

Regular Session, 2014

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 137

BY SENATOR PETERSON

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. Condemns the April 14, 2014, abduction of two hundred thirty-four Nigerian school girls who were kidnapped by the terrorist group Boko Haram.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To condemn the abduction of female students by armed militants from the Government Girls
3 Secondary School in the northeastern province of Borno in the Federal Republic of
4 Nigeria.

5 WHEREAS, on the night of April 14, 2014, as many as 234 female students, most
6 of them between 16 and 18 years old, were abducted by armed militants from the
7 Government Girls Secondary School, a boarding school located in the northeastern province
8 of Borno in the Federal Republic of Nigeria; and

9 WHEREAS, the militants burned down several buildings before opening fire on
10 soldiers and police who were guarding the school and forcing the students into trucks; and

11 WHEREAS, according to local officials in Borno state, about 43 students were able
12 to flee their captors, and the rest remain missing; and

13 WHEREAS, all public secondary schools in Borno state were closed in March 2014
14 because of increasing attacks in the past year that have killed hundreds of students, but the
15 young women at the Government Girls Secondary School were recalled to take their final
16 exams; and

17 WHEREAS, the group popularly known as "Boko Haram", which loosely translates
18 from the Hausa language to "western education is sin", is known to oppose the education of

1 girls, has kidnapped girls in the past to use as cooks and sex slaves, and is thought to be
2 responsible for the April 14, 2014, kidnapping in Borno state; and

3 WHEREAS, there are reports that the abducted girls have been sold as brides to
4 Islamist militants for the equivalent of twelve dollars each; and

5 WHEREAS, Boko Haram has targeted schools, mosques, churches, villages, and
6 agricultural centers, as well as government facilities, in an armed campaign to create an
7 Islamic state in northern Nigeria, prompting the president of Nigeria to declare a state of
8 emergency in three of the country's northeastern states in May 2013; and

9 WHEREAS, according to the Brookings Institution, Boko Haram burned down or
10 destroyed fifty schools and killed approximately thirty teachers in Nigeria in 2013, leaving
11 tens of thousands of children unable to attend school; and

12 WHEREAS, on April 14, 2014, hours before the kidnapping in Borno state, Boko
13 Haram bombed a bus station in Abuja, Nigeria, killing at least seventy-five people and
14 wounding over one hundred, making it the deadliest attack ever in Nigeria's capitol; and

15 WHEREAS, Amnesty International estimates that more than 1,500 people have been
16 killed in attacks by Boko Haram or reprisals by Nigerian security forces this year alone, and
17 the Council on Foreign Relations estimates that almost 4,000 people have been killed in
18 Boko Haram attacks since 2011; and

19 WHEREAS, according to the United Nations, girls' education is a major challenge
20 in Nigeria and 4,700,000 children of primary school age are still not in school with
21 attendance rates lowest in the north; and

22 WHEREAS, the advancement of women around the world is a foreign policy priority
23 for the United States; and

24 WHEREAS, women and girls must be allowed to go to school without fear of
25 violence and unjust treatment so that they can take their rightful place as equal citizens of
26 and contributors to the world.

27 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
28 does hereby:

29 (1) Express its strong support for the people of Nigeria, especially the parents and
30 families of the girls abducted by Boko Haram in Borno state, and calls for the immediate,

1 safe return of the girls.

2 (2) Condemn Boko Haram for its violent attacks on civilian targets, including
3 schools, mosques, churches, villages, and agricultural centers in Nigeria.

4 (3) Encourage the government of Nigeria to strengthen efforts to protect the ability
5 of children to obtain an education and to hold those who conduct such violent attacks
6 accountable.

7 (4) Encourage efforts by the United States Government to support the capacity of the
8 government of Nigeria to provide security for schools and to hold terrorist organizations,
9 such as Boko Haram, accountable.

10 (5) Urge timely civilian assistance from the United States and allied African nations
11 in rescuing and reintegrating the abducted girls.

12 (6) Recognize that every individual, regardless of gender, should have the
13 opportunity to pursue an education without fear of discrimination.

14 (7) Reaffirm its commitment to ending discrimination and violence against women
15 and girls, to ensuring the safety and welfare of women and girls, and to pursuing policies that
16 guarantee the basic human rights of women and girls statewide.

17 (9) Encourages the Department of State, the United States Agency for International
18 Development, and the Department of Defense to continue their support for initiatives that
19 positively impact the ability of women and girls to fully access their human rights.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
21 secretary of the United States Department of State, the secretary of the United States
22 Department of Defense, and to the Administrator of the United States Agency for
23 International Development.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by J. Ashley Mitchell.

DIGEST

Peterson (SR 137)

Condemns the abduction of female students by armed militants from the Government Girls Secondary School in the northeastern province of Borno in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.