

104TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 202

Concerning the ban on the use of United States passports for travel to
Lebanon.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 22, 1995

Mr. ABRAHAM (for himself, Mr. SIMON, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. KENNEDY)
submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee
on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Concerning the ban on the use of United States passports
for travel to Lebanon.

Whereas, on January 26, 1987, the Department of State issued a prohibition on the use of United States passports for travel to Lebanon, creating a ban on travel to Lebanon by United States citizens;

Whereas the ban on travel to Lebanon was instituted during a time of civil war, anarchy, and general lawlessness in Lebanon, when the safety and well-being of United States citizens were at serious risk, American hostages were being taken, and hundreds of lives were being lost due to acts of terrorism;

Whereas the civil war in Lebanon ended in 1990 and the last United States hostage held in Lebanon was freed on December 4, 1991;

Whereas there has been no incident of violence against any United States citizen in Lebanon since December 4, 1991;

Whereas security in Lebanon has improved demonstrably since the end of the civil war due to, among other efforts, the exchange of security delegations between the United States and Lebanon to monitor ongoing progress on security;

Whereas the United States and Lebanon have made special joint efforts to agree upon and sign international conventions against terrorism which would address crimes committed against United States citizens in Lebanon during the civil war;

Whereas the United States maintains an economic and military assistance program in Lebanon;

Whereas it is estimated that more than 45,000 United States citizens, including Members of Congress, traveled safely to Lebanon in the past 4 years, either in defiance of the ban or under current United States regulations which permit the use of passports by dual Lebanese-United States nationals and in urgent humanitarian cases;

Whereas Americans of Lebanese descent who have families residing in Lebanon and who are not willing to defy the travel ban have been seriously harmed by this ban and are prevented from being reunited with their loved ones in Lebanon;

Whereas the United States has eased certain restrictions on the travel ban to permit airline tickets to be issued di-

rectly from the United States to Beirut for travel by non-United States nationals and United States citizens who have obtained the appropriate waiver from the Department of State;

Whereas it is in the United States' national interest to assist actively the Government of Lebanon to attain the principles of democracy in the region;

Whereas the Lebanese government has initiated a 10-year, \$18,000,000,000 reconstruction effort, and in 1993–1995 awarded more than 500 contracts worth more than \$2,700,000,000 to business firms for development, reconstruction, and consulting projects;

Whereas the ban on the use of United States passports for travel to Lebanon creates a major impediment to United States firms that wish to bid for contracts in Lebanon;

Whereas it is in the United States national interest for United States businesses to participate in the reconstruction of Lebanon, since United States participation will bring economic benefit to the United States;

Whereas it is in the national interest of the United States for there to be an independent, politically and economically self-reliant Lebanon as a stabilizing state in the region;

Whereas in determining whether to restrict the use of United States passports in any country, the Secretary of State should apply consistent criteria; and

Whereas travel advisories, rather than travel bans, are in effect for countries such as Bosnia, Rwanda, Haiti, Colombia, and Peru, in which United States citizens have historically experienced as serious risk to their safety as they do in traveling to Lebanon: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

1 (1) in deciding whether to renew the ban on the
2 use of United States passports for travel to Leb-
3 anon, the Secretary of State should—

4 (A) expand the present humanitarian waiv-
5 er provisions to permit American citizens of
6 Lebanese descent to travel to Lebanon for fam-
7 ily reunification purposes;

8 (B) create a new waiver category to permit
9 exceptions for United States business personnel
10 who wish to travel to Lebanon for business pur-
11 poses; and

12 (C) change the Lebanon travel ban to a
13 travel advisory because American citizens have
14 been safely traveling there since 1991, and it
15 appears as if the risk posed to the safety of
16 American citizens is no greater in Lebanon
17 than it is in other countries that currently
18 maintain travel advisories; and

19 (2) the Secretary of State should identify those
20 conditions within Lebanon that are of risk to United
21 States citizens and provide suggestions for Lebanon
22 to ameliorate those risks.

23 SEC. 2. The Secretary of the Senate shall transmit
24 a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of State.

○