

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 126

Supporting the mission of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention and celebrating the 2011 International Day for Monuments and Sites.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 31, 2011

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Supporting the mission of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention and celebrating the 2011 International Day for Monuments and Sites.

Whereas the United States was the primary architect of the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, done at Paris November 23, 1972 (commonly known as the "World Heritage Convention"), and the following year became the first of the now 187 countries to ratify the convention;

Whereas the World Heritage Convention is the most widely accepted and effective conservation mechanism for the world's most significant natural and cultural sites, and the only international convention focused on both nature and culture;

Whereas the World Heritage Convention exemplifies the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) goals of promoting peace through cultural dialogue;

Whereas the ideals set forth in the Convention reflect the commitment of the United States to conserving its national parks and other forms of natural and cultural heritage;

Whereas the United States has served four terms on the World Heritage Committee, most recently from 2005 through 2009;

Whereas the World Heritage List currently contains 911 cultural and natural sites, 21 of which are located within the United States, including Florida's Everglades National Park, whose Ten Thousand Islands area composes part of the largest stand of protected mangrove forest in the Western hemisphere; Wrangell-St. Elias and Glacier Bay National Parks in Alaska, which contain some of the world's longest glaciers; California's Redwood National and State Parks, home to some of the tallest and oldest trees in the world; Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona, which retraces geological history over 2,000,000,000 years and represents the four major geologic eras; Independence Hall in Pennsylvania, where both the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution were signed; and Taos Pueblo, in New Mexico, one of the oldest continuously inhabited communities in the United States, and the only living American community designated both a World Heritage Site and a National Historical Landmark;

Whereas, in 2010, for the first time in 15 years, the World Heritage Committee inscribed a site in the United States,

Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, onto the World Heritage List, a site that is a natural and cultural treasure for Hawaiians and is rich in marine biodiversity and pristine natural beauty;

Whereas UNESCO and its World Heritage Centre play a vital role in the safeguarding of monuments and sites in times of crisis, war, or natural disaster;

Whereas, in an age of increasing conflict and volatility, the World Heritage Convention is more important than ever in ensuring the protection of priceless historical treasures;

Whereas the recent upheaval in Egypt, which threatened artifacts from the antiquities museum in Cairo, and mounting concerns about the destruction of the Roman ruins of Leptis Magna and other ancient cities in Libya serve as reminders of the crucial role UNESCO plays in promoting protection and conservation;

Whereas, through its List of World Heritage in Danger, UNESCO seeks to work with national governments to preserve natural and cultural sites under duress, by raising international awareness and providing local authorities with the support they need;

Whereas, in Afghanistan, UNESCO's safeguarding campaign is premised on the belief that a shared cultural heritage can strengthen national identity and create a common sense of ownership over the country's past and future;

Whereas the United States Government provides considerable assistance to World Heritage sites around the globe through programs such as the National Park Service's World Heritage Fellowship, which provides site managers from developing countries with training at World Herit-

age sites in the United States, including Everglades, Grand Canyon, Hawaii Volcanoes, and Olympic National Parks;

Whereas the World Heritage Centre has formed innovative partnerships with several private organizations in the United States, including new interactive tools that allow users to virtually tour UNESCO World Heritage sites from their computers;

Whereas April 18th has been endorsed by the UNESCO General Conference as the International Day for Monuments and Sites, also known as World Heritage Day; and

Whereas the 39th anniversary of the day in 2011 reflects a long-standing commitment to the celebration and preservation of natural and cultural sites around the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) supports the mission of UNESCO’s World
3 Heritage Convention;

4 (2) acknowledges the 39th anniversary of the
5 International Day for Monuments and Sites; and

6 (3) commends UNESCO and its role in pre-
7 serving and celebrating natural and cultural sites
8 worldwide.

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