

Panama Canal Act, which incorporated the treaty into United States law, included a sense of the Congress resolution that the "best interests of the United States require that the President enter into negotiations with the Republic of Panama for the purpose of arranging for the stationing of United States military forces after the termination of the Panama Canal Treaty of 1977."

Panama agreed to these terms in 1979. Since this time, both sides have been working on an agreement to define our future presence, but progress on this effort stalled in early 1998.

The current administration's policy in the region is a legacy of missed opportunities, including their failure to negotiate a continued United States presence in Panama. There exists a dire need for a stabilizing presence which the United States has brought to the region since World War II. Although the traditional threat of a foreign naval attack on the Canal has virtually disappeared, the United States still needs to be able to project military power in the region. The unprecedented upsurge in political instability and state-sponsored terrorism that the United States now faces makes it necessary to provide rapid troop and logistical transit through the Canal. The need to conduct surveillance or to pursue actual and potential adversaries also requires immediate access to the Canal. Such possibilities make it essential that the United States retain a measure of conventional military presence in the region.

There are many other reasons for the United States to retain a presence in Panama: First, the United States conducts a number of humanitarian and civil-military programs throughout the region. These missions have been greatly benefitted in the past with lower transportation costs and greater efficiency afforded by centralized logistics within the region. Second, as we all know, Panama is located in the center of a major drug transit corridor. Anti-drug operations will continue to be a critical feature of United States policy in the region. Third, with the issue of military readiness, the Jungle Operations Training Center at Fort Sherman provided unequaled facilities for training in low-intensity warfare. Former Assistant Secretary of Defense Frederick C. Smith stated that this and other sites "will be difficult to replicate elsewhere." Last, 65 to 80 percent of the Panamanian people favor United States involvement in the region.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we need to send a decisive message to the current administration to renew negotiations for security arrangements and a continued United States presence in the region. And the United States Government should make it clear to the world that the Panama Canal will remain free, open, and neutral, and any

indications to the contrary will be considered as an act of war against the people of the United States.●

SENATE RESOLUTION 258—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING MARCH 12, 2000 AS "NATIONAL SAFE PLACE WEEK"

Mr. CRAIG (for himself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. CLELAND, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. DODD, Mr. DOMENICI, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GORTON, Mr. GRAMS, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INUYE, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KERRY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LOTT, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SMITH, of Oregon, and Mr. SPECTER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 258

Whereas today's youth are vital to the preservation of our country and will be the future bearers of the bright torch of democracy;

Whereas youth need a safe haven from various negative influences such as child abuse, substance abuse and crime, and they need to have resources readily available to assist them when faced with circumstances that compromise their safety;

Whereas the United States needs increased numbers of community volunteers acting as positive influences on the Nation's youth;

Whereas the Safe Place program is committed to protecting our Nation's most valuable asset, our youth, by offering short term "safe places" at neighborhood locations where trained volunteers are available to counsel and advise youth seeking assistance and guidance;

Whereas Safe Place combines the efforts of the private sector and non-profit organizations uniting to reach youth in the early stages of crisis;

Whereas Safe Place provides a direct means to assist programs in meeting performance standards relative to outreach/community relations, as set forth in the Federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Act guidelines;

Whereas the Safe Place placard displayed at businesses within communities stands as a beacon of safety and refuge to at-risk youth;

Whereas over 300 communities in 33 states and more than 6,800 business locations have established Safe Place programs;

Whereas over 35,000 young people have gone to Safe Place locations to get help when faced with crisis situations;

Whereas through the efforts of Safe Place coordinators across the country each year more than one-half million students learn that Safe Place is a resource if abusive or neglectful situations exist;

Whereas increased awareness of the program's existence will encourage communities to establish Safe Places for the Nation's youth throughout the country: Now, therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) proclaims the week of March 12 through March 18, 2000 as "National Safe Place Week" and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States and interested groups to promote awareness of and volunteer involvement in the Safe Place programs, and to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I rise today to invite my colleagues to join me in sponsoring a resolution designating the week beginning March 12, 2000 as "National Safe Place Week." This resolution supports the successful Project Safe Place program and encourages its growth. This resolution promotes a program that improves the quality of life for young people across the nation without depleting social service funds or instituting new government programs whose success is unsure. Project Safe Place makes use of programs already in place, seeks to bring families together by helping them resolve their conflicts, and does not reach into the taxpayer's pocket.

The National Network for Youth estimates that more than two million young people run away from home each year. Increasing numbers of teens and even children are also being turned away from their homes by disinterested or frustrated parents. On the street, these youth are likely to resort to using drugs, prostitution and other criminal behavior to survive. They are more vulnerable to physical or sexual violence, and they are more likely to commit suicide. Without help, their future is bleak and frightening.

Project Safe Place is designated to assist young people and families who face difficult situations. The problems vary from one individual to the other. Some young people ask Safe Place for assistance because they frequently find themselves in hour-long screaming matches with their parents. Others go because they are beaten and mentally abused at home. Sometimes they have a parent who is addicted to drugs or alcohol. All the young people who find Safe Places have in common an overwhelming need to improve their home life.

The program works by creating a network of businesses and public locations that display the bright yellow, diamond-shaped Safe Place logo in their windows or on other highly visible places on the front of their buildings. Businesses and locations such as convenience stores, fire stations, libraries, and fast food restaurants are effective Safe Places because they are found throughout the community and they tend to be easily accessible. Also, young people are more likely to ask for help in familiar, non-threatening places. In most cases, it is easier for a young person to find a convenience store and walk into it than it is for him or her to track down a social services agency, travel to it and then brave the intimidation of walking through its doors.

The employees at Safe Places are trained to act as a link to help. At the Safe Place they make sure youth who ask for help are taken into the back of the store or restaurant, away from people who may know them and question them later. The employee immediately

notifies a shelter. The shelter sends a volunteer counselor to talk to the youth, offer advice and evaluate the problem. The volunteer, who is the same gender as the young person, will transport the youth to the shelter if more counseling is necessary or if the young person would like a safe place to stay. If the youth decides to stay at the shelter, parents will be notified that the young person is all right.

Project Safe Place is a national program that operates locally. It is a unique collaborative effort between youth service agencies, a network of volunteers and local businesses to make help available to youth quickly and in their own neighborhood. Safe Place aims to return young people to a healthy emotional environment. That could mean seeing that the family receives counseling or that could mean finding a place outside the house for the youth to live.

In addition to enhancing outreach programs to area youth, the distinct Safe Place signs increase awareness of the plight of troubled youths. They remind adults of problems in the community and often inspire people to volunteer. They demonstrate to businesses that the private sector can play a positive role and usually lead to more Safe Place sites.

Since its beginning in Louisville, Kentucky in 1983, acknowledgment of Project Safe Place has been crucial to letting young people know that the service is available to them and inspiring others to create more Safe Places. In March 1998, many Senators helped pass Senate Resolution 96, making the third week to March 1998 "National Safe Place Week." Since then, sites grew from 6,000 to 8,000. Today, more than 30,000 young people and their families have been helped. Even if your state is not one of the 34 that has at least one Safe Place, the program has probably still affected your state. It is likely that a runaway from your state has been returned to his or her family through this program. Counseling initiated by the program may have involved a parent who lives in your state.

My goal is to have at least one Safe Place in every state by the end of the decade. I urge all my colleagues to champion this plan and to begin by co-sponsoring this resolution making the second week of March "National Safe Place Week." The designation of time is a crucial step in promoting awareness of this effective program. Your support will help continue the valuable partnership between government and the private sector as we move toward a society with happier and safe young people.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of

the Senate and the public that an oversight hearing has been scheduled before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Historic Preservation, and Recreation of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The purpose of this hearing is to review the President's proposed Fiscal Year 2001 Budget for the operation of the National Park Service system.

The hearing will take place on Tuesday, February 29, 2000 at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send two copies of their testimony to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, SD-364 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510-6150.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, be allowed to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 10, 2000. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss the findings of the President's working group's report on "Over the Counter Derivatives Markets and the Commodity Exchange Act."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 10, 2000 at 9:30 a.m., in open session, to receive testimony on the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2001 and the future years defense plan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be granted permission to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 10, for purposes of conducting a Full Committee business meeting which is scheduled to begin at 9:00 a.m. The purpose of this business meeting is to consider pending calendar business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 10 at 10:00 a.m. to receive testimony on S. 1797, a bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, to provide for a land conveyance to the city of Craig, Alaska and for other purposes; S. 1925, the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act; S. 1664, a bill to clarify the legal effect on the United States of the acquisition of a parcel of land in the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve in the State of Utah; S. 1665, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to release reversionary interests held by the United States in certain parcels of land in Washington County, Utah, to facilitate an anticipated land exchange; H.R. 2863, a bill to clarify the legal effect on the United States of the acquisition of a parcel of land in the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve in the State of Utah; H.R. 2862, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to release reversionary interests held by the United States in certain parcels of land in Washington County, Utah, to facilitate an anticipated land exchange; and S. 1936, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to sell or exchange all or part of certain administrative sites and other National Forest System land in the State of Oregon and use the proceeds derived from the sale or exchange for National Forest System purposes.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 10, 2000, at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. to hold two hearings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 10, 2000 at 10:00 a.m., for a hearing regarding the Rising Cost of College Tuition and the Effectiveness of Government Financial Aid.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a markup on Thursday, February 10, 2000, at 10:00 a.m., in SD226.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. COVERDELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 10, 2000 at 2:00 p.m. to hold a closed hearing on intelligence matters.