

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 1439

Recognizing Robert “Bob” A. Hand for 40 years of service to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 18, 2022

Mr. COHEN (for himself, Mr. HUDSON, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. ADERHOLT, Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin, Mr. CLEAVER, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing Robert “Bob” A. Hand for 40 years of service to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Whereas Robert (Bob) Hand has given 40 years of faithful service to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, making him the longest serving staff of the United States Helsinki Commission to date;

Whereas he is a highly respected expert on the Western Balkans with his work being invaluable during the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, he was focused on holding accountable those responsible for atrocities such as the Srebrenica genocide in 1995 and the murder of the Albanian-American Bytyqi brothers in Serbia in 2001, and he kept Commissioners up to date on develop-

ments in the region, including in Albania, where he is also known for his expert analysis;

Whereas having served on numerous United States delegations to Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) meetings, observed dozens of elections, and served as a mission member on one of the OSCE's first field missions, the OSCE Missions of Long Duration in Kosovo, Sandjak, and Vojvodina while stationed in Novi Pazar in 1993, Bob's institutional expertise and memory on the OSCE has been vital to both the Helsinki Commission and the Department of State;

Whereas in his role as the Secretary of the United States delegation to the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA), Bob deftly and tirelessly guaranteed that the delegation was always well-prepared to engage with our counterparts from other countries and that our proposals and resolutions had the best possible chance for adoption;

Whereas his deep expertise on procedural matters and election monitoring, among other processes, made him an extraordinarily effective advocate and negotiator for United States interests and for human rights and democracy throughout his time as Secretary of the United States delegation;

Whereas no major meeting of the Parliamentary Assembly could be considered "typical", with an enormous variety of subjects discussed, new procedures created, and different Members of Congress participating on the United States delegation from meeting to meeting, Bob rose to a huge diversity of challenges as Secretary of the United States delegation, and he ensured that Members could meaningfully participate and contribute, and that the

United States presence was impactful in every meeting he coordinated;

Whereas during annual sessions in particular, Bob's calm demeanor and deep knowledge of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly processes helped all members of the delegation, whether Commissioners or not, whether it was their 1st or 15th time at an OSCE PA meeting, to know where they were supposed to be, when they were voting, what issues were at stake, and when they were scheduled to speak;

Whereas ahead of OSCE's yearly gatherings, Bob skillfully collected signatures from other delegations for United States initiatives in the Parliamentary Assembly as well as secured support from Members for important supplementary items and amendments fielded by other delegations;

Whereas at the 2022 OSCE PA Annual Session in Birmingham, Bob worked diligently with several other delegations to ensure that a critical resolution condemning Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine was adopted with the strongest possible language;

Whereas the United States delegation had a 100-percent success rate at the 2022 OSCE PA Annual Session with the joint Ukraine resolution submitted by the United States, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian delegations, and all United States amendments to committee resolutions and supplementary items adopted;

Whereas over the years, Bob guided the United States delegation through elections for OSCE PA leadership and helped secure positions for United States Members as OSCE PA President, Vice Presidents, and committee

Chairs to make up the OSCE PA Bureau as well as positions on ad hoc committees and appointments as Special Representatives on Anti-Semitism, Racism and Intolerance, Human Trafficking Issues, and on Political Prisoners;

Whereas Bob was instrumental in ensuring that the COVID pandemic in no way diminished the United States delegation's consistent and meaningful impact, and that United States objectives were advanced at each and every opportunity despite the unprecedented shift to online formats spanning multiple time zones;

Whereas Bob was always guided by a clear sense that what the United States says matters in a body such as the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, he prioritized principles over dialogue for its own sake, and he served the Commission's mandate faithfully and tirelessly; and

Whereas his longstanding relationships with the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly leadership, staff, and other parliamentarians mean his departure will be felt not only by the Commission but by many of our friends in the OSCE region who have worked with him over the years: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) recognizes Robert A. Hand's 40 years of
- 3 dedicated service to the Commission on Security and
- 4 Cooperation in Europe (United States Helsinki
- 5 Commission);
- 6 (2) appreciates his sound policy guidance on the
- 7 Balkans and other regions throughout his time with
- 8 the Commission;

1 (3) congratulates him on his successes as Sec-
2 retary of the United States delegation to the Organi-
3 zation for Security and Cooperation in Europe Par-
4 liamentary Assembly; and

5 (4) wishes him all the best in the next chapters
6 of his personal and professional endeavors.

○