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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETIETH SESSION

H. F. No. **2667**

05/15/2017 Authored by Clark, Maye Quade, Allen, Fischer, Anselmo and others  
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Civil Law and Data Practices Policy

1.1 A resolution

1.2 urging action to halt the persecution of gay men in Chechnya.

1.3 WHEREAS, gay men in Chechnya are being targeted and persecuted solely on the basis of

1.4 their sexual orientation, or even their suspected sexual orientation, with the numbers of unlawful

1.5 detentions, torture incidents, kidnappings, and killings mounting daily; and

1.6 WHEREAS, in spite of multiple governments and world leaders speaking out against this

1.7 hateful campaign of harassment and violence against gay men, the situation has worsened for many;

1.8 and

1.9 WHEREAS, so far, neither the Chechen Republic leader Ramzan Kadyrov nor Russian

1.10 President Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin have made any indication that they are willing to

1.11 investigate or take any action to halt these heinous crimes against completely innocent people; and

1.12 WHEREAS, on April 1, Novaya Gazeta, a Moscow newspaper known for covering sensitive

1.13 topics, published an exposé detailing how Kadyrov's security forces were arresting and murdering

1.14 gay men, holding them in squalid conditions and "outing" the men to families for suggested "honor

1.15 killing"; and

1.16 WHEREAS, at least 100 men are believed to have been seized and then held in a prison near

1.17 the town of Argun, and Human Rights Watch has confirmed that the men were treated brutally,

1.18 suffering torture, harassment, and threats, with at least three deaths among the men confirmed; and

1.19 WHEREAS, an adviser to Kadyrov has accused the Moscow newspaper of defamation,

1.20 calling its journalists "enemies of our faith and our motherland," and there has been talk of retribution

1.21 against the publication; meanwhile, Putin's silence on the issue speaks volumes, and Kadyrov

1.22 appears to have his strong support, appearing in a photo opportunity with Putin in the Kremlin

1.23 recently; and

2.1 WHEREAS, some reporters for Novaya Gazeta have been forced to flee Russia, and the  
2.2 Kremlin's apparent tolerance, and even support, for brutality and coercion as instruments of state  
2.3 power appears limitless at the moment; and

2.4 WHEREAS, meanwhile, a spokesman for Kadyrov not only denied the reports again, but  
2.5 claimed that gay people "do not exist" in Chechnya; and

2.6 WHEREAS, at a recent joint press conference with Putin in Sochi, German Chancellor Angela  
2.7 Merkel raised the matter, and other world leaders have been forcefully speaking out and holding  
2.8 Putin and the Kremlin accountable for the actions of Kadyrov and his associates, who have strong  
2.9 support from the highest levels of the Russian government; NOW, THEREFORE,

2.10 BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of the State of Minnesota that it urges action by the  
2.11 President and the Congress of the United States to help put an end to the horrific arrest, detention,  
2.12 torture, and murder of gay men in Chechnya.

2.13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Minnesotans find this situation, which has also involved  
2.14 nongovernmental individuals being encouraged to commit violence and discrimination against gay  
2.15 men in Chechnya, with threats made to their families amidst an atmosphere of support for the  
2.16 genocidal elimination of gay men, to be abhorrent and intolerable in a civilized world.

2.17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Minnesotans demand an end to this persecution, with  
2.18 multinational corporations, especially oil companies, using their economic clout to pressure Russian  
2.19 and Chechen authorities to investigate and put a stop to this violence and mistreatment; Minnesotans  
2.20 further demand that Russian and Chechen authorities stop their denials, stop fomenting homophobia  
2.21 and violence, and bring to justice those responsible for these crimes.

2.22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Minnesotans demand that the United States and the  
2.23 United Nations respond to this crisis and put pressure on the relevant parties, help provide safe  
2.24 escape to the victims, and provide safe haven/refugee status to them, sending the message that  
2.25 Minnesota is a welcoming, tolerant place.

2.26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of State of the State of Minnesota is directed  
2.27 to prepare copies of this memorial and transmit them to the President of the United States, the  
2.28 United States Secretary of State, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, the President  
2.29 and the Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and the Clerk of the United States House  
2.30 of Representatives, the chair of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the chair of the House  
2.31 Committee on Foreign Affairs, and Minnesota's Senators and Representatives in Congress.