

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. _____

Establishing the Senate Human Rights Commission.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. TILLIS (for himself and Mr. COONS) submitted the following resolution;
which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Establishing the Senate Human Rights Commission.

Whereas the Senate Human Rights Caucus, which was founded in 2014, and is currently co-chaired by Senator Tillis and Senator Coons, has created an outlet and opportunity to establish a formalized forum for human rights discussion and engagement in the Senate;

Whereas the Senate Human Rights Caucus has brought together critical thinkers and first-hand experts on issues affecting human rights throughout the world to better inform the actions of Congress;

Whereas, by establishing a commission in the Senate to put testimony regarding human rights in the record, all of the Federal Government and the public can access this information and insight; and

Whereas the Senate Human Rights Commission would continue the work of the Senate Human Rights Caucus and elevate the need to sustain and support the fundamental access to human rights across the world: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SENATE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION.**

3 (a) COMMISSION ESTABLISHMENT.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the
5 Senate the Senate Human Rights Commission (in
6 this section referred to as the “Commission”).

7 (2) DUTIES.—The Commission shall—

8 (A) serve as a forum for bipartisan discus-
9 sion of international human rights issues and
10 promotion of internationally recognized human
11 rights as enshrined in the United Nations Uni-
12 versal Declaration of Human Rights;

13 (B) monitor the state of human rights
14 across the world and raise awareness on critical
15 human rights violations through conducting
16 regular briefings, hearings, and private
17 roundtables;

18 (C) maintain records of all meetings and
19 activities; and

20 (D) collaborate with congressional commit-
21 tees and other congressional entities (including

1 the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission),
2 the executive branch, human rights organiza-
3 tions, civil society organizations, nongovern-
4 mental organizations, and think tanks to pro-
5 mote human rights initiatives within the Sen-
6 ate.

7 (3) LIMITATIONS.—The Commission shall
8 not—

9 (A) have legislative jurisdiction;

10 (B) have authority to take legislative ac-
11 tion on any bill or resolution; or

12 (C) encroach upon the jurisdiction of any
13 standing, select, or special committee of the
14 Senate.

15 (4) MEMBERSHIP.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall
17 be composed of 10 members of the Senate, who
18 shall be appointed, and may be removed, by the
19 President of the Senate.

20 (B) SELECTION.—The President of the
21 Senate shall—

22 (i) after consultation with the major-
23 ity leader, select 5 members from the ma-
24 jority party of the Senate, 1 of whom shall

1 be designated as a co-chairperson in ac-
2 cordance with paragraph (5)(A)(i); and

3 (ii) after consultation with the minor-
4 ity leader, select 5 members from the mi-
5 nority party of the Senate, 1 of whom shall
6 be designated as a co-chairperson in ac-
7 cordance with paragraph (5)(A)(ii).

8 (C) TERM.—The term of a member shall
9 end on the last day of the Congress during
10 which the member is appointed by the Presi-
11 dent of the Senate, unless the member ceases
12 being a member of the Senate, leaves the Com-
13 mission, or is removed.

14 (D) VACANCY.—

15 (i) IN GENERAL.—A vacancy on the
16 Commission shall be filled in the same
17 manner in which the original appointment
18 was made.

19 (ii) RESIGNATION.—A member of the
20 Commission wishing to resign from the
21 Commission shall submit a written notifi-
22 cation to the President of the Senate.

23 (5) CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE COMMISSION.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—Two members of the
2 Commission shall be appointed to serve as co-
3 chairpersons of the Commission, as follows:

4 (i) One co-chairperson shall be ap-
5 pointed, and may be removed, by the ma-
6 jority leader of the Senate.

7 (ii) One co-chairperson shall be ap-
8 pointed, and may be removed, by the mi-
9 nority leader of the Senate.

10 (B) TERM.—The term of a member as a
11 co-chairperson of the Commission shall end on
12 the last day of the Congress during which the
13 member is appointed as a co-chairperson, unless
14 the member ceases being a member of the Sen-
15 ate, leaves the Commission, resigns from the
16 position of co-chairperson, or is removed.

17 (C) PUBLICATION.—Appointments under
18 this paragraph shall be printed in the Congres-
19 sional Record.

20 (D) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the posi-
21 tion of co-chairperson of the Commission shall
22 be filled in the same manner in which the origi-
23 nal appointment was made.

24 (b) COMMISSION STAFF.—

25 (1) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Commission is au-
2 thorized, from funds made available under sub-
3 section (c), to—

4 (i) employ such staff in the manner
5 and at a rate not to exceed that allowed
6 for employees of a committee of the Senate
7 under section 105(e)(3) of the Legislative
8 Branch Appropriation Act, 1968 (2 U.S.C.
9 4575(e)(3)); and

10 (ii) incur such expenses as may be
11 necessary or appropriate to carry out its
12 duties and functions.

13 (B) EXPENSES.—

14 (i) IN GENERAL.—Payments made
15 under this subsection for receptions, meals,
16 and food-related expenses shall be author-
17 ized only for actual expenses incurred by
18 the Commission in the course of con-
19 ducting its official duties and functions.

20 (ii) TREATMENT OF PAYMENTS.—
21 Amounts received as reimbursement for ex-
22 penses described in clause (i) shall not be
23 reported as income, and the expenses so
24 reimbursed shall not be allowed as a de-

1 duction under the Internal Revenue Code
2 of 1986.

3 (2) DESIGNATION OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each co-chairperson of
5 the Commission may designate 1 professional
6 staff member.

7 (B) COMPENSATION OF SENATE EMPLOY-
8 EES.—In the case of the compensation of any
9 professional staff member designated under
10 subparagraph (A) who is an employee of a
11 Member of the Senate or of a committee of the
12 Senate and who has been designated to perform
13 services for the Commission, the professional
14 staff member shall continue to be paid by the
15 Member or committee, as the case may be, but
16 the account from which the professional staff
17 member is paid shall be reimbursed for the
18 services of the professional staff member (in-
19 cluding agency contributions when appropriate)
20 out of funds made available under subsection
21 (c).

22 (C) DUTIES.—Each professional staff
23 member designated under subparagraph (A)
24 shall—

1 (i) serve all members of the Commis-
2 sion; and

3 (ii) carry out such other functions as
4 the co-chairperson designating the profes-
5 sional staff member may specify.

6 (c) PAYMENT OF EXPENSES.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The expenses of the Com-
8 mission shall be paid from the Contingent Fund of
9 the Senate, out of the account of Miscellaneous
10 Items, upon vouchers approved jointly by the co-
11 chairpersons (except that vouchers shall not be re-
12 quired for the disbursement of salaries of employees
13 who are paid at an annual rate of pay).

14 (2) AMOUNTS AVAILABLE.—For any fiscal year,
15 not more than \$200,000 shall be expended for em-
16 ployees and expenses.

17 (d) SUNSET.—This section shall cease to have force
18 or effect on January 1, 2029.