

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 640

Supporting the goals of International Women’s Day.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 12, 2026

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals of International Women’s Day.

Whereas, as of March 2026, there are approximately 4,129,000,000 women and girls in the world, making up $\frac{1}{2}$ of the world’s population;

Whereas women and girls around the world—

(1) have fundamental human rights;

(2) play a critical role in providing and caring for their families and driving positive change in their communities;

(3) contribute substantially to food security, economic growth, the prevention and resolution of conflict, and the sustainability of peace and stability;

(4) are affected in different and often disproportionate ways by global, country, and community circumstances, including economic downturns, global health concerns, conflict, and migration; and

(5) must have meaningful protections and opportunities to more fully participate in and lead the political, social, and economic lives of their communities and countries;

Whereas the advancement and empowerment of women and girls around the world is a foreign policy priority for the United States and is critical to the achievement of global peace, prosperity, and sustainability;

Whereas, on October 6, 2017, the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 (Public Law 115–68; 131 Stat. 1202) was enacted into law, which includes requirements for a government-wide “Women, Peace, and Security Strategy” to promote and strengthen the participation of women in peace negotiations and conflict prevention overseas, enhanced training for relevant United States Government personnel, and follow-up evaluations of the effectiveness of the strategy;

Whereas the United States Strategy and National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, dated October 2023, recognizes that—

(1) the “implementation of the [Women, Peace, and Security] agenda is both a moral and a strategic imperative for U.S. foreign policy and national security”, reiterating that “the status of women and the stability of nations are inextricably linked”;

(2) the challenges posed to the United States and the global community cannot be solved without addressing the inequities faced by $\frac{1}{2}$ of the world’s population; and

(3) the United States must “eliminate barriers to women’s meaningful participation . . . in peace and security decision-making processes” in order to “achieve and

safeguard our national security priorities” and achieve “sustainable peace, international security, and economic stability”;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (commonly referred to as “UN Women”), peace negotiations are more likely to end in a peace agreement when women and women’s groups play a meaningful role in the negotiation process;

Whereas, according to a study by the International Peace Institute, a peace agreement is 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years if women participate in the development of the peace agreement;

Whereas, every year, approximately 12,000,000 girls are married before they reach the age of 18, which means that, on average—

- (1) nearly 33,000 girls are married every day; or
- (2) nearly 28 girls are married every minute;

Whereas, despite global progress, it is predicted that by 2030 more than 100,000,000 girls will marry before reaching the age of 18, and approximately 2,400,000 girls who are married before reaching the age of 18 are under the age of 15;

Whereas girls living in countries affected by conflict or other humanitarian crises are often the most vulnerable to child marriage, and 9 of the 10 countries with the highest rates of child marriage are experiencing humanitarian crises;

Whereas, on August 15, 2021, the Taliban entered Kabul, Afghanistan, and toppled the elected government of the

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, resulting in de facto Taliban rule over the people of Afghanistan;

Whereas the Taliban continues to restrict the ability of women and girls to exist in Afghan society, including by—

(1) prohibiting girls from going to school past sixth grade, including banning women from attending university;

(2) severely limiting the employment that women can pursue outside of their households;

(3) mandating that women cover their heads and faces in public and punishing those who wear brightly colored clothing;

(4) restricting the independent movement of women and girls and closing public spaces for women, including parks, salons, and gyms;

(5) closing domestic abuse shelters, sometimes forcing residents to return to their abusive families;

(6) preventing women aid workers from operating in Afghanistan, thus restricting operations in support of humanitarian assistance for all Afghans;

(7) jailing women human rights defenders; and

(8) limiting access to women’s healthcare, including preventative and emergency services, and requiring a male chaperone at most clinics and hospitals;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund (commonly referred to as “UNICEF”)—

(1) globally, 1 in 5 girls between the ages of 15 and 19 have been victims of some form of physical violence;

(2) approximately 370,000,000 girls and young women worldwide, about 1 in 8, have experienced forced sexual acts before the age of 18; and

(3) an estimated 1 in 3 women around the world have experienced some form of physical or sexual violence;

Whereas the overall level of violence against women is a better predictor of the peacefulness of a country, the compliance of a country with international treaty obligations, and the relations of a country with neighboring countries than indicators measuring the level of democracy, level of wealth, or level of institutionalization of the country;

Whereas women around the world remain vastly underrepresented in government positions, as women account for only 26.9 percent of national parliamentarians and 23.3 percent of government ministers;

Whereas the ability of women and girls to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country to achieve strong and lasting economic growth, self-reliance, and political and social stability;

Whereas, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization—

(1) approximately 122,000,000 girls between the ages of 6 and 17 remain out of school;

(2) girls living in countries affected by conflict are 2.5 times more likely to be out of primary school than boys;

(3) girls are twice as likely as boys to never set foot in a classroom; and

(4) up to 30 percent of girls who drop out of school do so because of adolescent pregnancy or child marriage;

Whereas women around the world face a variety of constraints that severely limit their economic participation

and productivity and remain underrepresented in the labor force;

Whereas, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations—

(1) agriculture and food systems are a major source of livelihoods, particularly for rural women;

(2) wage and productivity gaps persist in agriculture and food systems, despite the crucial role that women play in those sectors;

(3) the work of women in agriculture and food systems is more likely than that of men to be part-time, irregular, informal, vulnerable, labor-intensive, and low-skilled;

(4) in countries reporting on Sustainable Development Goal 5.a.1, more men than women are owners of or have rights to agricultural land; and

(5) the empowerment of women can have important benefits for agricultural productivity, nutrition, and food security;

Whereas the economic empowerment of women is inextricably linked to a myriad of other internationally recognized human rights that are essential to the ability of women to thrive as economic actors, including—

(1) living lives free of violence and exploitation;

(2) achieving the highest possible standard of health and well-being;

(3) enjoying full legal and human rights, such as access to registration, identification, and citizenship documents, and freedom of movement;

(4) access to formal and informal education;

(5) access to, and equal protection under, land and property rights;

- (6) access to fundamental labor rights;
- (7) the implementation of policies to address disproportionate care burdens; and
- (8) receiving business and management skills and leadership opportunities;

Whereas, according to the World Health Organization, global maternal mortality decreased by approximately 34 percent from 2000 to 2020, yet approximately 800 women and girls continue to die from preventable causes relating to pregnancy or childbirth each day, and 95 percent of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries, putting the global community off-track to meeting Sustainable Development Goal 3.1 for reducing maternal deaths;

Whereas the Russian invasion of Ukraine that began on February 24, 2022, has resulted in a disproportionate number of women and children seeking safety outside of Ukraine;

Whereas those women and girls, like women and girls in all humanitarian emergencies, including those subject to forced displacement, face increased and exacerbated vulnerabilities to—

- (1) gender-based violence, including rape, child marriage, domestic violence, human trafficking, and sexual exploitation and assault;
- (2) disruptions in education and livelihood;
- (3) lack of access to health services; and
- (4) food insecurity and malnutrition;

Whereas malnutrition poses a variety of threats to women and girls specifically, as malnutrition can weaken their immune systems, making them more susceptible to infections, and affects their capacity to survive childbirth, and children born of malnourished women and girls are more

likely to have cognitive impairments and higher risk of disease throughout their lives;

Whereas it is imperative—

(1) to alleviate violence and discrimination against women and girls; and

(2) to afford women and girls every opportunity to be equal members of their communities; and

Whereas March 8, 2026, is recognized as International Women’s Day, a global day—

(1) to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women in the past, present, and future; and

(2) to recognize the obstacles that women face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) strongly supports the goals of International
3 Women’s Day;

4 (2) recognizes that the fundamental human
5 rights of women and girls have intrinsic value that
6 affect the quality of life of women and girls;

7 (3) recognizes that the full empowerment of
8 women and girls is inextricably linked to the poten-
9 tial of a country to generate—

10 (A) economic growth and self-reliance;

11 (B) sustainable peace, democracy, and
12 good governance; and

13 (C) inclusive security;

1 (4) recognizes and honors individuals in the
2 United States and around the world, including
3 women human rights defenders, activists, and civil
4 society leaders, who have worked throughout history
5 to ensure that women and girls are guaranteed
6 equality and fundamental human rights;

7 (5) applauds the women around the world who
8 stand against oppression in any form and fight for
9 a better future, especially in Ukraine, Iran, and Af-
10 ghanistan;

11 (6) recognizes the unique cultural, historical,
12 and religious differences throughout the world and
13 urges the United States Government to act with re-
14 spect and understanding toward legitimate dif-
15 ferences when promoting any policies;

16 (7) reaffirms the commitment—

17 (A) to end discrimination and violence
18 against women and girls;

19 (B) to ensure the safety, health, education,
20 and welfare of women and girls;

21 (C) to pursue policies that guarantee the
22 fundamental human rights of women and girls
23 worldwide; and

24 (D) to promote meaningful and significant
25 participation of women in every aspect of soci-

1 ety and community, including conflict preven-
2 tion, protection, peacemaking, and
3 peacebuilding;

4 (8) supports sustainable, measurable, and glob-
5 al development that seeks to achieve gender equality
6 and the empowerment of women and girls; and

7 (9) encourages the people of the United States
8 to observe International Women’s Day with appro-
9 priate programs and activities.

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