

1 House Memorial

2 A memorial to the Congress of the United States,
3 urging Congress to adopt national standards for
4 background screening of families hosting foreign
5 exchange students in the United States and for
6 programs sending students from the United States to
7 study abroad.

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9 WHEREAS, in 2009 in Scranton, Pennsylvania, a number of
10 foreign exchange students were found to be suffering from
11 malnourishment or living in filthy, cramped host homes and had
12 to be removed from those homes, and

13 WHEREAS, in June 2017, a Cutler Bay, Florida man with a
14 prior felony conviction for a sexual assault was charged with
15 numerous offenses stemming from allegations that he had seduced
16 and married a Spanish exchange student living in his home and
17 used her to lure her underage sister to his home where she was
18 sexually abused, and

19 WHEREAS, critics of foreign exchange programs say weak
20 regulatory oversight, combined with inferior industry practices
21 and a shortage of qualified host families, have led to neglect
22 and mental, physical, and sexual abuse of foreign exchange
23 students, and

24 WHEREAS, a 2012 report of the United States Department of
25 State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors Office of

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26 | Inspector General found inadequacies and inconsistencies in the
27 | background checks of host families and recommended improvements,
28 | NOW, THEREFORE,

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30 | Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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32 | That Congress is urged to adopt national standards for
33 | background screening of families hosting foreign exchange
34 | students in the United States and for programs sending students
35 | from the United States to study abroad.

36 | BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
37 | dispatched to the President of the United States, to the
38 | President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the
39 | United States House of Representatives, and to each member of
40 | the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.