

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1203

By Smith

A RESOLUTION to commend Taiwan's response to COVID-19.

WHEREAS, Taiwan and the United States of America are longstanding allies who both deeply cherish the common values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law; Taiwan serves the best interests of the Asia-Pacific region in the continuation of stability and growth; and

WHEREAS, since 1980, the State of Tennessee and Taiwan have enjoyed long, cordial, and mutually beneficial sister-state relations, a friendship that continues to strengthen with each passing year; and

WHEREAS, with a population of around twenty-four million people, Taiwan recorded just over 390 cases of COVID-19 and six deaths as of mid-April 2020 without implementing severe restrictions, such as lockdowns or prolonged school or nursery closures; its success lies in its preparedness, speed, central command, and rigorous contact tracing; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan established a specialized Central Epidemic Command Center, which could be activated to coordinate a response in the event of an outbreak, after the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003. The command center was activated on January 20, 2020, the day before the island confirmed its first infection, and more than 120 action items were put into place within three weeks; and

WHEREAS, three weeks before Taiwan's first COVID-19 infection was confirmed, and within days of China's first reported case to the World Health Organization, Taiwanese officials began boarding and inspecting passengers for fever and pneumonia symptoms on flights from Wuhan, China; the island issued a travel alert for Wuhan on January 20, 2020, and officials began updating the public with daily briefings two days later, and

WHEREAS, a week after its first case, Taiwan began electronic monitoring of quarantined individuals via government-issued cell phones and announced travel and entry restrictions; in the following weeks, the government implemented new measures to keep the virus at bay and imposed strict social distancing measures on April 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Taiwanese authorities conducted widespread testing and traced those who came in contact with people infected with COVID-19, placing them in quarantine; the authorities proactively tested anyone who disembarked from a cruise ship and retested people who were previously diagnosed with influenza or pneumonia in order to confirm they were not misdiagnosed and, in fact, were infected with coronavirus; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan merged national health insurance data with customs and immigration databases to create real-time alerts to help identify vulnerable populations; when a patient visited a physician exhibiting respiratory symptoms, the national health insurance database could record the information, making it easier for officials to track clusters of outbreaks; and

WHEREAS, in addition, Taiwan used mandatory online reporting and check-ins for fourteen days after travel restrictions and employed digital fencing for approximately 55,000 people in home quarantine, whereby an alarm would sound if a quarantined person wandered too far from home; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan is an active member in the international community with a long history of commitment to international health and has donated more than seven million masks globally in its third wave of humanitarian assistance and global partnership; and

WHEREAS, Taiwan has recognized the drastic impact of COVID-19 in the State of Tennessee, and to that end, has donated 100,000 surgical masks, which were delivered directly to the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency distribution center in Lebanon on May 11, 2020; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that we commend Taiwan's response to COVID-19 and its proactive efforts to flatten the curve of infected cases, thank them for the 100,000 masks donated to the citizens of this State, and extend our sincere best wishes for the health and well-being of its citizenry.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared and transmitted to the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Atlanta, Georgia.