

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today as ranking member of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I offer the Women's Business Center Safeguard Act, legislation to fix a funding gap that exists for the most experienced meritorious women's business centers.

I would first like to express my sincere disappointment that the Republican majority refused to include the bipartisan women's business center compromise that was agreed to by Chair SNOWE and the bipartisan leadership of the House Small Business Committee, and, in the best interest of women business owners across the country, I urge them to reconsider.

I also want to comment on the Bush administration's proposals to eliminate experienced, efficient, and effective women's business centers in favor of new, untested, and inexperienced centers. Moving forward with the administration's proposal and failing to correct this funding gap immediately would jeopardize women's business centers in 39 States and eliminate assistance for thousands of women in business. While, as my bill demonstrates, I support opening new centers to help women entrepreneurs who do not currently have access to this important assistance, this should only occur when the existing centers, whether in their initial or a later funding period, are fully funded. The administration's policy to sacrifice successful, experienced centers in the interest of opening new centers is unwarranted and unwise. Women entrepreneurs and their businesses are critically important to our economy and to U.S. job creation, and women's business centers help them succeed. I intend to continue to advocate on their behalf.

This legislation contains a small adjustment to the Women's Business Center program that updates an outdated funding formula, without added cost to the Treasury. The adjustment changes the portion of funding allowed for women's business centers in the sustainability part of the program to keep up with the increasing number of centers that will need funding this fiscal year. In short, this change directs the SBA to reserve 54 percent of the appropriated funds for the sustainability centers, instead of 30 percent, which will allow for full funding of the most experienced centers, while still allowing for new centers and protecting existing ones.

Currently there are 88 women's business centers. Of these, 35 are in the initial grant program and 53 will have graduated to the sustainability part of the program in this funding cycle. These sustainability centers make up more than half of the total women's business centers, but under the current funding formula are only allotted 30 percent of the funds. Without the change to 54 percent, all grants to sustainability centers could be cut in half—or worse, 23 experienced centers could lose funding completely. Cutting

funding for these, our most efficient and successful centers, would not only be detrimental to the centers themselves, but also to the women they serve, to their local communities, to their States, and to the national economy.

As the author of the Women's Business Centers Sustainability Act of 1999, I can tell you that when the bill was signed into law, it was Congress's intent to protect the established and successful infrastructure of worthy, performing centers. The law was designed to allow all graduating Women's Business Centers that meet certain performance standards to receive continued funding under sustainability grants. This approach allows for new centers to be established—but not by penalizing those that have already demonstrated their worth. It was our intention to continue helping the most productive and well-equipped women's business centers, knowing that demand for such services was rapidly growing.

Today, with women-owned businesses opening at one-and-a-half times the rate of all privately held firms, the demand and need for women's business centers is even greater. Until Congress makes permanent the Women's Business Center Sustainability Pilot Program, as intended in Senate-passed legislation, an extension of authority and increase in sustainability funds is vital—not only to the centers themselves, but to the women's business community and to the millions of workers employed by women-owned businesses around the country.

This bill is necessary to continue the good work of SBA's Women's Business Center network, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it and its inclusion as part of any extension of SBA programs. I ask that the full text of this bill be printed in the RECORD.●

The bill follows.

S. 2266

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 "Women's Business Center Safeguard Act".

SEC. 2. WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 29(k) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(k)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following:

“(C) FUNDING PRIORITY.—Subject to available funds, and reservation of funds, the Administration shall, for each fiscal year, allocate—

“(i) \$150,000 for each women's business center established under subsection (b), except for any center that requests a lesser amount;

“(ii) from the remaining funds, not more than \$125,000, in equal amounts, to each women's business center established under subsection (1), to the extent such funds are reserved under subsection (k)(4)(A), except for any center that requests a lesser amount; and

“(iii) any funds remaining after allocations are made under clauses (i) and (ii) to new eligible women's business centers and eligible women's business centers that did not receive funding in the prior fiscal year under subsection (b).”; and

(2) in paragraph (4)(A), by adding at the end the following:

“(v) For fiscal year 2004, 54 percent.”.

(b) SUNSET DATE.—The amendments made by this section are repealed on October 1, 2004.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mr. DOMENICI, and Mr. CHAFEE):

S. 2267. A bill to amend section 29(k) of the Small Business Act to establish funding priorities for women's business centers; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2267

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 “Women's Sustainability Recovery Act of 2004”.

SEC. 2. WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 29(k) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(k)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following:

“(C) FUNDING PRIORITY.—Subject to available funds, and reservation of funds, the Administration shall, for fiscal year 2004, allocate—

“(i) \$150,000 for each eligible women's business center established under subsection (b), except for centers that request a lesser amount;

“(ii) from the funds reserved under subsection (k)(4)(A), not more than \$125,000, in equal amounts, to each eligible women's business center established under subsection (1), except for centers that request a lesser amount; and

“(iii) any funds remaining after allocations are made under clauses (i) and (ii) to new eligible women's business centers and eligible women's business centers that did not receive funding in the prior fiscal year under subsection (b).”; and

(2) in paragraph (4)(A), by adding at the end the following:

“(v) For fiscal year 2004, 48 percent.”.

(b) SUNSET DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) are repealed on October 1, 2004.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 326—CON-DEMNING ETHNIC VIOLENCE IN KOSOVO

Mr. VOINOVICH (for himself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and Mr. BROWNBACK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 326

Whereas ethnic violence erupted in Kosovo on March 17, 2004, claiming the lives of 20 individuals, including 8 Kosovo Serbs, 8 Kosovo Albanians, and 4 unidentified victims, injuring more than 600 others, and displacing more than 4,000 Kosovo Serbs and other minorities;

Whereas the violence also resulted in the destruction of more than 500 homes belonging to Kosovo Serbs, Ashkali, and other minorities, and in the destruction of, or damage to, more than 30 churches and monasteries belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church;

Whereas historic mosques in Belgrade and Nis, and an Islamic center in Novi Sad, were also destroyed or damaged;

Whereas in response to the violence, Commander in Chief of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allied Forces South, Admiral Gregory Johnson, concluded, "This kind of activity, which essentially amounts to ethnic cleansing, cannot go on.,";

Whereas Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General James Jones ordered the deployment of NATO's Strategic Reserve Force on March 19, 2004, to calm the violence and end the destruction;

Whereas Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and Foreign Minister of Serbia and Montenegro Goran Svilanovic met in Washington on March 19, 2004, and called for an immediate end to the violence, concurring that no party in Kosovo can be allowed to profit or advance a political agenda through violent measures;

Whereas a stable, secure, and functioning multiethnic society is in the best interest of all people of Kosovo, the broader region of Southeast Europe, and the world;

Whereas it is essential that political leaders in Kosovo support efforts to establish an environment in which all people in Kosovo have freedom of movement and the ability to live free from fear;

Whereas the United States and members of the international community have called on the people of Kosovo to implement 8 standards outlined by the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), which are to be met prior to the consideration of the question of final status for Kosovo, including: the existence of effective, representative, and functioning democratic institutions; enforcement of the rule of law; freedom of movement; sustainable returns of refugees and displaced persons, and respect for the rights of communities; creation of a sound basis for a market economy; fair enforcement of property rights; normalized dialogue with Belgrade; and transformation of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) in line with its mandate; and

Whereas it is in the long-term interest of all people of Kosovo that the UNMIK standards are achieved in order to promote peace, stability, and economic development, and to ensure a better future for all people in Kosovo: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) urges all people in Kosovo to immediately stop the violence, end the destruction of homes, churches, and other cultural and religious sites, and cooperate with North Atlantic Treaty Organization's Kosovo Force (KFOR), the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), and the Kosovo Police in identifying for prosecution the perpetrators of violence and the destruction of property;

(2) expresses its deep condolences to the families of those who have been killed in the recent violence;

(3) strongly condemns the destruction of personal and religious property in Kosovo, including more than 500 homes belonging to Kosovo Serbs, Ashkali, and other minorities, and of 30 churches and monasteries belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church, adding to the more than 100 churches that have been destroyed since June 1999;

(4) strongly condemns the destruction of historic mosques in the cities of Belgrade and Nis, and of an Islamic center in Novi Sad;

(5) recognizes the commitment made by the Kosovo Assembly to establish a fund for the reconstruction of property, including homes and churches, destroyed during the attacks;

(6) recognizes the commitment made by Serbian officials to provide funds for the reconstruction of mosques in Belgrade and Nis, and an Islamic center in Novi Sad;

(7) urges political leaders to fulfill their commitment to rebuild what has been destroyed and to take all possible action to allow the more than 4,000 Kosovo Serbs and other minorities displaced during the violence to return quickly and safely to their homes and communities;

(8) encourages all political leaders in Kosovo to renounce the use of violence, and to proceed with efforts to establish a secure, peaceful, multiethnic society, which protects the rights of all people in Kosovo, and to take action to proceed with the implementation of the standards or "benchmark goals" outlined by UNMIK;

(9) strongly recommends that the United Nations review the structure and organization of UNMIK; and

(10) urges reinvigoration of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina in an effort to move toward the establishment of a peaceful and secure environment guaranteeing freedom of movement and human rights for all people in Kosovo.

Mr. VOINOVICH. Mr. President, as many of my colleagues are aware, I continue to pay close attention to developments in Southeast Europe. During my time as a member of the Senate, I have been deeply concerned with the situation in Kosovo—particularly the situation for Kosovo's ethnic minorities.

I have traveled to Kosovo three times since the end of the military campaign in 1999, most recently in May 2002. At that time, I met with Kosovo Albanian leaders, including President Rugova and Prime Minister Rexhepi, as well as leaders of the Kosovo Serb community. In my conversations with all political leaders, I stressed the importance of moving forward with efforts to promote the rule of law and refugee return, as well as work to provide for the protection of human rights and freedom of movement for all people in Kosovo.

At that time, I reiterated a plea that I made during a trip to Pristina in February 2000, urging Kosovo's leaders to start a new paradigm of peace and stability for all people in Kosovo. I continue to believe it is essential that minorities in Kosovo, including Serbs, Roma, Egyptians, Bosniaks, Croats, Turks, Ashkalia, and others, are able to move about as they wish and live lives free from fear.

I could not agree more with a statement made in the Ninth Assessment of the Situation of Ethnic Minorities in Kosovo, a joint report released in May 2002 by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE, and the U.N. High Commission on Refugees, UNHCR. The report concludes, "Only when Kosovo's minorities feel confident in their long-term future and when all of Kosovo's displaced persons are able to exercise the choice to return to their homes, feeling assured of

their safety and confident in their ability to access institutions and participate in social, economic and political life in Kosovo on a non-discriminatory basis, will it be possible to say that the situation of minorities in Kosovo is acceptable."

The latest round of ethnic violence in Kosovo, which erupted on March 17, 2004, resulted in the deaths of 20 people, including 8 Kosovo Serbs, 8 Kosovo Albanians, and 4 unidentified victims. It displaced more than 4,000 people, including Kosovo Serbs, Ashkalia, and others, and led to the destruction of more than 500 homes and more than 30 churches or monasteries belonging to the Serbian Orthodox Church—adding to the more than 100 churches that had already been destroyed during the last 5 years.

This is a tragic and urgent reminder of the work that remains to be done in Kosovo. I believe we must redouble our efforts and do all that we can to prevent continued violence in Kosovo. While the violence appears to be calming, the situation on the ground remains tense. There is a long road ahead as we look to work with the people of Kosovo not only to rebuild what has been destroyed, but also to secure an environment where respect for human rights and the rule of law are protected. Continued U.S. leadership is critical in this regard.

Today, I submit a resolution condemning the recent ethnic violence in Kosovo and calling for a renewed effort to promote long-term peace and stability there. I am joined by a number of my colleagues, including Senator JOE BIDEN, Senator DICK LUGAR, Senator JOE LIEBERMAN, and Senator SAM BROWNBACK.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting swift passage of this important measure, which reminds us of unfinished business in this part of the world.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2956. Mr. GRAHAM, of Florida (for himself, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. CARPER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. NELSON, of Florida, and Mr. SCHUMER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4, to reauthorize and improve the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families, improve access to quality child care, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2957. Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. BINGAMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2958. Mrs. MURRAY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2959. Mr. REID (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2960. Mr. TALENT submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the