

by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H. Con. Res. 460. Concurrent resolution regarding the security of Israel and the principles of peace in the Middle East; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

H.R. 218. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to exempt qualified current and former law enforcement officers from State laws prohibiting the carrying of concealed handguns.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-8128. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: BAAE Systems (Operations) Limited (Jetstream) Model 4101 Airplanes Doc. No. 2002-NM-58" (RIN2120-AA64) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8129. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Boeing Model 727-100 and 200, 737-100 and 200; 737-200, 200C, 300, 400, and 500 and 747 Airplanes Doc. No. 2001-NM-297" (RIN2120-AA64) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8130. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Boeing Model 747-400, 400D, 400F, 757-20-0, 200PF, 200CB, 767-200, 300, and 300F Airplanes Doc. No. 2003-NM-40" (RIN2120-AA64) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8131. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Airbus Model A300 B4-600, 600R, and F4600R (Collectively Called A300 and 600) A310, A319, A320, A321, A330, and A340-200 and 300 Airplanes Doc. No. 2003-NM-19" (RIN2120-AA64) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8132. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Boeing Model 747 Airplanes Doc. No. 2003-NM-47" (RIN2120-AA64) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8133. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives: Gulfstream Aerospace LP Model Galaxy and Gulfstream 200 Airplanes Doc. No. 2004-NM-70" (RIN2120-AA64) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-8134. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition,

Technology, and Logistics, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's Defense, Chemical, Biological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Defense Program Annual Report to Congress and the Department's CBRN Defense Program Performance Plan for Fiscal Years 2003-2005; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-8135. A communication from the Chief Counsel, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "31 CFR Chapter V, Appendix A" received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-8136. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Policy, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the discontinuation of service in acting role for the position of Solicitor, Department of the Interior, received on June 21, 2004; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-8137. A communication from the Director, Office of Personnel Policy, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the discontinuation of service in acting role for the position of Solicitor, Department of the Interior, received on June 21, 2004; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-8138. A communication from the Executive Director for Operations, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "Performance of Commercial Activities"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-8139. A communication from the Commissioner, Social Security Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report of the Administration's commercial and inherently governmental activities; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-8140. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Section 420—Waiver of Post-Retirement Health Benefits" (Rev. Rul. 2004-65) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-8141. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "TD 9130: Required Distributions from Retirement Plans" (RIN1545-BA60) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-8142. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Administrative Simplification of Section 481(a) Adjustment Periods in Various Regulations" (RIN1545-BB47) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-8143. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "TD 9132: Changes in Use Under Section 168(i)(5)" (RIN1545-BB05) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-8144. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Coordinated Issue: Credit for Increasing Research Activities—Qualified Research Expenses" received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-8145. A communication from the Acting Chief, Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Applicable Federal Rates—July 2004" (Rev. Rul. 2004-66) received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-8146. A communication from the Chairman, Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's report entitled "Sources of Financial Data on Medicare Providers"; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-8147. A communication from the Chief, Regulations Branch, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Overtime Compensation and Premium Pay for Customs Officers" (RIN1651-AA59) received on July 22, 2004; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-8148. A communication from the Assistant Legal Adviser for Treaty Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the texts and background statements of international agreements, other than treaties; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-8149. A communication from the Chairman of the Board, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8150. A communication from the Chairman, International Trade Commission, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8151. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Housing Finance Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8152. A communication from the Chairman, National Science Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8153. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8154. A communication from the Attorney General of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Justice for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004.

EC-8155. A communication from the Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8156. A communication from the Director, Peace Corps, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-8157. A communication from the General Counsel, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8158. A communication from the Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of the Office of Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2003 through March 31, 2004; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8159. A communication from the Chairman, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's report under the Government in Sunshine Act for Calendar Year 2003; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8160. A communication from the Director, Strategic Human Resources Policy Division, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Federal Employees Health Benefits Program: Removal of Two Option Limitation for Health Benefits Plans and Continuation of Coverage for Annuitants Whose Plan Terminates an Option" received on June 22, 2004; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-8161. A communication from the Director, National Gallery of Art, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Gallery's report of commercial and inherently governmental activities; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

POM-463. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Louisiana relative to the National Finance Center in New Orleans, Louisiana; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 47

Whereas, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has been the forerunner in the application of computer technology in managing administrative functions; and

Whereas, in 1973, the USDA established the National Finance Center in New Orleans to provide consolidated payroll, personnel, and voucher and invoice payment systems and services to numerous government agencies; and

Whereas, today the National Finance Center in New Orleans also provides systems and support services for several government-wide processes, including the Federal Retirement Thrift Savings Plan; and

Whereas, the National Finance Center has become an asset not only to the government, but also the Greater New Orleans Area; and

Whereas, the National Finance Center in New Orleans employs over twelve hundred local federal employees; and

Whereas, the National Finance Center in New Orleans has recently been criticized by the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board (FRTIB), which oversees the Thrift Savings Plan; and

Whereas, the National Finance Center in New Orleans has dedicated over four hundred federal employees to the Thrift Savings Plan, who are responsible for answering phone calls from plan participants, processing loans, sending out statements, and maintaining the computer information systems; and

Whereas, at the request of the FRTIB, the National Finance Center in New Orleans installed a new and untested mainframe computer in order to manage the more than three million one hundred thousand plan participants accounts; and

Whereas, due to the flawed computer system, a problem that exceeded the scope of work performed by the National Finance Center's employees, numerous problems were encountered by the Thrift Savings Plan participants; and

Whereas, the problems were so serious that the National Finance Center became the subject of congressional hearing which questioned the center's ability to effectively manage the Thrift Savings Plan; and

Whereas, as a result of these inquiries, more than four hundred federal employees of the National Finance Center are experiencing a profound loss of moral as they face a future of increasing job uncertainty due to the recent press attacks which have reflected poorly upon their personal work performances; and

Whereas, prior to the installation of this new, untested, and flawed mainframe com-

puter by the FRTIB, the National Finance Center in New Orleans had enjoyed a long history of exemplary service and a solid reputation for its ability to effectively serve the needs of its customers: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana memorializes the Congress of the United States to support and expand the operations of the National Finance Center in New Orleans, including the renewal of its contract with the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

POM-464. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky relative to legislation to establish English as the official language of the United States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 242

Whereas, the United States of America is composed of individuals from diverse ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds, and continues to benefit from its rich diversity; and

Whereas, throughout the history of the United States, the common thread binding individuals of different backgrounds has been the English language; and

Whereas, declaring English as the official language is essential for uniting Americans who now speak more than 329 languages by providing a common means of communication; and

Whereas, U.S. immigrants would be encouraged to learn English in order to use government services and to participate in the democratic process; and

Whereas, learning English would be beneficial to immigrants who become United States Citizens because studies of Census data show that an immigrant's income rises about 30 percent as a result of learning English, leading to the realization of the American dream of increased economic opportunity and the ability to be a productive member of society; and

Whereas, in New York City schools, 54 percent of students who entered English as a Second Language programs in kindergarten scored above the 50th percentile in reading when they reached the 7th grade, compared with under 40 percent for students who entered bilingual programs at the same time; and in mathematics, the gap was even greater, 70 percent versus 51 percent; and

Whereas, the 2000 U.S. Census revealed that 21.3 million Americans, eight percent of the population, are classified as "limited English proficient," a 52 percent increase from 1990, and more than double the 1980 total; and

Whereas, the United States Government's efforts make it easy for immigrants to function in their native languages has not only proven to be expensive for American taxpayers, it has served to keep immigrants linguistically isolated, excluding them from the American "melting pot" which truly unites us as a people; and

Whereas, in 1983 the late Senator S. I. Hayakawa, an immigrant himself, founded U.S. English, Incorporated, a group dedicated to preserving the unifying role of the English language in the United States, declaring that "English is the key to full participation in the opportunities of American life"; and

Whereas, President Theodore Roosevelt stated that "We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language,

for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans"; and

Whereas, official English legislation does not mean "English only" because it does not prohibit government agencies from using other languages when there is a compelling public interest for doing so, such as protecting public health and safety, assuring equality before the law, promoting tourism, teaching foreign languages, providing for national defense, and many other legitimate, common sense needs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

Section 1. That the Kentucky House of Representatives urges the Congress of the United States of America to enact legislation establishing English as the official language of the United States of America.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to mail a copy of this Resolution to the Clerk of the United States Senate, the Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and to each member of Kentucky's Congressional delegation.

POM-465. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Hawaii relative to legislation to provide access prescription drugs by allowing purchase of prescription drugs from Canada and other countries that meet federal safety requirements; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 47

Whereas, the cost of prescription drugs has risen steadily in recent years, affecting consumers, businesses or employers, and public programs, while the pharmaceutical industry has been named as the most profitable among the Fortune 500 Companies in 2002; and

Whereas, Americans pay more for prescription drugs than in any other industrialized nation; in Canada, for example, a three-month supply of the best selling prescription drug Lipitor is thirty-seven percent cheaper; Paxil is approximately fifty percent cheaper; Vioxx is fifty-eight percent cheaper; and the anti-psychotic drug Risperdal is eighty percent cheaper; and

Whereas, in May 2003, Hawaii's Attorney General joined thirty-seven other attorneys general in a letter to Congress, seeking relief for consumers from the high cost of prescriptions and pointing out that the high cost of many brand-name prescription drugs makes lifesaving medications out of reach for many individuals; and

Whereas, the federal Food and Drug Administration has refused to certify as safe for reimportation prescription medication from Canada and other foreign countries, which would allow United States citizens, state and county governments, and businesses access to prescription drugs at much lower prices; and

Whereas, to justify its refusal, the Food and Drug Administration contends that reimportation from other countries could jeopardize consumer safety because pharmaceuticals from other countries will not be subject to the same requirements imposed by the United States; and

Whereas, a number of governors and mayors already are taking steps to provide prescription drugs from Canada to state employees, retirees, and residents; and

Whereas, in recent legislation, Congress authorized drug reimportation from Canada, giving United States Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson the authority to grant exceptions to allow states to purchase Canadian drugs for state employees and retirees; and

Whereas, it is likely, however, that the practice of reimportation will remain illegal;