At the request of Mr. Hatch, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. King) was added as a cosponsor of S. 169, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to authorize additional visas for well-educated aliens to live and work in the United States, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mrs. McCaskill, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. Blunt), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. Pryor), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. Moran) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. Isakson) were added as cosponsors of S. 183, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for fairness in hospital payments under the Medicare program.

At the request of Mr. Johnstone, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. Barrasso), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. Boozman) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. Risch) were added as cosponsors of S. 190, a bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for certain activities of the National Labor Relations Board and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.

At the request of Mr. Paul, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. Murkowski) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. Risch) were added as cosponsors of S. 191, a bill to codify and modify regulatory requirements of Federal agencies.

At the request of Mr. Franken, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. Warren) was added as a cosponsor of S. 199, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend projects relating to children and violence to provide access to school-based comprehensive mental health programs.

At the request of Mr. Heller, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. Baucus) was added as a cosponsor of S. 202, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, with respect to fraudulent representations about having received military declarations or medals.

At the request of Mr. Levin, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. Rockefeller) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. Nelson) were added as cosponsors of S. 218, a bill to ensure that amounts credited to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund are used for harbor maintenance.

At the request of Ms. Mikulski, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. Cardin), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. Durbin), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. Landrieu), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. Murphy) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. Schatz) were added as cosponsors of S. 223, a bill to amend section 217 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify the visa waiver program, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. Reid:

S. 234. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. Reid. Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of our Nation’s disabled veterans to once again discuss an end to an unjust and outdated policy known as “concurrent receipt.” For the past 122 years, this practice has prevented veterans from receiving the full benefits earned through years of service and personal injury in defense of our Nation. The law requires that a retired disabled veteran reduce their retirement pay dollar-for-dollar by the amount of any disability compensation received, in many cases wiping out retirement pay altogether. This is simply wrong.

I have worked over the past decade to fight to change this outdated policy and commend the progress Congress has made on behalf of our Nation’s veterans. In 2002, I was pleased to see that Congress passed a measure known as the Combat-Related Special Compensation, or CSRC, allowing for disabled retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive retirement pay dollar-for-dollar by the amount of any disability compensation received, in many cases wiping out retirement pay altogether. This is simply wrong.

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is amended by striking paragraph (2) of subsection (a).

(2) COMPUTATION.—Paragraph (1) of subsection (c) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(G) For a month for which the retiree receives veterans' disability compensation for a disability rated as 10 percent or less or has a service-connected disability rated as zero percent, $0."."

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.—

(1) The heading of section 1414 of such title is amended to read as follows: "§ 1414. Members eligible for retired pay who are also eligible for veterans' disability compensation: concurrent payment of retired pay and disability compensation."

(2) The item relating to such section in the table of sections at the beginning of chapter 71 of such title is amended to read as follows: "1414. Members eligible for retired pay who are also eligible for veterans' disability compensation: concurrent payment of retired pay and disability compensation."

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on January 1, 2014, and shall apply to payments for months beginning on or after that date.

SEC. 2. COORDINATION OF SERVICE ELIGIBILITY FOR COMBAT-RELATED SPECIAL COMPENSATION AND CONCURRENT RECEIPT.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO STANDARDIZE SIMILAR PROVISIONS.—

(1) QUALIFIED RETIREES.—Subsection (a) of section 1414 of title 10, United States Code, as amended by section 2(a), is amended—

(A) by striking "a member or" and all that follows through "thirteen") and inserting "a qualified retiree;"

(B) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(2) QUALIFIED RETIREES.—For purposes of this section, a qualified retiree, with respect to any month, is a member or former member of the uniformed services who—

(A) is entitled to retired pay (other than by reason of section 12731b of this title); and

(B) is also entitled for that month to veterans' disability compensation."  

(2) SPECIAL RULE FOR RETIREES WITH FEWER THAN 20 YEARS OF SERVICE.—Subsection (b)(3) of such section is further amended—

(A) by striking the lessor of the lesser of—

"(A) the amount of the reduction under sections 5304 and 5305 of title 38; or

"(B) the amount (if any) by which the amount of the member's retired pay under such chapter exceeds the amount equal to 2½ percent of the member's years of creditable service multiplied by the member's retired pay under section 112(b)(3) or 117 of this title, whichever is applicable to the member.";

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on January 1, 2014, and shall apply to payments for months beginning on or after that date.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. MIKULSKI, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 247. A bill to establish the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn, New York, and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties, Maryland, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, as we start Black History Month, I rise today to discuss a national hero that I have spoken about many times on the Senate floor. Our introduction of this legislation is a remarkable year for Harriet Ross Tubman in that March 13, 2013 will mark the 100th anniversary of her death. This noteworthy anniversary makes it all the more appropriate for me to talk about Maryland's Harriet Ross Tubman and her dedication to justice, equality and service to this country. It is also why it is important for Congress to take action this year on The Harriet Tubman National Historical Park and The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park Act that I am reintroducing today.

In my career, I have spoken on the Senate Floor, at events in Maryland, in meetings with constituents and with my colleagues about Harriet Tubman's service to this country. It is also why I have taken to discuss the life of this remarkable woman helps raise awareness about her importance to the history of our great Nation, my ultimate goal is to properly commemorate her service here and to the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and, in working with my colleagues from New York, also establish the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn, NY.

For the last 5 years I have championed the legislation I am reintroducing today. I appreciate the active support and work my cosponsors of this bill, Senators MIKULSKI, SCHUMER and GILLIBRAND have put into advancing this bill through the Senate. We all share a deep appreciation for how important establishing these parks is to preserving the legacy of this remarkable historical figure in American History but also to informing current and future abolitionists fighting to end slavery. Tubman became known as "the Moses of her people" by African-Americans and white abolitionists alike. Tubman once proudly told Frederick Douglass that in all of her journeys she "never lost a single passenger." She was so effective that in 1856 there was a $40,000 reward offered for her capture in the South. She is the most famous and most important conductor of the network of resistance known as the Underground Railroad.

During the Civil War, Tubman served the Union forces as a spy, a scout and a nurse. She served in Virginia, Florida and South Carolina. She is credited with leading slaves from those slave states to freedom during those years as well.

Following the Civil War, and the emancipation of all black slaves, Tubman settled in Auburn, NY. There she remained active in the women's suffrage movement, and she also established one of the first incorporated African-American homes for aged to care for the elderly. In 1903 she bequeathed the Tubman Home to the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Auburn where it stands as a monument to Harriet Tubman. Tubman died in Auburn in 1913 and she is buried in the Fort Hill Cemetery. Fortunately many of the structures and landmarks in New York remain intact and in relatively good condition. The Harriet Tubman Service began establishing units dedicated to the lives of African-Americans. Places like Booker T. Washington National
Monument on the campus of Tuskegee University in Alabama, the George Washington Carver National Monument in Missouri, The Buffalo Soldiers at Guadalupe Mountains National Park, the National Historical Trail commemorating the March for Voting Rights from Selma to Montgomery Alabama, and most recently the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial on the National Mall are all important monuments and places of historical significance that help tell the story of the African-American experience.

As the National Park Service continues its important work to recognize and preserve African-American history by providing greater public access and information about the places and people that have shaped the African-American experience, there are very few units dedicated to the lives of African-American women, and there are no National Historical Parks commemorating African-American women. I cannot name a more fitting hero than Harriet Tubman to be the first African-American woman to be memorialized with National Historical Parks that tell both her personal story and her lifelong fight for justice and freedom. Her courageous fight against the cruel institution of slavery and work of the Underground Railroad she led to her work in the women's suffrage movement.

I hope that my colleagues will support my effort to honor Harriet Tubman and support passage of my bill to authorize the creation of the Tubman National Historical Parks in New York and Maryland. These parks will hopefully pave the way for the Park Service to develop more National Historical Parks commemorating the lives of many other important African-American women in our history.

The vision for the Tubman National Historical Parks is to preserve the places and the story of the life of Harriet Tubman and tell her story through interpretative activities and continue to discover aspects of her life and the experience of passage along the Underground Railroad through archaeological research and discovery.

The buildings and structures in Maryland have mostly disappeared. Slaves were forced to live in primitive buildings even though many slaves were skilled tradesmen who constructed the substantial homes of their owners. Not surprisingly, few of the structures associated with the early years of Tubman’s life remain standing today. The landscape of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, however, is still evocative of the time that Tubman lived there. Farm fields and loblolly pine forests dot the lowland landscape, which is also notable for its extensive network of tidal rivers and wetlands that Tubman, and the people she guided to freedom, used as cover in her many escapes and rescues.

In particular, the Eastern Shore of Maryland, including the homestead of Ben Ross, her father, Stewart’s Canal, where she worked, the Brodess Farm, where she worked as a slave, and others are within the master plan boundaries of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge.

Similarly, Poplar Neck, the plantation from which she escaped to freedom, is still largely intact in Caroline County. The properties in Talbot County, immediately across the Choptank River from the plantation, are currently protected by various conservation easements. Were she alive today, Tubman would recognize much of the landscape that she knew intimately as she secretly led black men, women and children to freedom.

There has never been any doubt that Tubman led an extraordinary life. Her contributions to history are unsurpassed by few. Determining the most appropriate way to recognize that life and her contributions, however, has been exceedingly difficult. The National Park Service determined that designated Historical Park that would include two geographically separate units would be an appropriate tribute to the life of this extraordinary American. The New York unit would include the original Tubman buildings in the town of Auburn. The Maryland portion would include large sections of landscapes that are evocative of Tubman’s time and are historically relevant.

Harriet Tubman was a true American patriot. She was someone for whom liberty and freedom were not just concepts but values she fought tirelessly for. She lived those principles and so selflessly helped hundreds of other people attain freedom so, she has earned a nation’s respect and honor.

Harriet Tubman is one of many great Americans that we honor and celebrate every February during Black History Month. In schools across the country, American history curriculums teach our children about Tubman’s courage, conviction, her fight for freedom and her contributions to the greatness of our Nation during a contentious time in U.S. history. Through this bill, we add to Tubman’s legacy by preserving and commemorating the places evocative of Harriet Tubman’s extraordinary life.

Every year, millions of school children, as well as millions of adults, visit our National Historical Parks gain experiences and knowledge about our Nation’s history that simply cannot be found in history books or on the Internet. Our Nation’s strength and character comes from the actions of the American people who have watched and experienced the significant events that shaped our Nation. The National Park Service is engaged in the important work of preserving the places where American history was made and providing a tangible link to our history and future generations to experience and understand.

It is one thing to learn about Harriet Tubman from a book, and it is yet a completely different and fulfilling experience to explore, see, listen to and feel the places she worked and lived. It is a place where she escaped from and where she lived out her life as a free American.

The National Park Service is uniquely suited to honor and preserve these places of historical significance and I urge my colleagues to join me in preserving and growing the legacy of Harriet Tubman by establishing the Harriet Tubman National Historical Parks in her home state of Maryland.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 247

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE. This Act may be cited as the "Harriet Tubman National Historical Parks Act".

SEC. 2. HARRIET TUBMAN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, MARYLAND.

(a) Definitions.—In this section:

(1) HISTORICAL PARK.—The term "historical park" means the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park established by subsection (b)(1)(A).

(2) MAP.—The term "map" means the map entitled "Authorized Acquisition Area for the Proposed Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park", numbered T20/80,001, and dated July 2010.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Interior.

(4) STATE.—The term "State" means the State of Maryland.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), there is established the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties, Maryland, as a unit of the National Park System.

(B) DETERMINATION BY SECRETARY.—The historical park shall not be established until the date on which the Secretary determines that a sufficient quantity of land, or interests in land, has been acquired to constitute a manageable park unit.

(C) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary makes a determination under subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register notice of the establishment of the historical park, including an official boundary map for the historical park.

(D) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The official boundary map published under subparagraph (C) shall be on file and available for public inspection in appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(c) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the historical park is to preserve and interpret for the benefit of present and future generations the historical, cultural, and natural resources associated with the life of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.

(d) LAND ACQUISITION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may acquire land and interests in land within the areas depicted on the map as "Authorized Acquisition Areas" by purchase from willing sellers, donation, or exchange.

(B) BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.—On acquisition of land or an interest in land under subparagraph (A), the boundary of the historical park shall be adjusted to reflect the acquisition.

(e) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the historical park in accordance
with this section and the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—
(A) the National Park System Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.); and
(B) the Act of August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

(2) INTERAGENCY AGREEMENT.—Not later than the date on which the historical park is established, the Director of the National Park Service and the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service shall enter into an agreement to allow the National Park Service to provide for public interpretation of historic resources located within the boundary of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge that are associated with the life of Harriet Tubman, consistent with the management requirements of the Refuge.

(d) INTERPRETIVE TOURS.—The Secretary may provide interpretive tours to sites and resources located outside the boundary of the historical park in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties, Maryland, relating to the life of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.

(4) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—
(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with the State, political subdivisions of the State, colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, and individuals—
(i) to mark, interpret, and restore nationally significant historic or cultural resources relating to the life of Harriet Tubman or the Underground Railroad within the boundary of the historical park, if the agreement provides for reasonable public access; or
(ii) to conduct research relating to the life of Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad.

(B) VISITOR CENTER.—The Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with the State, political subdivisions of the State, colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, and individuals—

(i) to provide for National Park Service visitor and interpretive facilities for the historical park; and
(ii) to provide to the Secretary, at no additional cost, sufficient office space to administer the historical park.

(C) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—

(1) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the total cost of any activity carried out under this paragraph shall not exceed 50 percent.

(ii) FORM OF NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out an activity under this paragraph may be in the form of in-kind contributions or goods or services fairly valued.

(d) GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this section, the Secretary shall prepare a general management plan for the historical park in accordance with section 12(b) of the National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1a–7(b)).

(2) CONSULTATION.—The general management plan shall be prepared in consultation with the State (including political subdivisions of the State).

(3) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall coordinate the preparation and implementation of the management plan with—

(A) the National Park System Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.);
(B) the Act of August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.);
(C) the National Historical Park Proposed Boundary Map on the map entitled “Harriet Tubman National Historical Park Proposed Boundary Map”; and
(D) the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

SEC. 3. HARRIET TUBMAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, AUBURN, NEW YORK.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) HISTORICAL PARK.—The term “historical park” means the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park established by subsection (b)(1)(A).

(2) HOME.—The term “Home” means the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc., located in Auburn, New York.

(3) MAP.—The term “map” means the map entitled “Harriet Tubman National Historical Park”, numbered T18R/80,000, and dated March 2009.

(b) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(c) STATE.—The term “State” means the State of New York.

(b) HARRIET TUBMAN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK ESTABLISHED.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), there is established the Harriet Tubman National Historical Park in Auburn, New York, as a unit of the National Park System.

(B) DETERMINATION BY SECRETARY.—The historical park shall be established on the date on which the Secretary determines that a sufficient quantity of land, or interests in land, has been acquired to constitute a manageable park unit.

(C) NOTICE.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary makes a determination under subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register notice of the establishment of the historical park.

(D) MAP.—The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(2) BOUNDARY.—The historical park shall include the Harriet Tubman Home, the Tubman Home for the Aged, the Thompson Memorial AME Zion Church and Rectory, and associated land, as identified in the area entitled “National Historical Park Proposed Boundary Map” on the map.

(3) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the historical park is to preserve and interpret for the benefit of present and future generations the historical, cultural, and natural resources associated with the life of Harriet Tubman.

(4) LAND ACQUISITION.—The Secretary may acquire land and interests in land within the areas depicted on the map by purchase of a willing seller, donation, or exchange.

(c) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the historical park in accordance with the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—

(A) the National Park System Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.);
(B) the Act of August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

(2) INTERPRETIVE TOURS.—The Secretary may provide interpretive tours of sites and resources located outside the boundary of the historical park in Auburn, New York, relating to the life of Harriet Tubman.

(3) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with the owner of any land within the historical park to mark, interpret, or restore nationally significant historic or cultural resources relating to the life of Harriet Tubman if the agreement provides that—

(i) the Secretary shall have the right of access to any public portions of the land covered by the agreement to allow for—

(A) access at reasonable times by historical park visitors to—

(II) interpretation of the land for the public; and

(ii) no changes or alterations shall be made to the land except by mutual agreement of the Secretary and the owner of the land.

(B) RESEARCH.—The Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement for any activity carried out under this paragraph that—

(i) is within the scope of federal cooperative agreements involving religious property or property owned by a religious institution; and

(ii) involves no changes or alterations to the property involved.

(C) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—

(1) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of any activity carried out under this paragraph shall not exceed 50 percent.

(ii) FORM OF NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The non-Federal share of the cost of any activity carried out under this paragraph may be in the form of in-kind contributions or goods or services fairly valued.

(D) ATTORNEY GENERAL.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this section, the Attorney General shall issue a finding that the establishment of the historical park is consistent with the Establishment Clause of the first amendment to the Constitution.

(ii) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall coordinate the preparation and implementation of the management plan with—

(A) the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Historical Park established by section 2(b)(1); and

(B) the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act, except that not more than $5,000,000 shall be available to provide financial assistance under subsection (c)(3).

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) (by request):

S. 256. A bill to amend Public Law 93–435 with respect to the Northern Mariana Islands, providing parity with Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce, with my colleagues Lisa MURKOWSKI, the Ranking Member on the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, and Pete Domenici, a companion measure was introduced in 2005, that was first introduced by then-Chairman of the Committee on Energy and National Resources. A companion measure was introduced in 2005, that was first introduced by then-Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SEASON 1. AMENDMENT

(a) IN GENERAL.—The first section and section 2 of Public Law 93–435 (48 U.S.C. 1705, 1706) are amended by inserting “the CNMI” wherever the term “the Commonwealth” or “the Northern Mariana Islands,” after “Guam,” each place it appears.

(b) REFERENCES TO DATE OF ENACTMENT.—For the purposes of the amendment made by subsection (a), each reference in Public Law 93–435 to the “date of enactment” shall be considered to be a reference to the date of the enactment of this section.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Hon. Ron Wyden,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, 304 Dirksen Senate Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Dear Chairman Wyden:
One of the legislative issues for this Congress that we discussed at our recent meeting is the conveyance of submerged lands to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. I would like to follow up on our discussion by asking you to consider sponsoring the necessary legislation.

The Energy and Natural Resources Committee did report out a conveyance bill in the last Congress, H.R. 670 as amended, but the Senate did not take action on it. The legislation would be moved quickly as the 113th Congress gets to work.

I am enclosing a draft bill, which reflects the Energy and Natural Resources Committee amendments. I have reached out to Senator Murkowski, as well, asking her to co-sponsor the legislation, as she did with the Chairman Bingaman two years ago; and I am hopeful that this bipartisanism can prevail again.

In the House I will also be introducing the language recommended by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, though the Senate may well be able to act first.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Thank you, too, for having taken the time to meet with me to discuss issues of importance to the CNMI that may come before your Committee in the 113th Congress. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan,
Member of Congress.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico:

S. 259. A bill to assure equity in contracting between the Federal Government and small business concerns, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, I have reintroduced the Assuring Contracting Equity, or ACE Act, with a correction to a drafting error in order to ensure increases in contracting goals for service-disabled veteran owned small businesses and qualified HubZone small businesses. I look forward with my colleagues to address the issues facing entrepreneurs who do business with the Federal Government and hope that we can ensure that more Federal dollars are getting out to main street.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. LAUTENBERG):

S. 261. A bill to establish and clarify that Congress does not authorize persons convicted of dangerous crimes in foreign courts to freely possess firearms in the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce the No Firearms for Foreign Felons Act of 2013. This bill would close a loophole in current law, by ensuring that people convicted of foreign felonies and crimes involving domestic violence cannot possess firearms. We must close this gap in our laws before it is exploited by terrorists, drug gangs, and other dangerous criminals who threaten our communities.

Under current Federal law, people who are convicted in the United States of violent felonies like rape, murder, and terrorism are prohibited from possessing firearms. But under today’s Federal law, the Court also recognized that Congress granted the States ownership of the waters and submerged lands out to three miles under the Submerged Lands Act of 1953. In 1974, Congress granted ownership of these areas to the territories. However, the Federal Government has no history of such near-shore jurisdiction and there is no Federal agency with responsibility for their management.

Congress granted the States ownership of the waters and submerged lands out to three miles under the Submerged Lands Act of 1953. In 1974, Congress granted ownership of these areas to the territories. However, the Federal Government has no history of such near-shore jurisdiction and there is no Federal agency with responsibility for their management.

The CNMI faces huge economic challenges that began with the phase-out of World Trade Organization garment quotas in 2005 and resulted in the departure of garment manufacturing. Gaining ownership of the waters and submerged lands adjacent to their shores, just as those benefits are enjoyed by every other State and territory of the Nation.

The CNMI is the only territory or State that does not have ownership of its adjacent waters and lands out to at least 39 nautical miles under the Submerged Lands Act of 1953. In 1974, Congress granted ownership of these areas to the territories. However, the Federal Government has no history of such near-shore jurisdiction and there is no Federal agency with responsibility for their management.

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The CNMI is the only territory or State that does not have ownership of its adjacent waters and lands out to at least 39 nautical miles under the Submerged Lands Act of 1953. In 1974, Congress granted ownership of these areas to the territories. However, the Federal Government has no history of such near-shore jurisdiction and there is no Federal agency with responsibility for their management.

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As Justice Clarence Thomas noted in his dissent, "the majority's interpretation permits those convicted overseas of murder, rape, assault, kidnapping, terrorism, and other dangerous crimes to possess firearms freely in the United States." But whatever one may think of the Court's ruling, it is now the law of the land.

We must make every effort to close this dangerous loophole and the bill I am introducing today would do just that.

Under this bill, section 921 of Title 18 would be amended to state that "[the term 'any court' includes any Federal, State, or foreign court."

Similar changes would be made in other sections of the Gun Control Act. Where there are references to "state offenses" or "offenses under state law," the bill would expand these terms to include convictions of offenses under foreign law.

In other words, the bill would make it clear that if someone was convicted in a foreign court of an offense that would have disqualified him from possessing a gun in the U.S., then they will be disqualified from gun possession under U.S. law. The only exception will be if there is reason to think the conviction entered by the foreign jurisdiction is somehow invalid.
Under the bill, a foreign conviction will not constitute a “conviction” under the Gun Control Act, if either: the foreign conviction resulted from a denial of fundamental fairness that would violate due process if committed in the United States, or the conduct on which the foreign conviction was based would be legal if committed in the United States.

I expect that these circumstances will be fairly rare, but the bill does take them into account and will provide a complete defense to anyone with an invalid foreign conviction. In any event, it is clear that we should not keep in place a dangerous policy which essentially treats every foreign conviction as invalid.

Ensuring that foreign convictions count as convictions under U.S. law is important for a second reason. When someone with a felony conviction is arrested for another crime, the government may charge that person with being a felon in possession of a firearm, or may seek a sentence enhancement. However, if a foreign conviction is not treated as a conviction under our law, then the defendant may receive a significantly lower sentence than is appropriate given the number of convictions.

Particularly in these times, America cannot continue to give foreign-convicted murderers, rapists, and even terrorists the right to buy firearms in the United States.

With each passing day, we run a risk that foreign felons are exploiting this loophole in our law. This is unacceptable.

Criminals convicted in foreign courts should not be able to have guns when U.S. law forbids those convicted of the same crimes on U.S. soil from possessing guns. We should not wait for lives to be lost before we act to close this loophole.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 262. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide equity for tuition and fees for individuals entitled to educational assistance under the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs who are pursuing educational programs at institutions of higher learning, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. The original GI Bill proved to be a landmark initiative for our troops and an outstanding investment in the future of our nation. The Post-9/11 GI bill, signed into law in 2008, built on the success of the original program by providing helpful and hard-earned educational and economic benefits for our newest generation of veterans.

Just as the veterans of WWII were the engine of economic recovery and expansion in the postwar period, the most recent generation of veterans will continue their service to America by reaching their full educational and economic potential through the Post 9/11 GI Bill.

In January 2011, Congress made further changes to the Post 9/11 GI Bill which caps the amount of education benefits available to veterans enrolled in private colleges at $17,500 and limits the education benefit for veterans enrolled in public colleges to the amount charged for in-state tuition and fees. That seemed reasonable, but what we have learned is that many veterans are not eligible for in-state tuition. And the cost difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition for public universities can be substantial.

Current law unintentionally burdens a significant number of veterans, requiring them to pay thousands of dollars in out of pocket costs for non-resident tuition and fee rates. These costs add up over the course of a college career—so much so that veterans often drop out of college or transfer to another school, with a significant amount of debt and without an actual degree. But veterans at private schools have their tuition covered up to $18,077.

I am introducing the Veterans Equity Act of 2013 to remedy the inequality between benefits for those at a private institution and those at a public school charging out-of-state fees. This bill would allow veterans who are convicted of the same crimes on the state school they attend to receive up to $18,077 in tuition benefits, the same benefit that would be available to that veteran if attending a private institution.

This legislation is supported by American Council on Education, Association of State Colleges and Universities, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, Association of American Universities and the American Association of Community Colleges.

I am deeply concerned that some for-profit institutions may be abusing G.I. tuition payments by aggressively targeting veterans for academic programs that may not provide value to students, such as preparation for future employment. The Veterans Equity Act will help more veterans attend public institutions without significant out of pocket costs.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 262

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE**

This Act may be cited as the “Veterans Education Equity Act of 2013.”

**SEC. 2. PROVISIONS TO ASSURE TUITION AND FEES FOR INDIVIDUALS ENTITLED TO ASSISTANCE UNDER THE POST-9/11 VETERANS EDUCATION PROGRAM WHO ARE PURSUING PROGRAMS OF EDUCATION AT INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING.”**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Clause (i) of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1) of subsection (c) of section 3313 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(i) the actual net cost for tuition and fees assessed by the institution for the program of education after the application of—

(1) any waiver of, or reduction in, tuition and fees; and

(2)(bb) any scholarship, or other Federal, State, institutional, or employer-based aid or assistance (other than loans and any funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a) that is provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees; or

(II) the greater of—

(aa) the actual net cost for in-State tuition and fees assessed by the institution for the program of education after the application of—

(1) any waiver of, or reduction in, tuition and fees; and

(bb) any scholarship, or other Federal, State, institutional, or employer-based aid or assistance (other than loans and any funds provided under section 401(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a) that is provided directly to the institution and specifically designated for the sole purpose of defraying tuition and fees; or

(II) the amount equal to—

(1) for the academic year beginning on August 1, 2011, $17,500; or

(2) for any subsequent academic year, the amount in effect for the previous academic year under this subclause, as increased by the percentage increase equal to the most recent percentage increase determined under section 3015(h) of this title.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to the payment of educational assistance for an academic year beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 265. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants for community-based mental health infrastructure improvement; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I introduce, along with my colleague, Senator STABENOW, the Community Based Mental Health Infrastructure Improvements Act.

According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, a survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration in 2011, Rhode Island has the highest rate of serious mental illness among adults in the country. According to this survey, approximately 7.2 percent of adults aged 18 or older in my state have a serious mental illness, above the 4.6 percent national average. Too often, the stigma of mental illness prevents individuals from seeking diagnosis and treatment, unfortunately, states like Rhode Island have made strides in meeting this challenge.

In Rhode Island, mental health parity laws have been on the books since 2001. Similarly, Rhode Island’s Medicaid program, RiteCare, covers mental and behavioral health care for low-income children and families.
Those who need this treatment must have access to it. Community Mental Health Centers play a vital role in helping individuals get the mental and behavioral health care that they need to lead healthier, more productive lives. In 2012, Community Mental Health Centers in Rhode Island treated approximately 45,000 individuals at over 1 million distinct encounters. Next year, the number of individuals treated by Community Mental Health Centers will likely increase, as over 50,000 Rhode Islanders gain access to health insurance.

As more Americans across the country gain access to health insurance, these centers and other providers will see an increased caseload. Yet, many Community Mental Health Centers are in outdated and outdated facilities that make it difficult to provide the optimal level of care.

The Community Based Mental Health Infrastructure Improvements Act we are introducing today would support the necessary repairs, upgrades, and expansions of some facilities, and the construction of entirely new facilities in other instances in order to meet the growing demand.

I am pleased that this legislation has also been included in a broader bill, the Excellence in Mental Health Act, which I joined Senators STABENOW, BLUNT, BOXER, COLLINS, LEAHY and RUBIO in introducing today, to make other updates to the way Community Mental Health Centers are reimbursed for services. I look forward to working with my colleagues to address the critical needs of our mental and behavioral health care delivery system.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 26—RECOGNIZING THAT ACCESS TO HOSPITALS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FOR PATIENTS IN RURAL AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SURVIVAL AND SUCCESS OF COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MORAN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. Res. 26

Whereas access to quality health care services offers better health care to individuals in the United States can remain in the communities they call home and whether their children will return to those communities to raise families of their own;

Whereas more than 60,000,000 individuals in rural areas of the United States rely on rural hospitals and other providers as critical access points to health care;

Whereas rural areas of the United States need quality health care services to attract and retain business and industry;

Whereas key health care issues in the United States survive and flourish, Congress must address the unique health care needs of individuals in rural areas of the United States;

Whereas individuals in rural areas of the United States are, per capita, older, poorer, and sicker than individuals in urban areas of the United States;

Whereas, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, “rural areas create higher health care costs and uninsured, and millions of rural Americans have limited access to a primary care provider;”

Whereas, according to the Department of Agriculture, individuals in rural areas of the United States have higher rates of age-adjusted mortality, disability, and chronic disease than individuals in urban areas of the United States;

Whereas the 20 percent of the population of the United States that lives in rural areas is scattered over 90 percent of the landmass of the United States;

Whereas the geography and weather of rural areas of the United States can make accessing health care difficult, and cultural, social, and language barriers compound rural health challenges;

Whereas individuals in rural areas of the United States recognize that access to television and radio is not support a full-service hospital, are critical to the survival and success of communities in the United States;

Whereas, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, “rural areas of the United States are designated as primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (commonly referred to as “HPSAs”);

Whereas rural and other Health Centers have fewer than half as many primary care physicians per 100,000 people as urban areas of the United States;

Whereas access to health care continues to be a major challenge in rural areas of the United States, as:

(1) 77 percent of the 2,050 rural counties in the United States are designated as primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (commonly referred to as “HPSAs”);

(2) rural and other Health Centers and in which Medicare patients make up a significant percentage of hospital inpatient days or discharges; and

(3) a program established in 1997 to support limited-service hospitals that, being located in rural areas of the United States that cannot support a full-service hospital, are critical access points to health care for rural patients;

Whereas hospitals in rural areas of the United States achieve high levels of performance, due to the geographic isolation in which Medicare patients make up a significant percentage of hospital inpatient days or discharges;

Whereas the output of a rural community’s economy; and

(2) recognizes that preserving and strengthening access to quality health care in rural areas of the United States is crucial to the success and prosperity of the United States;

Whereas the geography and weather of rural areas of the United States that rural areas of the United States are integral to the local economies and are one of the largest types of employers in rural areas of the United States; and

(5) celebrates the many dedicated medical professionals across the United States who work hard each day to deliver quality care to the 1 in 5 people in the United States living in rural areas, because the dedication and professionalism of those medical professionals preserves the quality of life and sense of community enjoyed and cherished by individuals in rural areas of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 27—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 4 THROUGH 8, 2013, AS “NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK”

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. LEVIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. Res. 27

Whereas the American School Counselor Association has designated the week of February 4 through 8, 2013, as “National School Counseling Week”;

Whereas the importance of school counseling has been recognized through the inclusion of elementary- and secondary-school counseling programs in amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6391 et seq.); and

(2) recognizes that strengthening access to hospitals and other health care providers for patients in rural areas of the United States makes Medicare more cost-effective and improves health outcomes for patients;

Whereas the 20 percent of the population of the United States are, per capita, older, poorer, and sicker than individuals in urban areas of the United States;

Whereas individuals in rural areas of the United States (2) recognizes that preserving and strengthening access to quality health care in rural areas of the United States is crucial to the success and prosperity of the United States;

Whereas hospitals in rural communities play a vital role in caring for the residents of those communities and preserving the specialty of life that communities in the United States foster; and

Whereas the average Critical Access Hospital, a limited-service rural health care facility, generates approximately $2,700,000 in total revenue; and

Whereas the 20 percent of the population of the United States that lives in rural areas is scattered over 90 percent of the landmass of the United States;