

FITZGERALD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2363, a bill to revise and extend the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

S. 2461

At the request of Mr. DEWINE, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. FITZGERALD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2461, a bill to protect the public health by providing the Food and Drug Administration with certain authority to regulate tobacco products.

S. 2502

At the request of Mr. CRAIG, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2502, a bill to allow seniors to file their Federal income tax on a new Form 1040S.

S. 2542

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2542, a bill to provide for review of determinations on whether schools and local educational agencies made adequate yearly progress for the 2002–2003 school year taking into consideration subsequent regulations and guidance applicable to those determinations, and for other purposes.

S. 2551

At the request of Mr. FRIST, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2551, a bill to reduce and prevent childhood obesity by encouraging schools and school districts to develop and implement local, school-based programs designed to reduce and prevent childhood obesity, promote increased physical activity, and improve nutritional choices.

S. 2560

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2560, a bill to amend chapter 5 of title 17, United States Code, relating to inducement of copyright infringement, and for other purposes.

S. 2600

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2600, a bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to enter into a contract to revise the statue commemorating women's suffrage located in the rotunda of the United States Capitol to include a likeness of Sojourner Truth.

S. 2603

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2603, a bill to amend section 227 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 227) relating to the prohibition on junk fax transmissions.

S. RES. 389

At the request of Mr. CAMPBELL, the names of the Senator from New Mexico

(Mr. DOMENICI) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 389, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to prostate cancer information.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. COLEMAN:

S. 2638. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require an annual plan on outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, today I have introduced the Veterans Benefits Outreach Act.

Caring for our veterans is a commitment that supersedes politics. The President and Congress are united in our promise to provide veterans with access to quality care and benefits.

Spending for veterans medical care has doubled since 1993. President Bush's budget for the VA increased by 9 percent in fiscal year 2002, 13 percent in 2003 and another 4 percent in 2004. We in the Senate passed a budget resolution calling for another 5 percent increase next year. We have begun giving veterans concurrent receipt of their disability and retirement benefits, and are working to fix the survivor benefit plan.

But what good are these benefits if people don't know they can apply for them? According to an article that ran on the front page of the St. Paul Pioneer Press today entitled: "Wounded and Forgotten," there are an estimated half a million veterans who are eligible for Federal disability payments but are not receiving them—simply because they don't know that they can.

We need to do a better job of educating veterans about their rights. To this end, my legislation calls for the Veterans Administration to develop a strategy each year to reach out to veterans who are not taking advantage of the programs they're eligible for—to give them a chance to make an informed decision about the benefits America has promised them.

In addition to veterans who are not getting their benefits because they are unaware of them, there are some veterans who know they are eligible but have been turned away because of lost documents. You see, in 1973, the National Personnel Records Center in Missouri caught on fire, destroying thousands of veterans' personnel records.

The law already calls for the VA to give veterans the benefit of the doubt when they are missing documents that had been destroyed in the fire. But it is clear that in practice this is simply not the case. Too many veterans get nothing more than a postcard telling them their case cannot be proven because of the destruction of their records three decades ago.

It is simply unconscionable that these veterans should have to suffer be-

cause their records were ruined while in the custody of the government. To deal with this problem, my legislation also directs the VA to set up an appeals process for those whose applications are rejected because of documents lost in that fire.

My legislation is about going the extra mile to do the right thing. These are not hand-outs, these are not new entitlement programs—these are benefits prescribed under the law for people who have already qualified for them by serving their country. We must do whatever it takes to give America's veterans the benefits we promised them.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2638

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 "Veterans Benefits Outreach Act of 2004".

SEC. 2. ANNUAL PLAN ON OUTREACH ACTIVITIES.

(a) ANNUAL PLAN REQUIRED.—Subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 523 the following new section:

“§ 523A. Annual plan on outreach activities

“(a) ANNUAL PLAN REQUIRED.—The Secretary shall prepare each year a plan for the outreach activities of the Department for the following year.

“(b) ELEMENTS.—Each annual plan under subsection (a) shall include the following:

“(1) Plans for efforts to identify veterans who are not enrolled or registered with the Department for benefits or services under the programs administered by the Secretary.

“(2) Plans for informing veterans and their dependents of modifications of the benefits and services under the programs administered by the Secretary, including eligibility for medical and nursing care and services.

“(c) COORDINATION IN DEVELOPMENT.—In developing an annual plan under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consult with the following:

“(1) Directors or other appropriate officials of organizations recognized by the Secretary under section 5902 of this title.

“(2) Directors or other appropriate officials of State and local education and training programs.

“(3) Representatives of non-governmental organizations that carry out veterans outreach programs.

“(4) Representatives of State and local veterans employment organizations.

“(5) Businesses and professional organizations.

“(6) Other individuals and organizations that assist veterans in adjusting to civilian life.

“(d) INCORPORATION OF ASSESSMENT OF PREVIOUS ANNUAL PLANS.—In developing an annual plan under subsection (a), the Secretary shall take into account the lessons learned from the implementation of previous annual plans under such subsection.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 523 the following new item:

“523A. Annual plan on outreach activities.”.

SEC. 3. APPEAL OF CLAIMS DENIED BECAUSE OF LOSS OF RECORDS RESULTING FROM 1974 FIRE AT THE NATIONAL PERSONNEL RECORDS CENTER.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall develop and implement procedures by which veterans may appeal claims denied by the Secretary on the basis that records destroyed in the 1974 fire at the National Personnel Records Center could substantiate such claims.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 403—ENCOURAGING INCREASED INVOLVEMENT IN SERVICE ACTIVITIES TO ASSIST SENIOR CITIZENS

Mr. BAYH submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 403

Whereas approximately 13,000,000 individuals in the United States have serious long-term health conditions that may force them to seek assistance with daily tasks;

Whereas 56 percent of the individuals in the United States with serious long-term health conditions are age 65 or older;

Whereas the percentage of the population over the age of 65 is expected to rise from 13 percent in 2004 to 20 percent in 2020;

Whereas 15 percent of all seniors over the age of 65 suffer from depression;

Whereas studies have suggested that 25 to 50 percent of nursing home residents are affected by depression;

Whereas approximately 1,450,000 people live in nursing homes in the United States;

Whereas by 2018 there will be 3,600,000 seniors in need of a nursing home bed, which will be an increase of more than 2,000,000 from 2004;

Whereas as many as 60 percent of nursing home residents do not have regular visitors;

Whereas older patients with significant symptoms of depression have significantly higher health care costs than seniors who are not depressed;

Whereas people who are depressed tend to be withdrawn from their community, friends, and family;

Whereas the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNS) Senior Corps programs currently provide seniors with the opportunity to serve their communities through the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program, Foster Grandparent Program, and Senior Companion Program;

Whereas through the Senior Companion Program in particular, in the 2002 to 2003 program year, more than 17,000 low-income seniors volunteered their time assisting 61,000 frail elderly and homebound individuals who have difficulty completing daily tasks;

Whereas numerous volunteer organizations across the United States enable Americans of all ages to participate in similar activities;

Whereas Faith in Action, 1 volunteer organization, brings together 40,000 volunteers of many faiths to serve 60,000 people with long-term health needs or disabilities across the country, 64 percent of whom are 65 years of age or older;

Whereas the thousands of volunteers that, through the Senior Companion Program and volunteer organizations nationwide, provide companionship and assistance to frail elderly individuals, nursing home residents, and homebound seniors, deserve to be commended for their work;

Whereas the demand for these services outstrips the number of volunteers, and organi-

zations are seeking to enlist more individuals in the United States in the volunteer effort;

Whereas companionship and assistance programs for seniors with long-term health needs offer many demonstrated benefits, such as: allowing frail elderly individuals to remain in their homes; enabling seniors to maintain independence for as long as possible; providing encouragement and friendship to lonely seniors; and providing relief to home care givers;

Whereas regular visitation and assistance is the best way of assuring seniors that they have not been forgotten, and State and local recognition of regular visitation programs can call further attention to the importance of volunteering on an ongoing basis; and

Whereas a month dedicated to service for seniors and recognized across the United States will call attention to volunteer organizations serving seniors and provide a platform for recruitment efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the month of August as “Service for Seniors Month”;

(2) recognizes the need for companionship and assistance with daily tasks among seniors with long-term health conditions throughout the year, and encourages the people of the United States to volunteer regularly at a nursing home or long-term care facility;

(3) encourages volunteer organizations that offer companionship and assistance to seniors to incorporate “Service for Seniors Month” in their recruitment efforts;

(4) encourages individuals in the United States to volunteer in these service organizations in order to give back to a generation that sacrificed so much; and

(5) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States and interested groups to observe “Service for Seniors Month” with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of, and volunteer involvement service for, seniors with long-term health needs.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 123—RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF ALEXANDER HAMILTON ON THE BICENTENNIAL OF HIS DEATH BECAUSE OF HIS STANDING AS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FOUNDING FATHERS OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CORZINE, and Mr. LAUTENBERG) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. CON. RES. 123

Whereas Alexander Hamilton dedicated his life to serving his adopted country as a Revolutionary soldier, aide-de-camp to General George Washington, Representative to the Continental Congress, member of the New York State Assembly, first Secretary of the Treasury of the United States, and Inspector General of the Army;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton was a poor teenage immigrant to New York from the West Indian Islands of Nevis and St. Croix;

Whereas in the early days of the Revolutionary War Alexander Hamilton was commissioned as a captain and raised and trained his own New York artillery regiment and served valiantly in the battles of Long Island and Manhattan;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton quickly captured the attention of General George Wash-

ington who made him his aide-de-camp and confidant throughout the most difficult days of the Revolutionary War;

Whereas in 1781, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hamilton of the Continental Army led a bold attack of New York troops during the siege of Yorktown, the decisive and final battle of the Revolutionary War;

Whereas in 1782, Alexander Hamilton was elected as a member of the Continental Congress from New York;

Whereas as a private citizen Alexander Hamilton served many philanthropic causes and was a co-founder of the New York Manumission Society, the first abolitionist organization in New York and a major influence on the abolition of slavery from the State;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton was a strong and consistent advocate against slavery and believed that Blacks and Whites were equal citizens and equal in their mental and physical faculties;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton was one of the first members of the founding generation to call for a convention to drastically revise the Articles of Confederation;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton joined James Madison in Annapolis, Maryland in 1786 to officially request that the States call a constitutional convention;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton was elected as a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787 from New York, where he played an influential role and was the only delegate from New York to sign the Constitution;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton was the primary author of the Federalist Papers, the single most influential interpretation of American constitutional law ever written;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton was the most important individual force in achieving the ratification of the Constitution in New York against the strong opposition of many of the delegates to the ratifying convention;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton was the leading voice of the founding generation in support of the controversial doctrine of judicial review, which is the backbone for the role of the Supreme Court in the constitutional system of the United States;

Whereas on September 11, 1789, Alexander Hamilton was appointed by President George Washington to be the first Secretary of the Treasury;

Whereas as Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton salvaged the public credit, created the first Bank of the United States, and outlined the basic economic vision of a mixed agricultural and manufacturing society supported by a strong financial system that would underlie the great economic expansion of the United States for the next 2 centuries;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton was the leading proponent among the Founding Fathers of encouraging a strong manufacturing base for the United States in order to create good paying middle-class jobs and encourage a society built on merit rather than class or skin color;

Whereas in pursuit of this vision Alexander Hamilton founded The Society for Establishing Useful Manufactures which in turn founded the town of Paterson, New Jersey, one of the first industrial centers of the United States;

Whereas Alexander Hamilton proposed and oversaw the creation of the Coast Guard for law enforcement in territorial waters of the United States;

Whereas in 1798, President John Adams called upon Alexander Hamilton to raise an army in preparation for a possible war with France and, as Inspector General of the Army, he trained a powerful force of well-equipped soldiers who were able to help deter war at this vulnerable stage in the founding of the United States;