

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 332

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the division of Europe, and the beginning of the peaceful and democratic reunification of Germany.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 2, 2009

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. LUGAR, and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the end of the division of Europe, and the beginning of the peaceful and democratic reunification of Germany.

Whereas, between 1945 and 1961, more than 2,500,000 people, or 15 percent of the total population of the German Democratic Republic (referred to in this preamble as “East Germany”), left the country to pursue economic opportunity and enjoy the benefits of liberty and political freedom in the Federal Republic of Germany (referred to in this preamble as “West Germany”) and other countries;

Whereas, at midnight on August 13, 1961, East Germany sealed its border with West Berlin and began construc-

tion of a 100-mile barrier that would later include bunkers, watchtowers, searchlights, minefields, barbed wire, concrete walls, and armed guards, to prevent the emigration of the people of East Germany to seek freedom and opportunity elsewhere;

Whereas, during the 28 years the Berlin Wall existed, approximately 5,000 people successfully fled East Germany for West Germany and West Berlin, more than 75,000 people were imprisoned for attempting to leave East Germany, and an estimated 1,200 people were killed trying to escape;

Whereas Presidents John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan declared their vision of Berlin as a free city, in the heart of a free Germany;

Whereas Chancellor Willi Brandt of West Germany and others demonstrated great foresight in their pursuit of “Ostpolitik”, a policy of engagement that lowered tensions and ultimately helped undermine the authoritarian rule of the wall-builders;

Whereas more than 22,000,000 Americans served in the Cold War, supporting the efforts to bring military, economic, and diplomatic pressure to bear in the defense of Germany and the West, and ultimately helping more than 400,000,000 people gain their freedom from the bondage of communism in the Soviet Bloc;

Whereas the Solidarity Movement in Poland demonstrated that the will of a people united could not be silenced by winning a surprise landslide victory in elections to the Contract Sejm in June 1989;

Whereas, on August 23, 1989, Hungary officially opened the border between Hungary and Austria, resulting in 13,000

refugees from East Germany fleeing into West Germany through Hungary;

Whereas, on September 4, 1989, after prayers for peace in the Nikolai Church, crowds that would eventually number in the hundreds of thousands gathered in Leipzig, East Germany, to repeatedly and peacefully protest the authoritarian regime of East Germany and to demand basic freedoms;

Whereas, in September 1989, thousands of people in East Germany took refuge in the embassy of West Germany in Prague, Czechoslovakia, in order to emigrate to West Germany and the West;

Whereas, on October 18, 1989, faced with widespread civil unrest and a deteriorating political situation, East German leader Erich Honecker, who had predicted that the Wall “will stand in fifty or a hundred years,” resigned;

Whereas, on November 4, 1989, more than 1,000,000 people gathered in Alexanderplatz in East Berlin and 40 other cities and towns in East Germany to demand free elections and basic civil rights, such as freedoms of opinion, movement, press, and assembly;

Whereas, on November 9, 1989, East German politbureau member Günter Schabowki announced that the government would allow “every citizen of the German Democratic Republic to leave the GDR through any of the border crossings,” and East German leader Egon Krenz promised “free, general, democratic and secret elections”;

Whereas thousands of people in East Berlin immediately flooded the border checkpoints at the Berlin Wall and demanded entry into West Berlin, causing the overwhelmed

border guards of East Germany to open the checkpoints to allow people to cross into West Berlin;

Whereas, in the days following the fall of the Berlin Wall, hundreds of thousands of people from East Germany freely crossed the border into West Berlin and West Germany for the first time in more than 28 years;

Whereas the Chancellor of West Germany Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher managed the political situation and foreign diplomacy with great tact and in close cooperation with Western allies, leading to the peaceful reunification of Germany as a sovereign, democratic state on October 3, 1990;

Whereas, on November 9, 2009, the people of Germany will celebrate on both sides of the Brandenburg Gate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall with the “Festival of Freedom”;

Whereas the fall of the Berlin Wall was one of the milestones of the 20th century, brought about by the actions of many ordinary and some extraordinary people; and

Whereas the fall of the Berlin Wall embodied the end of the division of Europe, the opening of the Iron Curtain, and the triumph of democracy over communism: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) recognizes the 20th anniversary of the fall
3 of the Berlin Wall;

4 (2) celebrates 20 years of an undivided Europe,
5 free from the oppression of authoritarianism, with

1 the people of the former communist countries and
2 Western Europe;

3 (3) honors the service and sacrifice of the peo-
4 ple of Germany, the United States, and other coun-
5 tries who served in the Cold War to bring freedom
6 to Central and Eastern Europe;

7 (4) expresses its appreciation to the people of
8 Germany for their commitment to preserving the
9 dignity and freedom of others in their leadership on
10 international assistance, peacekeeping, and security
11 efforts, including in Afghanistan, Bosnia and
12 Herzegovina, Georgia, Kosovo, Lebanon, Sudan, and
13 off the coast of the Horn of Africa; and

14 (5) reaffirms the friendship between the Gov-
15 ernment and people of the United States and the
16 Government and people of Germany.

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