

SEC. 2. NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVISTS DEBT RELIEF AMENDMENT.

Section 4(b) of the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-438; 122 Stat. 5000) is amended by striking “15-year” and inserting “1-year”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 464—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE BY RECOGNIZING THE EPIDEMIC OF VIOLENCE TOWARD TRANSGENDER PEOPLE AND MEMORIALIZING THE LIVES LOST THIS YEAR

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. BUTLER, Mr. FETTERMAN, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. SCHATZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 464

Whereas Transgender Day of Remembrance was created following the 1998 killing of Rita Hester, a transgender woman of color, whose murder has yet to be solved;

Whereas the following year, on November 20, 1999, Gwendolyn Ann Smith created the first Transgender Day of Remembrance in honor of Rita Hester and other transgender people whose lives were lost due to violence;

Whereas Transgender Day of Remembrance 2023 honors the memory of the lives of transgender people tragically lost in acts of violence between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023;

Whereas the United States is currently experiencing an epidemic of violence against transgender people of the United States;

Whereas at least 33 transgender or gender nonconforming people were violently killed in the United States in 2023, a number many believe to be much higher due to the prevalence of underreporting or misreporting violence against this community;

Whereas the lives of Tiffany Banks, Kelly Loving, Daniel Aston, Diamond Jackson-McDonald, Destiny Howard, Mar'Quis “MJ” Jackson, Caelee Love-Light, Jasmine “Star” Mack; KC Johnson, Unique Banks, Zachae Imanitwihaho, Maria Jose Rivera Rivera, Chashay Ashanti Henderson, Paris Aminah, Tortuguita, Ta'Ssiyah Woodland, Ashley Burton, Koko Da Doll, Banko Brown, Ashia Davis, Chanell Perez Ortiz, Jacob Williamson, Camdyn Rider, DeVonnice J'Rae Johnson, Thomas “Tom-Tom” Robertson, YOKO, Luis Ángel Díaz Castro, Sherlyn Marjorie, Emma Borhanian, Clayton Stephens, Ome Gandhi, Lovely Page, Bre'Asia Banks, and Alexa Sokova were tragically lost in acts of violence between October 1, 2022, and September 30, 2023;

Whereas, following the introduction of the Transgender Day of Remembrance Resolution of 2022, the lives of Morgan Moore, Kylie Monali, and London Starr were reported to have been lost to acts of violence between October 1, 2021, and September 30, 2022;

Whereas at least 285 transgender or gender nonconforming people have been murdered worldwide in 2023, according to the Transgender Day of Remembrance memorial page from Trans Lives Matter;

Whereas violence against transgender people of the United States disproportionately impacts transgender women of color;

Whereas Black transgender women are the most targeted group to experience violence in the United States;

Whereas the COVID-19 global health pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on transgender people of the United States;

Whereas transgender people of the United States face barriers to health care, such as lack of health insurance, stigma and discrimination, and higher rates of unemployment;

Whereas transgender people disproportionately suffer from higher rates of homelessness, with reports suggesting as many as 1/3 of all transgender women and 1/2 of transgender women who are Black, Middle Eastern, multiracial, or undocumented have experienced homelessness;

Whereas almost half of all transgender people in the United States will attempt suicide at least once, and over 1 in 20 will attempt suicide each year, a rate that is almost 10 times higher than the rest of the United States population;

Whereas asylum seekers and refugees who are transgender experience disproportionate rates of violence, including sexual violence, as they seek safety;

Whereas transgender immigrants have died in detention centers in the United States due to medical neglect, injury, and abuse at the hands of staff;

Whereas transgender people who are housed in institutional settings such as jails and prisons are subject to high levels of violence and discrimination;

Whereas transgender students are significantly more likely to experience bullying and harassment at school due to their gender identity;

Whereas understanding and addressing the challenges faced by transgender people of the United States is hampered by a severe lack of data;

Whereas Congress and the executive branch must act to protect and preserve the lives of all people of the United States, including those that are transgender, through inclusive legislation and policies that treat everyone with dignity and respect;

Whereas the continued introduction of anti-transgender legislation has fueled violence against transgender people of the United States;

Whereas the pressure some State legislatures have pushed on State and local authorities to treat gender-affirming health care as child abuse has led to a spike in bullying and assault in schools, worsening mental health among transgender youth and adults, and parents who are afraid their children will be deprived of medical care or be removed from their homes;

Whereas the transgender community has shown great resilience in the face of adversity in all aspects of their lives, including housing, education, employment, and health care; and

Whereas the transgender community has demonstrated tremendous leadership since the courageous actions of many community members, including Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, at the Stonewall uprising of 1969: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and principles of Transgender Day of Remembrance by recognizing the epidemic of violence toward transgender people and memorializing the lives lost this year;

(2) recognizes that the alarming trends of increased violence against transgender people of the United States, particularly transgender women of color, are unacceptable, and that finding solutions to these issues must be a pressing priority for the United States Government;

(3) supports efforts to study, respond to, and prevent violence against transgender people;

(4) affirms the principle that every person is endowed with basic human rights and that the commitment of the United States to this principle must encompass every single individual;

(5) recognizes the bravery and resilience of the transgender community as it fights for equal dignity and respect; and

(6) recognizes the multitude of contributions and cultural impact the transgender community has had on the society of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 465—EX-PRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF NOVEMBER 20, 2023, THROUGH DECEMBER 20, 2023, AS “NATIONAL SURVIVORS OF HOMICIDE VICTIMS AWARENESS MONTH”

Mr. MARKEY submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.:

S. RES. 465

Whereas the United States faces a national public health crisis of gun violence;

Whereas, on average, more than 13,000 homicides each year continue to rob families and communities of loved ones;

Whereas homicides increased by 30 percent in 2020, compounding the many deaths caused by COVID-19;

Whereas for every 1 homicide victim, there are at least 10 surviving family members, and the number of survivors of homicide victims grows exponentially each year as they navigate life after the tragic loss of their loved one;

Whereas homicide victims are loved and grieved by family members, friends, neighbors, classmates, colleagues, and communities across the country;

Whereas, in the United States, almost 1 in 4 Black American, Hispanic, or Latinx adults report having lost a loved one to gun-related homicide;

Whereas losing a loved one to homicide is one of the most traumatic events a person can experience;

Whereas, in the United States, homicide is the leading cause of death among Black Americans between the ages of 12-19 and the second leading cause of death for teenagers nationwide;

Whereas more than 1/2 of women who are victims of homicides are killed because of intimate partner violence;

Whereas 40 percent of homicides in the United States go unsolved;

Whereas homicide results in chronic physical and behavioral health consequences that carry significant behavioral and economic burdens on families and communities impacted by murder, trauma, grief, and loss;

Whereas all families of homicide victims deserve to be treated with dignity and compassion;

Whereas surviving family members need holistic, coordinated, compassionate, and consistent support and services in the immediate aftermath of a homicide and ongoing opportunities for healing in the months and years afterward;

Whereas surviving family members want to remember and honor their loved ones' lives regardless of the circumstances surrounding their death;

Whereas survivors of homicide victims are transforming their pain into purpose by informing, influencing, and impacting public policy, and working to create and sustain an environment where all families can live in peace and all people are valued;

Whereas survivors, advocates, and providers are working together to implement

equitable and effective community-based responses to homicide;

Whereas the leadership of surviving family and community members is essential to disrupting cycles of violence and promoting peace in all communities; and

Whereas recognition of the needs of survivors can help combat trauma, foster healing, and inform joy for families and communities impacted by homicide: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses support for the designation of November 20, 2023, through December 20, 2023, as “National Survivors of Homicide Victims Awareness Month”;

(2) supports efforts to—

(A) raise awareness of survivors of homicide victims;

(B) support survivors of homicide victims, including families, schools, and communities, with support services and information; and

(C) encourage research—

(i) to better address the needs of families and communities severely impacted by violence; and

(ii) to consider ways to improve access to, and the quality of, behavioral health services for survivors of homicide victims; and

(3) calls on the people of the United States, interest groups, and affected persons—

(A) to promote awareness of survivors of homicide victims;

(B) to take an active role in the fight to end gun violence and homicide;

(C) to respond to all families suffering in the aftermath of homicide with consistency, compassion, and competence and by centering the principles of love, unity, faith, hope, courage, justice, and forgiveness; and

(D) to observe National Survivors of Homicide Victims Awareness Month with appropriate activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 466—CALLING UPON THE UNITED STATES SENATE TO GIVE ITS ADVICE AND CONSENT TO THE RATIFICATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. Kaine, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. KING, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 466

Whereas the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) was adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea in December 1982 and entered into force in November 1994 to establish a treaty regime to govern activities on, over, and under the world’s oceans;

Whereas the UNCLOS builds on four 1958 Law of the Sea conventions to which the United States is a party, namely the Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone, the Convention on the High Seas, the Convention on the Continental Shelf, and the Convention on Fishing and Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas;

Whereas the UNCLOS and an associated 1994 agreement relating to implementation of the treaty were transmitted to the Senate on October 6, 1994, and, in the absence of Senate advice and consent to ratification, the United States is not a party to the treaty or the associated 1994 agreement;

Whereas the treaty has been ratified by 169 parties, which includes 168 countries and the European Union, but not the United States;

Whereas the United States, like most other countries, maintains that coastal States under the UNCLOS have the right to regulate economic activities in their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), but do not have the right to regulate foreign military activities in their EEZs;

Whereas the treaty’s provisions relating to navigational rights, including navigational rights in EEZs, reflect the diplomatic position of the United States on the issue dating back to the adoption of the UNCLOS in 1982;

Whereas becoming a party to the treaty would codify the current position of the United States, which recognizes the provisions within the UNCLOS as customary international law;

Whereas becoming a party to the treaty would give the United States standing to participate in discussions relating to the treaty and thereby improve the ability of the United States to intervene as a full party to disputes relating to navigational rights and to defend United States interpretations of the treaty’s provisions, including those relating to whether coastal States have a right under the UNCLOS to regulate foreign military activities in their EEZs;

Whereas becoming a party to the treaty would allow the United States to be a member of the International Seabed Authority and thereby participate directly in setting and voting on the policies organizing and controlling mineral-related activities in the international seabed area as global demand for critical minerals increases;

Whereas more than 97 percent of the global internet traffic relies on infrastructure located on the international seabed compared to space-based infrastructure;

Whereas lack of full-party membership to UNCLOS limits the access and influence of the United States to critical territorial dispute management, including matters involving pursuit and competition of extended outer continental shelf submissions, facilitated primarily by Article 76, which represents the main tool assisting sovereign authority delimitation agreements;

Whereas relying on customary international norms to defend United States interests in those issues is not sufficient, because customary international law is not universally accepted and is subject to change over time based on state practice;

Whereas relying on other countries to assert claims on behalf of the United States at the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague is woefully insufficient to defend and uphold United States sovereign rights and interests;

Whereas the Permanent Court of Arbitration, in the July 12, 2016, ruling on the case *In the Matter of the South China Sea Arbitration*, stated that “the Tribunal communicated to the Parties and the U.S. Embassy that it had decided that ‘only interested States parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea will be admitted as observers’ and thus could not accede to the U.S. request” to “send a representative to observe the hearing”;

Whereas, on November 25, 2018, the Russian Federation violated international norms and binding agreements, including the UNCLOS, in firing upon, ramming, and seizing Ukrainian vessels and crews attempting to pass through the Kerch Strait;

Whereas, on May 25, 2019, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea ruled in a vote of 19–1 that “[t]he Russian Federation shall immediately release the Ukrainian naval vessels *Berdyansk*, *Nikopol* and *Yani Kapu*, and return them to the custody of Ukraine” and that “[t]he Russian Federation

shall immediately release the 24 detained Ukrainian servicemen and allow them to return to Ukraine”, demonstrating the Tribunal’s rejection of the Russian Federation’s arguments in that matter in relation to the Law of the Sea;

Whereas, despite the Tribunal’s ruling aligning with the position of the United States Government on the November 25, 2018, incident, the continued nonparticipation of the United States in the UNCLOS limits the ability of the United States to effectively respond to the Russian Federation’s actions and to any potential future violations by the Russian Federation and any other signatory of UNCLOS;

Whereas the Secretary of Defense, the Honorable Lloyd Austin, stated that “the United States has long treated the UNCLOS’s provisions related to navigation and overflight as reflective of longstanding and customary international law. Our military already acts in a manner consistent with these rights and freedoms, so accession to the Convention will not impact the manner in which we conduct our operations”, in response to a question for the record from Senator Hirono on January 21, 2021;

Whereas the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Lisa Franchetti, stated that “the United States played a major role in drafting the Convention, and it is favorable to U.S. interests on all significant issues as a result. Further, our Navy already acts in a manner consistent with the Convention’s navigational and overflight provisions. Accession would not impose any additional constraints on the Navy’s ability to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows”, in response to advance policy questions on September 14, 2023, before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate;

Whereas Admiral Franchetti further stated that “the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea would give our objections to excessive maritime claims a stronger legal foundation that does not rely exclusively on customary international law. When protesting excessive maritime claims asserted by the People’s Republic of China in the South China Sea, the Russian Federation in the Arctic region, and others, the United States would come from a position of increased authority and influence”, in response to advance policy questions on September 14, 2023, before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate;

Whereas the Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral John C. Aquilino, stated that “there’s really two main reasons [to ratify the UNCLOS]: as the group gets together, it would be certainly beneficial if we had a seat at the table when there were discussions occurring as it applied to potential adjustments and the interpretations of those international laws and the second reason is it puts us in an increased position of credibility . . . we adhere to the UNCLOS treaty in our operations, and it would make our position much stronger if we were signatories”, on March 23, 2021, at his nomination hearing before the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate;

Whereas the Commander, North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, General Gregory M. Guillot, stated, “I support U.S. accession to the Law of the Sea Convention (UNCLOS). UNCLOS provides a comprehensive regime for the governance of the world’s oceans, including the Arctic, and U.S. accession would further demonstrate our commitment to an international rules-based order. Acceding to the treaty would enable U.S. representation during critical international negotiations that impact the maritime domain, provide an additional mechanism to counter countries like Russia and China that continue to