

111<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# S. RES. 251

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, should fulfill its obligations to ensure that women fully participate as candidates and voters in the August 20, 2009, presidential and provincial council elections in Afghanistan.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 7, 2009

Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. LUGAR, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Mr. BEGICH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

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# RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, should fulfill its obligations to ensure that women fully participate as candidates and voters in the August 20, 2009, presidential and provincial council elections in Afghanistan.

Whereas women in Afghanistan play a critical role in establishing accountable governance, fostering economic development, and securing peace in Afghanistan;

Whereas many women in Afghanistan face rising insecurity and consequent physical and verbal violence in seeking

political office and exercising their constitutional right to vote;

Whereas the Afghan Independent Electoral Commission has made efforts to consult with domestic and international organizations advocating for full inclusion of all people in Afghanistan in the elections, and has called on the donor community to assist its efforts to open and staff all appropriate polling places throughout Afghanistan; and

Whereas women’s rights activists and civil society representatives from throughout Afghanistan gathered on June 25, 2009, and decided to launch the Five Million Afghan Women Campaign, a campaign of 5,000,000 women of Afghanistan to support eligible women’s political participation in order to ensure the rule of law and gender equality: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2            (1) congratulates the brave women and women-  
3        led organizations of Afghanistan on the launch of  
4        the Five Million Afghan Women Campaign;

5            (2) urges the Government of Afghanistan to en-  
6        sure that sufficient staffing is in place in women’s  
7        polling stations, including security staff and equip-  
8        ment and appropriate polling place personnel;

9            (3) urges the Government of Afghanistan and  
10       the religious, community, and cultural leaders of Af-  
11       ghanistan to make every effort to encourage eligible  
12       women to participate in the August 20, 2009, elec-  
13       tions;

1           (4) urges the Government of Afghanistan to  
2 fully include women in formal committees and bodies  
3 charged with election security and related processes;

4           (5) urges the Government of Afghanistan and  
5 the Independent Electoral Commission to continue  
6 to consult with the Afghan Ministry of Women's Af-  
7 fairs, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Com-  
8 mission, and women-led nongovernmental organiza-  
9 tions regarding women's participation in the elec-  
10 tions, in order to guarantee a free and fair election  
11 process, including providing equal access for women  
12 candidates to media outlets as well as ensuring ade-  
13 quate security and transportation for women voters  
14 on election day;

15           (6) encourages the Secretary of State, including  
16 through the United States Agency for International  
17 Development, to continue to mobilize funding and  
18 resources of the United States for programs  
19 throughout Afghanistan to raise the awareness of  
20 women in Afghanistan regarding governance, in-  
21 crease women's political participation in the August  
22 20, 2009, and future elections, and support such  
23 women's ability to exercise their rights as citizens;  
24 and

1           (7) urges the new Government of Afghanistan  
2           elected on August 20, 2009, to employ and engage  
3           women in meaningful roles and positions in such  
4           new government.

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