

EC-2057. A communication from the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Risk-Based Capital Standards: Construction Loans on Presold Residential Properties; Junior Liens on 1- to 4-Family Residential Properties; and Investments in Mutual Funds. Leverage Capital Standards: Tier 1 Leverage Ratio" (Docket 99-01) received on February 26, 1999; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-2058. A communication from the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, transmitting, a draft of proposed legislation entitled "The Disaster Mitigation Act"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2059. A communication from the Director of the Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Determination That Pre-existing National Ambient Air Quality Standards for PM-10 No Longer Apply to Ada County/Boise State of Idaho" (FRL6237-9) received on March 1, 1999; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2060. A communication from the Director of the Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Modification of the Ozone Monitoring Season for Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee" (FRL6237-6) received on March 1, 1999; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2061. A communication from the Director of the Office of Regulatory Management and Information, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Regulation of Fuels and Fuel Additives: Extension of the Reformulated Gasoline Program to the St. Louis, Missouri Moderate Ozone Nonattainment Area" (FRL6306-1) received on March 1, 1999; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2062. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on flood damage reduction projects for the Beargrass Creek Basin in Louisville, Kentucky; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-2063. A communication from the Director of the Office of Regulatory Management and Information, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Dicamba; Pesticide Tolerance, Technical Correction" (FRL6049-2) received on February 28, 1999; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2064. A communication from the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Raisins Produced From Grapes Grown in California; Increase in Assessment Rate" (Docket FV99-989-2 IFR) received on February 26, 1999; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2065. A communication from the Administrator of the Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Tart Cherries Grown in the States of Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin; Additional Option for Handler Diversion and Receipt of Diversion Credits" (Docket FV99-930-1 IFR) received on March 3, 1999; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-2066. A communication from the Comptroller General of the United States, trans-

mitting, pursuant to law, a report on an instance in which the Air Force did not fully implement a recommendation made by the Office of the Comptroller General in connection to a bid protest concerning workload procurement at the Sacramento Air Logistics Center; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-2067. A communication from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, the President's comprehensive Government-wide Performance Plan for fiscal year 2000; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-2068. A communication from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office's report on the Costs and Benefits of Federal Regulations for 1998; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-2069. A communication from the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the Department of Defense Civilian Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-2070. A communication from the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Prevailing Rate Systems; Removal of Umatilla County, Oregon, from the Spokane, Washington, Nonappropriated Fund Wage Area" (RIN3206-A110) received on March 2, 1999; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-2071. A communication from the Chief Financial Officer of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Bank's annual report under the Inspector General Act for fiscal year 1998; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-2072. A communication from the Chief of the Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Last-in, First-out Inventories" (Rev. Rul. 99-15) received on March 2, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2073. A communication from the Chief of the Regulations Unit, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Rules and Regulations" (Rev. Proc. 99-18) received on March 2, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2074. A communication from the Statutory Chairman and the Administrative Chairman of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on the status of the Commission's recommendations; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2075. A communication from the Chairman of the United States International Trade Commission, transmitting, a draft of proposed legislation to authorize appropriations for the Commission for fiscal year 2000; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-2076. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Proposed Method of Incorporating Health Status Risk Adjusters Into Medicare+Choice Payments" received on March 1, 1999; to the Committee on Finance.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. ALLARD (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ASHCROFT, and Mr. BROWNBACK):

S. 552. A bill to provide for budgetary reform by requiring a balanced Federal budget and the repayment of the national debt; to the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Governmental Affairs, jointly, pursuant to the order of August 4, 1977, with instructions that if one Committee reports, the other Committee have thirty days to report or be discharged.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. KERREY):

S. 553. A bill to provide additional trade benefits to countries that comply with the provisions of the ILO Convention; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CAMPBELL:

S. 554. A bill to amend section 490 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide alternative certification procedures for assistance for major drug producing countries and major drug transit countries; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. DEWINE (for himself and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. 555. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue payment of monthly educational assistance benefits to veterans enrolled at educational institutions during periods between terms if the interval between such periods does not exceed eight weeks; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. JEFFORDS):

S. 556. A bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to establish guidelines for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of post offices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. GRAMS (for himself and Mr. GORTON):

S. Con. Res. 16. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the Government National Mortgage Association guaranty fee should not be increased to provide increased revenues or the Federal Government to offset other expenditures; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. KERREY):

S. 553. A bill to provide additional trade benefits to countries that comply with the provisions of the ILO Convention; to the Committee on Finance.

THE INTERNATIONAL CHILD WELFARE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise today, on behalf of myself and Senator KERREY, to introduce legislation that will chart a new United States approach to the terrible problem of child exploitation in overseas labor markets.

This legislation, the International Child Welfare Protection Act, will target new, additional trade benefits to countries that comply with the provisions of the International Labor Organization's Convention Number 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment, also known as the Minimum Age Convention.

The aim of the Minimum Age Convention is to abolish child labor throughout the world by establishing a minimum age at which children may be employed.

Our legislation will do two things:

It will give the President the authority to grant a country that complies with the Minimum Age Convention up to a fifty-percent tariff rate cut on items produced in that country that would not otherwise be eligible for preferential tariff rates.

It will also permit the President to waive current limitations on the amounts of additional goods that countries complying with the Minimum Age Convention may export to the United States. If, in the unlikely event the President finds that domestic industries are hurt because of these special, targeted trade benefits, the President also has the authority to suspend, limit, or withdraw the benefits.

This legislation is important for three reasons.

First, it is a tragic fact that child labor is rampant in many places in the world, despite more laws aimed at stopping this inhumane practice. International Labor Organization statistics show that between 100 million and 200 million children worldwide are engaged in providing goods and services. Ninety-five percent of these children, according to the ILO, work in developing countries. Why are children pressed into service as low-paid or un-paid workers? Because, according to the ILO, children are "generally less demanding, more obedient, and less likely to object to their treatment or conditions of work." We must all do what we can to stop this unconscionable practice.

The second reason we need this legislation is because it is clear that regulation and enforcement alone will not work. Incentives are needed as well. The reason that it is so tough to enforce child labor standards is that it is often very difficult to trace specific products to specific plants in specific countries. The Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs says that quantifying the extent of child labor in a particular country's export industry "can seldom be done with specificity." If you can't even trace the goods or services with certainty, you can't expect enforcement alone to be the answer.

Finally, we need this legislation because even though the ILO Minimum Age Convention was adopted in 1973, only twenty-one developing country member states out of 173 ILO member states have ratified the Convention to stop child labor. Out of the twenty-one developing country member states that have ratified the Convention, none are from Asia, where over half of all working children are to be found. If even one additional ILO member state ratifies the Convention because of the trade incentives this legislation offers, we have achieved a great deal.

I encourage all my colleagues to join me in this effort.

Mr. KERREY. Mr. President, earlier this morning, Senator GRASSLEY of Iowa introduced a bill that I am a co-sponsor of called the International Child Welfare Protection Act. I would like to talk about that piece of legislation and the objective of that legislation.

I first became aware of this problem through the efforts of the junior Senator from Iowa, TOM HARKIN, who came before the Finance Committee earlier this year to describe the need to put in our trade authority language that would have the negotiators negotiating for the purpose of reducing the use of child labor worldwide. I support that. I believe the Finance Committee should, when we mark up the normal trade authority, put that language in. My hope is that this piece of legislation will provide a stimulus to do that.

This legislation Senator GRASSLEY and I are introducing says that economic growth is not just about the bottom line; it is about improving human lives.

I believe this piece of legislation can help do that, Mr. President, by taking an incentive-based approach to encourage developing countries to do the right thing on child labor. Instead of threatening them with access to U.S. markets, this bill says we are going to hold out an incentive and offer them U.S. markets at a price they currently can't access.

Now, the action we ask them to take in exchange is to sign the International Labor Organization's Convention on Child Labor. That convention states that the minimum age for admission to employment shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling; either 14, 15, or 16 years of age. For that agreement, we will provide preferential access to the world's largest consumer market for additional products.

As I said, I believe this is a good move for the United States to make. I think it does provide incentives, for developing nations especially, to change their own policies toward child labor. But I also think it is important to try to get into our negotiating authority language that directs our negotiators to keep child labor in mind and try to negotiate for the purpose of reducing the use of child labor in nations with which we trade. There should be a connection between trade and growing the middle-class worldwide.

Unfortunately, all too often, trade is measured only in terms of the dollars that we export and the dollars we import. For me, it is far better and more likely that we will have public support for good, open trade policies, if we use trade as a means to an objective, not just to produce a better bottom line, not just to produce higher trade numbers, but to increase the standard of living of people in the United States and to increase the standard of living of people throughout the world.

The single best way for us to assure access for U.S. goods overseas is for us

to help the middle class grow in other countries. The only way to do that is for people to produce and sell goods that other countries want to buy and their own people can afford. It is a very difficult process for developing nations. We went through it in the United States of America. But for those developing nations to lift their middle class, they have to open up their markets and subject their businesses to competition. Otherwise, their standard of living will constantly be depressed as a result of simply saying that we are only going to complete up to the standard of our domestic marketplace.

When I talk about international trade issues, Mr. President, that is the fundamental truth with which I began. Free trade—reducing tariffs both here and abroad—will help the middle class to grow. And a prosperous and growing middle class has a positive effect on the issues we face in trade policy today. Indeed, I argue that it is one of the reasons we have struggled to get normal trade authority from the President. As least as I see it in Nebraska, there is growing skepticism that there is a connection between the standard of living of the people who are in the workforce today and the trade policies.

Many of my citizens have reached a conclusion that there is a negative connection, and that free trade policies have depressed their standard of living and made it more difficult for them to earn the wages they feel they deserve as a consequence of the work they are doing every day. We have many problem in trade policies that make it difficult for us to convince the American people that free trade is unquestionably a good thing. The legislation Senator GRASSLEY and I have introduced today says we want to make progress on these issues.

The International Labor Organization estimates that more than 250 million children worldwide between the ages of 5 and 14 are obliged to work either full-time or part-time in developing countries alone. Many work under condition that are debilitating for their physical, moral, or emotional well-being.

Far too many are employed in the fields, rug factories, and electronic factories that hope to export products to the United States of America. What this bill does is go directly to that desire.

This bill would immediately cause other countries to say, desire.

This bill would immediately cause other countries to say, "We can sell products to the U.S. consumers that we could not sell before. All we have to do is agree to an internationally recognized standard on child labor."

If they sign that agreement today, they gain access to American markets and American dollars tomorrow. It is an approach that has worked for the Europeans. It is an incentive-based, rather than a punitive, approach; it is a trade policy that is increasingly recognized as a better way to proceed on some of these very difficult issues.

We want children to be the beneficiaries of economic growth, not the engines of it. To us, it is evident that it is self-defeating for economic growth to come at the expense of our children.

This bill is a step in the right direction, and I hope it represents to the people I serve that I am willing, in fact, I look forward to coming to the table on these very difficult and sticky trade issues that have divided us in the past.

I hope it is seen, as well, as an important first step—but a first step only—in reducing the terrible consequences of allowing these young children to be used for labor in these developing countries. It is a very important issue that Senator Harkin has worked on for years. He brought it to the attention of the Finance Committee. I believe the committee is responding in a first-step fashion, and I hope they will follow this action with further changes in the negotiating language that will say to our negotiators: we want you to put child labor at the top of your concerns when you are negotiating trade agreement.

By Mr. CAMPBELL:

S. 554. A bill to amend section 490 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide alternative certification procedures for assistance for major drug producing countries and major drug transit countries; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

THE DRUG CERTIFICATION IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, today I introduce the Drug Certification Improvement Act of 1999 to strengthen and improve the annual drug certification process of countries which are fully cooperating with the United States to fight drug trafficking. This bill is based on legislation, S. 457, which I introduced in the 105th Congress.

I am concerned that the current system, in place since 1986, no longer works as Congress intended. As we witnessed last Friday, February 26th, the administration issued its certification for 1999. This certification penalizes only two countries—Burma and Afghanistan—for not fully cooperating with the United States to combat drug trafficking. The administration's certification also granted waivers on national security grounds to four countries—Paraguay, Haiti, Cambodia, and Nigeria—so they will continue to receive United States aid.

This certification, with only two countries sanctioned, raises serious concerns about the viability and effectiveness of the existing certification process and its underlying statutory authority. This concern is reflected in a Washington Post news report of February 27, 1999, which stated: "The Administration's relatively forgiving approach reflects an effort to lower the profile on the certification reviews and thereby reduce the political tensions it has often created."

Under current law, notice provided to the target country is often too late and not specific enough to address the problems. Congress also lacks timely and specific information that would assist in exercising its legislative and oversight responsibilities.

The existing law also gives a free ride to countries which are decertified but then granted waivers and continue to receive aid because it is deemed to be in the national interest of the United States. These waivers allow the provision of aid year after year to countries not fully cooperating with the United States. What incentive do these countries have to improve their cooperation?

The current certification process is set forth in section 490 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. It requires the president to submit to Congress by March 1 of each year a list of major illicit drug producing and transiting countries which he certifies are fully cooperating with the United States.

Under existing law, the president has three options: One, certify a country which has cooperated fully with U.S. anti-drug efforts or has taken adequate steps on its own to comply with the 1988 U.N. anti-drug trafficking convention. Two, decertify a country for not fully cooperating. Or three, decertify a country but provide a waiver because it is in the national interests of the United States to continue to provide aid.

Currently, when a country is decertified, at least 50 percent of U.S. bilateral foreign aid is suspended in the current fiscal year. In fact, that country may lose more than 50 percent of its current funding if the State Department has not yet released the aid. Unless the country is recertified, all U.S. aid is suspended in subsequent fiscal years. And, the United States is required to vote against loans in the multilateral development banks, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank.

Congress has 30 days from receipt of the President's certification to enact a joint resolution disapproving the President's action. If Congress passes such a resolution, the President can veto it and require a two-thirds majority vote in Congress to override the veto. Congress also has its prerogative to pass a resolution at other times, but it too would be subject to a presidential veto.

The alternative I am proposing today would basically put countries "on probation." By putting countries on notice that the United States has serious concerns about their lack of cooperation, it would provide a fair period of time during which those countries could address U.S. concerns.

My legislation builds on the existing carrot and stick approach in the certification process. The carrot is certification although for a finite period of time of 7 months. During this "probationary period," all U.S. aid continues to flow and the United States remains supportive in international develop-

ment banks. The President also stipulates which specific conditions must be met by that country to improve its cooperation with the United States and to continue receiving U.S. aid. Not only is sufficient notice provided to the country, but to the Congress as well.

The stick is a penalty similar to that under existing law. If after 7 months the country does not comply with the stipulations made by the President to improve its cooperation with the United States, 100 percent of U.S. bilateral aid is cut off. The United States also would vote against aid in the multilateral development banks if the country does not comply with U.S. stipulations, as provided for under current law. These penalties would remain in effect until the President notifies Congress that the country has complied with the stipulations made in the President's original probationary certification.

My bill also provides reasonable notice to Congress. Under this alternative, Congress would be informed about those specific concerns which the President identified regarding a country's lack of cooperation. Congress also would be able to track that country's progress during the 7-month probationary period and, of course, maintain its prerogative to pass legislation as it deems necessary. I believe this would help avoid contentious battles between Congress and the administration which appear to be a main reason for the limited certification we see from the administration this year.

It is clear that the existing certification process is flawed. The Drug Certification Improvement Act of 1999 provides a new certification option to fix the process, and I urge my colleagues to support passage of this bill.

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. 554

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

SECTION 1. ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR ASSISTANCE FOR MAJOR DRUG PRODUCING AND DRUG TRANSIT COUNTRIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 490 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291j) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(i) ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—In lieu of submitting a certification with respect to a country under subsection (b), the President may submit the certification described in paragraph (2). The President shall submit the certification under such paragraph at the time of the submission of the report required by section 489(a).

"(2) CERTIFICATION.—A certification with respect to a country under this paragraph is a certification specifying—

"(A) that the withholding of assistance from the country under subsection (a)(1) and the opposition to assistance to the country under subsection (a)(2) in the fiscal year concerned is not in the national interests of the United States; and

"(B) the conditions which must be met in order to terminate the applicability of paragraph (4) to the country.

"(3) EFFECT OF CERTIFICATION IN FISCAL YEAR OF CERTIFICATION.—If the President submits a certification with respect to a country under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year—

"(A) the assistance otherwise withheld from the country pursuant to subsection (a)(1) may be obligated and expended in that fiscal year; and

"(B) the requirement of subsection (a)(2) to vote against multilateral development bank assistance to the country shall not apply to the country in that fiscal year.

"(4) EFFECT OF CERTIFICATION IN LATER FISCAL YEARS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Subparagraph (B) shall apply to a country covered by a certification submitted under this subsection during the period beginning on October 1 of the year in which the President submits the certification and ending on the date on which the President notifies Congress that the conditions specified with respect to the country under paragraph (2)(B) have been met.

"(B) PROHIBITION ON ASSISTANCE.—

"(i) BILATERAL ASSISTANCE.—During the applicability of this subparagraph to a country, no United States assistance allocated for the country in the report required by section 653 may be obligated or expended for the country.

"(ii) MULTILATERAL ASSISTANCE.—During the applicability of this subparagraph to a country, the Secretary of the Treasury shall instruct the United States Executive Director of each multilateral development bank to vote against any loan or other utilization of the funds of such institution to or by the country.

"(5) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'multilateral development bank' shall have the meaning given the term in subsection (a)(2)."

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Subsection (a) of such section is amended by striking "subsection (b)" each place it appears and inserting "subsections (b) and (i)".

By Mr. DEWINE (for himself and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. 555. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to continue payment of monthly educational assistance benefits to veterans enrolled at educational institutions during periods between terms if the interval between such periods does not exceed eight weeks; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

VETERANS' EDUCATION BILL

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Veterans' Education Benefits Equity Act. A similar bill has already been introduced in the House of Representatives by my distinguished Ohio colleague, Congressman NEY.

This legislation would fix an unintended oversight in veterans' educational benefits. Currently, the law stipulates that qualified veterans can receive their monthly educational assistance benefits when they are enrolled at educational institutions during periods between terms, if the period does not exceed 4 weeks. This time period was established to allow enrolled veterans to continue to receive their benefits during the December/January holidays. The problem with the current

time period is that it only covers veterans enrolled at educational institutions on the semester system. Obviously, many educational institutions work on the quarter system, which can have a vacation period of eight weeks between the first and second quarters during the winter holiday season. Consequently, many veterans unfairly lose their benefits during this period because of the institution's course structures.

It is my understanding that some educational institutions which have a sizable veteran enrollment frequently create a one credit hour course on military history or a similar topic specifically geared towards veterans in order for them to remain enrolled and eligible for their educational benefits. Consequently, the cost of extending the current eligibility period to eight weeks would have a minimal, if not negligible, cost.

The Department of Veterans' Administration has recognized the need to correct this oversight and assisted in the drafting of this legislation and fully supports this bill.

I urge my colleagues to support this common sense fix and allow all veterans to received the uninterrupted educational assistance they earned. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the Veterans' Education Benefits Equity Act be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 555

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 Benefits Equity Act of 1999".

SEC. 2. REVISION OF EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE INTERVAL PAYMENT REQUIREMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Clause (C) of the third sentence of section 3680(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(C) during periods between school terms where the educational institution certifies the enrollment of the eligible veteran or eligible person on an individual term basis if (i) the period between such terms does not exceed eight weeks, and (ii) both the term preceding and the term following the period are not shorter in length than the period."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to payments of educational assistance under title 38, United States Code, for months beginning on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. JEFFORDS):

S. 556. A bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to establish guidelines for the relocation, closing, consolidation, or construction of post offices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

THE POST OFFICE AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP ACT OF 1999

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999.

There has been a great deal of debate lately on the importance of letting states and localities make their own decisions. Whether it is with highway funding, the the "ed flex" bill, or legislation to allow states more latitude in establishing rural hospitals, there is increasing sentiment that Washington really doesn't know better—states and localities should find solutions to the problems they know best. It is in the spirit of state and local control that I, along with Senator JEFFORDS, introduce legislation to give citizens a say in Postal Service decisions to open, close, relocate or consolidate post offices.

Since its establishment over 200 years ago, with Benjamin Franklin as the first Postmaster General, the United States Postal Service has faithfully delivered the mail to generations of Americans. Across small town America, the post office is still the center of the community, the glue that holds towns like Livingston and Red Lodge, Montana together.

Unfortunately, Americans all over have suffered as the Postal Service opens, closes, or moves post offices without considering the impact their decision will have on the community.

Today, Senator JEFFORDS and I are introducing legislation to change that. With passage of the Post Office Community Partnership Act, downtown communities will have an increased say in their future. They will have input into Postal Service decisions that affect their communities, and they will be allowed the chance to offer alternatives to Postal Service changes. Under current law, communities have little say when the USPS decides to pull up stakes. Our bill would change that by allowing communities to work with the Postal Service in the decision-making process.

With the exception of some minor changes, this is the same bill that we introduced last spring, the one that received 76 votes of support when it was attached to the Treasury Postal Appropriations bill.

I was pleased when Senator JEFFORDS and I received such overwhelming support for our legislation in the 105th Congress.

However, the amendment was stripped when the Senate and House reconciled their bills; I was very disappointed that the wishes of three in four senators were ignored in passing the final legislation through conference committee.

That small communities across America are reeling from the effects of downtown post office closings is evidence enough that their voices need to be heard, and I am confident that this year we will pass this important bill. I believe that with mutual cooperation, the interests of communities and the Postal Service can be served. The nature—indeed the very name—of this legislation is participation.

We will not give up the fight. For the sake of small communities everywhere,

I will continue to do my utmost to see that their views are heard and accounted for. I am confident that with this bill's passage our communities and this important American institution may begin a new era of cooperation for the good of all involved. And we can put the community back in the Postal Service.

Mr. President, I hope my colleagues will join Senator JEFFORDS and me in passing this important legislation.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss a bill that my colleague Senator BAUCUS and I are reintroducing titled the "Post Office Community Partnership Act of 1999".

Aside from a few technical changes, the bill is similar to the one we introduced in the 105th Congress that was supported by so many of our colleagues in a 76-21 vote last July. Unfortunately our postal language was dropped from the underlying bill during conference with the House. However, I am hopeful that this year our bill will become law. I should add that this year we have coordinated our efforts with Representative BLUMENAUER of Oregon and an identical companion bill is being put forward in both the Senate and the House.

Mr. President, I live in a small town in Vermont. I understand the importance downtowns and village centers play in the identity and longevity of communities. Downtowns are the social and economic hearts of small communities. They are where neighbors catch up on the news, shop, worship, and celebrate national holidays.

Our bill will enable the residents of small villages and large towns to have a say when the Postal Service decides that their local post office will be closed, relocated, or consolidated. Local post offices are important tenants in any vibrant downtown. A recent article in USA Today cited a 1993 study that found that 80 percent of the people who shopped downtown planned their visit around a visit to the post office.

There is much talk in the news today about revitalizing our downtowns and encouraging smart growth. I say to my colleagues, if you want to encourage smart growth, let's start by doing what we can do to keep federal facilities such as post offices in downtowns.

Some of my colleagues may ask why this legislation is necessary. A story from my home state of Vermont will answer that question.

A few years ago the general store on the green in Perkinsville, Vermont went bankrupt and the adjacent post office wanted to leave the small village center for a new building outside of town. By the time the community was aware of the relocation, plans were so far along—the new building had actually been constructed based on the promise of the post office as the anchor tenant—that there was no time to fully investigate in-town alternatives. One elderly resident wrote that in contrast to families now being able to walk to

the post office, "we certainly won't be walking along the busy Route 106 two miles or more to get postal services."

Mr. President, post office closings and relocations are occurring all across the country and especially in small and rural communities. My colleagues will quickly discover similar examples in their own states where the removal of the post office has harmed the economic vitality of the downtown area, deprived citizens without cars of access, and contributed to sprawl.

Mr. President, post offices in Vermont and across the nation are centers of social and business interaction. In communities where post offices are located on village greens or in downtowns, they become integral to these communities' identities. I believe that this legislation will strengthen the federal-local ties of the Postal Service, help preserve our downtowns, and combat the problem of sprawl. I urge my colleagues to join Senator BAUCUS and me in support of this important legislation.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 13

At the request of Mr. SESSIONS, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 13, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide additional tax incentives for education.

S. 493

At the request of Mr. SARBANES, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. ROBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 493, a bill to require the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to evaluate, develop, and implement pilot projects in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina to address problems associated with toxic microorganisms in tidal and non-tidal wetlands and waters.

S. 508

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 508, a bill to prohibit implementation of "Know Your Customer" regulations by the Federal banking agencies.

S. 528

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 528, a bill to provide for a private right of action in the case of injury from the importation of certain dumped and subsidized merchandise.

S. 543

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 543, a bill to prohibit discrimination on the basis of genetic information with respect to health insurance.

AMENDMENT NO. 40

At the request of Mr. ALLARD the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), and the Sen-

ator from Texas (Mr. GRAMM) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 40 proposed to S. 280, a bill to provide for education flexibility partnerships.

At the request of Mr. ROBB his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 40 proposed to S. 280, *supra*.

At the request of Mr. NICKLES his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 40 proposed to S. 280, *supra*.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 16—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE GOVERNMENT NATIONAL MORTGAGE ASSOCIATION GUARANTY FEE SHOULD NOT BE INCREASED TO PROVIDE INCREASED REVENUES

Mr. GRAMS (for himself and Mr. GORTON) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

S. CON. RES. 16

Whereas the Government National Mortgage Association, known as Ginnie Mae, was established as a wholly owned corporation of the United States to facilitate the worldwide sale of investment securities backed by mortgages insured or guaranteed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) or the Veterans Administration (VA), which is now the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas Ginnie Mae assesses a fee to lenders issuing such securities and notes for the guaranty, by Ginnie Mae, of the timely payment to investors of principal and interest of the securities and notes;

Whereas the guaranty fee currently charged by Ginnie Mae, at a rate of 6 basis points, has produced significant net revenue for the Federal Government each year;

Whereas Ginnie Mae is actuarially sound and its reserves are sufficient to protect the taxpayers of the United States from any loss;

Whereas the cost of home ownership is increasing, thereby making the dream of home ownership unattainable for many families in the United States;

Whereas FHA and VA loans are used primarily by first-time and minority homeowners to achieve the dream of home ownership;

Whereas Congress should seek to eliminate barriers to affordable housing and reduce the costs of home ownership; and

Whereas proposals to increase the Ginnie Mae guaranty fee above the current rate, if enacted, would constitute a tax on home ownership, would increase the costs of owning a home, and would ultimately deny many Americans the opportunity to own a home; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring). That it is the sense of the Congress that any increase in the guaranty fee assessed by the Government National Mortgage Association above the rate currently in effect constitutes an unnecessary and unwarranted tax on home ownership that cannot be justified as sound public policy or as necessary for financial soundness of the Government National Mortgage Association and, therefore, should not be used to provide increased revenues for the Federal Government to offset other expenditures.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, today I am submitting a Senate Concurrent