

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 254

To express the sense of the Senate regarding the reopening of Pennsylvania Avenue.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 14, 1996

Mr. GRAMS submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs

RESOLUTION

To express the sense of the Senate regarding the reopening of Pennsylvania Avenue.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

3 The Senate makes the following findings:

4 (1) In 1791, President George Washington
5 commissioned Pierre Charles L'Enfant to draft a
6 blueprint for America's new capital city; they envi-
7 sioned Pennsylvania Avenue as a bold, ceremonial
8 boulevard physically linking the U.S. Capitol build-
9 ing and the White House, and symbolically the Leg-
10 islative and Executive branches of government.

1 (2) An integral element of the District of Co-
2 lumbia, Pennsylvania Avenue stood for 195 years as
3 a vital, working, unbroken roadway, elevating it into
4 a place of national importance as “America’s Main
5 Street”.

6 (3) 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, the White
7 House, has become America’s most recognized ad-
8 dress and a primary destination of visitors to the
9 Nation’s Capital; “the People’s House” is host to
10 5,000 tourists daily, and 15,000,000 annually.

11 (4) As home to the President, and given its
12 prominent location on Pennsylvania Avenue and its
13 proximity to the People, the White House has be-
14 come a powerful symbol of freedom, openness, and
15 an individual’s access to their government.

16 (5) On May 20, 1995, citing possible security
17 risks from vehicles transporting terrorist bombs,
18 President Clinton ordered the Treasury Department
19 and the Secret Service to close Pennsylvania Avenue
20 to vehicular traffic for two blocks in front of the
21 White House.

22 (6) By impeding access and imposing undue
23 hardships upon tourists, residents of the District,
24 commuters, and local business owners and their cus-
25 tomers, the closure of Pennsylvania Avenue, under-

1 taken without the counsel of the government of the
 2 District of Columbia, has replaced the former open-
 3 ness of the area surrounding the White House with
 4 barricades, additional security checkpoints, and an
 5 atmosphere of fear and distrust.

6 (7) In the year following the closure of Penn-
 7 sylvania Avenue, the taxpayers have borne a tremen-
 8 dous burden for additional security measures along
 9 the Avenue near the White House.

10 (8) While the security of the President is of
 11 grave concern and is not to be taken lightly, the
 12 need to assure the President's safety must be bal-
 13 anced with the expectation of freedom inherent in a
 14 democracy; the present situation is tilted far too
 15 heavily toward security at freedom's expense.

16 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF THE SENATE.**

17 It is the sense of the Senate that the President should
 18 order the immediate, permanent reopening to vehicular
 19 traffic of Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White
 20 House, restoring the Avenue to its original state and re-
 21 turning it to the People.

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