

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 80

Establishing the Senate Human Rights Commission.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 1, 2021

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. LANKFORD) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration

RESOLUTION

Establishing the Senate Human Rights Commission.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SENATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.**

3 (a) COMMISSION ESTABLISHMENT.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the
5 Senate the Senate Human Rights Commission (in
6 this section referred to as the “Commission”).

7 (2) DUTIES.—The Commission shall—

8 (A) serve as a forum for bipartisan discus-
9 sion of international human rights issues and
10 promotion of internationally recognized human

1 rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration
2 of Human Rights;

3 (B) raise awareness of international
4 human rights violations through regular brief-
5 ings and hearings; and

6 (C) collaborate with congressional commit-
7 tees and other congressional entities, the execu-
8 tive branch, human rights entities, and non-
9 governmental organizations to promote human
10 rights initiatives within the Senate.

11 (3) LIMITATIONS.—The Commission shall
12 not—

13 (A) have legislative jurisdiction;

14 (B) have authority to take legislative ac-
15 tion on any bill or resolution; or

16 (C) encroach upon the jurisdiction of any
17 standing, select, or special committee of the
18 Senate.

19 (4) MEMBERSHIP.—Any Senator may become a
20 member of the Commission by submitting a written
21 statement to that effect to the Commission.

22 (5) CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE COMMISSION.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—Two members of the
24 Commission shall be appointed to serve as co-
25 chairpersons of the Commission, as follows:

1 (i) One co-chairperson shall be ap-
 2 pointed, and may be removed, by the ma-
 3 jority leader of the Senate.

4 (ii) One co-chairperson shall be ap-
 5 pointed, and may be removed, by the mi-
 6 nority leader of the Senate.

7 (B) TERM.—The term of a member as a
 8 co-chairperson of the Commission shall end on
 9 the last day of the Congress during which the
 10 member is appointed as a co-chairperson, unless
 11 the member ceases being a Member of the Sen-
 12 ate, leaves the Commission, resigns from the
 13 position of co-chairperson, or is removed.

14 (C) PUBLICATION.—Appointments under
 15 this paragraph shall be printed in the Congres-
 16 sional Record.

17 (D) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the posi-
 18 tion of co-chairperson of the Commission shall
 19 be filled in the same manner in which the origi-
 20 nal appointment was made.

21 (b) COMMISSION STAFF.—

22 (1) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission is au-
 24 thorized, from funds made available under sub-
 25 section (c), to—

(i) employ such staff in the manner and at a rate not to exceed that allowed for employees of a committee of the Senate under section 105(e)(3) of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1968 (2 U.S.C. 4575(e)(3)); and

(ii) incur such expenses as may be necessary or appropriate to carry out its duties and functions.

(B) EXPENSES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Payments made under this subsection for receptions, meals, and food-related expenses shall be authorized only for actual expenses incurred by the Commission in the course of conducting its official duties and functions.

(ii) TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS.—Amounts received as reimbursement for expenses described in clause (i) shall not be reported as income, and the expenses so reimbursed shall not be allowed as a deduction under the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(2) DESIGNATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each co-chairperson of
2 the Commission may designate 1 professional
3 staff member.

4 (B) COMPENSATION OF SENATE EMPLOY-
5 EES.—In the case of the compensation of any
6 professional staff member designated under
7 subparagraph (A) who is an employee of a
8 Member of the Senate or of a committee of the
9 Senate and who has been designated to perform
10 services for the Commission, the professional
11 staff member shall continue to be paid by the
12 Member or committee, as the case may be, but
13 the account from which the professional staff
14 member is paid shall be reimbursed for the
15 services of the professional staff member (in-
16 cluding agency contributions when appropriate)
17 out of funds made available under subsection
18 (c).

19 (C) DUTIES.—Each professional staff
20 member designated under subparagraph (A)
21 shall—

22 (i) serve all members of the Commis-
23 sion; and

1 (ii) carry out such other functions as
2 the co-chairperson designating the profes-
3 sional staff member may specify.

4 (c) PAYMENT OF EXPENSES.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The expenses of the Com-
6 mission shall be paid from the Contingent Fund of
7 the Senate, out of the account of Miscellaneous
8 Items, upon vouchers approved jointly by the co-
9 chairpersons (except that vouchers shall not be re-
10 quired for the disbursement of salaries of employees
11 who are paid at an annual rate of pay).

12 (2) AMOUNTS AVAILABLE.—For any fiscal year,
13 not more than \$200,000 shall be expended for em-
14 ployees and expenses.

○