

(Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 819, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 1006

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1006, a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation, and for other purposes.

S. 1124

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1124, a bill to grant the Director of the United States Marshals Service authority to appoint criminal investigators in the excepted service.

S. 1218

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1218, a bill to promote Federal employment for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 1358

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1358, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the treatment of certain direct primary care service arrangements and periodic provider fees.

S. 1588

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1588, a bill to secure Federal voting rights of persons when released from incarceration.

S. 1650

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1650, a bill to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to award grants to support the access of marginalized youth to sexual health services, and for other purposes.

S. 1693

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1693, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify that section 230 of that Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sex trafficking.

S. 1774

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1774, a bill to provide protections for workers with respect to their right to select or refrain from selecting representation by a labor organization.

S. 1873

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Maine

(Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1873, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a program to establish peer specialists in patient aligned care teams at medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2007

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2007, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the exclusion for educational assistance programs.

S. 2186

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2186, a bill to modernize laws and policies, and eliminate discrimination, with respect to people living with HIV/AIDS, and for other purposes.

S. 2274

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2274, a bill to provide for the compensation of Federal employees affected by lapses in appropriations.

S. RES. 363

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 363, a resolution expressing profound concern about the growing political, humanitarian, and economic crisis in Venezuela and the widespread human rights abuses perpetrated by the Government of Venezuela.

S. RES. 367

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 367, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran for its violence against demonstrators and calling for peaceful resolution to the concerns of the citizens of Iran.

S. RES. 368

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 368, a resolution supporting the right of all Iranian citizens to have their voices heard.

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 368, supra.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 2292. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to pro-

hibit oil and gas preleasing, leasing, and related activities in certain areas of the Outer Continental Shelf off the coast of Florida, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I must say, I have seen political games being played with trying to drill off of the coast of Florida. Not only am I appalled—I have recoiled at this political game—but unfortunately I am not surprised because of what we have seen happen in the last 15 hours.

It all started late last week when the Department of the Interior released a new 5-year drilling plan. It virtually had all of the coastal waters—the Outer Continental Shelf of the entire United States—included in this plan, including that area of Florida that is off limits to drilling in law—a law that Republican Senator Mel Martinez and I passed back in 2006 that keeps drilling off of the gulf coast of Florida until the year 2022.

This new proposal would open up nearly all of the Federal waters to drilling, including all of the coastal waters of Florida, both the west coast—gulf coast—and the east coast—the Atlantic—and also the Straits of Florida, those waters that come around the Florida Keys, which is the Gulf Stream that comes right up the southeast coast of Florida. The Gulf Stream then goes out across the Atlantic, past Bermuda, and ends up in Northern Europe.

Well, our colleagues have heard this Senator many times come and talk about how keeping oil rigs away from Florida's coast is an issue that is important to our State because of our tourism economy but also because of the military missions on the west coast—the gulf—as well as the Atlantic.

As a Floridian, this Senator has been fighting this fight ever since the mid-1980s when Secretary of the Interior James Watt intended to drill off the east coast of Florida where we were launching our space shuttle, dropping the solid rocket boosters, and where we were launching our military rockets, taking our clandestine satellites into orbit and dropping the first stages. That is how I beat it back in the 1980s, but lo and behold, here we are again in the same place.

We know you can't allow drilling in the Straits of Florida right off the Florida Keys because an oilspill there would be in the Gulf Stream, and that Gulf Stream hugs the coast of southeast Florida. Can you imagine what it would do to the beaches of the Florida Keys, Miami Beach, and all up the Gold Coast of Florida, all the way to Palm Beach, all the way north to Fort Pierce, where then the Gulf Stream heads farther in a northeasterly direction out into the Atlantic?

Well, let me show you what is happening in the gulf coast. All of this in yellow is what is off limits in the Gulf of Mexico as a result of the 2006 law.

There is an obvious reason for all of this—because this line is known as the Military Mission Line. Everything east of here is the largest testing and training area in the world for the U.S. military. That is why we put this off limits to oil activity.

Oh, by the way, the testing and training mission for the entire Department of Defense is located right here at Eglin Air Force Base, which is where they brought all the pilot training for many nations for the F-35, the new super stealth jet fighter.

Guess what is going on down here in Panama City at Tyndall Air Force Base. That is where we have all the pilot training for our F-22, another one of our stealth fighters.

Down here in Key West, we have the Key West Naval Air Station. They bring in the squadrons of F-18s for the Navy at Boca Chica, which is where the airbase is, and within 2 minutes of lifting off the runway, they are over restricted airspace to do their testing and training.

By the way, what about the rest of the Navy? They bring their amphibious ships in here, going onto the beaches up there by Eglin Air Force Base. And all of the activity is not just on the surface; the testing and training mission is also subsurface because that is part of the Navy's mission as well.

There is ample opportunity to test because from here to here is 300 miles. From here to here is about 300 miles. So there is plenty of room to do this testing. This is the largest testing and training area in the world.

But painfully, over time, we have found another reason, and that was over here off of Louisiana. A little over a decade ago, there was an oilspill. It wasn't any little oilspill; it was the Deepwater Horizon, the BP well that spewed at the surface. At the bottom of the ocean, which was a mile below the surface, it spewed out 5 million barrels of oil before they got it stopped. That was a rig that did not work. There was supposed to be what is called a blowout preventer that was to go in and clamp off the well, and there was a blowout. It was defective. It didn't close off that well at the wellhead 5,000 feet below the surface of the gulf. As a result, 5 million barrels of oil spilled.

What happened to Florida's economy, not even to speak of all the fishing over in Louisiana and Alabama and Mississippi? I will tell you what happened to Florida's economy. Oil came as far east as Pensacola Beach. Photographs of oil completely covering the sugary white sands of Pensacola Beach went around the world. So what did people do? For an entire tourist season, they didn't come to any of the beaches of the gulf coast because they thought there was oil on the beach.

Painfully, that experience—not even to speak of what has been done to our environment and how much oil is still sloshing around down there on the bottom of the gulf—painfully, that experience got in the minds of the businesses

all up and down the gulf coast of Florida.

By the way, over on the east coast—had that oil ever gotten into a current called the Loop Current that comes down and becomes the Gulf Stream, that oil would have ruined the tourism industry all along Florida's southeast coast, from the Keys to Miami Beach, and all the way up to Fort Pierce, FL.

Floridians feel fairly strongly about this. That is why we were fortunate, over a decade ago, in a bipartisan way, to pass a law to keep all of that area I just showed you off limits. We knew what would happen to our tourism—what people subsequently found out with the Deepwater Horizon oilspill—and we knew what would happen to threaten our national security by hampering our ability to do our training and testing.

So, voila, all of a sudden, the Trump administration announces last week that it is going to drill off all of Florida. I have sponsored legislation in the past. I have introduced bills to expand the moratorium on the gulf coast. I have sponsored other legislation to protect Florida. And today I am introducing another bill that would be a permanent ban on drilling off of Florida's coast for exactly the reasons I have just said.

Last week, when the Secretary of the Interior, Secretary Zinke, announced that they were opening up nearly all Federal waters, including all of those around Florida, we, of course, went into fighting mode again. We will fight this, and it will be defeated. It turns out that was just a political stunt because late yesterday—1 day after officially publishing the plan in the Federal Register—Secretary Zinke flew to Florida, met with the Governor of Florida for 20 minutes at the Tallahassee Airport, and suddenly announced that he had now decided to take Florida “off the table.” That sounds like a political stunt.

While many in Florida have seen right through this shameless political stunt, it has opened up a long list of other questions that I have now asked Secretary Zinke to answer in a letter I sent today.

What exactly does “off the table” mean? Is it the whole Eastern Gulf? Half of it? Is it 125 miles off the coast? Does it mean both coasts of Florida? Does it mean just one? What about the Straits of Florida, Secretary Zinke?

What about the seismic surveys? You all have said you are proceeding with that. Are those off the table too? If you are going to take Florida waters “off the table” in this little political stunt that was done 1 day after the Federal Register published this proposed rule, does that mean you are going to eliminate the seismic surveys? There is no reason to expose marine life and endangered species to the harmful impacts of seismic surveys if there aren't any actual plans to drill in the area. So, Mr. Secretary, are you taking those off the table?

What about your statement—it also included another caveat, Mr. Secretary. You said you were “removing Florida from consideration for any new oil and gas platforms.” Well, all of us know that platforms are different from wellheads. So tell me, Mr. Secretary, does that mean there will still be drilling off the coast of Florida, but the platforms themselves might be located just to the west of the Military Mission Line, and the wellhead is going to be underneath and far from that prohibited line? Mr. Secretary, does your change of heart mean that the administration now supports the bipartisan efforts of the Florida delegation to extend the moratorium on drilling in the Eastern Gulf? That is the bill that I am introducing today, and it has been introduced by Congressman Castor in the House of Representatives.

For every day that goes by without answers to these essential questions, the Secretary needs to add that much more time to the public comment period.

The Secretary's promise last night at the Tallahassee Airport, one day after publishing in the Federal Register that Florida is off limits—right now those are just empty words because the only real thing out there that exists is the law that prevents drilling off the gulf coast of Florida for the next 5 years.

The Secretary has proposed a 5-year plan to drill the rest of Florida and to start drilling in 2023 off the gulf coast of Florida.

There is also a law called the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, which spells out a very specific process for developing lease sales in Federal waters. With all of this rush, and now saying that Florida is “off the table,” I fear this announcement of Secretary Zinke's is going to discourage Floridians from commenting on the proposal that was published just this Monday—the one that opened up Florida's entire coastline to drilling—because Floridians have been given false assurances that they are all in the clear. That brings us back to this political stunt: Design a plan for the entire United States, publish it on Monday, and take it back on Tuesday for Florida for political reasons.

Floridians should be aware and they should make their objections known because if they don't, then the administration will try to say that they never heard objections from Floridians. It goes on and on—more political games.

Floridians aren't the only ones who need to know what this means. What about all the other States that have been affected? Did you hear that there is an uproar among the Governors of other coastal States that are in this drilling plan of the administration? They asked: Why, one day later, would you go to Florida and say “We are eliminating it,” but, Secretary Zinke, you didn't exempt my State—all the way from Maine in the North, all the way to Florida on the Atlantic coast,

all the other Gulf States, and then to the west coast of the United States, California all the way up to the State of Washington? It is more games.

People in Maryland, people in Massachusetts, people in the Carolinas are really upset. They ask: Why don't you eliminate the drilling that you are proposing off my State? What about out in California and Oregon and the State of Washington?

The administration and Secretary Zinke shouldn't be playing politics with an issue that is so important to all of our futures, especially so to Florida's future.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 371—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE VALUE OF THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

Mr. FLAKE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 371

Whereas the United States and Mexico share a nearly 2,000-mile long border that spans 4 States of the United States and 6 Mexican states;

Whereas for more than a century the United States and Mexico have maintained and fostered diplomatic ties that in 2017 allow for close cooperation and collaboration on efforts to strengthen security measures along the border, combat drug trafficking and illegal immigration, and facilitate cross-border trade;

Whereas the United States and Mexico have enjoyed economic ties for more than a century that culminated with the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, which opened the Mexican market to the United States and Canada, creating the largest single free trade area in the world;

Whereas before the North American Free Trade Agreement was in effect, in 1993, United States trade in goods with Mexico was worth approximately \$82,000,000,000, and in 2016, United States trade in goods with Mexico was worth approximately \$525,000,000,000;

Whereas the United States has invested approximately \$1,800,000,000 in the Mérida Initiative, which focuses on the disruption of organized criminal groups, institutionalizing the rule of law, creating a 21st-century border, and building resilient communities;

Whereas cooperation between the United States and Mexico to fight drug trafficking and organized crime has grown significantly since the implementation of the Mérida Initiative and security cooperation has intensified since 2008 as trade between the United States and Mexico has boomed;

Whereas the United States intelligence community has worked effectively with its counterparts in Mexico to assist in the arrest of top criminals and drug traffickers, notably Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán who was extradited to the United States by Mexico in 2017;

Whereas Mexico has assisted the United States in extraditing criminals and fugitives of United States law captured in Mexico and such cooperation has increased substantially, with 12 extraditions in 2000 and 79 in 2016;

Whereas Mexico has been an important partner in stanching the flow of illegal migrants from Central America bound for the United States, by deporting hundreds of thousands from Mexico before they reach the United States border;

Whereas Mexico is second to only Canada in energy trade with the United States, provides crude oil to the United States, and imports rapidly growing volumes of both petroleum products and natural gas from the United States;

Whereas recent changes to Mexico's Constitution allow for further cooperation between the United States and Mexico to develop North American energy resources to the benefit of both countries;

Whereas, in 2015, the largest share of business and tourist travelers to the United States were from Mexico;

Whereas the number of United States citizens living in Mexico has steadily increased and exceeded 1,000,000 in 2017, making United States citizens in Mexico the world's largest United States expatriate community;

Whereas Mexico is an active participant in international affairs through its membership in the United Nations and the Organization of American States, and hosted the G-20 Leaders' Summit in 2012;

Whereas the United States and Mexico maintain a robust education exchange program called the United States-Mexico Bilateral Forum on Higher Education, Innovation, and Research that strengthens student mobility between the United States and Mexico, aiming to send 100,000 Mexican students to the United States and 50,000 United States students to Mexico by 2018;

Whereas the Mexico-United States Entrepreneurship and Innovation Council is a bilateral initiative comprised of public and private sector representatives designing new initiatives alongside public policies to enhance regional competitiveness that strengthens the high-impact entrepreneurship system in North America;

Whereas the North American Free Trade Agreement was negotiated 25 years before the date of agreement to this resolution, prior to the advancement of new technologies and economies, such as the E-commerce sector, that are not addressed in the Agreement's chapters; and

Whereas approximately 80 percent of Mexico's exports go to the United States and 47 percent of Mexico's imports come from the United States, making the United States Mexico's most significant trading partner: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) values the bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico and the many benefits derived from cooperation on security, combatting transnational crime, energy, economic engagement, and cultural engagement;

(2) recognizes that implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994, and the resulting increase in trade, has provided a platform on which cooperation with Mexico on so many levels has been possible;

(3) recognizes that Mexico is an essential partner for the United States in regional security and encourages the President to continue to strengthen ties between the United States and Mexico to help advance United States regional interests;

(4) understands that the relationship between the United States and Mexico is strengthened by interaction between people from the United States and Mexico and economic interaction;

(5) encourages United States drug enforcement agencies to continue developing strong cooperative measures with Mexico since efforts to stem the drug trade into the United

States depend on Mexico's cooperation because, among other matters, more than 90 percent of heroin in the United States comes from Mexico;

(6) stresses the importance of the North American Free Trade Agreement to the United States economy and to the bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico; and

(7) encourages the President to work toward modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement in a way that strengthens the Agreement so that it can continue to provide benefits to the peoples of the United States and Mexico and the important bilateral relationship between the United States and Mexico.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I have 2 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 10, 2018, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "America's Water Infrastructure Needs and Challenges."

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, January 10, 2018, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on the following nominations: Kurt D. Engelhardt, of Louisiana, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, Barry W. Ashe, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Louisiana, Howard C. Nielson, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the District of Utah, and James R. Sweeney II, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Indiana.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Summer Lockerbie and Stephen Popick, fellows in my office, be granted privileges of the floor for the remainder of this session of the Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REQUIRING THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES TO CONDUCT A STUDY AND SUBMIT A REPORT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 282, S. 875.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.