

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

## SENATE RESOLUTION 43—DESIGNATING THE FIRST DAY OF APRIL 2005 AS “NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS DAY”

Mr. REID submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 43

Whereas deadly asbestos fibers are invisible and cannot be smelled or tasted;

Whereas when airborne fibers are inhaled or swallowed, the damage is permanent and irreversible;

Whereas these fibers can cause mesothelioma, asbestosis, lung cancer, and pleural diseases;

Whereas asbestos-related diseases can take 10 to 50 years to present themselves;

Whereas the expected survival rate of those diagnosed with mesothelioma is between 6 and 24 months;

Whereas little is known about late stage treatment and there is no cure for asbestos-related diseases;

Whereas early detection of asbestos-related diseases would give patients increased treatment options and often improve their prognosis;

Whereas asbestos is a toxic and dangerous substance and must be disposed of properly;

Whereas nearly half of the more than 1,000 screened firefighters, police officers, rescue workers, and volunteers who responded to the World Trade Center attacks on September 11, 2001, have new and persistent respiratory problems;

Whereas the industry groups with the highest incidence rates of asbestos-related diseases, based on 2000 to 2002 figures, were shipyard workers, vehicle body builders (including rail vehicles), pipefitters, carpenters and electricians, construction (including insulation work and stripping), extraction, energy and water supply, and manufacturing;

Whereas the United States imports more than 30,000,000 pounds of asbestos used in products throughout the Nation;

Whereas asbestos-related diseases kill 10,000 people in the United States each year, and the numbers are increasing;

Whereas asbestos exposure is responsible for 1 in every 125 deaths of men over the age of 50;

Whereas safety and prevention will reduce asbestos exposure and asbestos-related diseases;

Whereas asbestos has been the largest single cause of occupational cancer;

Whereas asbestos is still a hazard for 1,300,000 workers in the United States;

Whereas asbestos-related deaths have greatly increased in the last 20 years and are expected to continue to increase;

Whereas 30 percent of all asbestos-related disease victims were exposed to asbestos on naval ships and in shipyards;

Whereas asbestos was used in the construction of virtually all office buildings, public schools, and homes built before 1975; and

Whereas the establishment of a “National Asbestos Awareness Day” would raise public awareness about the prevalence of asbestos-related diseases and the dangers of asbestos exposure: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate designates the first day of April 2005 as “National Asbestos Awareness Day”.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am submitting a resolution today to designate

April 1 of this year as “National Asbestos Awareness Day.”

I submitted this resolution toward the end of the last Congress and the Senate did not have a chance to act on it. I submit it again today because strengthening public awareness about the danger of asbestos exposure could save thousands of lives.

Scientists have shown that inhalation of asbestos fibers can cause several serious diseases that might not show up for years after exposure. These diseases include lung cancer and asbestosis, the progressive scarring of the lungs by asbestos fibers causing respiratory distress, as well as malignant mesothelioma, a form of cancer for which asbestos exposure is the only known cause.

Over the next decade, more than 100,000 U.S. citizens will die of asbestos-related diseases. That is approximately 30 people per day—and it means one person will die in the time it takes us to act on this resolution.

Asbestos not only kills thousands of Americans every year. It also causes pain and suffering, tears families apart, and adds to the costs of our health care system.

I have been touched by the stories of Americans affected by asbestos-related diseases.

Last fall, I received a phone call from my brother, Don, who told me that a long-time family friend, Harold Hansen, had died from mesothelioma. Harold was a wonderful friend and family man. He hadn't worked directly with asbestos in his lifetime, but he had been unwittingly exposed—and that exposure took his life.

Alan Reinstein was diagnosed with mesothelioma on June 16, 2003, and soon after underwent radical surgery to remove his entire lung, pericardium, diaphragm, and other affected parts of his body. He continues to courageously fight this deadly illness, and each day he must face the fear that the cancer might return.

Despite his illness, Alan is a lucky man because he has a loving wife, Linda, and family that give him strength. Linda Reinstein couldn't sit by and watch her husband suffer, knowing that thousands of others had also been afflicted. So she founded the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization to educate the public and the medical community about diseases caused by asbestos exposure.

I have received many letters from Nevadans who have family members with asbestos-related diseases. Eleanor Shook, from my home town of Searchlight, NV, lost her husband Chuck to mesothelioma. He had been repeatedly exposed to asbestos while at work. Two months after his diagnosis, he passed away—no cure, no treatment, no reprieve. There is a hole in that family where Chuck once stood.

I also received a letter from Jack Holmes a former school teacher from

Las Vegas, who wrote: “I am dying. I have malignant mesothelioma . . . I can expect extreme pain and suffering before I die.”

I also heard from Robert Wright of Henderson, NV, who was exposed to asbestos while serving in the United States Navy. He now suffers from asbestosis.

These are just a few of the hundreds of citizens of Nevada that are suffering with asbestos-related diseases. Every one of their stories is a tragedy and every one of them could have been prevented with greater awareness and education.

Most Americans think asbestos was banned a long time ago. Nothing could be further from the truth. New asbestos is used every day to insulate water pipes, as insulation, in making ceiling tiles and in many other building materials. When the tiny particles are released, they are invisible, and can't be smelled or tasted. Once inhaled, the particles lodge themselves in the lining of the lungs and remain there, causing irreversible damage for up to 50 years before disease sets in.

A single large dose of asbestos can fill your lungs with enough particles to cause disease. Simply walking by a construction site where asbestos particles are at a heavy concentration could be enough to give you a lethal dose.

Perhaps the most frightening thing about asbestos is that a person can be exposed without knowing it. A New York City police officer told me he worked in an undercover sting as a construction worker. The goal of the sting was to catch individuals who would improperly dispose of asbestos that had been removed from buildings. He told of catching men who tried to illegally dump asbestos in a school yard, where children would have been exposed to its dangers for years to come.

This story underscores the importance of raising public awareness about the dangers of asbestos exposure.

Better awareness and education can reduce exposure. For those who have been exposed, early detection and screening can increase treatment options and improve prognosis.

Asbestos kills—but asbestos education can save lives.

Just as victims and their families joined together to raise awareness of asbestos-related disease by forming the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization, the Senate can increase awareness of this silent killer by declaring April 1, 2005 as Asbestos Awareness Day. I hope all senators will join me in this effort.

## SENATE RESOLUTION 44—CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. COLEMAN) submitted the following