

CASEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. SMITH, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. REED, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 1995. A bill to support public health infrastructure; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, they say an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, and the COVID pandemic showed us just how painfully true that is when it comes to public health.

Our public health system is our frontline defense—not only against deadly diseases and pandemics; it also aids in addressing the opioid and fentanyl crisis, preventing chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease, protecting our food and water supply, and a lot more.

But despite our public health system's central role in protecting our communities, keeping our families safe and healthy, and preventing major disruptions in our lives, our public health system was sorely underfunded before COVID struck, and it has been seriously overwhelmed ever since. We have—thank goodness—gotten a much better grasp on COVID, but who in their right mind would look at the last few years and think funding public health is probably something we can put on the back burner?

We have to do better. We have to apply the lessons we learned and start thinking ahead now so we are never caught unprepared again. We have to end this cycle of crisis and complacency when it comes to building and maintaining strong public health infrastructure because the simple fact of the matter is public health infrastructure saves lives, and the better funded and prepared our public health system is before a crisis, the more lives we will save during one.

And make no mistake, the question is not whether there will be a new threat; it is: When is the next crisis going to strike? Will we be ready next time?

We cannot afford to treat public health like a one-and-done issue, which is why I am here today reintroducing my bill to provide \$4.5 billion in dedicated annual funding to support core public health capabilities at every level so we can protect our public health system from complacency and hostage-taking and drastic cuts.

The Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act would make much-needed investments at the CDC, and, crucially, it would establish a grant program to support health departments all across our country. This funding would meet a wide variety of needs in communities across America. Health departments could use it to make sure they do robust contact tracing and stop outbreaks in their tracks, have adequate lab capacity to address public health threats, and have a surge work-

force available in an emergency to save lives.

This funding would empower our public health departments to make sure lifesaving information reaches everyone: people who don't speak English, people with disabilities, or people who don't have access to the internet. It would help officials conduct public awareness campaigns and fight misinformation and get really basic but essential information out, like when and where to find a vaccine clinic.

Public health departments could also use this funding as they update their IT and data systems to help them more quickly identify threats before they become full-blown outbreaks. And it would help us collect more consistent, comprehensive demographic data so we can see and address gaps in our responses and get the resources where they are needed the most.

It would also help our departments hire and train and retain the people they need. That is really important. A recent survey actually showed that nearly half of all our State and local public health workers left their jobs between 2017 and 2020, citing harassment or retirement. Post COVID, public health workers are more burnt out than ever and in dire need of reinforcements. This funding will help provide that and a lot more.

And, critically, this would be dedicated annual funding. That would do so much to help take the possibility of cuts and chaos off the table and put us on track to build the kind of world-class public health system that our communities deserve, the kind our families need to keep them safe.

And here is the thing: Every dollar that we invest now saves us much more in the long run. When we tackle public health threats now—staving off major outbreaks, major disruption—we save in a really big way down the line. We should all know by now we can't take public health for granted. We have seen real momentum and support for this from communities who understand all too well we need a strong public health system at every level.

It is time for Congress to show we get it too. It is time for us to invest in prevention, invest in public health in a serious way, because when we say that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, we are talking about stopping the next global pandemic and the next global economic crisis in its tracks, which will save lives and livelihoods.

So let's not make public health funding partisan. I urge my Republican colleagues to support this legislation. If you are skeptical, talk to me. A nominal investment in public health is a major payoff in terms of economic security and keeping our families safe and healthy. It seems like a pretty good deal to me.

I hope we can all work together and pass the Public Health Infrastructure Saves Lives Act.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

### SENATE RESOLUTION 251—CELEBRATING THE 2023 NATO SUMMIT IN VILNIUS, LITHUANIA, AND EXPRESSING PRIORITIES RELATED TO TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY AND THE NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 251

Whereas the United States signed the North Atlantic Treaty, done at Washington, D.C., April 4, 1949 (commonly known as the "Washington Treaty"), to provide collective security and strengthen security and political cooperation with allies of the United States;

Whereas the United States and its allies recognized that security cooperation was a necessary precursor to enhanced political and economic stabilization and engagement;

Whereas, in 1991, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (commonly known as "NATO" and the "Alliance") issued an unclassified Strategic Concept for the first time, outlining the basic principles and plans of the Alliance to address security challenges and strategic threats;

Whereas, in 1994, NATO established the Partnership for Peace to enable partner countries to share information and modernize and democratize their political and security infrastructure with NATO;

Whereas, in 1999, NATO established the Membership Action Plan to facilitate the accession of aspiring member countries by providing advice, assistance, and support in meeting the political and military principles of the Alliance;

Whereas any country that wishes may pursue NATO membership consistent with the 1995 Study on Enlargement and Article 10 of the Washington Treaty by—

(1) pursuing formal accession talks with the Alliance;

(2) sending a letter of intent to NATO, including a timeline for the completion of necessary reforms recommended by the Alliance;

(3) working with member countries so that accession protocols are signed and ratified by such member countries;

(4) receiving an invitation from the Secretary General of NATO to accede to the Washington Treaty; and

(5) acceding to the Washington Treaty in accordance with national procedures and by depositing instruments of accession;

Whereas, following the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time, calling on the Alliance to provide for collective defense;

Whereas Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which were among the first Eastern European nations to declare independence from the Soviet Union, formally joined NATO in 2004 and have provided notable support for NATO operations, including—

(1) operations in Iraq and Afghanistan;

(2) operations that have been enhanced in response to increased threats; and

(3) operations in response to the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation in February 2022;

Whereas, in 2006, the Alliance agreed that each member country would commit at least 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product to defense spending to ensure sustained readiness;

Whereas the Alliance consists of 31 independent member countries, including Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, and the United States;

Whereas, in response to the unprovoked and illegal war on Ukraine by the Russian Federation, Finland and Sweden applied for NATO membership in May 2022;

Whereas, during the 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, Spain, NATO formally extended an invitation to Finland and Sweden to join the Alliance;

Whereas Finland formally ascended to the Alliance on April 4, 2023, as the most recent country to join NATO;

Whereas the accession of Sweden into NATO awaits final ratification by Hungary and Türkiye;

Whereas NATO—

(1) leads operations in Kosovo and other countries in the Mediterranean region to maintain peace and stability;

(2) supports operations around the world, including in Europe and the African Union, to advance priorities of the Alliance; and

(3) facilitates a training mission in Iraq to develop the capacity of the security infrastructure of Iraq;

Whereas, since the further invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation on February 24, 2022, which followed the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation in 2014, the Alliance is the strongest and most united it has ever been;

Whereas, as the Russian Federation illegally attacks the sovereignty of Ukraine, individual members of the Alliance have contributed essential military and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, including through the Ukraine Defense Contact Group established by the United States;

Whereas, in response to the brutal war on Ukraine by the Russian Federation, NATO enhanced its presence on the eastern flank of the Alliance by reinforcing existing multinational battlegroups and establishing new multinational battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia;

Whereas efforts by NATO to bolster the security of the eastern flank and to counter aggression by the Russian Federation followed efforts in 2016 by establishing NATO forward presences in the northeast and southeast of the Alliance;

Whereas the Alliance recognizes the strategic importance of the Black Sea region, which the Russian Federation has tried to weaponize, including by attempting to block shipments of grain from Ukraine through the Black Sea, bringing the world to the brink of a global food security crisis;

Whereas, for the first time in history, the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept recognized that the stated ambitions and coercive policies of the People's Republic of China challenge the interests of the Alliance;

Whereas the Alliance recognizes that deepening ties between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation have resulted in immediate and long-term challenges to the rules-based international world order;

Whereas NATO is prepared to respond to existing and emerging threats to transatlantic security;

Whereas Vilnius, Lithuania, will host the 2023 NATO Summit following the 700-year jubilee of the city on January 25, 2023;

Whereas the 2023 NATO Summit will highlight the leadership of the Baltic States in NATO and as supporters of democratic values globally;

Whereas Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are among the top 5 per capita contributors of assistance to Ukraine;

Whereas, despite continued belligerence by the Russian Federation, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have welcomed exiled opposition leaders from the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation;

Whereas the choice of Vilnius as the location for the 2023 NATO Summit underscores the Baltic States as vital NATO members and further demonstrates the strength of the Alliance; and

Whereas the 2023 NATO Summit is an opportunity to build upon the work of previous summits to continue strengthening the Alliance and pave the way for new NATO member countries that can join in upholding democratic values: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms that, for 74 years, the unity and strength of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (commonly known as “NATO” and the “Alliance”) has contributed to peace and stability in Europe and around the world;

(2) celebrates that the 2023 NATO Summit will be held in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 11 and 12, 2023;

(3) acknowledges individuals around the world who have served in NATO missions and operations since the Alliance was founded;

(4) supports the sovereignty of all nations to decide whether to pursue membership to the Alliance;

(5) urges Hungary and Türkiye to ratify the accession of Sweden to NATO without further delay;

(6) recognizes that Sweden would bring new and unique capabilities to NATO, which would enable the Alliance to respond to existing and emerging threats to transatlantic security;

(7) encourages the Alliance to operationalize the 2022 Strategic Concept, including by countering the aggressive and coercive behavior exhibited by the People's Republic of China;

(8) expresses support for the decision of NATO to open an office in Tokyo, Japan, to address pacing challenges to transatlantic security in the Indo-Pacific Region;

(9) asserts that NATO members should consider the commitment to spend 2 percent of Gross Domestic Product as the lowest percent contribution to ensure the sustainability, resilience, and readiness of the Alliance;

(10) emphasizes that the Alliance should continue to support Ukraine as it fights for freedom, sovereignty, and territorial integrity; and

(11) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to meet obligations as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty, done at Washington, D.C., April 4, 1949.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 252—CELEBRATING THE 246TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CREATION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. BRAUN (for himself, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. LEE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SCOTT of Florida, Mr. ROUNDS, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SCHMITT, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. BRITT, Mr. WICKER, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. VANCE, Mr. BUDD, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. TUBERVILLE, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 252

Whereas, on June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress approved the design of a flag of the United States;

Whereas, over the years, the flag of the United States has preserved the standards of the original design comprised of alternating red and white stripes accompanied by a union consisting of white stars on a field of blue;

Whereas, on May 30, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued Presidential Proclamation 1335, an announcement asking the people of the United States to observe June 14 as Flag Day;

Whereas, on August 3, 1949, President Harry Truman signed into law House Joint Resolution 170, 81st Congress, a joint resolution designating June 14 of each year as Flag Day;

Whereas, on August 21, 1959, President Dwight Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10834 (24 Fed. Reg. 6865), an order establishing the most recent design of the flag of the United States;

Whereas the Pledge of Allegiance was written by Francis Bellamy, a Baptist minister, and first published in the September 8, 1892, issue of *The Youth's Companion*;

Whereas, in 1954, Congress added the words “under God” to the Pledge of Allegiance;

Whereas, for more than 60 years, the Pledge of Allegiance has included references to the United States flag, to the United States having been established as a union “under God”, and to the United States being dedicated to securing “liberty and justice for all”;

Whereas, in 1954, Congress believed it was acting constitutionally when it revised the Pledge of Allegiance;

Whereas the United States was founded on principles of religious freedom by the Founders, many of whom were deeply religious;

Whereas the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States embodies principles intended to guarantee freedom of religion through the free exercise thereof and by prohibiting the Government from establishing a religion;

Whereas patriotic songs, engravings on United States legal tender, and engravings on Federal buildings also contain general references to “God”;

Whereas, in *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow*, 542 U.S. 1 (2004), the Supreme Court of the United States overturned the decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in *Newdow v. U.S. Congress*, 328 F.3d 466 (9th Cir. 2003), a case in which the Ninth Circuit concluded that recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by a public school teacher violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

Whereas the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit subsequently concluded that—

(1) the previous opinion of that court in *Newdow v. U.S. Congress*, 328 F.3d 466 (9th Cir. 2003) was no longer binding precedent;

(2) case law from the Supreme Court of the United States concerning the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States had subsequently changed after the decision in *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow*, 542 U.S. 1 (2004); and

(3) Congress, in passing the new version of the Pledge of Allegiance, had established a secular purpose for the use of the term “under God”; and

Whereas, in light of those conclusions, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit upheld the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by public school teachers: Now, therefore, be it