

Senate Resolution No. 18

Introduced by Senators Leno, Block, Corbett, Correa, De León, Evans, Galgiani, Hancock, Hill, Jackson, Lara, Lieu, Liu, Roth, Steinberg, Wolk, and Yee

Relative to the government of Russia

WHEREAS, The government of Russia has recently undertaken an aggressive course of action on both the local and national level to pass laws targeting the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community; and

WHEREAS, The government of Russia has enacted a law banning the adoption of Russian-born children by LGBT couples and also by any couple or single parent living in a country where marriage equality exists in any form; and

WHEREAS, The government of Russia has enacted a law banning “propaganda of nontraditional sexual relations” that penalizes LGBT-affirming and positive messages or actions, including, but not limited to, messages on the Internet, and violates the fundamental human rights of freedom of speech, assembly, expression, and equality, all under the guise of protecting children; and

WHEREAS, Russia is the host of the XXII Olympic Winter Games; and

WHEREAS, The government of Russia has enacted a vaguely worded law allowing police officers to arrest tourists and foreign nationals who violate the new “gay propaganda” law and detain them for up to 15 days and expel them from Russia; and

WHEREAS, Representatives of the Russian government have indicated they intend to enforce the new law against visitors and athletes during the XXII Olympic Winter Games; and

WHEREAS, Representatives of the International Olympic Committee, rather than condemning the new laws, have indicated their view that statements in support of LGBT people and LGBT rights would violate Rule 50 of the Olympic Charter, which prohibits demonstrations or political, religious, or racial propaganda; and

WHEREAS, Other international events are scheduled to occur in Russia this year, including the Miss Universe Pageant in Moscow on November 9, 2013, which is seen by billions of people across the globe; and

WHEREAS, These laws have already resulted in a significant increase in homophobia and targeted violence against LGBT people and caused millions of Russians to live in fear that their government will target them or remove their children from their homes simply because of who they are; and

WHEREAS, History repeatedly instructs us that despotic rulers who scapegoat classes of their own citizens and then legislate their status as outlaws often move on to initiate genocide against those same people, especially if the rest of the world remains silent; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama has publicly stated that he is offended by the anti-LGBT laws; and

WHEREAS, Hillary Clinton, as the 67th United States Secretary of State, stated in a December 2011 Human Rights Day address to the United Nations, “Gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights”; and

WHEREAS, Equity shareholders in publicly traded companies can be instrumental in encouraging responsible corporate citizenship, and the California Public Employees’ Retirement System and the California State Teachers’ Retirement System have joined 1,200 other institutional investors from 50 countries who manage more than \$34 trillion in assets to develop and become a signatory to the Principles for Responsible Investment; and

WHEREAS, Californians expect companies with equity securities held in a public employee retirement fund’s portfolio to be conducted with integrity and a view toward supporting and protecting internationally proclaimed human rights; and

WHEREAS, California’s history of leadership in socially responsible public investing serves as a model followed by other governments and includes divesting in shares of tobacco and gun companies and banning investments in countries that violate ethical, labor, and human rights standards, such as South Africa, Iran, and Sudan; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, That the Senate condemns the Russian government’s attacks on the LGBT community and laws targeting LGBT people and their supporters, including tourists, athletes, and other participants in the XXII Olympic Winter Games; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate deplores and condemns all laws and acts of violence, in both word and in action, that use the government as an instrument of discrimination, persecution, and legislation against the LGBT community and its supporters; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate calls upon the President, the United States Congress, and the United States Department of State to increase efforts to encourage the decriminalization of homosexuality in every country and to use all means possible to increase the number of countries supporting decriminalization, including, but not limited to, the United Nations, trade and diplomatic relationships, and the implementation of international treaties and declarations on human rights; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate urges the International Olympic Committee to withdraw their statements expressing that support for LGBT people and their rights is a violation of Rule 50 and to seek written agreement from the Russian government that the new “gay propaganda” law will not affect those attending, participating, or competing in the XXII Olympic Winter Games; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate urges NBCUniversal, as broadcaster of the XXII Olympic Winter Games in the United States, to increase awareness of Russia’s homophobic laws and the threat they pose to participating athletes and visitors by discussing them on air at every opportunity, including during the opening and closing ceremonies when millions of Americans will be watching; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate urges other organizations holding large internationally televised events in Russia, including the Miss Universe Organization and its owner Donald Trump, to move their events to countries without such virulently antigay laws; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate strongly encourages the California Public Employees’ Retirement System and the California State Teachers’ Retirement System, whenever feasible and consistent with their fiduciary responsibilities, to cease making direct investments in Russia and to encourage companies in which employee retirement funds are invested and that are doing business in Russia not to take actions that promote or otherwise enable human rights violations in Russia; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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Senate Resolution No. 18 read and adopted by the Senate September 10, 2013.

Attest: _____
Secretary of the Senate