

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

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) celebrates the 246th anniversary of the creation of the flag of the United States;

(2) recognizes that the Pledge of Allegiance has been a valuable part of life for the people of the United States for generations; and

(3) affirms that the Pledge of Allegiance is a constitutional expression of patriotism and strongly defends the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance.

SENATE RESOLUTION 253—DESIGNATING JUNE 16, 2023, AS NATIONAL SERVICE AND CONSERVATION CORPS DAY

Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 253

Whereas there exists a network of more than 150 Service and Conservation Corps across the United States that provides education, workforce development, and support services to approximately 22,000 young adults and post-9/11 veterans annually;

Whereas the Service and Conservation Corps are locally-based organizations that engage young adults between 18 and 30 years of age and veterans younger than 35 years of age in service projects that address recreation, conservation, disaster response, and community needs;

Whereas the Service and Conservation Corps are direct descendants of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a Great Depression-era Federal work relief program in existence from 1933 to 1942 that—

(1) mobilized 3,000,000 young men to dramatically improve the public lands of the United States;

(2) provided participants with food, shelter, education, and a \$30 per month stipend; and

(3) planted 3,000,000,000 trees and helped build trails, roads, campgrounds, and other park infrastructure still in use today;

Whereas April 5, 2023, was the 90th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps with a presidential Executive order (Executive Order 6101 (relating to relief of unemployment through the performance of useful public work));

Whereas, unlike the Civilian Conservation Corps, which was a large, Federal program that was only open to young men, while Black and Native American participants faced discrimination, modern Service and Conservation Corps are equitable, diverse, and inclusive;

Whereas most modern Service and Conservation Corps are nonprofit organizations or are operated by units of State or local government;

Whereas, through public-private partnerships, Service and Conservation Corps work with a range of organizations, government agencies, and institutions to engage Corps participants in meaningful projects that address local and national issues;

Whereas, throughout a term of service that could last from a few months to a year, Corps participants experience the “Corps Model” by—

(1) gaining work experience and developing in-demand skills;

(2) serving on crews alongside other young adults, or in “individual placement” or internship positions, that provide additional capacity to Federal, State, and local resource management agencies;

(3) receiving a stipend or living allowance and often an education award or scholarship upon completion of service; and

(4) receiving educational programming, mentoring, and access to career and personal counseling;

Whereas some Service and Conservation Corps operate or partner with charter schools to help Corps participants earn their high school diploma or GED certificate;

Whereas Corps participants complete thousands of community improvement, resilience, and resource conservation projects every year;

Whereas Service and Conservation Corps have longstanding partnerships with Federal, State, and local community development and resource management agencies to engage Corps participants in meaningful and necessary projects across the United States;

Whereas Corps projects include—

(1) enhancing neighborhoods and community public spaces, including urban gardens;

(2) preserving and protecting public lands, shorelines, waterways, habitats, and wildlife;

(3) preserving historic structures;

(4) providing access to and enhancing recreation on public lands and waters;

(5) enhancing resilience to climate change and natural disasters;

(6) mitigating, responding to, and recovering from natural disasters, including hurricanes and wildfires;

(7) improving energy efficiency and resource conservation; and

(8) building and maintaining alternative transportation and sustainable infrastructure;

Whereas the United States urgently needs to transition to more sustainable infrastructure, respond to decades of deferred maintenance on public lands and waters, restore critical ecosystems, and make communities more resilient to climate change;

Whereas unemployment and barriers to opportunity affect millions of young people in the United States and disproportionately affect young people of color; and

Whereas the existing network of more than 150 Service and Conservation Corps is ready to meet the needs of young people in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates June 16, 2023, as National Service and Conservation Corps Day;

(2) congratulates the existing network of more than 150 Service and Conservation Corps on their contributions to the United States;

(3) urges the people of the United States to recognize the importance of national service; and

(4) supports the continuation and expansion of the national network of Service and Conservation Corps.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I have 10 requests for committees to meet during today’s session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today’s session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

The Committee on Finance is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 3:15 p.m., to conduct a classified briefing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND SPENDING OVERSIGHT

The Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Spending Oversight of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 1615

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1615) to prohibit the use of Federal funds to ban gas stoves.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be