

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 34

Calling on the United States and Russia to continue cooperation in securing safe and loving homes for unparented children.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 15, 2013

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself and Mr. FITZPATRICK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Calling on the United States and Russia to continue cooperation in securing safe and loving homes for unparented children.

Whereas in both the United States and Russia, the number of children in need of loving parents far outnumbers the families actively seeking to adopt;

Whereas since 1991 more than 60,000 Russian children have found safe, permanent, and loving homes with United States families;

Whereas in 19 cases, adopted Russian children have died from abuse or neglect in the care of their adoptive United States parents, and others have suffered abuse;

Whereas Russian President Vladimir Putin said on December 20, 2012, regarding United States citizens who have

adopted Russian children, “We know that tragedies happen but the vast majority of people who adopt Russian children take good care of them and are good, decent people”;

Whereas countries making children available for international adoption have the right and responsibility to set procedural safeguards and criteria to ensure the children’s well-being;

Whereas in response to cases of abuse and neglect, the Government of Russia negotiated the July 13, 2011, bilateral adoption agreement to strengthen procedural safeguards in the adoption process between the United States and Russia and to ensure the well-being of children adopted by United States families;

Whereas the bilateral adoption agreement signed on July 13, 2011, by United States Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov entered into force between the United States and Russia on November 1, 2012;

Whereas the Russian Government has expressed concern that the Russian Government’s efforts to check on the welfare of adopted Russian children and to monitor legal proceedings involving abuse against Russian children have not been accommodated consistently;

Whereas, on December 28, 2012, Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin signed into law legislation entitled “On Measures Concerning the Implementation of Government Policy on Orphaned Children and those without Parental Care”, which includes a ban on adoptions of Russian children by United States citizens, and may nega-

tively affect adoptions that are already in process or completed;

Whereas 52, and possibly more, intercountry adoptions of Russian children by United States families are in the final legal stages of adoption in Russia, and hundreds of additional United States families had adoptions pending in Russia as of January 1, 2013;

Whereas adoption, both domestic and international, is an important child protection tool and an integral part of child welfare best practices around the world, along with prevention of abandonment and family reunification; and

Whereas the United Nations, the Hague Conference on Private International Law, and other international organizations have recognized a child's right to a family as a basic human right worthy of protection: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) appeals to the Russian Government to allow
3 the adoptions initiated before January 1, 2013, to
4 proceed to conclusion;

5 (2) invites the Government of Russia to con-
6 tinue participation in the bilateral adoption agree-
7 ment that went into force November 1, 2012;

8 (3) expresses deep sadness over the untimely
9 and tragic deaths in the United States of 19 adopted
10 Russian children and over the other cases of abuse;

1 (4) celebrates the tens of thousands of loving,
2 safe United States families who have opened their
3 homes and hearts to Russian children;

4 (5) affirms the extensive work of the Russian
5 Foreign Ministry and the United States Department
6 of State to create safeguards against future abuse
7 through the bilateral adoption agreement that went
8 into force November 1, 2012; and

9 (6) urges Federal, State, and local governments
10 and adoptive families to accommodate official inquir-
11 ies into the well-being of adopted Russian children
12 and to comply with all adoption requirements delin-
13 eated by the bilateral agreement, including the moni-
14 toring of the child's living conditions and upbringing,
15 the submission of corresponding reports, and
16 registration of the child with the Russian consulate.

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