

by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 28, 2004

PN1254 Marine Corps nominations (263) beginning Mark A. Adams, and ending Erin L. Zellers, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 22, 2004

PN1256 Marine Corps nominations (560) beginning Christopher J. Aaby, and ending Mark W. Zipsie, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 22, 2004

PN1537 Marine Corps nomination of David C. Cox, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 19, 2004

PN1491 Marine Corps nominations (47) beginning Travis R. Avent, and ending Mark B. Windham, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 6, 2004

NAVY

PN1493 Navy nominations (2083) beginning Victoria T. Crescenzi, and ending Joseph Zuliani, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 6, 2004

PN1538 Navy nomination of Scott F. Murray, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 19, 2004

PN1492 Navy nomination of Melissa A. Harvison, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 6, 2004

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now return to legislative session.

WOMEN'S SUSTAINABILITY RECOVERY ACT OF 2004

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Small Business Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2267 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

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

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

Mr. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise to support S. 2267, the "Women's Sustainability Recovery Act of 2004" which I recently introduced. There is today a critical need to preserve the operations of existing the Women's Business Centers currently serving women entrepreneurs in almost every State and territory. I am pleased to be joined in this effort by Senators DOMENICI, CHAFEE, BOND and others. By adopting this bill today, the Senate is signaling its intention to preserve much-needed funding for the business centers currently in operation.

Today, more than 10.6 million women-owned small businesses are helping to fuel our economic recovery: they employ over 19 million Americans and contribute \$2.46 trillion in revenues. In my home State of Maine, there

are more than 63,000 women-owned firms, generating more than \$9 billion in sales. Numbers like these speak for themselves, clear evidence of the success of the Women's Business Centers Program, which helps women achieve their dreams of owning a small business, and other programs like it. As chair of the Small Business Committee, I am committed to a wide range of efforts designed to assist women business owners, so that they, in turn, can continue to make a significant contribution to our economy.

The Women's Business Center program was introduced through the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988, and it was made permanent in 1997. Congress has demonstrated its support for this program time and time again; its appropriations have grown from \$2 million in 1989 to \$12.5 million in 2004, and the results of this investment have been impressive. In fiscal year 2002, centers reported clients realized a return of \$161 in gross receipts for every dollar invested in the program.

Even more remarkable is the fact that the SBA's Women's Business Center have helped to create or retain almost 7,000 jobs in the United States, a success attributable to the centers unique training and counseling programs. In fiscal year 2003, the Women's Business Center program increased its expected level of delivered services by 17 percent, providing counseling and assistance to more than 106,600 clients and thereby exceeding its initial goal of 88,540 clients. To a large degree, this increased productivity has been triggered by the success of sustainability grants, which extend funding to eligible women's business centers.

This year, insufficient funding for the sustainability grant program may force 53 Women's Business Centers to close their doors. While current legislation reserves 30.2 percent of the Women's Business Center appropriation for the sustainability grant program, this amount is not enough to support the 53 centers in jeopardy. By supporting this bill, S. 2267, which increases the reserve forth sustainability grant program by 48 percent, Congress will ensure that each of the 53 Women's Business Centers eligible for sustainability has the opportunity to compete for a sufficient pool of funding for fiscal year 2004, and that centers will be able to effectively provide valuable technical assistance to women entrepreneurs.

Without this legislation, many of the center may be in jeopardy of closing their doors. This would be a significant loss given that some of these centers have been part of the program for as long as 9 years and, during that time, have proven themselves powerful engines of economic development in communities and States across the Nation.

These centers have been extraordinarily successful in providing assistance to women in all walks of life. Women who once received public assistance are now operating businesses

and creating jobs. Other women are transitioning from employee to small business employer, and established business owners are creating and manufacturing products for sale at home and abroad. The centers nurture women entrepreneurs through business and financial planning and assist women business owners who need help securing funding for startup and expansion. Furthermore, this legislation requires no additional appropriation, just a reallocation of current funds.

I am committed to resolving the women's sustainability funding crisis through this bill, and I will continue to work with my colleagues to ensure the continued success of women-owned businesses.

(At the request of Mr. DASCHLE, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today I join my colleague, Senator SNOWE, chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, in passing legislation to safeguard Women's Business Centers funded through the Small Business Administration. This legislation is identical to the Women's Business Center provision I introduced as part of S. 2186, the SBA Emergency Authorization Extension Act of 2004, on March 9, 2004, and it fixes a funding gap that exists for meritorious Women's Business Centers that are graduating from the first stage of the program and entering the sustainability portion.

I would first like to thank Chair SNOWE for working very closely with me on this issue, as we have for the past year and a half. Senator SNOWE has long been an advocate of the Women's Business Centers and was a cosponsor of the original legislation that created the sustainability pilot program in 1999. Now, her support for continuing the nationwide network of Women's Business Centers has been the catalyst for success in the Senate. I commend Chair SNOWE for her strong leadership for women in business across this country. I would also like to thank all of the cosponsors of this legislation and of S. 2266, all of whom have shown resounding support for women entrepreneurs and recognize the positive impact the Women's Business Centers have on promoting and supporting women in business and on strengthening our national economy.

Second, I want to comment on the Bush administration's proposals to eliminate experienced, efficient, and effective Women's Business Centers in favor of new and untested centers. Unless this legislation can be enacted quickly, the administration will move forward with its proposal, which places in jeopardy experienced Women's Business Centers in 39 States and eliminates assistance for thousands of women in business. While, as this 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. 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. Passing S. 2267 today will send a strong message to the House of Representatives that time is of the essence with respect to this important program, and I hope the House leadership will allow immediate passage of this measure when they are next in session.

I would also like to express my dismay that, despite bipartisan support from members of this committee, the Republican majority has opposed helping women entrepreneurs and blocked the provisions of this bill from being included in the two extensions of all SBA programs that have already passed the Senate. Those who favor blocking enactment of these provisions in hopes of closing the most experienced existing Women's Business Centers are potentially depriving thousands of women in business access to much needed assistance. This bill is a bipartisan compromise intended to maintain an effective Women's Business Center network throughout this fiscal year—a compromise that was agreed to by Chair SNOWE, myself, and the bipartisan leadership of the House Small Business Committee. It is supported by women's groups across the country.

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. 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 48 percent, all grants to sustainability centers could be cut in half—or worse, 23 experienced centers could lose funding completely. In short, this change directs the SBA to reserve 48 percent of the appropriated funds for the sustainability centers, instead of 30 percent, which will allow enough funding to keep open the most experienced centers, while still permitting the establishment of new centers and protecting existing ones. In the interest of compromise and prompt enactment of a workable solution, I fully support the formula change to 48 percent, although a change to 54 percent—as introduced as part of my Women's Business Center Safeguard Act, S. 2266—would be needed to fully fund all sustainability centers.

I have serious concerns regarding an amendment to our original legislation by the Republican leadership. The amendment would allow the Small Business Administration to award grants at arbitrary and disproportionate levels, instead of following precedent and awarding Women's Business Center grants equally to all qualified and successfully performing centers. I am deeply concerned that the administration may use this authority to shortchange some existing centers in order to use part of the 48 percent reserve funding to open new centers. While this is within the language of the amendment, it is clearly the opposite of the legislation's intent, which is to increase available funds for the most experienced Women's Business Centers so that they remain in operation. To that end, it is my recommendation that the administration use the full 48 percent for sustainability centers and that the Agency award grants at equal, or close to equal, amounts. The committee has been told that providing any sustainability Women's Business Center with a grant less than the minimum grant awarded to sustainability centers in fiscal year 2003 would impede its ability to operate effectively and successfully under the current requirements established by the administration. I am willing to make this compromise because it will give all Women's Business Centers the opportunity to receive funding; however, it is not intended to undercut the funding to any center that has met the SBA's performance standards.

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 the Senate-passed legislation, an extension of authority and increase in the portion of appropriated funds available to sustainability centers 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 round the country.

This bill is urgently needed now to continue the good work of the SBA's

Women's Business Center network, and I urge all of my colleagues in the Senate and the House of Representatives to show their support for the growing number of women in business by supporting immediate passage of this bill.

WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM

Mr. President, as we pass our legislation, S. 2267, the Women's Sustainability Recovery Act, I ask my colleague from Maine, the chairwoman of the Senate Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, how the SBA is to implement these changes to the Women's Business Center program? I know she has been a leader on this issue, and it is my understanding that she encourages the SBA to fully support sustainability centers at a level that will enable them to operate successfully, before opening new centers.

Ms. SNOWE. I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for his question. As is evident in S. 1375, the bill to reauthorize the Small Business Administration, which passed the Senate last September, it is the intention of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee and of the full Senate to continue funding eligible Women's Business Centers before opening new centers. This legislation supports that important objective. To that end, I expect the SBA to award Women's Business Center grants for the coming fiscal year to each Women's Business Center that is properly meeting performance standards. Congress has appropriated \$12.5 million in fiscal year 2004 for the Women's Business Center program. If the amount reserved for sustainability centers under this legislation is insufficient to award the full amount of \$125,000 to each sustainability center that meets those standards, I expect the SBA to adequately fund eligible centers.

Mr. KERRY. The committee has been told that many of the Women's Business Centers would be unable to meet minimum performance standards with a significant reduction in grant funding. Does the chairwoman agree that the funding for the sustainability centers last fiscal year would be an appropriate funding level for sustainability centers this year?

Ms. SNOWE. To ensure that each center that meets the SBA performance thresholds continues to serve women entrepreneurs in every state and territory, I expect the SBA to fully expend all the funds reserved under this bill for women's sustainability grants. This amount should be sufficient to provide funding to eligible women's business centers in the sustainability program at or above the minimum grants awarded in fiscal year 2003 to women's business centers.

Mr. KERRY. I commend Chairwoman SNOWE for her persistent efforts on behalf of this legislation and the more comprehensive SBA Reauthorization legislation. Without her strong support and hard work on this issue, the future success of this important assistance for women entrepreneurs would be in jeopardy.●

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Snowe technical amendment at the desk be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc.

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

The amendment (No. 3106) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To make a technical correction)

On page 2, strike lines 9 through 14, and insert the following:

“(ii) from the funds reserved under paragraph (4)(A), not more than \$125,000 to each eligible women’s business center established under subsection (1); and”

The bill (S. 2267), as amended, was read the third time and passed, 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 paragraph (4)(A), not more than \$125,000 to each eligible women’s business center established under subsection (1); 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.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA GOLDEN GOPHERS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 346 which was introduced earlier today by Senators DAYTON and COLEMAN.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 346) commending the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers for winning the 2003-2004 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I National Collegiate Women’s Ice Hockey Championship.

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

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed

to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 346) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 346

Whereas on Sunday, March 28, 2004, the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers defeated Harvard University in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I National Collegiate Women’s Ice Hockey Championship game by a score of 6 to 2, having defeated Dartmouth College by a score of 5 to 1 in the semifinal;

Whereas during the 2003-2004 season, the Gophers won an outstanding 30 games, while losing only 4 and tying 2;

Whereas the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers women’s ice hockey team is the only women’s sport at the University to win a national championship;

Whereas sophomores Krissy Wendell, Natalie Darwitz, and Allie Sanchez and juniors Jody Horak and Kelly Stephens were selected for the 2003-2004 National Collegiate Athletic Association All-Tournament team, and Krissy Wendell was named the tournament’s Most Valuable Player;

Whereas sophomore Krissy Wendell was named to the Jofa Women’s University Division Ice Hockey All-American first team, and sophomore Natalie Darwitz was named to the Jofa Women’s University Division Ice Hockey All-American second team;

Whereas seniors Kelsey Bills, La Toya Clarke, Melissa Coulombe, and Jerilyn Glenn made tremendous contributions to the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers women’s ice hockey program;

Whereas the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers women’s ice hockey head coach Laura Halldorson, for the third time since 1998, has been named the American Hockey Coaches Association’s Division I Women’s Coach of the Year (2003-2004); and

Whereas all of the team’s players showed tremendous dedication throughout the season toward their goal of winning the national championship: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends the University of Minnesota women’s ice hockey team for winning the 2003-2004 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Women’s Ice Hockey Championship;

(2) recognizes the achievements of all the team’s players, coaches, and support staff and invites them to the United States Capitol Building to be honored; and

(3) directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the president of the University of Minnesota.

COMMENDING TOM LUNDREGAN

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 347 submitted by Senators FRIST and DASCHLE.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 347) to commend the Senate Enrolling Clerk Thomas J.

Lundregan on Thirty-Six Years of Service to the United States Government.

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

Mr. FRIST. “Reserved, low key, self-deprecating, totally professional, and devoted to the Senate,” that is how assistant enrolling clerk Joe Monahan describes his colleague Tom Lundregan, who retires tomorrow from his post as the Senate’s enrolling clerk.

For 15 years in the Office of the Secretary, Tom has had the crucial task of ensuring that the written copy of the legislation we pass in this body is thoroughly accurate before it is sent on to the House and to the President. As Tom explains, “We cannot make mistakes. The final paper that is sent to the White House is being signed by the President and is going to become the law of the land.” He says the responsibility can be “a little scary.”

Despite the stress, Tom has maintained an impeccable record and earned the admiration of all of his colleagues. Not once on his watch has a piece of legislation been sent back from the House or from the President because of an error.

Through work weeks that have stretched up to 90 hours, sometimes even 50 hours straight, Tom has shown total focus, dedication and commitment to the integrity of this institution.

Says his colleague Joe, “There are darn few people who can do that.” He is right. The Senate has been incredibly fortunate to have such a meticulous and hard working member of the team.

Tom says his most vivid memory of working in the Senate is 9/11, and realizing that a plane was heading this way. September 11 reinforced his idea of the importance of every Senate job, from clerks to staff to elected officials. “This is the finest institution in the world that represents democracy to everyone in the world. To have an opportunity to work in this building has been a tremendous honor.”

Tom and his wife plan to spend their retirement years where it is warm all year round. They hope to travel throughout the States, starting this spring with Yosemite, Lake Tahoe and the Grand Canyon. Tom also anticipates after 15 years of grueling and unpredictable hours finally being able to spend quantity time with his four grandsons.

I thank Tom for his extraordinary service to the Senate and to the American people. I wish him safe travels and all the best in his well-earned retirement.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I come to the floor for a couple of minutes because I want to thank a man who is a fixture in this institution.

Tom Lundregan is the Senate’s enrolling clerk and as fine a public servant as you will find anywhere. Today marks his last day in the Senate, and I know that I speak for all of us when I say we are going to miss him.

Tom began his Government service 36 years ago as a printing apprentice with the Government Printing Office.