

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Reaffirming the United States-Liberia partnership, and calling for free, fair,
and peaceful elections in Liberia in October 2017.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Reaffirming the United States-Liberia partnership, and call-
ing for free, fair, and peaceful elections in Liberia in
October 2017.

Whereas the United States and Liberia share broad and deep
bilateral ties over the course of a nearly 200-year rela-
tionship;

Whereas the United States established diplomatic relations
with Liberia in 1864;

Whereas it is estimated that hundreds of thousands of Libe-
rians died in the country's two interconnected civil wars
from 1989 to 2003 and many more fled as refugees;

Whereas today the United States is home to an estimated
80,000 people of Liberian ancestry in vibrant commu-

nities across the country, many of whom sought refuge from the violence during the civil wars;

Whereas the people and Government of the United States have a deep and abiding interest in Liberia's democratic stability and post-conflict development;

Whereas United States assistance to Liberia since the end of its second civil war in 2003 has supported post-conflict recovery and a subsequent sustained transition toward broad-based economic growth, improved access to high-quality education, health system strengthening, enhanced socioeconomic welfare for the people of Liberia, the professionalization of the country's military and civilian security forces, efforts to foster the capacities, accountability, and transparency of government institutions, and the consolidation of participatory democracy;

Whereas in 2005, and again in 2011, the citizens of Liberia elected Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as their President, making her the first woman to be elected president of an African nation;

Whereas President Sirleaf was awarded the United States Presidential Medal of Freedom on November 5, 2007, for defending and advancing the democratic rights of her fellow citizens, in the face of house arrest, foreign exile, death threats, and imprisonment, and the Noble Peace Prize on October 7, 2011, for contributing to the non-violent struggle for the security and rights of women;

Whereas the Government of Liberia has contributed to efforts to foster peace, stability, democratization, as well as regional economic growth, development, and integration in West Africa, as demonstrated by President Sirleaf's role in mediating a peaceful transfer of power in the Gambia

in January 2017 and her broader leadership as 2016–2017 Chairperson of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States;

Whereas Liberia will hold presidential and legislative elections on October 10, 2017;

Whereas successful 2017 elections are expected to lead to Liberia’s first democratic transfer of power since 1944; and

Whereas public confidence in the electoral process is vital to advancing democracy in Liberia and for ensuring the success of the elections: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) upholds its commitment to maintain and
3 foster the enduring relationship between the people
4 and the Governments of the United States and Libe-
5 ria;

6 (2) commends President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
7 for efforts to consolidate post-conflict peacebuilding
8 and democratic gains, promote social and economic
9 development, and foster ties with the international
10 community, and for her work to advance inter-
11 national gender equality;

12 (3) urges the Government and people of Liberia
13 and all of the country’s political parties to—

14 (A) hold free, fair, credible, and peaceful
15 elections in October 2017 and in the future;

1 (B) adhere to the objectives set out in the
2 Ganta and Farmington River Declarations and
3 promote and ensure peaceful conduct among
4 candidates, their supporters, and Liberian citi-
5 zens generally;

6 (C) ensure that there is robust civic edu-
7 cation and electoral campaign outreach to often
8 politically marginalized groups, including
9 women, urban youth, and rural communities;
10 and

11 (D) raise awareness of and express zero
12 tolerance for violence against women, gender
13 discrimination, or social bias of any nature in
14 the electoral process;

15 (4) supports efforts by the Department of State
16 and the United States Agency for International De-
17 velopment to assist in election preparations;

18 (5) calls on Liberian citizens to fully participate
19 in the general elections and to pursue legal avenues
20 to resolve any disputes over the results;

21 (6) encourages Liberian civil society organiza-
22 tions to intensify civic and voter education, particu-
23 larly among women, youth, and rural communities,
24 and in local languages;

1 (7) condemns any external interference in the
2 election, including any communication or action by
3 convicted war criminal and former armed faction
4 leader Charles Taylor to influence the elections from
5 prison;

6 (8) encourages President Donald Trump to ap-
7 point an Assistant Secretary of State for African Af-
8 fairs to bolster diplomatic engagement with the Gov-
9 ernment of Liberia, electoral stakeholders, and civil
10 society and robustly engage with other sub-Saharan
11 African countries and governments;

12 (9) calls upon the United States Government
13 and international partners, especially election-fo-
14 cused nongovernmental organizations, to continue to
15 support successful elections and Liberia's anticipated
16 historic democratic post-electoral transition of execu-
17 tive power; and

18 (10) welcomes the visit of President Ellen
19 Johnson Sirleaf to the United States Congress for
20 her final address as President of Liberia.