduction;

Whereas Congress calls on the Department of State to fully use the tools available under the Sean and David Goldman International Child Abduction Prevention and Return Act of 2014 (22 U.S.C. 9101 et seq.) to negotiate, and make publicly available, bilateral agreements or memorandums of understanding—

(1) with countries not parties to the Hague Convention on Abduction to resolve abduction and access cases; and

(2) regarding open abduction and access cases predating the Hague Convention on Abduction with countries that have thereafter become parties to the Hague Convention on Abduction;

Whereas all 50 States and the District of Columbia have enacted laws criminalizing parental kidnapping;

Whereas, in 2023, the Prevention Branch of the Office of Children’s Issues of the Department of State—

(1) fielded more than 4,600 inquiries from the general public relating to preventing a child from being removed from the United States; and

(2) enrolled more than 3,700 children in the Children’s Passport Issuance Alert Program, which—

(A) is 1 of the most important tools of the Department of State for preventing international parental child abduction;

(B) allows the Office of Children’s Issues to contact the enrolling parent or legal guardian to verify whether the parental consent requirement has been met when a passport application has been submitted for an enrolled child; and

(C) has enrolled a total of over 66,600 children in the program since its inception; Whereas the Department of State cannot track the ultimate destination of a child through the use of the passport issued by the Department of State if the child is transported to a third country after departing from the United States;

Whereas a child who is a citizen of the United States may have another nationality and may travel using a passport issued by another country, which—

(1) increases the difficulty of determining the whereabouts of the child; and

(2) makes efforts to prevent abduction more critical;

Whereas, during 2023, 205 children were returned to the United States, and an additional 119 abduction cases, involving 147 children, were resolved without the children being returned to the United States; and

Whereas, in 2023, the Department of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Prevention Branch of the Office of Children’s Issues of the Department of State, enrolled 341 children in the Prevent Abduction Program, which is aimed at preventing international parental child abduction through coordination with U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officers at the airport, seaport, or land border ports of entry by intercepting the child before departure: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes and observes “Countering International Parental Child Abduction Month” during the period beginning on April 1, 2025, and ending on April 30, 2025, to raise awareness of, and opposition to, international parental child abduction; and

(2) urges the United States to continue playing a leadership role in raising awareness about the devastating impacts of international parental child abduction by educating the public about the negative emotional, psychological, and physical consequences to children and parents victimized by international parental child abduction.

SENATE RESOLUTION 151—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT THE UNITED STATES SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE 1994 GENOCIDE IN RWANDA AS “THE GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSI IN RWANDA”

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

S. RES. 151

Whereas, in 2018, the United Nations General Assembly amended the title of the annual observance of the genocide in Rwanda on April 7 to be the “International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda”;

Whereas United States officials have noted publicly that the genocide in Rwanda was “intended to destroy Tutsi”;

Whereas, on April 7, 2023, Secretary of State Blinken stated, “The U.S. stands with Rwanda . . . in remembering the Tutsi victims of genocide. We also mourn the others who were murdered for their opposition to a genocidal regime.”;

Whereas the United States Integrated Country Strategy for Rwanda (approved March 14, 2022) refers to the “1994 genocide against the Tutsi ethnic group”;

Whereas Rwandan officials, in appropriately opposing genocide denial or revisionism, aptly note that any nomenclature that does not specifically use the phrase

“genocide against the Tutsi” is “ambiguous” and conducive to genocide denial or revisionism;

Whereas the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum notes in its public educational materials on the “genocide in Rwanda” that the victims were “predominantly Tutsi” and that the goal of Hutu extremist leaders was for “Rwandan Tutsis to be exterminated”;

Whereas the United States-based non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch, which played a central role in documenting the genocide in Rwanda and in supporting international efforts to bring the perpetrators to justice, found that the “Tutsi were being targeted for elimination”;

Whereas European diplomats refer to the “genocide against the Tutsi” in public statements;

Whereas, starting in 2022, the Government of the United Kingdom has used the terminology “genocide against the Tutsi”;

Whereas the United States is the only major country in the world to publicly reject the terminology “genocide against the Tutsi”: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the United States should recognize the 1994 genocide in Rwanda as “the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda”;

(2) the Secretary of State should publicly affirm that terminology; and

(3) other types of atrocities occurred alongside the genocide against the Tutsi, and the history of the genocide should clearly affirm the other experiences of mass violence against Rwandans during the same period, including the killings and other violence experienced by Hutus and the Indigenous Twa community, perpetrated by Hutu extremist militias.

SENATE RESOLUTION 152—DESIGNATING APRIL 2025 AS “PRESERVING AND PROTECTING LOCAL NEWS MONTH” AND RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCAL NEWS

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WELCH, Mr. WARNER, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. KELLY, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. SMITH, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. BENNET) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 152

Whereas the United States was founded on the principle of freedom of the press enshrined in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which declares that “Congress shall make no law . . . abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press . . .”;

Whereas an informed citizenry depends on accurate and unbiased news reporting to inform the judgment of the people;

Whereas a robust, diverse, and sustainable local news presence leads to civic engagement and the buttressing of democratic norms and practices;

Whereas local news provides vital information on national, State, and local elections to help United States citizens execute their civic responsibility;

Whereas the absence of local news outlets and investigative reporting allows local government corruption and corporate malfeasance to go unchecked;

Whereas local journalists help combat misinformation and disinformation by using

their community knowledge and connections to debunk fraudulent or misleading content;

Whereas local cable franchises routinely provide for public educational and government access channels on their systems that—

(1) offer vital local civic programming that informs communities;

(2) provide news and information not often available on other local broadcast channels or cable;

(3) supplement local journalism; and

(4) at times, are the only source for local news;

Whereas more than ¾ of United States citizens trust local news sources;

Whereas, according to researchers at the Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism, the United States has lost more than 3,200 local print outlets since 2005;

Whereas, according to recent research—

(1) an average of 2.5 local print outlets are being shuttered every week in the United States;

(2) more than 200 of the 3,143 counties and county equivalents in the United States have no local newspaper at all, creating a news shortage for over 3,500,000 residents of those areas;

(3) of the remaining counties in the United States, more than ½ have only 1 newspaper to cover populations ranging from fewer than 1,000 to more than 1,000,000 residents and ¾ have no daily newspaper, with fewer than 100 of these counties having a digital substitute;

(4) more than ½ of all newspapers in the United States have changed owners during the past decade;

(5) as of 2024, just 10 companies, including companies with partial or full ownership by private equity firms and hedge funds, control ¾ of all newspapers and more than ½ of all dailies in the United States;

(6) of the surviving 5,595 newspapers in the United States, thousands now qualify as “ghost newspapers”, or newspapers with reporting and photography staffs that are so significantly reduced that they can no longer provide much of the breaking news or public service journalism that once informed readers about vital issues in their communities;

(7) rural counties are among the counties most deeply impacted by the loss of local reporting, as more than 500 of the net loss of nearly 3,200 newspapers that have closed since 2005 are in rural counties; and

(8) researchers at the Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism estimate that 279 counties across 32 States are at an elevated risk of becoming news deserts, which would inordinately impact high-poverty areas in the South, Mountain West, and Midwest, and communities with significant Black, Latino, and Native American populations;

Whereas, while overall employment in newspaper, television, radio, and digital newsrooms dropped by roughly 26 percent, or 30,000 jobs, between 2008 and 2020, the plunge in newspaper newsrooms alone was much worse at 57 percent, or 40,000 jobs, during that same time period;

Whereas the number of news employees in the radio broadcasting industry dropped by 26 percent between 2008 and 2020;

Whereas nearly 15,000 media jobs, including jobs in the newspaper industry and broadcasting, were lost in 2024;

Whereas, between January and September 2024, digital-native publications and legacy media outlets laid off approximately 2,500 journalists, and many of those publications shuttered during the last year;

Whereas beat reporting, meaning the day-to-day coverage of a particular field that allows a journalist to develop expertise and cultivate sources, has ceased to be a viable

career for would-be journalists due to the decimation of newsroom budgets;

Whereas requests submitted under section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly referred to as “Freedom of Information Act requests”), by local newspapers to local, State, and Federal agencies fell by nearly 50 percent between 2005 and 2010, demonstrating a significant drop in the extent to which local reporters request government records;

Whereas, according to the Pew Research Center, newspapers in the United States saw a decline in advertising revenue of almost 60 percent between 2013 and 2023;

Whereas the sponsorship revenue of all-news radio stations dropped by 25 percent between 2019 and 2021;

Whereas there remains a significant gender disparity in newsroom employment, with women comprising approximately ½ of staff who are 30 years of age or older;

Whereas women who are local television news anchors and reporters, especially women of color, are often subject to harassment and stalking;

Whereas, across the United States, there are nearly 300 media outlets that primarily serve Black communities, and, in recent years, many of those newspapers have seen—

(1) significant losses in advertising revenue as small businesses in their communities were forced to close; and

(2) declines in circulation due to the closures of businesses in their communities;

Whereas the number of Black journalists working at daily newspapers dropped by 40 percent between 1997 and 2014, more than for any other demographic group, and the exodus of journalists from local news outlets exacerbated by the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, and declining news readership and circulation, has been disproportionately borne by Black constituencies;

Whereas the number of print media sources published by and for Native American readers has shrunk dramatically in recent years, from 700 media outlets in 1998 to only 200 in 2018;

Whereas Tribally-owned news outlets are often dependent on Tribal governments for funding, but most of those outlets lack the policy structure necessary to fully protect journalistic independence;

Whereas a 2018 survey by the Native American Journalists Association found that 83 percent of respondents believed that Native press coverage of Tribal government affairs was sometimes, frequently, or always censored;

Whereas there are more than 620 Latino news media outlets in the United States, including more than 275 independently owned print publications, and collectively those news media outlets primarily rely on a declining advertising revenue base;

Whereas the lack of local news impacts communities that speak languages other than English, which are often excluded from national media coverage;

Whereas investments in local journalism have mainly focused on larger media markets, contributing to inequities and a journalistic divide between affluent and low-income communities;

Whereas student journalists, at the college and high school level, have stepped in to play an important role reporting on their local communities despite the lack of educational resources and support;

Whereas the Pew Research Center reports that nearly 1 in 10 statehouse reporters are student journalists;

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic took a substantial economic toll on the local news industry, contributing to budget cuts, staff layoffs, and scores of newsroom closures,