Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2005 as “National Preparedness Month”; and

(2) encourages the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, and businesses to co-sponsor National Preparedness Month 2005.

This nationwide effort will involve more than 130 private sector organizations — including hospitals, businesses, and communities — to become involved in preparedness efforts.

I join Senator LIEBERMAN in cosponsoring this resolution to promote citizen emergency preparedness. I hope that my colleagues will join us by supporting this important initiative.

SENATE RESOLUTION 230—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2005 AS “NATIONAL PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH”

Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. BUNNING, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. HATCH, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CHAO, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. LORIE, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. Res. 230

Whereas prostate cancer affects millions of men and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among men in the United States:

Whereas 1 in 6 men in the United States will develop prostate cancer;

Whereas prostate cancer is an adult disease that can be detected as early as age 40.

REWARDED.

That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2005 as “National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month”;

(2) declares that it is critical to—

(A) increase screening by both a digital rectal examination (DRE) and a prostate specific antigen blood test (PSA) that can detect prostate cancer in earlier and more treatable stages and reduce the rate of mortality due to the disease;

(B) increase research funding to be proportionate with the burden of prostate cancer so that the causes of the disease, improved screening and treatments, and ultimately a cure may be discovered; and

(C) continue to consider methods to improve both access to and the quality of health care services for detecting and treating prostate cancer; and

(3) calls on the people of the United States, interested groups, and affected persons to—

(A) promote awareness of prostate cancer;

(B) take an active role in increasing the devastating effects of prostate cancer on individuals, their families, and the economy;

and

(C) observe September 2005 with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 231—ENCOURAGING THE TRANSITIONAL NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF IRAQ TO ADOPT A CONSTITUTION THAT GRANTS WOMEN EQUAL RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW AND TO WORK TO PROTECT SUCH RIGHTS

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. D’MONT, Mrs. COLLINS, Mr. BIDEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. ALLEN, Mrs. LINCOLN, and Mr. SANTORUM) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. Res. 231

Whereas Iraq is a sovereign nation and a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, done at New York December 16, 1966, and entered into force March 23, 1976;

Whereas in Iraq’s January 2005 parliamentary elections, more than 2,000 women ran for office and currently 31 percent of the seats in Iraq’s National Assembly are occupied by women;

Whereas women lead the Iraqi ministries of Displacement and Migration, Communications, Municipalities and Public Works, Environment, and Science and Technology;

Whereas the Personal Status Law provides for substantial participation of women in the Iraqi National Assembly and of personnel in all levels of the government;

Whereas the Personal Status Law provides for family and property rights for women in Iraq;

Whereas through grants funded by the United States Government’s Iraqi Women’s Democracy Initiative, nongovernmental organizations are providing training in political leadership, communications, coalition-building skills, voter education, constitution drafting, legal reform, and the legislative process;

Whereas a 275-member Transitional National Assembly, which is charged with the responsibility of drafting a new constitution, was elected to serve as Iraq’s national legislature for a transition period; and

Article 12 of the Transitional Administrative Law states that “[a]ll Iraqis [are] equal in their rights without regard to gender . . . and they are equal before the law;

Whereas Article 12 of the Transitional Administrative Law further states that “[d]iscrimination against an Iraqi citizen on the basis of his gender is prohibited’’;

Whereas on May 10, 2005, Iraq’s National Assembly appointed a committee, composed of Assembly members, to begin drafting a constitution for Iraq, subject to the approval of the Iraqi people in a national referendum;

Whereas the Senate recognizes the need to affirm the spirit and free the energies of women in Iraq who have spent countless hours, years, and lifetimes working for the basic human right of equal constitutional protection;

Whereas the Senate recognizes the risks Iraqi women have faced in working for the future of their country and admire their courageous commitment to democracy; and

Whereas the full and equal participation of all Iraqi citizens in all aspects of society is essential to achieving Iraq’s democratic and economic potential; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the Iraqi people for the progress achieved toward the establishment of a representative democratic government;

(2) recognizes the importance of ensuring women in Iraq have equal rights and opportunities under the law and in society and supports continued, substantial, and vigorous participation of women in the Iraqi National Assembly and in all levels of the government;

(3) recognizes the importance of ensuring women’s rights in all legislation, with special attention to preserving women’s equal rights under family, property, and inheritance laws;

(4) strongly encourages Iraq’s Transitional National Assembly to adopt a constitution that grants women equal rights and opportunities under the law and to work to protect such rights;

(5) pledges to support the efforts of Iraqi women to fully participate in a democratic Iraq;

and

(6) wishes the Iraqi people every success in developing, approving, and enacting a new
Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has increased voter registration among racial, ethnic, and language minorities, as well as enhanced the ability of citizens in those minority groups to participate in the political process and to elect minority representatives to public office, resulting in 81 African-American, Latino, Asian, and Native American Members of Congress and local officials across the United States; and

Whereas despite the noteworthy progress from 40 years of enforcement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, voter inequities, disparities, and obstacles still remain for far too many minority groups and serve to demonstrate the ongoing importance of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 provides extensive voter protections, such as equipping voters with the means to challenge election laws that result in a denial or abridgment of voting rights on account of race, color, or language minority status (in section 2 of such Act), eliminating literacy tests nationwide (in section 201 of such Act), requiring Federal approval before jurisdictions with a history of racial discrimination restrict minority voting rights may implement changes in voting practices and procedures (in section 5 of such Act), providing the Department of Justice with authority to appoint Federal election monitors and observers to ensure that elections are conducted free from discrimination and intimidation (in sections 6 through 9 of such Act), and mandating language assistance and translated voting materials in jurisdictions with substantial numbers of language minorities in areas where necessary (in section 203 of such Act); and

Whereas several of these provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 will expire in August 2007 unless Congress acts to preserve and reauthorize them; and

Whereas it is vital to democracy in the United States, and to the efforts of the United States to promote democracy abroad, that the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 are fully effective to prevent discrimination and dilution of the equal rights of minority voters; and

Whereas, in 2005, the year marking the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, people in the United States must applaud the substantial progress that has been made in protecting the right to vote, but also continue efforts to ensure fairness and equal access to the political process in order to protect the rights of every citizen of the United States; and

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been widely hailed as the single most important civil rights legislation in the history of the United States, enabling political empowerment and voter enfranchisement for all citizens of the United States; and

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 affirms the permanent guarantee of the 15th amendment that “the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude”;

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was amended in 1975 to facilitate equal political opportunity for language-minority citizens and was amended in 1982 to protect the rights of individuals who may be denied the right to vote because of limited English proficiency;

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has helped advance the true spirit of democracy in the United States by encouraging political participation by all citizens and ensuring for the voters the ability to elect representatives in Federal, State, and local governments; and

Whereas Medicaid was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on August 30, 1965, providing Federal assistance to States to promote democracy abroad, and reauthorize them;

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has provided comprehensive and effective voting rights bill as a necessary response by Congress and the President to end racial and language minority status (in section 2 of such Act), eliminating literacy tests nationwide (in section 201 of such Act), requiring Federal approval before jurisdictions with a history of racial discrimination restrict minority voting rights may implement changes in voting practices and procedures (in section 5 of such Act), providing the Department of Justice with authority to appoint Federal election monitors and observers to ensure that elections are conducted free from discrimination and intimidation (in sections 6 through 9 of such Act), and mandating language assistance and translated voting materials in jurisdictions with substantial numbers of language minorities in areas where necessary (in section 203 of such Act); and

Whereas the Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been widely hailed as the single most important civil rights legislation in the history of the United States; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses and celebrates the 40th anniversary of the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965;

(2) reaffirms its commitment to advancing the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to ensure the continued effectiveness of the Act in protecting the voting rights of all citizens of the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, 40 years ago, after the Selma-Montgomery march, many of us in the Senate and House worked hard to pass the landmark Voting Rights Act of 1965, to guarantee that racism and its bitter legacy would never again close the polls to any citizen. The failure to ensure voting rights regardless of race or national origin was a national shame, which was finally addressed in this long overdue bill. As we look toward August 6, the 40th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act, we remember the sacrifices of those who worked tirelessly to ensure that all Americans have access to the ballot, regardless of race.

All of us are grateful for those sacrifices, which forced America to live up to its highest ideals, the ideal of equality and justice for all. And when we say all, we mean all. I want to thank my friend and colleague Senator John Lewis for his leadership and his courage in joining Dr. Martin Luther King and so many others on the march across Selma’s Pettus Bridge to demonstrate the need for voting rights. Those who marched and endured hatred and violence provided the guiding light for Congress. As we celebrate the Voting Rights Act, we also celebrate their contributions.

This celebration must also be a wake up call to remind us of the need to strengthen the provisions of the Voting Rights Act that are scheduled to expire in 2007. We must re-authorize section 5, which provides for Federal oversight of voting changes in—areas where a history of discrimi- nation has limited the right to vote. We must also reauthorize Section 203, which provides for bi-lingual elections in areas where necessary, to ensure that American citizens can vote, even if they have limited English proficiency.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in both the House and Senate, and on both sides of the aisle, on this important issue.