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13 U.S. Senators back women religious

Joshua J. McElwee | Jul. 5, 2012 NCR Today

Thirteen of the 17 women currently serving in the U.S. Senate have backed a resolution honoring the work of women religious in the country after a harsh Vatican rebuke.

The proposed resolution, which would give the Senate's "deepest appreciation" for the sisters' work, is nearly identical to the one that was introduced in the House of Representatives in June. [1]

While the proposed House resolution cites the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR) -- the group which was the subject of the April rebuke from the Vatican -- by name, the proposed Senate resolution does not, only referring to "the congregations of women religious, along with their respective organizations."

Both proposed resolutions, however, acknowledge the work of sisters in the U.S. in the fields of education, healthcare, and social justice ministry and say sisters make the country "stronger" and "deserve our deepest appreciation."

Among the sponsors of the Senate's version of the resolution are both of the Senators from the states of Maine and California: Republicans Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins; and Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, respectively.

The Senate resolution was introduced June 28 and has been referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

The House version of the resolution was introduced June 18, currently has 174 cosponsors, and is before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

In an April 18 order to the LCWR, the Vatican?s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith ordered that the group revise its statues and programs and place itself under the authority of three bishops.

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[1] http://ncronline.org/node/31018