

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 503

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Government of the People's Republic of China should immediately guarantee the safety and freedom of tennis star Peng Shuai.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 3, 2022

Mr. SCOTT of Florida (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BROWN, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COTTON, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

APRIL 4 (legislative day, MARCH 31), 2022

Reported by Mr. MENENDEZ, with an amendment and an amendment to the preamble

APRIL 7, 2022

Considered, amended, and agreed to with an amended preamble

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate that the Government of the People's Republic of China should immediately guarantee the safety and freedom of tennis star Peng Shuai.

Whereas, on November 2, 2021, 3-time Olympian Peng Shuai went missing after she said in a since-deleted post on Chinese social media site Weibo that she had been sexually assaulted and forced into a sexual relationship with

Zhang Gaoli, who was the senior Vice Premier of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China from 2013 to 2018;

Whereas authorities of the People’s Republic of China imposed a media and internet blackout of discussions of Peng’s case;

Whereas, on November 14, 2021, after Peng had not been seen or heard from for 12 days, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Women’s Tennis Association Steve Simon requested a “full, fair, and transparent” investigation into Peng’s allegations;

Whereas the hashtag “#WhereIsPengShuai” trended across social media worldwide, with the exception of the People’s Republic of China where it was censored;

Whereas, on November 17, 2021, the Women’s Tennis Association received a statement purporting to be from Peng, recanting her abuse claim and saying “everything is fine”;

Whereas, in response, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Women’s Tennis Association Steve Simon said the statement “released today by Chinese state media concerning Peng Shuai only raises my concerns as to her safety and whereabouts”;

Whereas the International Olympic Committee said in a statement that it was “encouraged by assurances that she is safe”;

Whereas, on November 19 and 20, 2021, photos and videos of Peng appearing in her home, in a restaurant, and at a youth tennis event in Beijing emerged on Twitter accounts affiliated with government-run media;

Whereas, on November 19, 2021, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the White House is “deeply concerned” over Peng’s disappearance and seeks “independent and verifiable proof” of her location and condition;

Whereas, on November 19, 2021, Liz Throssell, the spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, told reporters “. . . it would be important to have proof of her whereabouts and wellbeing, and we would urge that there be an investigation with full transparency into her allegations of sexual assault”;

Whereas, on November 21, 2021, the International Olympic Committee said in a statement that its President, Thomas Bach, had a 30-minute video call with Peng, joined by a Chinese sports official and an official of the International Olympic Committee;

Whereas the statement said that, during the call, Peng appeared to be “doing fine” and appeared “relaxed”, and said she “would like to have her privacy respected”;

Whereas the International Olympic Committee did not explain how the video call with Peng had been organized, given the difficulties other concerned parties have had reaching her;

Whereas, on November 30, 2021, in an interview with CNN, International Olympic Committee official Dick Pound defended the handling of the situation by the Government of the People’s Republic of China and said the “unanimous conclusion” by International Olympic Committee officials on the call is that Peng Shuai is “fine”;

Whereas the annual report of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China for 2020 finds that gender-based

violence in China remains a serious issue, and highly publicized cases of sexual assault continue to surface;

Whereas, on December 1, 2021, the Women’s Tennis Association suspended all Women’s Tennis Association tournaments in China and Hong Kong;

Whereas Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Women’s Tennis Association Steve Simon stated, “In good conscience, I don’t see how I can ask our athletes to compete there when Peng Shuai is not allowed to communicate freely and has seemingly been pressured to contradict her allegation of sexual assault. Given the current state of affairs, I am also greatly concerned about the risks that all of our players and staff could face if we were to hold events in China in 2022.”; and

Whereas the Government of the People’s Republic of China has repeatedly detained “#MeToo” activists in China and censored online and public discussion around sexual assault and harassment: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

2 (1) the case of Peng Shuai is directly related to
3 broader international concerns around the freedom
4 of speech and safety in China;

5 (2) the failure of the International Olympic
6 Committee to clearly and forcefully challenge the
7 claims of the Government of the People’s Republic
8 of China concerning Peng’s safety raises questions
9 about the ability and willingness of the International
10 Olympic Committee to stand up for the human
11 rights of athletes participating in the Olympic and

1 Paralympic games in Beijing, as well as in future
2 games;

3 (3) the Government of the People's Republic of
4 China should immediately take steps to—

5 (A) allow Peng to provide independent and
6 verifiable proof of her own whereabouts and
7 safety without retribution;

8 (B) allow Peng to engage directly with the
9 Women's Tennis Association and the United
10 Nations to independently verify her safety and
11 explain her absences from public life since mak-
12 ing her allegation;

13 (C) open an independent and transparent
14 investigation into Peng's allegations against
15 former senior Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli;

16 (D) publicly commit to hold sexual violence
17 abusers accountable;

18 (E) cease all censorship of reporting and
19 discussions of Peng's case; and

20 (F) allow Peng to leave China if she so de-
21 sires and prevent any retaliation against family
22 members remaining there;

23 (4) the International Olympic Committee, by
24 failing to clearly and forcefully challenge the Chinese
25 Communist Party's narrative, has failed to uphold

1 its own stated commitments with regard to
2 “[r]espect for international conventions on pro-
3 tecting human rights”, as outlined in the Code of
4 Ethics of the International Olympic Committee, and
5 runs counter to efforts by the United States Govern-
6 ment, human rights organizations, the Women’s
7 Tennis Association, and other international bodies
8 and individuals to secure Peng’s safety;

9 (5) to regain lost public confidence, the Inter-
10 national Olympic Committee should publicly call on
11 the Government of the People’s Republic of China to
12 undertake the actions called for in paragraph (3);
13 and

14 (6) to demonstrate commitment to Olympic ath-
15 letes and their human rights, the International
16 Olympic Committee should deny the ability of the
17 People’s Republic of China to serve as an Olympic
18 Games host nation or to bid to become a future
19 Olympic Games host nation until the Government of
20 the People’s Republic of China ceases its horrific
21 abuses of internationally recognized human rights,
22 including the genocide against the Uyghurs and
23 other Muslim minorities, and undertakes the actions
24 called for in paragraph (3).

○