

107<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. RES. 529

Congratulating Martin Strel of the Republic of Slovenia for his historic athletic achievement as the first person to swim the length of the Mississippi River.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2002

Mr. OBERSTAR submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

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# RESOLUTION

Congratulating Martin Strel of the Republic of Slovenia for his historic athletic achievement as the first person to swim the length of the Mississippi River.

Whereas Martin Strel of Mokronog, Republic of Slovenia, has distinguished himself as a marathon swimmer and holds several world records for long-distance swimming;

Whereas Martin Strel established a new long-distance world record for swimming the length of the Danube River (1,878 miles, 3004 km) over 58 days in 2000;

Whereas Martin Strel established a new world record of uninterrupted swimming in 2001 with a swim of 84 hours, 10 minutes that covered 312 miles, 504 km;

Whereas President Milan Kucan, President of the Republic of Slovenia, presented Martin Strel with the Badge of

Honor of the Republic of Slovenia on October 24, 2001, for his athletic achievements and for contributions to the promotion of Slovenia;

Whereas Martin Strel announced that he would attempt to establish a new long-distance swim record by swimming the length of the Mississippi River (2360 miles, 3797 km);

Whereas Martin Strel announced that his swim of the Mississippi River would be called the Eye-to-Eye Project that represents Mr. Strel's personal battle against the Mississippi River, but also represents Slovenia's friendship with the United States;

Whereas Martin Strel of Slovenia began his swim of the Mississippi River at the headwaters of Lake Itasca in Minnesota on July 4, 2002;

Whereas Martin Strel averaged 11–12 hours a day swimming the Mississippi River and covered nearly 35 miles a day as he swam through the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana;

Whereas Martin Strel endured considerable hardships during his historic swim, including a lightning strike that nearly hit him near Cape Girardeau, Missouri, a whirlpool that nearly pulled him under near Greenville, Mississippi, and dangerous boat traffic that he encountered in Louisiana;

Whereas Martin Strel completed his remarkable journey in 68 days and reached the delta of the Mississippi River in Louisiana at 11:35 a.m. on September 9, 2002;

Whereas Martin Strel has dedicated himself to swim for peace, friendship, and clean waters, and he dedicated his

swim of the Mississippi River to honor the innocent victims and heroes of September 11, 2001;

Whereas Martin Strel's swim coincided with the ten-year anniversary of the United States recognition of Slovenia as an independent nation on September 7, 1992;

Whereas Martin Strel was assisted in this swimming endeavor by an impressive team led by Jelko Kacin, the President of the Eye-to-Eye Project Organizing Committee, as well as Martin Strel's son, Borut Strel, and American volunteers Guy Haglund, Byron Curtis, David Hale, and Matt Mohlke; and

Whereas the Eye-to-Eye Project represents the best of the human spirit to promote the outstanding relationship and friendship between the United States and Slovenia: Now, therefore, be it

1       *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2               (1) congratulates Martin Strel of Slovenia for  
3       his historic athletic achievement as the first person  
4       to swim the length of the Mississippi River;

5               (2) recognizes Martin Strel for his courage, de-  
6       termination, and pioneering spirit as he succeeded in  
7       this great human endeavor;

8               (3) commends Martin Strel for dedicating his  
9       swim to honor the victims and heroes of September  
10      11, 2001; and

1           (4) recognizes that the Eye-to-Eye Project has  
2           served as an excellent opportunity to promote the  
3           friendship between the United States and Slovenia.

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