

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION**S. RES.** _____

Acknowledging that it is in the national interest of the United States to support democratic actors in the Russian Federation, commending the work of Russian civil society and independent media to expose and respond to the crimes of the government of Vladimir Putin and pursue accountability for such crimes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. COLLINS, *Mr. Kaine, Ms. Murkowski*) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Acknowledging that it is in the national interest of the United States to support democratic actors in the Russian Federation, commending the work of Russian civil society and independent media to expose and respond to the crimes of the government of Vladimir Putin and pursue accountability for such crimes.

Whereas the United States has sought to support democracy in the Russian Federation and with Russian individuals since 1991 to support democracy, economic growth, health, women, and youth;

Whereas numerous nongovernmental organizations in the United States, including the National Endowment for

Democracy, American Councils, and the Institute of International Education, have worked to support Russian individuals and build ties between the people of the United States and the people of the Russian Federation;

Whereas in May 2015, the Russian Federation enacted a law that permits Russian authorities to extrajudicially shut down foreign and international organizations operating in Russia to strengthen ties between people in the United States and people in Russia, including the National Endowment for Democracy, American Councils, and the Institute of International Education, by declaring such organizations to be “undesirable”;

Whereas the Russian Federation launched an illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine in 2014, and a brutal, full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which caused the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to suspend cooperation with the Russian Federation;

Whereas Russian opposition leader, pro-democracy activist, and anti-corruption campaigner Alexei Navalny was killed in a Russian prison on February 16, 2024, one day after he appeared in court in a healthy condition, which followed a pattern of other high-profile murders of pro-democracy Russians, including journalist Anna Politkovskaya in 2006 and opposition leader Boris Nemtsov in 2015;

Whereas, according to the Memorial Human Rights Center, more than 1,700 political prisoners remain in Russian jails as of September 2026, including—

- (1) Moscow municipal deputy Aleksei Gorinov;
- (2) pensioner Igor Baryshnikov;
- (3) the mother of a human rights lawyer, Zarema Musaeva; and

(4) journalist Maria Ponomarenko;

Whereas the Russian Federation persecutes Jehovah's Witnesses, Baptists, Seventh Day Adventists, and members of other minority religious groups within Russia and in the occupied territories of Ukraine, including, according to Memorial Human Rights Center, by jailing nearly 500 people in response to their exercise of the right of freedom of religion or their religious affiliations;

Whereas more than 20,000 Russians were detained by Russian authorities between February 2022 and February 2025 for their opposition to the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine;

Whereas, in the summer of 2026, Apple and Google removed the Russian state-backed apps that the European Union determined had been operating as tools of the Russian Federation's Federal Security Service, including for the purpose of surveilling Russian citizens;

Whereas Russian authorities have endeavored to cut off the Russian people's access to independent information, including by—

(1) blocking United States-based platforms Facebook, Instagram, X, WhatsApp, Signal, Discord, Snapchat, FaceTime, and LinkedIn;

(2) throttling other internet platforms, including YouTube; and

(3) pressuring companies to block hundreds of virtual private networks (VPNs);

Whereas pro-democracy Russian groups have helped Ukrainian citizens find their family members who had been unjustly detained and had disappeared inside the Russian

Federation by facilitating communication, assistance, moral support, and legal services;

Whereas Russian independent media has—

- (1) exposed sanctions violations;
- (2) ensured that the Russian people understand the grim fate awaiting soldiers on the frontlines in Ukraine;
- (3) collected evidence of Russian war crimes; and
- (4) reminded Russian citizens opposed to the war that they are not alone;

Whereas Russian civil society has—

- (1) helped anti-war Russians avoid being drafted into the Russian military against their will; and
- (2) evacuated forcibly displaced Ukrainians from the territory of the Russian Federation;

Whereas nearly 1,000,000 Russians have left their home country since February 2022, and at least 650,000 Russians remain outside of Russia, largely due to fear from government reprisal in response to their anti-war and pro-democracy views; and

Whereas the Russian Federation has wrongfully detained numerous United States citizens in recent years, including Paul Whelan, Trevor Reed, Brittney Griner, Evan Gershkovich, Alsu Kurmasheva, Marc Fogel, Ksenia Karelina, Robert Gilman, and Stephen Hubbard while seeking to leverage the releases of these Americans to free convicted arms traffickers, drug traffickers, murderers, and cyber hackers: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

- 2 (1) condemns the efforts of the Government of
- 3 the Russian Federation—

1 (A) to isolate its citizens from the rest of
2 the world;

3 (B) to commit horrific war crimes in
4 Ukraine; and

5 (C) to violently crack down on those voic-
6 ing their dissent of such policies;

7 (2) calls on the Department of State, working
8 through the Democracy Fund, to renew and bolster
9 efforts, including consultations with the National
10 Endowment for Democracy, to engage with and sup-
11 port pro-democracy Russian individuals and organi-
12 zations, many of which—

13 (A) are opposed to the Russian Federa-
14 tion's unjust war against Ukraine; and

15 (B) believe in a democratic future for their
16 country;

17 (3) recognizes the strategic imperative and na-
18 tional interest of the United States to support demo-
19 cratic actors in the Russian Federation who are ex-
20 posing and pursuing accountability for the crimes of
21 Vladimir Putin's government;

22 (4) stands with the Russian people who have
23 demonstrated their opposition to the war of aggres-
24 sion against Ukraine; and

- 1 (5) commits to engagement with Russians living
- 2 in exile who are working to support democracy in
- 3 their country and opposing the war against Ukraine.