

By Senator Sobel

31-04785-11

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Senate Resolution

A resolution expressing Florida's deepest sympathies for and continuing solidarity with Japan in the wake of the country's recent disaster.

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2011, an 8.9-magnitude offshore earthquake struck northeastern Japan and, as the most intense quake ever recorded for the region, unleashed destructive tsunamis minutes later, wreaking horrific devastation and indeterminate loss of life in the area, and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida has enjoyed a strong relationship with Japan in the areas of finance, commerce, culture, security, and education, and

WHEREAS, with trade steadily increasing, Japan is currently one of the state's two leading foreign investors, recently averaging \$4.16 billion; Japanese companies employ an estimated 21,000 people in Florida in areas such as wholesale trade, retail trade, and manufacturing; Florida exports approximately \$781 million in goods and services to Japan, including civilian aircraft, motor vehicles, office machines, citrus, and fertilizer; and, at an average of \$3.9 billion, the state imports more from Japan than any other country except China, mostly in motor vehicles and aircraft, communications equipment, machinery, and medical supplies, and

WHEREAS, through cooperative efforts such as the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and various other agreements, the Armed Forces of the United States work closely with Japan in defense coordination, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian relief efforts, intelligence sharing, and mutual military support, an

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30 alliance that continues to promote security and peace in the Far
31 East region and throughout the world, and

32 WHEREAS, the number of American students studying in Japan
33 has increased 57 percent over the course of the decade, and, as
34 a result, Japan grants more student visas to Americans than to
35 any other non-Asian country; conversely, the number of Japanese
36 students currently in the United States approaches 25,000, and

37 WHEREAS, with Japanese travelers accounting for almost two-
38 thirds of visitors from Asia to the United States in 2005, both
39 the United States and Florida owe much of their success in
40 tourism to the citizens of Japan, and

41 WHEREAS, the people of Florida have been moved by the news
42 of the losses and suffering of the people of Japan and, through
43 their representatives, wish to express their feelings of
44 sympathy and solidarity, NOW, THEREFORE,

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46 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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48 That in recognition of the United States' and Florida's
49 close ties to Japan across a broad spectrum, including in the
50 areas of commerce, security, education, and culture, and to
51 express the state's deepest sympathies toward the nation and its
52 people in the wake of their most devastating natural disaster to
53 date, the Florida Senate hereby declares and demonstrates its
54 profound sorrow at the loss of life and its strong bond of
55 friendship and solidarity with the Japanese people as they
56 embark upon their recovery from this tragedy.

57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be
58 presented to Ichiro Fujisaki, Ambassador Extraordinary and

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59 Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States of America, and to
60 United States Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, as a
61 tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida Senate.