

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

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 “inde-

pendent 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.”;

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; and

Whereas athletes from the around the world will be competing in the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing in February 2022: 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 of athletes participating in the
5 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing;

6 (2) the failure of the International Olympic
7 Committee to clearly and forcefully challenge the
8 claims of the Government of the People’s Republic
9 of China concerning Peng’s safety raise questions
10 about the ability and willingness of the International

1 Olympic Committee to stand up for the human
2 rights of athletes participating in the 2022 Olympic
3 and Paralympic games in Beijing;

4 (3) the Government of the People's Republic of
5 China would help reduce concerns about athlete
6 safety at the 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing
7 by assuring Peng's freedom and safety and inves-
8 tigating her allegations in a fair and transparent
9 manner;

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

12 (A) provide independent and verifiable
13 proof of Peng's whereabouts and that she is
14 safe;

15 (B) allow Peng to engage directly with the
16 Women's Tennis Association and the United
17 Nations to independently verify her safety and
18 explain her absence from public life since mak-
19 ing her allegation;

20 (C) open an independent and transparent
21 investigation into Peng's allegations against
22 former senior Vice Premier Zhang Gaoli;

23 (D) publicly commit to hold sexual violence
24 abusers accountable;

1 (E) cease all censorship of reporting and
2 discussions of Peng's case; and

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

6 (5) by failing to clearly and forcefully challenge
7 the Chinese Communist Party's narrative, the Inter-
8 national Olympic Committee has failed to uphold its
9 own stated commitments with regard to "[r]espect
10 for international conventions on protecting human
11 rights", as outlined in the Code of Ethics of the
12 International Olympic Committee;

13 (6) the conduct of the International Olympic
14 Committee runs counter to efforts by the United
15 States Government, human rights organizations, the
16 Women's Tennis Association, and other international
17 bodies and individuals to secure Peng's safety; and

18 (7) in an effort to regain lost public confidence,
19 the International Olympic Committee should publicly
20 call on the Government of the People's Republic of
21 China to undertake the actions called for in para-
22 graph (4).

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