

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, be allowed to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss risk management/crop insurance and possibly other issues before the Agriculture Committee.

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000 at 10 a.m., in open session to receive testimony on the National Security Implications on export controls and to examine S. 1712, the Export Administration Act of 1999.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000, to conduct a hearing on pending nominations.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24 at 9:30 a.m. to conduct an oversight hearing regarding energy supply issues relating to crude oil, heating oil, and transportation fuels. The hearing will examine such issues as the recent price spikes in the Northeast Region as well as predicted gasoline prices during the peak summer months. The committee will examine the short and long term causes as well as the potential fixes.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000 at 10 a.m. to hear testimony regarding Medicare Reform: Issues and Options.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet to conduct a markup on Thursday, February 24, 2000, at 10 a.m., in SD226.

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000, beginning at 9 a.m. in room 428A of the Russell Senate Office Building to hold a hearing entitled "The President's Fiscal Year 2000 Budget Request for the Small Business Administration."

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000 at 2 p.m. to hold a closed hearing on intelligence matters.

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

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Governmental Affairs Committee be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000, 9:30 a.m., for a hearing entitled "Day Trading: Everyone Gambles But The House."

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a hearing.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Forests and Public Lands of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing. The subcommittee will receive testimony on S. 1722, a bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to increase the maximum acreage of Federal leases for sodium that may be held by an entity in any one State, and for other purposes; and its companion bill, H.R. 3063, a bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to increase the maximum acreage of Federal leases for sodium that may be held by an entity in any one State, and for other purposes; and S. 1950, a bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 to ensure the orderly development of coal, coalbed methane, natural gas, and oil in the Power River Basin, Wyoming and Montana, and for other purposes.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sub-

committee on Housing and Transportation of the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000, to conduct a hearing on "HUD's community Builders Program."

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, February 24, 2000 at 2:30 p.m. in open session to receive testimony on Department of Defense Policies pertaining to recruiting and retention in review of the defense authorization request for fiscal year 2001 and the future years defense program.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure be authorized to conduct a hearing on the Army Corps of Engineers FY 2001 budget on Thursday, February 24, at 10 a.m.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Ben Hubbard of my staff be given privileges of the floor throughout the day and for any subsequent votes today.

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

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the privilege of the floor be granted to Scott Kindsvater, an outstanding pilot. He is a major in the Air Force who happens to come from Dodge City, KS, America. He is a congressional fellow from the Air Force, serving in my office in regard to this particular issue.

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

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

THE NEED FOR RESPONSIBLE MILITARY HEALTH CARE REFORM

• Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I wish to express the need to support responsible, significant, military health care reform. I commend the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee and Republican leadership for making enactment of military health care reform a top priority in the Senate.

Our nation's military health care delivery system cries out for strong, meaningful reform. The military health care delivery system is facing some very unique challenges.

One of the critical challenges is how best to reconfigure the military health

care delivery system so that it might continue to meet its military readiness and peace-time obligations at a time of continuous change for our base and force structure. In the process of deciding how to proceed, I met with and heard from many military family members, veterans and military retirees from around the country. I was inundated with suggestions for reform. In every meeting and every letter, I encountered retired service men and women who have problems with every aspect of the military medical care system—with long waiting periods, with access to the right kind of care, with access to needed pharmaceutical drugs, and with the broken promise of lifetime health care for military retirees and their spouses. I heard these concerns expressed as I have traveled across the United States over the past several months.

My distinguished colleagues, the Republican Leader, Senator LOTT, Armed Services Committee Chairman, Senator WARNER, and Ranking Member, Senator LEVIN, introduced a bill that also addresses the military health care system. The bill is S.2087, the "Military Health Care Improvements Act of 2000." I applaud my colleagues in rising to this challenge, and I am pleased to see that portions of legislation I introduced last month were included in their bill. However, I can not cosponsor this legislation because it does not do enough to reform the military health care delivery system for our veterans, especially our oldest veterans, retirees, and survivors.

I have several concerns with the legislation introduced yesterday.

One of the areas of greatest concern among military retirees and their families is the "broken promise" of lifetime medical care, especially for those over-age 65. S. 2087 fails to meet what I think is the most important requirement, the restoration of the broken promise of free lifetime medical care promised to retirees and their families who entered the service prior to June 7, 1956. The major veteran service organizations share my view that the number one priority is to take care of these older military retirees and their spouses who were promised lifetime medical care benefits. I was proud to be an original cosponsor of S.2003 that restores the broken promise given to retirees who entered the service prior to June 7, 1956. I pledge to work with the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Armed Services to fully restore the broken promise to our over-65 military retirees and their families.

In addition, there are some significant differences between S. 2013, the "Honoring Health Care Commitments to Service Members Past and Present Act of 2000" that I introduced in January with Senators COVERDELL, ROBB, HAGEL, JEFFORDS and BINGAMAN, and the health care bill being introduced yesterday.

My legislation would help repair the "broken promise" given to Medicare-

eligible military retirees and their families by restoring their access to military health care that was taken away when they turned 65. Additionally, S. 2013 offers health care options to retirees and would provide additional benefits to active duty servicemembers and their families. The hallmark of this legislation is that it offers several new choices to retirees and their families in their health care delivery services.

S. 2013 was drafted with the help of The Military Coalition and The National Military and Veteran's Alliance. The Military Coalition has strongly endorsed S. 2013, stating, "We applaud your leadership in introducing comprehensive legislation aimed at correcting serious inequities in the military health care benefit."

While S. 2087 promotes enrollment expansion in the Federal Employees Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) demonstration for Medicare eligible beneficiaries, it caps the enrollment levels to just 66,000 personnel. This would preclude world-wide or even nation-wide enrollment, a feature offered in my bill.

Additionally, S. 2087 expands TRICARE Senior Prime sites to only the major medical centers, not nationwide like my bill. This would exclude hundreds of thousands of our retired servicemembers, only addressing the needs of Medicare-eligible retirees and their spouses who happen to live near a small number of hospitals.

Finally, S. 2087 only has a mail-order option for pharmacy requirements of our Medicare-eligible retirees and their families and requires a \$150 deductible. My bill offers both a mail order and a retail pharmacy option. The mail order option only helps Medicare-eligible retirees who require long-term medication like blood pressure pills. However, if the retiree or spouse needs medication in a timely manner, it makes sense for them to be able to drive or walk to their local pharmacy and have their prescription filled. The bill I have offered allows for this option. The one introduced by my colleagues yesterday does not.

Mr. President, I commend my colleagues for their efforts to address many of these important military health care challenges. Not lost on any of us is the urgent need to address the over-age 65 issue since there are reportedly 4,000 World War II, Korean and Vietnam War-era military retirees dying every month. It is imperative that as changes are made to our nation's military force and continue to be made in the future with regard to base structure, that Congress not only stay focused on bringing health care costs under control, but that steps be taken to retain the health care coverage so critical to our nation's active duty personnel, their families, retirees, and survivors. While the world situation necessitates a modified force and base structure transformed for the new millennium, it should not carry with it an

abandonment of the responsibility that our nation has to assist those who have served our country to obtain access to the health care services they need.

Make no mistake, retiree health care is a readiness issue, as well. Today's servicemembers are acutely aware of retirees' disenfranchisement from military health coverage, and exit surveys cite this issue with increasing frequency as one of the factors in members' decisions to leave service. In fact, a recent GAO study found that "access to medical and dental care in retirement" was a significant source of dissatisfaction among active duty officers in retention-critical specialties.

I pledge to work closely with the Armed Services Committee, my respected colleagues from the committee, and from both sides of the aisle who have cosponsored my bill, as well as groups like the Military Coalition and the National Military Veterans Alliance, to work out our differences and not abandon the health care coverage needs of our nation's military retirees, their families, and survivors. We must pass comprehensive military health care reform to fulfill our broken promise to our military retirees while bolstering retention and readiness among today's servicemembers by assuring them that retention promises will be fulfilled once their active service is over.

Mr. President, this year will be, in the words of the Joint Chiefs, the year of health care reform. Whether my legislation, S. 2013—fully supported by the major veteran service organizations representing over 9 million members—is successful or not will depend on several factors: Congress' ability to realize real health care reform and provide the necessary resources, the Pentagon's ability to work with private industry to control costs on pharmaceuticals and health insurance plans, and the military retirees who utilize the system coming together and galvanizing support for the future of military health care. We can not abandon the "greatest generation" who are responsible for the successes and riches we currently enjoy in this great country.●

IN MEMORY OF "PEANUTS" CREATOR CHARLES SCHULZ

● Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, on February 12, we lost the creator of the world's most popular comic strip, Charles Schulz. The "Peanuts" comic strip was a daily staple for millions of people—not only in America but around the world.

While Charles Schulz' legions of fans mourn the loss of his creative genius, he was also a man with a wonderful family who cared deeply about him. I want to express my deep sympathy to his wife, Jeanne Schulz, his five children (Monte, Craig, Meredith, Amy, and Jill), his two stepchildren and 18 grandchildren. Our hearts are with you.

For half a century, the "Peanuts" comic-strip has been part of the fabric