

112TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION  
**S. RES.**

**Honoring and supporting women in North Africa and the Middle East whose bravery, compassion, and commitment to putting the wellbeing of others before their own have proven that courage can be contagious.**

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. HAGAN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND)

submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on RESOLUTION

Honoring and supporting women in North Africa and the Middle East whose bravery, compassion, and commitment to putting the wellbeing of others before their own have proven that courage can be contagious.

Whereas, in the course of peaceful protests in countries throughout North Africa and the Middle East, women have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with men to advance their rights;

Whereas Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has said, “The rights of women and girls is the unfinished business of the 21st Century.”

Whereas, in late December 2010 and January 2011, Tunisia underwent a political upheaval, dubbed the “Jasmine Revolution,” resulting in the fleeing of President of Tunisia Zine El Abidine Ben Ali from the country on January 14, 2011;

Whereas one of the first voices of the “Jasmine Revolution” was the sister of Mohammad Bouazizi, the young man whose death led to many of the peaceful protests in Tunisia;

Whereas, on January 25, 2011, demonstrations began across Egypt with thousands of protesters peacefully calling for a new government, free and fair elections, significant constitutional and political reforms, greater economic opportunity, and an end to government corruption;

Whereas women in Egypt have utilized social media to galvanize support among men and women for peaceful protest;

Whereas huge crowds came out to protest peacefully in Egypt, and women were among those that faced tear gas and who pitched their tents and slept in the cold in Tahrir Square;

Whereas hundreds of women took part in a rally in Cairo on March 8, 2011, the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day, to remind women in Egypt that they must have a voice in their nation's future;

Whereas, on February 25, 2011, the United Nations Security Council and the international community condemned the violence and use of force against civilians in Libya;

Whereas, according to press reports, women in Libya have been working behind the scenes making a profound difference to promote reform and keep the momentum of the uprising alive, listening to worried fathers whose sons are fighting on the frontlines, keeping up with the day-to-day clashes and casualty numbers, and holding meetings about health and education issues, as well as participating in the demonstrations themselves;

Whereas, according to press reports, women are among the leaders of demonstrations calling for reform in Yemen;

Whereas women's groups in countries such as Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran have attempted to harness critical support regarding legislation affecting their rights;

Whereas women around the world continue to face significant obstacles in all aspects of their lives, including denial of basic human rights, discrimination, and gender-based violence;

Whereas women, young and old, have marched in the streets of countries from Tunisia to Iran demanding freedom from oppression; and

Whereas women across North Africa and the Middle East aspire for freedom, democracy, and rule of law:

Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

- (1) honors the women in North Africa and the 3 Middle East who have worked to ensure that women are guaranteed equality and basic human rights;
- (2) recognizes that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of nations to generate economic growth and sustainable democracy;
- (3) acknowledges that women in North Africa and the Middle East are demanding to be included in making choices that will affect their own lives and their families;
- (4) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to the universal rights of freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and freedom of association, including via the Internet, and supports the calls for representative and responsive democratic governments that respect these rights;

- (5) celebrates this year's centennial anniversary of International Women's Day, a global day to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future, and a day to recognize the obstacles that women still face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities;
- (6) condemns any efforts to provoke or instigate violence against women, and calls upon all parties to refrain from all violent and criminal acts; and
- (7) underscores the vital importance of women's rights and political participation as leaders in North Africa and the Middle East consider constitutional reforms and shape new governments.