

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
TO H. RES. 588  
OFFERED BY MR. SMITH OF NEW JERSEY**

Strike the preamble and insert the following:

Whereas according to UNICEF, over 4,000,000 orphans are estimated to be living in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

Whereas the United States has made significant financial investments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, providing an estimated \$758,102,000 in development, humanitarian, and security assistance in fiscal year 2013;

Whereas cyclical and violent conflict has plagued the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the mid-1990s;

Whereas, according to the United States Department of State, the policy of the Administration toward the Democratic Republic of the Congo is “focused on helping the country become a nation that. . .provides for the basic needs of its citizens”;

Whereas the United Nations has recognized a child’s right to a family as a basic human right worthy of protection;

Whereas adoption, both domestic and international, is widely recognized as an important child protection tool and an integral part of child welfare best practices around the world, along with family reunification and prevention of abandonment;

Whereas, on September 27, 2013, the Congolese Ministry of Interior and Security, General Direction of Migration, in-

formed the United States Embassy in Kinshasa that effective September 25, 2013, they had suspended issuance of exit permits to adopted Congolese children seeking to depart the country with their adoptive parents, affecting hundreds of children;

Whereas there are American families with finalized adoptions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the necessary legal paperwork and visas ready to travel home with these children but are currently unable to do so; and

Whereas on December 19, 2013, the Congolese Minister of Justice, Minister of Interior and Security, and the General Direction of Migration confirmed to members of the United States Department of State that the current suspension on the issuance of exit permits continues: Now, therefore, be it

Strike all after the resolving clause and insert the following:

That the House of Representatives—

1           (1) affirms that all children deserve a safe, lov-  
2           ing, and permanent family;

3           (2) recognizes the importance of ensuring that  
4           international adoptions of all children are conducted  
5           in an ethical and transparent manner;

6           (3) expresses concern over the increasing num-  
7           ber of new adoption cases that have been opened  
8           and the impact on children and families of the

1 Democratic Republic of the Congo's suspension of  
2 exit permits;

3 (4) respectfully requests that the Congolese  
4 Government—

5 (A) resume issuing exit permits for all chil-  
6 dren that have been adopted;

7 (B) expedite the processing of those adop-  
8 tions which involve medically fragile children;  
9 and

10 (C) encourages continued dialogue and co-  
11 operation between the United States Depart-  
12 ment of State and the Democratic Republic of  
13 the Congo's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to im-  
14 prove the intercountry adoption process and en-  
15 sure the welfare of all children adopted from  
16 the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Amend the title so as to read: "A resolution con-  
cerning the suspension of exit permit issuance by the  
Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo for  
adopted Congolese children seeking to depart the country  
with their adoptive parents."

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