

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
H.R. 3210

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the majority leader, after consultation with the Republican leader, may turn to the consideration of H.R. 3210, the terrorism insurance bill, and that it be considered under the following limitations: That the Dodd-Sarbanes-Schumer substitute be agreed to for purposes of original text; that there be a time limitation of 3 hours for debate on the bill and 1 hour for debate on each amendment equally divided in the usual form; that the only amendments in order be relevant to terrorism insurance; that in addition to a managers' amendment, the following be the only amendments in order: Senator HOLLINGS, relevant; Senator NELSON of Florida, relevant; Senator WYDEN, relevant; Senator LEAHY, relevant; that Senator LOTT, or his designee, be permitted to offer four first-degree amendments; that relevant second-degree amendments be in order and limited to 30 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form; that upon the disposition of these amendments and the conclusion or yielding back of debate time, the bill be read a third time and the Senate vote, without any intervening debate, on final passage of the bill.

I would say that I have been advised, and certainly this has been the case in the past, that Senator LOTT, the Republican leader, would offer a counter to this agreement. I would simply say this is how we would like to go forward. This is what we have been asked to have cleared on our side for a long period of time. We have done that. It is cleared on our side.

I think it is a shame that we are not going to be able to get this approved. I believe this is something that is critical to be done. I am disappointed we will not be able to do that.

As I have indicated in relation to the hate crimes unanimous consent request, the Republicans have indicated that if I did offer this tonight, they would object. As I have said, there is absolutely no reason at this late hour that somebody wait because this would have taken an hour or two for them to wait around, and that was not necessary. So on behalf of the minority, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

(Mr. REID assumed the chair.)

TERRORISM REINSURANCE
LEGISLATION

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, the hour is late, and I am not going to speak but a couple of minutes, just to lay the predicate for the subject that the distinguished Senator from Nevada has just raised, to which the Republican minority has entered an objection—the bill on providing Federal backup for the terrorism risk the insurance industry would assume.

I am assuming that eventually we will get some agreement to bring this legislation to the floor. I want the record to reflect that it is the considered judgment of this Senator, with the experience I have had in my former public service as insurance commissioner of Florida, that there needs to be some considerable tightening of this legislation, and the majority leader and the assistant majority leader have been kind enough to indicate that I will be protected in order to offer one of the amendments.

That amendment would simply be to make sure the rates are frozen on any further rate hike until the actuarial soundness can be determined of what should be the rate with regard to the terrorism risk. The problem for determining that is the fact that there is no data—very little, except for the data we now have from September 11, and that is the only experience we have, save the earlier decade of the nineties and the attempt at bombing the World Trade Center. Therefore, it is very difficult to determine what is an adequate rate. Because it is difficult, it is also easy to jack the rates up sky high.

So that is the burden I will come to the floor to try to address.

If the Republican minority ever releases their objection to this legislation, then we need to perfect this legislation so that the ratepayers, the consumers, are not paying a much higher rate for the terrorism risk than is justified by actuarial soundness.

I thank the assistant majority leader for presiding so I could come down to make this statement. I look forward to working with the leadership on this issue.

I yield the floor.

(Mr. NELSON of Florida assumed the chair.)

DESIGNATING APRIL 30, 2002, AS
“DIA DE LOS NINOS: CELEBRATING YOUNG AMERICANS”

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 355, S. Res. 249.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will state the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 249) designating April 30, 2002, as “Dia de los Ninos: Celebrating Young Americans,” and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to, en bloc, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, and any statements regarding this matter be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 249) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 249

Whereas many nations throughout the world, and especially within the Western

hemisphere, celebrate “Dia de los Niños” on the 30th of April, in recognition and celebration of their country’s future—their children;

Whereas children represent the hopes and dreams of the people of the United States;

Whereas children are the center of American families;

Whereas children should be nurtured and invested in to preserve and enhance economic prosperity, democracy, and the American spirit;

Whereas Hispanics in the United States, the youngest and fastest growing ethnic community in the Nation, continue the tradition of honoring their children on this day, and wish to share this custom with the rest of the Nation;

Whereas 1 in 4 Americans is projected to be of Hispanic descent by the year 2050, and there are, in 2002, approximately 12.3 million Hispanic children in the United States;

Whereas traditional Hispanic family life centers largely on children;

Whereas the primary teachers of family values, morality, and culture are parents and family members, and we rely on children to pass on these family values, morals, and culture to future generations;

Whereas more than 500,000 children drop out of school each year and Hispanic dropout rates are unacceptably high;

Whereas the importance of literacy and education are most often communicated to children through family members;

Whereas families should be encouraged to engage in family and community activities that include extended and elderly family members and encourage children to explore, develop confidence, and pursue their dreams;

Whereas the designation of a day to honor the children of the Nation will help affirm for the people of the United States the significance of family, education, and community;

Whereas the designation of a day of special recognition of children of the United States will provide an opportunity to children to reflect on their future, to articulate their dreams and aspirations, and find comfort and security in the support of their family members and communities;

Whereas the National Latino Children’s Institute, serving as a voice for children, has worked with cities throughout the country to declare April 30 as “Dia de los Niños: Celebrating Young Americans”—a day to bring together Latinos and other communities nationwide to celebrate and uplift children; and

Whereas the children of a nation are the responsibility of all its people, and people should be encouraged to celebrate the gifts of children to society—their curiosity, laughter, faith, energy, spirit, hopes, and dreams: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 30, 2002, as “Dia de los Niños: Celebrating Young Americans”; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to join with all children, families, organizations, communities, churches, cities, and States across the Nation to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies, including—

(A) activities that center around children, and are free or minimal in cost so as to encourage and facilitate the participation of all our people;

(B) activities that are positive, uplifting, and that help children express their hopes and dreams;

(C) activities that provide opportunities for children of all backgrounds to learn about one another’s cultures and share ideas;

(D) activities that include all members of the family, and especially extended and elderly family members, so as to promote greater communication among the generations within a family, enabling children to appreciate and benefit from the experiences and wisdom of their elderly family members;

(E) activities that provide opportunities for families within a community to get acquainted; and

(F) activities that provide children with the support they need to develop skills and confidence, and find the inner strength—the will and fire of the human spirit—to make their dreams come true.

DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF APRIL 29–MAY 3, 2002, AS “NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK”

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 254, submitted earlier today by Senators LIEBERMAN, GREGG, CARPER, and HUTCHINSON of Arkansas.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will state the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 254) designating April 29, 2002, through May 3, 2002, as “National Charter Schools Week,” and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I am proud to join my colleagues, Senators GREGG, CARPER, HUTCHINSON, and BAYH in introducing this resolution today to salute the success of public charter schools in our country and to designate April 29, 2002 through May 3, 2002, as National Charter Schools Week.

This week also marks the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Nation's first charter school. Since the City Academy in St. Paul, MN, was founded, the idea has been catching on.

From seeing several charter schools up close, I am convinced that they represent one of the most promising engines of education reform in the country today. Charter schools grant educators freedom from top-heavy bureaucracies and their red tape in exchange for a commitment to meet high academic standards. In 1994, I was proud to join my colleague Dave Durenberger of Minnesota as sponsor of the bill authorizing the Federal Charter School Grant Program, which Congress passed with strong bipartisan majorities and which has provided more than \$750 million since then for planning, startup and implementation of charter schools.

I also think it's important to note in many cases charter schools are built from the ground up by educational entrepreneurs, teachers, parents and local leaders seeking to reinvent the public school and take it back to the future, reconnecting public education to some of our oldest, most basic values—responsibility, opportunity, community, and refocusing its mission on doing what's best for the child instead of what's best for the system.

The results speak for themselves. Today, over 500,000 students attend more than 2,400 charter schools in 34 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. And, nationwide charters schools have combined waiting lists long enough to fill another 1,000 schools. Parents and educators in turn have given these programs overwhelmingly very high marks. Growing research shows that charter schools are effectively serving diverse populations, particularly many of the disadvantaged and at-risk children that traditional public schools have struggled to educate.

Despite our achievements to date, we cannot rest on our laurels. We must strive to increase options, and replicate successes. Recently, some skeptics have criticized what they see as a slow down in the growth of charter schools and an increase in the number of schools that have closed. Although the hundreds of families on waiting lists clearly refutes these skeptics, we must rightly maintain our vigilance to ensure that charter schools reach our high academic expectations and demand accountability from those that our failing their students.

Unfortunately in too many cases, charter schools are the victims of poorly drafted charter school laws and inadequate funding. I am pleased that many of the reforms enacted under the recently signed No Child Left Behind Act will further strengthen the academic performance of charter schools and help put them on firmer fiscal footing. Recognizing that greater choice and accountability enhances our public education system, I recently urged all American colleges and universities to create charter schools. Parents are crying out for more high-quality public school options that prepare their children for college, and colleges are perfectly positioned to help.

The most remarkable aspect of the charter movement may be that it has managed to bring together educators, parents, community activists, business leaders and politicians from across the political spectrum in support of a common goal to better educate our children by offering more choice, more grassroots control and more accountability within our public schools. I am proud to salute these growing community efforts throughout our nation, and commend these frontline educational innovations for their commitment to expanding educational options for American families to ensure that all children reach high levels of academic achievement.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to, en bloc, the motion to reconsider be laid on the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements thereto be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 254) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 254

Whereas charter schools are public schools authorized by a designated public body and operating on the principles of accountability, parental involvement, choice, and autonomy;

Whereas in exchange for the flexibility and autonomy given to charter schools, they are held accountable by their sponsors for improving student achievement and for their financial and other operations;

Whereas 37 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have passed laws authorizing charter schools;

Whereas 37 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico will have received substantial assistance from the Federal Government by the end of the current fiscal year for planning, startup, and implementation of charter schools since their authorization in 1994 under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.);

Whereas 34 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico are serving more than 500,000 students in more than 2,431 charter schools during the 2001-2002 school year;

Whereas charter schools can be vehicles for improving student academic achievement for the students who attend them, for stimulating change and improvement in all public schools, and for benefiting all public school students;

Whereas charter schools must meet the same Federal student academic achievement accountability requirements as all public schools, and often set higher and additional goals, to ensure that they are of high quality and truly accountable to the public;

Whereas charter schools assess and evaluate students annually and often more frequently, and charter school student academic achievement is directly linked to charter school existence;

Whereas charter schools give parents new freedom to choose their public school, charter schools routinely measure parental approval, and charter schools must prove their ongoing and increasing success to parents, policymakers, and their communities;

Whereas two-thirds of charter schools report having a waiting list, the average size of such a waiting list is nearly one-half of the school's enrollment, and the total number of students on all such waiting lists is enough to fill another 1,000 average-sized charter schools;

Whereas students in charter schools nationwide have similar demographic characteristics as students in all public schools;

Whereas charter schools in many States serve significant numbers of students from families with lower income, minority students, and students with disabilities, and in a majority of charter schools almost half of the students are considered at risk or are former dropouts;

Whereas charter schools have enjoyed broad bipartisan support from the Administration, Congress, State Governors and legislatures, educators, and parents across the Nation; and

Whereas charter schools are laboratories of reform and serve as models of how to educate children as effectively as possible: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 29, 2002, through May 3, 2002, as “National Charter Schools Week”;

(1) honors the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Nation's first charter school;