S. 582

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. ALLEN), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. CHAFEE), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. CORZINE), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. DAYTON), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. JEFFORDS), the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. TALENT), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 582, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the desegregation of the Little Rock Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, and for other purposes.

S. 601

At the request of Mr. CONRAD, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 601, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include combat pay in determining an allowable contribution to an individual retirement plan.

S. 609

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 609, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the provision of scientifically sound information and support services to patients receiving a positive test diagnosis for Down syndrome or other prenatally diagnosed conditions.

S. 626

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 626, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to diabetes self management training by designating certified diabetes educators who are recognized by a nationally recognized certifying body and who meet the same quality standards set forth for other providers of diabetes self management training, as certified providers for purposes of outpatient diabetes self-management training services under part B of the medicare program.

S. 633

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 633, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of veterans who became disabled for life while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States.

S. 642

At the request of Mr. FRIST, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 642, a bill to support certain national youth organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, and for other purposes.

S. 643

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 643, a bill to amend the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987 to reauthorize State mediation programs.

S. 647

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 647, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to authorize physical therapists to evaluate and treat medicare beneficiaries without a requirement for a physician referral, and for other purposes.

S. 663

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) were added as cosponsors of S. 663, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow self-employed individuals to deduct health insurance costs in computing self-employment taxes.

S. RES. 83

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 83, a resolution commemorating the 65th Anniversary of the Black Press of America.

AMENDMENT NO. 204

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 204 proposed to S. Con. Res. 18, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2006 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2005 and 2007 through 2010.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BURNS:

S. 696. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 regarding the transfer of students from certain schools; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act with regard to the transfer of students from certain schools. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 includes a requirement that schools not meeting adequate yearly progress—the AYP—for 2 consecutive years must provide transfer within the school district, and if no such schools exist, make efforts to provide transfers between school districts to the extent practical. This is the school choice provision. However, the current law's guidance on school choice does not adequately define practicality or feasibility, and where definitions are provided, they are overly broad.

We have just come off the Easter break. We had an opportunity to talk to a lot of educators and students. We return to our work starting today to make some significant—maybe not significant changes, but little changes to No Child Left Behind to make it more practical and make it more common sense in States such as Montana.

When we start looking at these maps, and as the President pro tempore leaves the Chamber, he understands what rural is when he looks at his State of Alaska. We are not nearly as big as Alaska. However, when we look at the State of Montana—and for those who wonder about distances and sizes, from the Yak, which is up in the northwest corner of the State, to Alzada in the southeast corner, it is farther than it is from Chicago to Washington, DC. So there is a pretty fair chunk of land out here, and we have young folks who go to school in just about every part of the State.

These are the elementary schools I am going to talk about as I speak on No Child Left Behind and the legislation I am introducing today.

The bottom line is No Child Left Behind is not a one-size-fits-all legislation. We have some of the greatest teachers there are in the country, and we have some of the brightest minds to teach. Accordingly, it is imperative that Congress continues to hear the needs and concerns of America's rural education communities.

Just to give my colleagues an idea, I had a little bit to do with the passage

and the shaping of the 1996 Telecommunications Act. In that bill, we had a piece included called broadband. Back in those days, most folks had not heard of the Internet, broadband, or digital. There were not very many of us around here who were even computer literate. We are getting better. We are getting a little younger.

I can remember when we put the broadband section in the bill, primarily to do two things in my State: distance learning, allowing these smaller schools in rural areas to access the Internet and classes to be taught via a two-way interact from another location so that their curriculum could be broadened, just like a school, say, located in Billings, Great Falls, Missoula. Just because someone was born way out here and went to school in Jordan, MT, where we have a county the size of Rhode Island—it only has 1,800 folks and only one high school. It used to be a boarding school. I do not think it is anymore. But it used to be when you took your student to school on Monday morning, you did not see them until Friday night after the football game was over. So we deal in a little bit different kind of environment and situation.

The Federal law must recognize the significant differences between urban and rural school districts with regard to student transportation, school spacing, and, of course, the school-of-choice options. Although No Child Left Behind leaves the State of Montana in control of determining the feasibility of transfers between different school districts, it is much less flexible when it comes to transfers within the same school district.

My legislation would add to existing guidelines on the practicality and the feasibility of school choice that a school district would not be required to provide a student with a transfer option to another school if providing the option is impractical due to the distance to be traveled, a geographical barrier or hazard, the duration of the travel, or an unusually high cost of travel. However, if choice is not offered under the latter circumstances, students in affected schools will still receive valuable supplemental education services, and school districts will still have the option to provide students school learning choices through distance learning programs or virtual schools or several other options offered under current law.

We are pretty sparse in eastern Montana. From Miles City to Jordan is about 90 miles. I was talking about Jordan a while ago up on the big dry creek. You heard me say I have a lot of dirt between light bulbs out there. Well, we have a lot of land between schools out there also, and school districts can be quite large. The centers of Billings, Great Falls, Missoula, the Flat Head, or even Bozeman are grouped pretty closely. In eastern Montana, however, they are far apart. We have elementary schools not even on paved roads, still on gravel. I know one that is still on a mud road. If it rains real hard or during the spring thaw, they cannot get a car in there or a pickup truck or even a four-wheel drive vehicle, so they all ride horses, which is not a bad idea. It saves on gas, and as high as gas is, it probably isn't a bad idea at all. This is a map of the elementary schools to give an idea of where they are located way out there.

Now, I want to take a look at the high schools. There are not as many of them. What are you going to do if a school in Miles City is in need of improvement under the current law? Where are you going to send them? To Broadus? I don't think so. That is another 80 or 90 miles. Pretty soon the miles start adding up.

Right now the law requires the schools to pay for students to transfer them in the same district unless doing so is too expensive. In Montana, as with many rural schools in rural States, there are considerations greater than just cost. While the law makes sense in Billings, it does not work in districts where the schools are farther apart.

Take the Broadus County School District in southeastern Montana as an example. As we can see, there is a lot of distance between schools. There are not very many schools out there. These are high schools. These are not elementary schools but high schools. Some may take up to 2 hours one way to drive. It not only hurts the family life of the students, but it disrupts what they do and also has an adverse effect on their academic performance.

Sometimes this type of commute may be necessary. My legislation makes this decision a matter for rural States to decide instead of the politicians here in Washington, DC, or by a rule written into a law that just is unworkable in my State.

I realize No Child Left Behind had some built-in flexibilities, and I also realize that some States did not take advantage of some of those flexibilities. Now we are locked into a situation where it is almost impossible to change unless we change the legislation and reword it. My legislation simply clarifies what is feasible and practical for school choice transfers within school districts and gives the States, especially my State, the ability to treat schools in rural Broadus differently than it treats schools in more urbanized Billings, MT.

I would imagine the Senator from Florida who is new to this body and a terrific addition to this body has some rural areas in Florida. We think of Florida as more urbanized, but they have some rural areas too, just like Montana. That does not mean there are kids out there whose needs should not be addressed.

When we visit schools, we get all kinds of questions from the students. I was visiting a sixth-grade class the other day. They came up with all kinds of questions. Some of them were pretty good, some were not so good. I did have one that was just a little bit different. This young man stood up in sixth grade, and he said: Senator, what do you want written on your tombstone? My gosh, I never had that question before, and I did not know exactly how to handle it, so I just told him: He's not here yet. That is the only way I could answer him.

These young people are very bright. They like their schools in these areas with distance learning. And we have telemedicine. We are delivering medical care much differently now. We are doing it with broadband services. We have 14 counties that do not have a doctor. It is done by physician assistants and many other people.

The other day a student from our part of the country enrolled at Montana State University at Billings. He had taken enough courses in his senior year in distance learning from MSUB that he has a full semester completed. So when he goes away to school, he already has half a year done.

This is why we have the Telecommunications Act. This is why we have the No Child Left Behind Act. We have to look at schools and libraries and some of the kinks we have to work out in that law so that these smaller schools and libraries can get their moneys so they can offer this online education. This is just another part of tweaking the No Child Left Behind law to make it work in rural areas.

I urge my Senate colleagues, especially those from rural States, to join me in cosponsoring this bill because it is very important. If we are really dedicated to the program of No Child Left Behind, we cannot leave rural children behind either, and we have to make it work.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, 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. 696

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 ''Rural Schools Geography Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) There are significant differences between urban and rural school districts with regard to student transportation, distances between schools and school districts, and school of choice options. Local educational agencies (LEAs) in rural areas often have only 1 school servicing a particular grade-level, and the distance between these schools is often much greater than in urban areas. These differences are not addressed by existing guidelines under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

(2) In 2000, rural schools (those in communities with populations below 2,500) taught 32 percent of the children in the United States, but rural schools accounted for $5,670,000,000 of the Nation's spending on school transportation, or nearly half of such spending.

(3) Rural transportation costs, per-pupil, are double that of urban transportation

costs. As a percentage of total spending, rural areas spend 77 percent more than urban areas for education transportation.

(4) Commutes in rural areas are much more likely to be on rougher, unpaved roads. This not only undermines the physical health of the students, but makes transportation during poor weather much more difficult or impossible. Students with longer commutes are more likely to miss school because of inclement weather. School attendance is an important factor in school performance.

(5) School students who have long commutes actively avoid advanced and high-level courses because they do not have time for the extra homework. This self-imposed restriction retards maximization of educational potential.

(6) Students with long commutes are less likely to engage in in-home and out-of-home activities, such as family dinners, after-school jobs, and athletic or musical extra-curricular activities. Participation in these activities benefits overall educational progress.

(7) Section 1116(b)(10)(C) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 instructs that the lowest achieving children be given priority for out-of-district transportation. Thus, the negative impacts of long commutes disproportionately affect the very students who need the most help.

SEC. 3. AMENDMENT TO THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965.

Section 1116 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6316) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(i) GEOGRAPHY LIMITS.—Notwithstanding subsections (b) and (c), a local educational agency shall not be required to provide a student the option to transfer to another school pursuant to this section if providing the option is impractical due to the distance to be traveled, a geographical barrier or hazard, the duration of the travel, or an unusually high cost of travel.''.

SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION.

The Secretary of Education, not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, shall promulgate such regulations as the Secretary determines necessary to implement this Act.

SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendment made by section 3 shall take effect on the first July 1 that occurs after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. OBAMA (for himself and Mr. INOUYE):

S. 697. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to improve higher education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Higher Education Opportunity Through Pell Grant Expansion Act of 2005, or HOPE Act.

Right now, in schools, playgrounds, and backyards across America, children are dreaming about what they want to be when they grow up. As tomorrow's astronauts, doctors, and teachers dream about their futures, their parents know that so many of those dreams are dependent on a college diploma.

The families I have met in Illinois are worried that they might not be able to give their kids a chance at that diploma. Everywhere I go, I hear the same story: we work hard, we pay our bills, we cut corners, and we put away savings, but we just don't know if it is going to be enough when the tuition bill comes in the mail.

The facts and statistics are not encouraging. College tuition is rising at a stunning rate of almost 10 percent a year, and over the last 25 years it is gone up an astounding 519 percent. Because of these rising prices, over 200,000 students were priced out of a college education last year.

In a country with so much wealth and opportunity for education, it is difficult to imagine there are parents who are forced to say to their kids: ''We're sorry. We can't afford to send you to college.'' None of us in the Senate should rest until those parents can start saying ''yes'' to their kids.

This bill would start us down that path by increasing access to Pell grants. Today, these need-based awards are used by 5.3 million undergraduate students to fund their education. Unfortunately, the awards just haven't kept up with the rising price of tuition or even inflation. As a result, the current $4,050 Pell grant maximum is $700 less in real terms than the maximum grant 30 years ago. Pell grants now cover only 23 percent of the total cost of the average 4-year public college.

The HOPE Act would correct this problem by raising the Pell grant maximum to $5,100, and it would continue to raise this maximum in future years to keep up with inflation. The bill also would make sure that no student sees a reduction in Pell grant assistance due to recent changes in the eligibility formula.

Because working families are already burdened with too many taxes, this bill would not add to the deficit or raise a dime of taxes. Instead, it will close two loopholes that guarantee banks and private lenders an additional $2 billion in taxpayer subsidies every year on top of the interest that college students and their families are already paying on their loans. In a country where 200,000 students were priced out of college last year, our tax dollars shouldn't be spent subsidizing banks that are already making record profits.

When our children dream about their future, they need to know those dreams are within their reach. A college education forms the foundation of the opportunity society that will keep this country strong and growing in the 21st century. I know we can work together to get this done, and I look forward to doing so.

I urge my colleagues to support the HOPE Act.

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. 697

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 ''Higher Education Opportunity Through Pell Grant Expansion Act''.

SEC. 2. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Senate makes the following findings:

(1) Federal Pell Grants are need-based and are used by 5,300,000 undergraduate students to fund their college educations.

(2) Over 90 percent of Federal Pell Grant recipients come from a family with a combined income of less than $40,000.

(3) Because of the rising cost of college tuition, the maximum Federal Pell Grant amount of $4,050 for academic year 2004–2005 is $700 less in real terms than the maximum Federal Pell Grant amount for academic year 1975–1976.

(4) Federal Pell Grants for academic year 2003–2004 cover only 23 percent of the total cost of the average 4-year public college.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) eligible undergraduate students should receive the maximum Federal Pell Grant amount established by the amendment made by section 3(b) of this Act; and

(2) sufficient funds should be appropriated to allow the awarding of the maximum Federal Pell Grant amount for which students are eligible pursuant to the amendment made by section 3(b) of this Act.

SEC. 3. FEDERAL PELL GRANTS.

(a) APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS FOR FEDERAL PELL GRANTS.—In addition to any amounts otherwise appropriated to carry out subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a) for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, there are authorized to be appropriated and there are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2006, for carrying out such subpart 1, an additional $2,000,000,000.

(b) AUTHORIZATION AMOUNT AND MAXIMUM FEDERAL PELL GRANT.—Section 401(b)(2)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a(b)(2)(A)) is amended to read as follows:

''(2)(A)(i) The amount of a Federal Pell Grant for a student eligible under this part shall be $5,100 for academic year 2005–2006, less an amount equal to the amount determined to be the expected family contribution with respect to that student for that year.

''(ii) The Secretary shall cumulatively adjust the amount in clause (i) every 2 academic years beginning with academic year 2006–2007 to account for any percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.''.

SEC. 4. ALLOWANCE FOR STATE AND OTHER TAXES.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the annual updates to the allowance for State and other taxes in the tables used in the Federal Needs Analysis Methodology to determine a student's expected family contribution for the award year 2005–2006 under part F of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087kk et seq.), published in the Federal Register on Thursday, December 23, 2004 (69 Fed. Reg. 76926), shall not apply to a student to the extent the updates will increase the student's expected family contribution under such part F.

SEC. 5. TERMINATION OF EXCESSIVE ALLOWANCES.

Section 438(b)(2)(B) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087–1(b)(2)(B)) is amended by striking clause (v) and inserting the following:

''(v) This subparagraph shall not apply to—

''(I) any loan made or purchased after the date of enactment of the Higher Education Opportunity Through Pell Grant Expansion Act;

''(II) any loan that had not qualified before such date of enactment for receipt of a special allowance payment determined under this subparagraph; or

''(III) any loan made or purchased before such date of enactment with funds described in the first or second sentence of clause (i) if—

''(aa) the obligation described in the first such sentence has, after such date of enactment, matured, or been retired or defeased; or

''(bb) the maturity date or the date of retirement of the obligation described in the first such sentence has, after such date of enactment, been extended.''.

SEC. 6. WINDFALL PROFIT OFFSET.

Section 438 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087–1) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) WINDFALL PROFIT OFFSET.—At the end of every fiscal quarter for which an eligible lender does not receive a special allowance payment under this section, the eligible lender shall pay to the Secretary of the Treasury for deposit into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts a windfall profit offset payment for the fiscal quarter equal to the amount by which—

''(1) the aggregate amount of all payments of interest received by the eligible lender from borrowers on all loans made, insured, or guaranteed under this part during the fiscal quarter; exceeds

''(2) interest guaranteed the lender under this section for the fiscal quarter, irrespective of the amount received under subparagraph (A).''.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. TALENT, and Mr. CRAIG):

S. 702. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the occupational taxes relating to distilled spirits, wine, and beer; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I join my colleagues Senators BUNNING, JOHNSON and TALENT today in introducing legislation that will repeal the special occupational tax on taxpayers who manufacture, distribute, and sell alcoholic beverages.

The special occupational tax is not a tax on alcoholic products, but rather operates as a license fee on businesses. The tax is imposed on those engaged in the business of selling alcohol beverages. Believe it or not, this tax was originally established to help finance the Civil War. That war is over, and this inequitable tax has outlived its original purpose. Repealing the SOT will also simplify the tax code for thousands of small businesses.

The SOT on alcohol dramatically increased during the budget process in 1988 and has unfairly burdened business owners across the country since. From Thompson Falls to Sidney, from Chinook to Billings, small businesses are burdened with yet another tax in the form of the SOT. According to the Alcohol and Tobacco, Tax and Trade Bureau, there are 426,193 locations nationwide that pay the SOT every year, including 399,657 retailers. These retail establishments account for $99 million out of $103 million collected in SOT revenues.

In Montana, there are 2,969 locations which together pay nearly $1 million in the SOT every year. Seasonal resorts in Whitefish and Yellowstone, ''mom and pop'' convenience stores in Butte, and bowling alleys, flower shops, and restaurants across Montana, and the United States, pay the Federal Government over $100 million per year for the privilege of running businesses that sell beer, wine, or alcoholic beverages.

The SOT is extremely regressive. Retailers must annually pay $250 per location; wholesalers pay $500; vintners and distillers pay $1,000. Because the SOT is levied on a per location basis, a sole proprietorship must pay the same amount as one of the nation's largest retailers, and locally-owned chains having to pay per location, would have to pay as much as, if not more than, the nation's largest single site brewery. This is not what Congress had in mind 150 years ago, and I don't believe it's a situation we want today.

Repealing the SOT on alcohol is supported by a broad-based group of business organizations and enjoys widespread bipartisan support on Capitol Hill. Last year, we made progress in ending this burdensome tax on small businesses. We repealed the tax for three years. More can be done. Business owners across the United States deserve assurance that they won't be hit with this antiquated tax down the line.

The legislation preserves the TTB's record-keeping requirements, while removing the agency's enforcement burden, and will save over $2 million per year. The GAO examined SOT efficacy several times, and found it fundamentally flawed. The Joint Committee on Taxation called for the elimination of SOT in its June 2001 simplification study.

More than 90 percent of all SOT revenue comes from retailers—a great majority of those are small businesses. Our small business sector is a great strength of our economy. President Bush has said that the best way to encourage job growth is to let small businesses keep more of their own money, so they can invest in their business and make it easier for somebody to find work. Repealing the SOT would provide an immediate and visible tax cut to small business owners.

In recent months, there has been much talk of tax reform inside the beltway. President Bush has made tax reform one of his key priorities and established a panel that will make recommendations to the Department of Treasury for a better tax system. Getting rid of a tax that has outlived its original purpose is one small step toward reform that makes sense for Montana and our country. We urge our colleagues to join us in this endeavor.

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. 702

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REPEAL OF OCCUPATIONAL TAXES RELATING TO DISTILLED SPIRITS, WINE, AND BEER.

(a) REPEAL OF OCCUPATIONAL TAXES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The following provisions of part II of subchapter A of chapter 51 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to occupational taxes) are hereby repealed:

(A) Subpart A (relating to proprietors of distilled spirits plants, bonded wine cellars, etc.).

(B) Subpart B (relating to brewer).

(C) Subpart D (relating to wholesale dealers) (other than sections 5114 and 5116).

(D) Subpart E (relating to retail dealers) (other than section 5124).

(E) Subpart G (relating to general provisions) (other than sections 5142, 5143, 5145, and 5146).

(2) NONBEVERAGE DOMESTIC DRAWBACK.—Section 5131 of such Code is amended by striking '', on payment of a special tax per annum,''.

(3) INDUSTRIAL USE OF DISTILLED SPIRITS.—Section 5276 of such Code is hereby repealed.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1)(A) The heading for part II of subchapter A of chapter 51 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the table of subparts for such part are amended to read as follows:

''PART II—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

''Subpart A. Manufacturers of stills.
''Subpart B. Nonbeverage domestic drawback claimants.
''Subpart C. Recordkeeping and registration by dealers.
''Subpart D. Other provisions. ''.

(B) The table of parts for such subchapter A is amended by striking the item relating to part II and inserting the following new item:

''Part II. Miscellaneous provisions. ''.

(2) Subpart C of part II of such subchapter (relating to manufacturers of stills) is redesignated as subpart A.

(3)(A) Subpart F of such part II (relating to nonbeverage domestic drawback claimants) is redesignated as subpart B and sections 5131 through 5134 are redesignated as sections 5111 through 5114, respectively.

(B) The table of sections for such subpart B, as so redesignated, is amended—

(i) by redesignating the items relating to sections 5131 through 5134 as relating to sections 5111 through 5114, respectively, and

(ii) by striking ''and rate of tax'' in the item relating to section 5111, as so redesignated.

(C) Section 5111 of such Code, as redesignated by subparagraph (A), is amended—

(i) by striking ''**AND RATE OF TAX**'' in the section heading,

(ii) by striking the subsection heading for subsection (a), and

(iii) by striking subsection (b).

(4) Part II of subchapter A of chapter 51 of such Code is amended by adding after subpart B, as redesignated by paragraph (3), the following new subpart:

''Subpart C—Recordkeeping by Dealers

''Sec. 5121. Recordkeeping by wholesale dealers.
''Sec. 5122. Recordkeeping by retail dealers.
''Sec. 5123. Preservation and inspection of records, and entry of premises for inspection.''.

(5)(A) Section 5114 of such Code (relating to records) is moved to subpart C of such part

II and inserted after the table of sections for such subpart.

(B) Section 5114 of such Code is amended—

(i) by striking the section heading and inserting the following new heading:

"SEC. 5121. RECORDKEEPING BY WHOLESALE DEALERS.",

and

(ii) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d) and by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection:

''(c) WHOLESALE DEALERS.—For purposes of this part—

''(1) WHOLESALE DEALER IN LIQUORS.—The term 'wholesale dealer in liquors' means any dealer (other than a wholesale dealer in beer) who sells, or offers for sale, distilled spirits, wines, or beer, to another dealer.

''(2) WHOLESALE DEALER IN BEER.—The term 'wholesale dealer in beer' means any dealer who sells, or offers for sale, beer, but not distilled spirits or wines, to another dealer.

''(3) DEALER.—The term 'dealer' means any person who sells, or offers for sale, any distilled spirits, wines, or beer.

''(4) PRESUMPTION IN CASE OF SALE OF 20 WINE GALLONS OR MORE.—The sale, or offer for sale, of distilled spirits, wines, or beer, in quantities of 20 wine gallons or more to the same person at the same time, shall be presumptive evidence that the person making such sale, or offer for sale, is engaged in or carrying on the business of a wholesale dealer in liquors or a wholesale dealer in beer, as the case may be. Such presumption may be overcome by evidence satisfactorily showing that such sale, or offer for sale, was made to a person other than a dealer.''.

(C) Paragraph (3) of section 5121(d) of such Code, as so redesignated, is amended by striking ''section 5146'' and inserting ''section 5123''.

(6)(A) Section 5124 of such Code (relating to records) is moved to subpart C of part II of subchapter A of chapter 51 of such Code and inserted after section 5121.

(B) Section 5124 of such Code is amended—

(i) by striking the section heading and inserting the following new heading:

"SEC. 5122. RECORDKEEPING BY RETAIL DEALERS.",

(ii) by striking ''section 5146'' in subsection (c) and inserting ''section 5123'', and

(iii) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d) and inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection:

''(c) RETAIL DEALERS.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) RETAIL DEALER IN LIQUORS.—The term 'retail dealer in liquors' means any dealer (other than a retail dealer in beer or a limited retail dealer) who sells, or offers for sale, distilled spirits, wines, or beer, to any person other than a dealer.

''(2) RETAIL DEALER IN BEER.—The term 'retail dealer in beer' means any dealer (other than a limited retail dealer) who sells, or offers for sale, beer, but not distilled spirits or wines, to any person other than a dealer.

''(3) LIMITED RETAIL DEALER.—The term 'limited retail dealer' means any fraternal, civic, church, labor, charitable, benevolent, or ex-servicemen's organization making sales of distilled spirits, wine or beer on the occasion of any kind of entertainment, dance, picnic, bazaar, or festival held by it, or any person making sales of distilled spirits, wine or beer to the members, guests, or patrons of bona fide fairs, reunions, picnics, carnivals, or other similar outings, if such organization or person is not otherwise engaged in business as a dealer.

''(4) DEALER.—The term 'dealer' has the meaning given such term by section 5121(c)(3).''.

(7) Section 5146 of such Code is moved to subpart C of part II of subchapter A of chapter 51 of such Code, inserted after section 5122, and redesignated as section 5123.

(8) Subpart C of part II of subchapter A of chapter 51 of such Code, as amended by paragraph (7), is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 5124. REGISTRATION BY DEALERS.

''Every dealer who is subject to the recordkeeping requirements under section 5121 or 5122 shall register with the Secretary such dealer's name or style, place of residence, trade or business, and the place where such trade or business is to be carried on. In case of a firm or company, the names of the several persons constituting the same, and the places of residence, shall be so registered.''.

(9) Section 7012 of such Code is amended by redesignating paragraphs (4) and (5) as paragraphs (5) and (6), respectively, and by inserting after paragraph (3) the following new paragraph:

''(4) For provisions relating to registration by dealers in distilled spirits, wines, and beer, see section 5124.''.

(10) Part II of subchapter A of chapter 51 of such Code is amended by inserting after subpart C the following new subpart:

"Subpart D—Other Provisions

''Sec. 5131. Packaging distilled spirits for industrial uses.

''Sec. 5132. Prohibited purchases by dealers.''.

(11) Section 5116 of such Code is moved to subpart D of part II of subchapter A of chapter 51 of such Code, inserted after the table of sections, redesignated as section 5131, and amended by inserting ''(as defined in section 5121(c))'' after ''dealer'' in subsection (a).

(12) Subpart D of part II of subchapter A of chapter 51 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 5132. PROHIBITED PURCHASES BY DEALERS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in regulations prescribed by the Secretary, it shall be unlawful for a dealer to purchase distilled spirits for resale from any person other than a wholesale dealer in liquors who is required to keep the records prescribed by section 5121.

''(b) LIMITED RETAIL DEALERS.—A limited retail dealer may lawfully purchase distilled spirits for resale from a retail dealer in liquors.

''(c) PENALTY AND FORFEITURE.—

''For penalty and forfeiture provisions applicable to violations of subsection (a), see sections 5687 and 7302. ''.

(13) Subsection (b) of section 5002 of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking ''section 5112(a)'' and inserting ''section 5121(c)(3)'',

(B) by striking ''section 5112'' and inserting ''section 5121(c)'',

(C) by striking ''section 5122'' and inserting ''section 5122(c)''.

(14) Subparagraph (A) of section 5010(c)(2) of such Code is amended by striking ''section 5134'' and inserting ''section 5114''.

(15) Subsection (d) of section 5052 of such Code is amended to read as follows:

''(d) BREWER.—For purposes of this chapter, the term 'brewer' means any person who brews beer or produces beer for sale. Such term shall not include any person who produces only beer exempt from tax under section 5053(e).''.

(16) The text of section 5182 of such Code is amended to read as follows:

''For provisions requiring recordkeeping by wholesale liquor dealers, see section 5112, and by retail liquor dealers, see section 5122. ''.

(17) Subsection (b) of section 5402 of such Code is amended by striking ''section 5092'' and inserting ''section 5052(d)''.

(18) Section 5671 of such Code is amended by striking ''or 5091''.

(19)(A) Part V of subchapter J of chapter 51 of such Code is hereby repealed.

(B) The table of parts for such subchapter J is amended by striking the item relating to part V.

(20)(A) Sections 5142, 5143, and 5145 of such Code are moved to subchapter D of chapter 52 of such Code, inserted after section 5731, redesignated as sections 5732, 5733, and 5734, respectively, and amended by striking ''this part'' each place it appears and inserting ''this subchapter''.

(B) Section 5732 of such Code, as redesignated by subparagraph (A), is amended by striking ''(except the tax imposed by section 5131)'' each place it appears.

(C) Paragraph (2) of section 5733(c) of such Code, as redesignated by subparagraph (A), is amended by striking ''liquors'' both places it appears and inserting ''tobacco products and cigarette papers and tubes''.

(D) The table of sections for subchapter D of chapter 52 of such Code is amended by adding at the end the following:

''Sec. 5732. Payment of tax.

''Sec. 5733. Provisions relating to liability for occupational taxes.

''Sec. 5734. Application of State laws.''.

(E) Section 5731 of such Code is amended by striking subsection (c) and by redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (c).

(21) Subsection (c) of section 6071 of such Code is amended by striking ''section 5142'' and inserting ''section 5732''.

(22) Paragraph (1) of section 7652(g) of such Code is amended—

(A) by striking ''subpart F'' and inserting ''subpart B'', and

(B) by striking ''section 5131(a)'' and inserting ''section 5111''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on July 1, 2005, but shall not apply to taxes imposed for periods before such date.

By Mr. SARBANES:

S. 705. A bill to establish the Interagency Council on Meeting the Housing and Service Needs of Seniors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to establish an Interagency Council on Meeting the Housing and Service Needs of Seniors, which will help the Federal Government work with its partners to meet the growing housing and related needs of senior citizens around the country. The Interagency Council will work to better coordinate Federal programs so that seniors and their families can access the programs and the services necessary to allow them to age in place or find suitable housing alternatives.

It is important that we take note of the needs of this rapidly growing senior population. In 2000, the population over 65 years of age was 34.7 million. This number is expected to grow to over 50 million by 2020. By the year 2030, nearly one-fifth of the United States population will be above 65 years of age.

In recognition of the importance of this issue, in 1999 Congress established the Commission on Affordable Housing and Health Facility Needs for Seniors—''Seniors Commission''—to assess the Federal role in senior housing, health and supportive services. The Seniors

Commission made a number of significant findings. For example, the commission found that seniors require a wide array of housing options with access to services, including meal preparation, transportation, health care, and assistance with daily activities. According to the Seniors Commission, over 18 percent of senior citizens—over 5.8 million seniors—who do not reside in nursing facilities have difficulty performing their daily activities without assistance. Over a million of these seniors are severely impaired, requiring assistance with many of their basic tasks. Many other seniors, those that can perform their daily functions, still require access to health care, transportation and other services. Without enhanced housing opportunities, such as service-enriched housing or assisted living facilities, these seniors find it increasingly difficult to remain outside of nursing homes or other institutional settings. In fact, the Seniors Commission found that ''many seniors across the income spectrum are at risk of institutionalization or neglect due to declining health and the loss or absence of support and timely interventions.'' For many seniors, in-home care, service-enriched housing, retrofitted homes and apartments, and assisted living-type facilities are sorely needed so that seniors can access necessary services where they live.

While there are numerous Federal programs that assist seniors and their families in meeting these needs, they are fragmented across many government agencies, with little or no coordination. In fact, the Seniors Commission found that ''the most striking characteristic of seniors' housing and health care in this country is the disconnection of one field from another.'' For example, housing assistance is available from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, while health care and supportive services are most likely accessed through various branches of the Department of Health and Human Services, such as the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services and the Administration on Aging, as well as through the Department of Transportation and the Department of Labor.

The Seniors Commission concluded that ''the time has come for coordination among Federal and State agencies and administrators.'' The legislation I am introducing today, the ''Meeting the Housing and Service Needs of Seniors Act of 2005,'' answers the commission's call to action by implementing the recommendation for better federal coordination.

Through a high-level interagency council the Federal Government will take a simple, but critical, step in addressing this fragmentation. This Council will have a variety of functions. The council will review all Federal programs designed to assist seniors, identify gaps in services, make recommendations about how to reduce duplication, identify best practices for relevant programs and services, and most importantly, work to improve the availability of housing and services for seniors. The council will also monitor, evaluate, and recommend improvements in existing programs and services that assist seniors in meeting their housing and service needs at the Federal, State, and local level, and will work to more effectively coordinate programs at the federal level, as well as at the state level, where many of the decisions regarding health and service needs are made. In addition, the council will be responsible for collecting and disseminating information, through a variety of means, about seniors and the programs and services relating to their needs. Through collaboration with the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Statistics and the Census Bureau, the council will consolidate data on these needs and identify and address unmet data needs.

With improved collaboration and coordination among the Federal agencies and our State partners, we can ensure that seniors are better able to access housing and services. To ensure its effectiveness, the council will be comprised of top-level officials who oversee the programs which assist seniors in this country, including the Secretaries of the Department of Housing and Urban Development; the Department of Health and Human Services; the Department of Labor; the Department of Transportation; and the Department of Veterans Affairs; as well as the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration; the Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and the Administrator of the Administration for the Aging.

This is a step we must take. It is essential that we make it easier for seniors and their families to access housing and supportive services together, so that when faced with difficult decisions, they do not have to navigate a confusing maze of programs and services, and work through multiple bureaucracies. We must also make it simpler for developers and providers to link housing and services so that greater supportive housing opportunities are available to the senior population. Through the Interagency Council, it is my hope that we will move toward a model of providing housing and services to seniors around the country.

If we are to successfully address these growing needs, it is clear that much work must be done. The establishment of an Interagency Council on Meeting the Housing and Service Needs of Seniors is a critical first step in this endeavor. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation, and I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill together with letters of support be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 705

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 ''Meeting the Housing and Service Needs of Seniors Act of 2005''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The senior population (persons 65 or older) in this country is rapidly growing, and is expected to increase from 34,700,000 in 2000 to nearly 40,000,000 by 2010, and then will dramatically increase to over 50,000,000 by 2020.

(2) By 2020, the population of ''older'' seniors, those over age 85, is expected to double to 7,000,000, and then double again to 14,000,000 by 2040.

(3) As the senior population increases, so does the need for additional safe, decent, affordable, and suitable housing that meets their unique needs.

(4) Due to the health care, transportation, and service needs of seniors, issues of providing suitable and affordable housing opportunities differ significantly from the housing needs of other families.

(5) Seniors need access to a wide array of housing options, such as affordable assisted living, in-home care, supportive or service-enriched housing, and retrofitted homes and apartments to allow seniors to age in place and to avoid premature placement in institutional settings.

(6) While there are many programs in place to assist seniors in finding and affording suitable housing and accessing needed services, these programs are fragmented and spread across many agencies, making it difficult for seniors to access assistance or to receive comprehensive information.

(7) Better coordination among Federal agencies is needed, as is better coordination at State and local levels, to ensure that seniors can access government activities, programs, services, and benefits in an effective and efficient manner.

(8) Up to date, accurate, and accessible statistics on key characteristics of seniors, including conditions, behaviors, and needs, are required to accurately identify the housing and service needs of seniors.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) The term ''housing'' means any form of residence, including rental housing, homeownership, assisted living, group home, supportive housing arrangement, nursing facility, or any other physical location where a person can live.

(2) The term ''service'' includes transportation, health care, nursing assistance, meal, personal care and chore services, assistance with daily activities, mental health care, physical therapy, case management, and any other services needed by seniors to allow them to stay in their housing or find alternative housing that meets their needs.

(3) The term ''program'' includes any Federal or State program providing income support, health benefits or other benefits to seniors, housing assistance, mortgages, mortgage or loan insurance or guarantees, housing counseling, supportive services, assistance with daily activities, or other assistance for seniors.

(4) The term ''Council'' means the Interagency Council on Meeting the Housing and Service Needs of Seniors.

(5) The term ''senior'' means any individual 65 years of age or older.

SEC. 4. INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON MEETING THE HOUSING AND SERVICE NEEDS OF SENIORS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the executive branch an independent

council to be known as the Interagency Council on Meeting the Housing and Service Needs of Seniors.

(b) OBJECTIVES.—The objectives of the Council are as follows:

(1) To promote coordination and collaboration among the Federal departments and agencies involved with housing, health care, and service needs of seniors in order to better meet the needs of senior citizens.

(2) To identify the unique housing and service needs faced by seniors around the country and to recommend ways that the Federal Government, States, State and local governments, and others can better meet those needs, including how to ensure that seniors can find and afford housing that allows them to access health care, transportation, nursing assistance, and assistance with daily activities where they live or in their communities.

(3) To facilitate the aging in place of seniors, by identifying and making available the programs and services necessary to enable seniors to remain in their homes as they age.

(4) To improve coordination among the housing and service related programs and services of Federal agencies for seniors and to make recommendations about needed changes with an emphasis on—

(A) maximizing the impact of existing programs and services;

(B) reducing or eliminating areas of overlap and duplication in the provision and accessibility of such programs and services; and

(C) making access to programs and services easier for seniors around the country.

(5) To increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing housing and service related programs and services which serve seniors.

(6) To establish an ongoing system of coordination among and within such agencies or organizations so that the housing and service needs of seniors are met in a more efficient manner.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—The Council shall be composed of the following:

(1) The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development or a designee of the Secretary.

(2) The Secretary of Health and Human Services or a designee of the Secretary.

(3) The Secretary of Agriculture or a designee of the Secretary.

(4) The Secretary of Transportation or a designee of the Secretary.

(5) The Secretary of Labor or a designee of the Secretary.

(6) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs or a designee of the Secretary.

(7) The Secretary of the Treasury or a designee of the Secretary.

(8) The Commissioner of the Social Security Administration or a designee of the Commissioner.

(9) The Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services or a designee of the Administrator.

(10) The Administrator of the Administration on Aging or a designee of the Administrator.

(11) The head (or designee) of any other Federal agency as the Council considers appropriate.

(12) State and local representatives knowledgeable about the needs of seniors as chosen by the Council members described in paragraphs (1) through (11).

(d) CHAIRPERSON.—The Chairperson of the Council shall alternate between the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on an annual basis.

(e) VICE CHAIR.—Each year, the Council shall elect a Vice Chair from among its members.

(f) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet at the call of its Chairperson or a majority of its members at any time, and no less often than quarterly. The Council shall hold meetings with stakeholders and other interested parties at least twice a year, so that the opinions of such parties can be taken into account and so that outside groups can learn of the Council's activities and plans.

SEC. 5. FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL.

(a) RELEVANT ACTIVITIES.—In carrying out its objectives, the Council shall—

(1) review all Federal programs and services that assist seniors in finding, affording, and rehabilitating housing, including those that assist seniors in accessing health care, transportation, supportive services, and assistance with daily activities, where or close to where seniors live;

(2) monitor, evaluate, and recommend improvements in existing programs and services administered, funded, or financed by Federal, State, and local agencies to assist seniors in meeting their housing and service needs and make any recommendations about how agencies can better work to house and serve seniors; and

(3) recommend ways—

(A) to reduce duplication among programs and services by Federal agencies that assist seniors in meeting their housing and service needs;

(B) to ensure collaboration among and within agencies in the provision and availability of programs and services so that seniors are able to easily access needed programs and services;

(C) to work with States to better provide housing and services to seniors by—

(i) holding individual meetings with State representatives;

(ii) providing ongoing technical assistance to States in better meeting the needs of seniors; and

(iii) working with States to designate State liaisons to the Council;

(D) to identify best practices for programs and services that assist seniors in meeting their housing and service needs, including model—

(i) programs linking housing and services;

(ii) financing products offered by government, quasi-government, and private sector entities;

(iii) land use, zoning, and regulatory practices; and

(iv) innovations in technology applications that give seniors access to information on available services;

(E) to collect and disseminate information about seniors and the programs and services available to them to ensure that seniors can access comprehensive information;

(F) to hold biannual meetings with stakeholders and other interested parties (or to hold open Council meetings) to receive input and ideas about how to best meet the housing and service needs of seniors;

(G) to maintain an updated website of policies, meetings, best practices, programs, services, and any other helpful information to keep people informed of the Council's activities; and

(H) to work with the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging Statistics, the Census Bureau, and member agencies to collect and maintain data relating to the housing and service needs of seniors so that all data can be accessed in one place and to identify and address unmet data needs.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) BY MEMBERS.—Each year, the head of each agency that is a member of the Council shall prepare and transmit to the Council a report that describes—

(A) each program and service administered by the agency that serves seniors and the number of seniors served by each program or service, the resources available in each, as well as a breakdown of where each program and service can be accessed;

(B) the barriers and impediments, including statutory or regulatory, to the access and use of such programs and services by seniors;

(C) the efforts made by each agency to increase opportunities for seniors to find and afford housing that meet their needs, including how the agency is working with other agencies to better coordinate programs and services; and

(D) any new data collected by each agency relating to the housing and service needs of seniors.

(2) BY THE COUNCIL.—Each year, the Council shall prepare and transmit to the President, the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, the House Financial Services Committee, and the House Committee on Education and the Workforce a report that—

(A) summarizes the reports required in paragraph (1);

(B) utilizes recent data to assess the nature of the problems faced by seniors in meeting their unique housing and service needs;

(C) provides a comprehensive and detailed description of the programs and services of the Federal Government in meeting the needs and problems described in subparagraph (B);

(D) describes the activities and accomplishments of the Council in working with Federal, State, and local governments, and private organizations in coordinating programs and services to meet the needs described in subparagraph (B) and the resources available to meet those needs;

(E) assesses the level of Federal assistance required to meet the needs described in subparagraph (B); and

(F) makes recommendations for appropriate legislative and administrative actions to meet the needs described in subparagraph (B) and for coordinating programs and services designed to meet those needs.

SEC. 6. POWERS OF THE COUNCIL.

(a) HEARINGS.—The Council may hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Council considers advisable to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(b) INFORMATION FROM AGENCIES.—Agencies which are members of the Council shall provide all requested information and data to the Council as requested.

(c) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Council may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

(d) GIFTS.—The Council may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

SEC. 7. COUNCIL PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—All members of the Council who are officers or employees of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for their services as officers or employees of the United States.

(b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Council shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Council.

(c) STAFF.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall, without regard to civil service laws and regulations, appoint and terminate an Executive Director and such other additional personnel

as may be necessary to enable the Council to perform its duties.

(2) EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.—The Council shall appoint an Executive Director at its initial meeting. The Executive Director shall be compensated at a rate not to exceed the rate of pay payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of title 5, United States Code.

(3) COMPENSATION.—With the approval of the Council, the Executive Director may appoint and fix the compensation of such additional personnel as necessary to carry out the duties of the Council. The rate of compensation may be set without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter II of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(d) TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—In carrying out its objectives, the Council may procure temporary and intermittent services of consultants and experts under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(e) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Upon request of the Council, any Federal Government employee may be detailed to the Council without reimbursement, and such detail shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

(f) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Secretary of Housing Urban Development and the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall provide the Council with such administrative and supportive services as are necessary to ensure that the Council can carry out its functions.

SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act, $1,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2005 through 2010.

ELDERLY HOUSING COALITION,
Washington, DC, April 5, 2005

Re support for Interagency Council on Housing and Service Needs of Seniors.

Hon. PAUL SARBANES,
Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SARBANES: The Elderly Housing Coalition (EHC) is comprised of organizations that represent providers of affordable housing and supportive service for the elderly. We are writing in enthusiastic support of your legislation that would establish the Interagency Council on Housing and Service Needs of Seniors. This Council is desperately needed and will help federal, state and local governments better serve the housing and service needs of our elderly population.

According to the Congressional Commission on Affordable Housing and Health Facility Needs for Seniors in the 21st Century, we must integrate our current fragmented system of programs that seniors rely on to find the housing and services they need. As the number of seniors grows exponentially and will, in fact, have doubled by 2030, we must find a way to use our resources more effectively.

Your bill will be a great first step to bringing the key governmental agencies together to identify how they can best work to maximize program efficiency and streamline access. Again, we are pleased to offer our support for this legislation establishing an interagency council and thank you for your leadership on this issue.

If there is anything that the Elderly Housing Coalition can do to help or if you have any questions about the EHC please contact Nancy Libson or Alayna Waldrum at (202) 783–2242.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Retired Americans.
American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging.
American Association of Service Coordinators.
Association of Jewish Aging Services of North America.
B'nai B'rith International.
Catholic Charities USA.
Catholic Health Association of the United States.
Council of Large Public Housing Authorities.
Elderly Housing Development and Operations Corporation.
Kinship Caregiver Resources/Intergenerational Village Project.
Local Initiatives Support Corporation.
National Association of Housing, Cooperatives.
National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials.
National Housing Conference.
National Low Income Housing Coalition.
National PACE Association.
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future.
Volunteers of America.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF HOMES AND SERVICES FOR THE AGING,
Washington, DC, April 5, 2005.

Re Interagency Council on Housing and Service Needs of Seniors Legislation.

Hon. PAUL SARBANES,
Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SARBANES: On behalf of AAHSA, I am writing to thank you for introducing legislation to establish an Interagency Council on Housing and Service Needs of Seniors. AAHSA members serve two million people every day through mission-driven, not-for-profit organizations dedicated to providing the services people need, when they need them, in the place they call home. Our members offer the continuum of aging services: assisted living residences, continuing care retirement communities, nursing homes, senior housing facilities, and outreach services. AAHSA's mission is to create the future of aging services through quality the public can trust.

Half of our members own or operate federally subsidized senior apartment buildings and work collaboratively with home and community based service providers that operate programs governed by a maze of departmental regulations. This unique perspective gives us and our members a bird's eye view of how important it is for the various federal agencies to work together to ensure the best care in the most responsive and efficient manner possible.

In 2002 the Commission on Affordable Housing and Health Facility Needs for Seniors in the 21st Century reported to Congress that a top priority for the federal government should be integrating the existing fragmented system of programs that seniors rely on to piece together the housing and services they need. Time is precious—the United States is facing exponential growth in our senior population, which will double by 2030. AAHSA members have created a number of successful models for combining services and senior housing. Unfortunately these are limited and difficult to replicate because of the programmatic barriers. Now is the time to get the policymakers to the table to address the barriers and opportunities that exist in our federal programs and how to make them work.

We know that this can be done. AAHSA strongly supports your bill, which will help the Executive branch and Federal agencies better coordinate the successful aging programs, as an important first step. Thank you for your leadership. If there is anything that AAHSA or my staff can do to support you, please do not hesitate to let me know. I can be reached at (202) 783–2242.

Sincerely,

LARRY MINNIX,
President and CEO.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE COORDINATORS,
Columbus, OH, April 5, 2005.

Hon. PAUL SARBANES,
U.S. Senator,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SARBANES: On behalf of the 1,600 members of the American Association of Service Coordinators (AASC), I want to express our support for your proposed legislation to establish an Interagency Council on Housing and Service Needs of Seniors. AASC believes that this bill is urgently needed to assist service coordinators and others seeking to bring together the various federal and other programs needed by older persons and other special populations.

In my testimony, before the Commission on Affordable Housing and Health Facility describing the present fragmented system, I stated that ''even for long-time professionals, the current 'crazy-quilt' tapestry of services and shelter options makes it difficult to fully grasp their complexities, let alone try to access them. The results are confusion among consumers, duplication of service delivery, government agencies not knowing who supplies what service or that some services even exist, reduction in qualified service workers, regulations that impede dedicated service providers from providing the service they were hired and want to perform.''

One of AASC recommendations to the Commission was the establishment of a cabinet-level department that would encompass in one entity housing, health care and other federal support programs serving the elderly to better focus federal policy and regulatory efforts, in conjunction with states and communities. AASC believes that your bill is an important step to establish a permanent national platform to address many of the cross-cutting needs and issues confronting increasing numbers of frail and vulnerable older persons.

As you may know, AASC is a national, nonprofit organization representing professional service coordinators who serve low-income older persons and other special populations living in federally assisted and public housing facilities nationwide, their caregivers, and others in their local community. Our dedicated membership consists of service coordinators, case managers and social workers, housing managers and administrators, housing management companies, public housing authorities, state housing finance agencies, state and local area agencies on aging and a broad range of national and state organizations and professionals involved in affordable, service-enhanced housing. Background information on AASC is available on our website: www.servicercoordinators.org.

We are grateful for your leadership on the vital issue. Please let me know how AASC

can assist you to expedite enactment of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

JANICE MONKS,
President.

ELDERLY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT & OPERATIONS CORPORATION,
Fort Lauderdale, FL, April 5, 2005.

Hon. PAUL SARBANES,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SARBANES: I am pleased that Elderly Housing Development and Operations Corporation (EHDOC) representing over 40 senior housing facilities in 14 states, is joining with other non-profit organizations involved with federally assisted senior housing to strongly support your bill to establish an Interagency Council on Housing and Service Needs of Seniors. We believe that the establishment of this Interagency Council will provide a cost-effective and efficient means to promote coordination between the various federal agencies involved with senior housing and services, particularly HUD and HHS.

EHDOC is well aware of the need to improve collaboration between the various federal agencies based on our efforts to assist low-income, frail elderly in Council House in Suitland, MD. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to link the various services needed to enable many frail elderly to remain in their homes as they age due to the existing fragmentation of federal housing, services and health care policies and programs.

The difficulty experienced by EHDOC with linking housing and services is repeated by many nonprofit sponsors of federally assisted senior housing throughout the country. As you know, I was I honored to serve as your appointee to the recent Commission on Affordable Housing and Health Care Facilities Needs of Older Persons. We repeatedly heard testimony from public and private agencies involved with senior housing, supportive services and health care, older persons and others, of their difficulties in bringing together these services to meet the needs of older persons.

As stated in the Senior Commissions' final report, ''the very heart of this Commission's work is the recognition that the housing and service needs of seniors traditionally have been addressed in different 'worlds' that often fail to recognize or communicate with each other.'' Findings of the Commission concluded ''while policymakers have struggled to be responsive to the needs of seniors, the very structure of Congressional committees and Federal agencies often makes it difficult to address complex needs in a comprehensive and coordinated fashion. For example: medical needs of seniors are addressed by Medicare and Medicaid; social service needs are addressed by Medicaid, the OAA, and other block grant programs; housing programs are administered by HUD and the Department of Agriculture's RHS; and transportation programs are administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).''

We commend you for your leadership in addressing this critical need to effectively bring together the various federal agencies and others involved with affordable housing and service needs of older persons through the establishment of an Interagency Council on Senior Housing. Please let me if you have any questions or how EHDOC can assist you with the enactment of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

STEVE PROTULIS,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL PACE ASSOCIATION,
April 5, 2005.

Hon. PAUL SARBANES,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SARBANES: On behalf of the National PACE Association (NPA), I want to express our support for your bill to establish an Interagency Council on Housing and Service Needs of Seniors. NPA believes that this legislation is essential to provide effective linkages between housing, health care and services, and that the proposed Interagency Council will facilitate an effective national forum to promote coordination among key federal agencies involved with these programs, particularly HUD, HHS, CMS, and DOT.

As you may know, NPA represents nonprofit organizations in 21 states, including Hopkins ElderPlus in Baltimore that are providers of PACE—a Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. PACE programs coordinate and provide all needed preventive, primary, acute and long term care services so that older persons can continue living in the community. PACE serves individuals who are aged 55 or older, certified by their state to need nursing home care, are able to live safely in the community, and live in a state designated PACE service area. PACE provides a ''one stop shop'' for health and long-term care, and our members clearly understand through their extensive experience with the holistic needs of frail elderly, the interrelationship between housing, services, health and long-term care.

While housing is not a direct PACE benefit, our members have long recognized the importance of housing as a vital aspect of promoting wellness and quality of life for older persons. In fact, nearly all PACE programs nationwide serve enrollees who reside in public and federally assisted multifamily senior housing, and nearly one third of our members co-locate their PACE health care centers with senior housing or assisted living. Unfortunately, it is often difficult to link housing, services and health care due to conflicting funding streams, licensing, eligibility, and other factors.

Additional background information on PACE, NPA, and our members are available at our website: *www.npaonline.org*. Our members strongly support your bill and the prompt establishment of an Interagency Council on Senior Housing and Services. We are grateful for your leadership with this effort. Please let me know if you have any questions or how NPA can assist you with this effort to benefit low-income, frail elderly. I can be reached at 703–535–1567 or *shawnbanpaonline.org*.

Sincerely,

SHAWN BLOOM,
President and CEO.

By Mr. COLEMAN:

S. 706. A bill to convey all right, title, and interst of the United States in and to the land described in this Act to the Secretary of the Interior for the Prairie Island Indian Community in Minnestora; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. President, 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. 706

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 ''Prairie Island Land Conveyance Act of 2005''.

SEC. 2. PRAIRIE ISLAND LAND CONVEYANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Army shall convey all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the land described in subsection (b), including all improvements, cultural resources, and sites on the land, subject to the flowage and sloughing easement described in subsection (d) and to the conditions stated in subsection (f), to the Secretary of the Interior, to be—

(1) held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Prairie Island Indian Community in Minnesota; and

(2) included in the Prairie Island Indian Community Reservation in Goodhue County, Minnesota.

(b) LAND DESCRIPTION.—The land to be conveyed under subsection (a) is the approximately 1290 acres of land associated with the Lock and Dam #3 on the Mississippi River in Goodhue County, Minnesota, located in tracts identified as GO–251, GO–252, GO–271, GO–277, GO–278, GO–284, GO–301 through GO–313, GO–314A, GO–314B, GO–329, GO–330A, GO–330B, GO–331A, GO–331B, GO–331C, GO–332, GO–333, GO–334, GO–335A, GO–335B, GO–336 through GO–338, GO–339A, GO–339B, GO–339C, GO–339D, GO–339E, GO–340A, GO–340B, GO–358, GO–359A, GO–359B, GO–359C, GO–359D, and GO–360, as depicted on the map entitled ''United States Army Corps of Engineers survey map of the Upper Mississippi River 9-Foot Project, Lock & Dam No. 3 (Red Wing), Land & Flowage Rights'' and dated December 1936.

(c) BOUNDARY SURVEY.—Not later than 5 years after the date of conveyance under subsection (a), the boundaries of the land conveyed shall be surveyed as provided in section 2115 of the Revised Statutes (25 U.S.C. 176).

(d) EASEMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Corps of Engineers shall retain a flowage and sloughing easement for the purpose of navigation and purposes relating to the Lock and Dam No. 3 project over the portion of the land described in subsection (b) that lies below the elevation of 676.0.

(2) INCLUSIONS.—The easement retained under paragraph (1) includes—

(A) the perpetual right to overflow, flood, and submerge property as the District Engineer determines to be necessary in connection with the operation and maintenance of the Mississippi River Navigation Project; and

(B) the continuing right to clear and remove any brush, debris, or natural obstructions that, in the opinion of the District Engineer, may be detrimental to the project.

(e) OWNERSHIP OF STURGEON LAKE BED UNAFFECTED.—Nothing in this section diminishes or otherwise affects the title of the State of Minnesota to the bed of Sturgeon Lake located within the tracts of land described in subsection (b).

(f) CONDITIONS.—The conveyance under subsection (a) is subject to the conditions that the Prairie Island Indian Community shall not—

(1) use the conveyed land for human habitation;

(2) construct any structure on the land without the written approval of the District Engineer; or

(3) conduct gaming (within the meaning of section 4 of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (25 U.S.C. 2703)) on the land.

(g) NO EFFECT ON ELIGIBILITY FOR CERTAIN PROJECTS.—Notwithstanding the conveyance under subsection (a), the land shall continue to be eligible for environmental management planning and other recreational or natural

resource development projects on the same basis as before the conveyance.

(h) EFFECT OF SECTION.—Nothing in this section diminishes or otherwise affects the rights granted to the United States pursuant to letters of July 23, 1937, and November 20, 1937, from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of War and the letters of the Secretary of War in response to the Secretary of the Interior dated August 18, 1937, and November 27, 1937, under which the Secretary of the Interior granted certain rights to the Corps of Engineers to overflow the portions of Tracts A, B, and C that lie within the Mississippi River 9-Foot Channel Project boundary and as more particularly shown and depicted on the map entitled ''United States Army Corps of Engineers survey map of the Upper Mississippi River 9-Foot Project, Lock & Dam No. 3 (Red Wing), Land & Flowage Rights'' and dated December 1936.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. DODD):

S. 707. A bill to reduce preterm labor and delivery and the risk of pregnancy-related deaths and complications due to pregnancy, and to reduce infant mortality caused by prematurity; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early Act, or PREEMIE Act. This bipartisan bill expands research into the causes and prevention of prematurity, babies born 3 weeks or more early, and increases education and support services related to prematurity. I am pleased that Senator DODD is once again my partner on this legislation and we hope the Senate will pass the PREEMIE Act in this Congress.

In June 2004, the Subcommittee on Children and Families, which I chaired, held a hearing to learn about the problem of premature birth. Unfortunately, Tennessee has the fourth highest rate of premature birth in the country. Fourteen percent of Tennessee babies are born prematurely. In an average week in Tennessee, 210 babies are born prematurely. Premature infants are 14 times more likely to die in the first year of life. It is the No. 1 cause of infant death in the first month of life. Premature babies who survive may suffer lifelong consequences including: cerebral palsy, mental retardation, chronic lung disease, and vision and hearing loss.

In February 2004, the National Center for Health Statistics, NCHS, reported the first increase in the U.S. infant mortality rate since 1958, from 6.8 infant deaths per 1,000 live births in 2001 to 7.0 in 2000. This increase is extremely disturbing because the infant mortality rate is a measure of the health of society. NCHS subsequently reported that 61 percent of this increase in infant mortality was due to an increase in the birth of premature and low birthweight babies. Almost half the cases of premature birth have no known cause—any pregnant woman is at risk. We must address this issue.

Finally, this is a costly problem. In 2002, the estimated charges for hospital stays for infants with a diagnosis of preterm birth or low birthweight, LBW, were $15.5 billion. The average hospital charge per infant stay with a principal diagnosis of prematurity/LBW was $79,000, with an average hospital stay of 24.2 days. Hospital charges for newborn stays without complications averaged $1,500 in 2002, with an average hospital stay of 2.0 days. Employers carry much of the burden. Almost half of that $15.5 billion was billed to employers or other private insurers, according to the March of Dimes. The other half is billed to Medicaid.

As a nation, we must address this problem. The PREEMIE Act calls for expanding Federal research related to preterm labor and delivery and increasing public and provider education and support services. It is supported by the March of Dimes, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses, and many others.

I hope my colleagues will join me in the fight to ensure a healthy start for all of American's children by cosponsoring and working with me for passage of the PREEMIE Act during this Congress.

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

S. 707

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 ''Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers who deliver Infants Early Act'' or the ''PREEMIE Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Premature birth is a serious and growing problem. The rate of preterm birth increased 27 percent between 1982 and 2002 (from 9.4 percent to 11.9 percent). In 2001, more than 480,000 babies were born prematurely in the United States.

(2) Preterm birth accounts for 24 percent of deaths in the first month of life.

(3) Premature infants are 14 times more likely to die in the first year of life.

(4) Premature babies who survive may suffer lifelong consequences, including cerebral palsy, mental retardation, chronic lung disease, and vision and hearing loss.

(5) Preterm and low birthweight birth is a significant financial burden in health care. The estimated charges for hospital stays for infants with any diagnosis of prematurity/low birthweight were $15,500,000,000 in 2002. The average lifetime medical costs of a premature baby are conservatively estimated at $500,000.

(6) The proportion of preterm infants born to African-American mothers (17.3 percent) was significantly higher compared to the rate of infants born to white mothers (10.6 percent). Prematurity or low birthweight is the leading cause of death for African-American infants.

(7) The cause of approximately half of all premature births is unknown.

(8) Women who smoke during pregnancy are twice as likely as nonsmokers to give birth to a low birthweight baby. Babies born to smokers weigh, on average, 200 grams less than nonsmokers' babies.

(9) To reduce the rates of preterm labor and delivery more research is needed on the underlying causes of preterm delivery, the development of treatments for prevention of preterm birth, and treatments improving outcomes for infants born preterm.

(b) PURPOSES.—It the purpose of this Act to—

(1) reduce rates of preterm labor and delivery;

(2) work toward an evidence-based standard of care for pregnant women at risk of preterm labor or other serious complications, and for infants born preterm and at a low birthweight; and

(3) reduce infant mortality and disabilities caused by prematurity.

SEC. 3. RESEARCH RELATING TO PRETERM LABOR AND DELIVERY AND THE CARE, TREATMENT, AND OUTCOMES OF PRETERM AND LOW BIRTHWEIGHT INFANTS.

(a) GENERAL EXPANSION OF NIH RESEARCH.—Part B of title IV of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 284 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 409J. EXPANSION AND COORDINATION OF RESEARCH RELATING TO PRETERM LABOR AND DELIVERY AND INFANT MORTALITY.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of NIH shall expand, intensify, and coordinate the activities of the National Institutes of Health with respect to research on the causes of preterm labor and delivery, infant mortality, and improving the care and treatment of preterm and low birthweight infants.

''(b) AUTHORIZATION OF RESEARCH NETWORKS.—There shall be established within the National Institutes of Health a Maternal-Fetal Medicine Units Network and a Neonatal Research Units Network. In complying with this subsection, the Director of NIH shall utilize existing networks.

''(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2005 through 2009.''.

(b) GENERAL EXPANSION OF CDC RESEARCH.—Section 301 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 241 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(e) The Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shall expand, intensify, and coordinate the activities of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with respect to preterm labor and delivery and infant mortality.''.

(c) STUDY ON ASSISTED REPRODUCTION TECHNOLOGIES.—Section 1004(c) of the Children's Health Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-310) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) consider the impact of assisted reproduction technologies on the mother's and children's health and development.''.

(d) STUDY ON RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PREMATURITY AND BIRTH DEFECTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shall conduct a study on the relationship between prematurity, birth defects, and developmental disabilities.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 2 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report concerning the results of the study conducted under paragraph (1).

(e) REVIEW OF PREGNANCY RISK ASSESSMENT MONITORING SURVEY.—The Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shall conduct a review of the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring Survey to ensure that the Survey includes information relative to medical care and intervention received, in order to track pregnancy outcomes and reduce instances of preterm birth.

(f) STUDY ON THE HEALTH AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF PRETERM BIRTH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National Institutes of Health in conjunction with the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shall enter into a contract with the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences for the conduct of a study to define and address the health and economic consequences of preterm birth. In conducting the study, the Institute of Medicine shall—

(A) review and assess the epidemiology of premature birth and low birthweight, and the associated maternal and child health effects in the United States, with attention paid to categories of gestational age, plurality, maternal age, and racial or ethnic disparities;

(B) review and describe the spectrum of short and long-term disability and health-related quality of life associated with premature births and the impact on maternal health, health care and quality of life, family employment, caregiver issues, and other social and financial burdens;

(C) assess the direct and indirect costs associated with premature birth, including morbidity, disability, and mortality;

(D) identify gaps and provide recommendations for feasible systems of monitoring and assessing associated economic and quality of life burdens associated with prematurity;

(E) explore the implications of the burden of premature births for national health policy;

(F) identify community outreach models that are effective in decreasing prematurity rates in communities;

(G) consider options for addressing, as appropriate, the allocation of public funds to biomedical and behavioral research, the costs and benefits of preventive interventions, public health, and access to health care; and

(H) provide recommendations on best practices and interventions to prevent premature birth, as well as the most promising areas of research to further prevention efforts.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the contract is entered into under paragraph (1), the Institute of Medicine shall submit to the Director of the National Institutes of Health, the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the appropriate committees of Congress a report concerning the results of the study conducted under such paragraph.

(g) EVALUATION OF NATIONAL CORE PERFORMANCE MEASURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration shall conduct an assessment of the current national core performance measures and national core outcome measures utilized under the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant under title V of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 701 et seq.) for purposes of expanding such measures to include some of the known risk factors of low birthweight and prematurity, including the percentage of infants born to pregnant women who smoked during pregnancy.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report concerning the results of the evaluation conducted under paragraph (1).

SEC. 4. PUBLIC AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDER EDUCATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES.

Part P of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 280g et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 399O. PUBLIC AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDER EDUCATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, directly or through the awarding of grants to public or private nonprofit entities, shall conduct a demonstration project to improve the provision of information on prematurity to health professionals and other health care providers and the public.

''(b) ACTIVITIES.—Activities to be carried out under the demonstration project under subsection (a) shall include the establishment of programs—

''(1) to provide information and education to health professionals, other health care providers, and the public concerning—

''(A) the signs of preterm labor, updated as new research results become available;

''(B) the screening for and the treating of infections;

''(C) counseling on optimal weight and good nutrition, including folic acid;

''(D) smoking cessation education and counseling; and

''(E) stress management; and

''(2) to improve the treatment and outcomes for babies born premature, including the use of evidence-based standards of care by health care professionals for pregnant women at risk of preterm labor or other serious complications and for infants born preterm and at a low birthweight.

''(c) REQUIREMENT.—Any program or activity funded under this section shall be evidence-based.

''(d) NICU FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS.—The Secretary shall conduct, through the awarding of grants to public and nonprofit private entities, projects to respond to the emotional and informational needs of families during the stay of an infant in a neonatal intensive care unit, during the transition of the infant to the home, and in the event of a newborn death. Activities under such projects may include providing books and videos to families that provide information about the neonatal intensive care unit experience, and providing direct services that provide emotional support within the neonatal intensive care unit setting.

''(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section, such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2005 through 2009.''.

SEC. 5. INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL ON PREMATURITY AND LOW BIRTHWEIGHT.

(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to stimulate multidisciplinary research, scientific exchange, and collaboration among the agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services and to assist the Department in targeting efforts to achieve the greatest advances toward the goal of reducing prematurity and low birthweight.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall establish an Interagency Coordinating Council on Prematurity and Low Birthweight (referred to in this section as the Council) to carry out the purpose of this section.

(c) COMPOSITION.—The Council shall be composed of members to be appointed by the Secretary, including representatives of—

(1) the agencies of the Department of Health and Human Services; and

(2) voluntary health care organizations, including grassroots advocacy organizations, providers of specialty obstetrical and pediatric care, and researcher organizations.

(d) ACTIVITIES.—The Council shall—

(1) annually report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services on current Departmental activities relating to prematurity and low birthweight;

(2) plan and hold a conference on prematurity and low birthweight under the sponsorship of the Surgeon General;

(3) establish a consensus research plan for the Department of Health and Human Services on prematurity and low birthweight;

(4) report to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the appropriate committees of Congress on recommendations derived from the conference held under paragraph (2) and on the status of Departmental research activities concerning prematurity and low birthweight;

(5) carry out other activities determined appropriate by the Secretary of Health and Human Services; and

(6) oversee the coordination of the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act, such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2005 through 2009.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to join Senator ALEXANDER in reintroducing the Prematurity Research Expansion and Education for Mothers Who Deliver Infants Early (PREEMIE) Act—legislation intended to address the growing crisis of premature birth in our nation.

I think when many of us hear about a baby being born early, we don't give much thought to what it means. After all, it is not all that uncommon—I'm sure that almost all of my colleagues knows someone born prematurely. Thanks to modem medicine it is also not uncommon for a baby born early to end up healthy and happy.

But this feeling that prematurity is somehow ''normal'' or to be expected masks a growing health crisis. Prematurity has real consequences in health and economic terms. We need to bring to light this issue that affects some of the most vulnerable members of our society: newborn babies.

As a member of the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee I, along with my colleagues, have devoted much time and effort to improving the health of our nation's children and infants. And yet despite our efforts, the problem of prematurity continues to persist and even grow. What is so striking about prematurity is how many parents face these enormous emotional and financial burdens. Nearly 1 out of every 8 babies in the United States is born prematurely—that's 1,300 babies each day, and over 470,000 each year (including more than 4,000 in my home state of Connecticut).

Despite all of the health care advances of the last decades, the problem of prematurity is not in any way abating. According to recent data released by the National Center for Health Statistics, in 2002 the infant mortality rate actually increased for the first time since 1958. Much of this increase is attributable to infant death in the

first month of life—of which prematurity is the leading cause. Since 1981, the premature birth rate has increased by 27 percent. This stands in stark contrast to some of the breathtaking medical discoveries of the past two decades. We can now treat and even cure many types of cancer, but we can't prevent babies from being born too soon.

Mr. President, the consequences of prematurity are devastating. As I mentioned earlier, it is the leading cause of neonatal death—a tragedy that no family should have to face. For those infants that survive, a lifetime of severe health problems is not uncommon. Prematurity has been linked to such long-term health problems as cerebral palsy, mental retardation, chronic lung disease, and vision and hearing loss. Premature babies have the deck stacked against them from the moment they are born. And even in the fortunate cases where there are no life-long health consequences, the experience of a premature birth takes an enormous emotional toll on a family.

Prematurity also carries a significant economic cost. According to a recent study conducted by the March of Dimes, hospitalizations due to prematurity cost a total of $15.5 billion during the year 2002—accounting for nearly half of all hospital charges for infants in this country. And this number does not even include the cost of care for problems later in life resulting from a premature birth. Much of this cost falls on employers who are already bearing the weight of skyrocketing health care costs.

Given the emotional and economic toll that prematurity takes on this country, we know remarkably little about why it happens, and how it can be prevented. Some of the risk factors associated with preterm birth are known, including advanced age of the mother, smoking, and certain chronic diseases. But nearly 50 percent of all premature births have no known cause. And because we know so little about the causes of prematurity, we also do not know how to prevent it.

For such a large (and growing) problem, it is astounding how little we know. It is critical that we make a national commitment to solving this puzzle. We must do everything we can to expand research—both public and private—into the root causes of prematurity.

Senator ALEXANDER and I are introducing the PREEMIE Act for precisely this reason. Our bill would coordinate and expand research related to prematurity at the Federal level. It would also educate health care providers and the general public about the risks of prematurity, and measures that can be taken before and during pregnancy to prevent it. Pregnant mothers need to know the warning signs and symptoms of premature labor—and they need to know what to do if they begin to notice those signs.

Finally, because we will never eliminate prematurity completely, our legislation would provide support services to families impacted by a premature birth. As we're investigating the causes of prematurity and increasing awareness in expectant parents, we need to reach out to the mothers and fathers across our country whose children are born too soon. We need to give them emotional support during the difficult days, weeks, and months that often follow a premature birth. We need to make sure that the doctors, nurses, and other hospital staff who care for premature babies are sensitive to the needs of their parents, their brothers, and their sisters. And we need to make sure that when the time finally comes to bring a premature baby home, parents have all the information they need to make that transition.

It is my hope that this legislation will complement and support some of the efforts going on in the private sector—such as the March of Dimes ambitious campaign to increase public awareness and reduce the rate of preterm birth. I urge all of my colleagues to join us in support of this important legislation.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. SMITH):

S. 708. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide medicare beneficiaries with access to information concerning the quality of care provided by skilled nursing facilities and to provide incentives to skilled nursing facilities to improve the quality of care provided by those facilities by linking the amount of payment under the medicare program to quality reporting and performance requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Long Term Care Quality and Consumer Information Improvement Act of 2005. Medicare spending for skilled nursing facilities grew rapidly during the late 1980s and 1990s increasing from almost $4 billion in 1992 to $12.9 billion in 1997. While spending has increased under Medicare, there has not been an effort to reward skilled nursing facilities that have provided exceptional care to seniors.

The bill I am introducing today with my colleague from Oregon, Senator WYDEN, will establish a system to reward skilled nursing facilities that provide exceptional care. We should take steps to ensure that skilled nursing facilities that are providing the best care be rewarded. We must also create incentives for other facilities to strive to provide excellent care.

The Long Term Care Quality and Consumer Information Improvement Act of 2005 directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish 10 to 15 quality measures for skilled nursing facilities. While establishing these measures, the Secretary must consult with residents of skilled nursing facilities, patient advocacy organizations, state regulatory representatives, representatives from the skilled nursing facility industry and quality measure experts. The quality ratings for the facilities will then be published on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' website and published in newspapers with a national circulation.

The quality measures created by this bill will be used as an incentive for facilities to provide excellent care. Skilled nursing facilities that submit data shall receive a full market basket update and starting in fiscal year 2006 skilled nursing facilities that are in the top 10 percent of facilities will receive a 2 percent payment bonus. Skilled nursing facilities that are below the top 10 percent, but within the top 20 percent shall receive a one percent payment bonus.

The increased public disclosure of facility-specific quality data and the financial incentives included in this bill will spur competition and improved performance in skilled nursing facilities. I believe that we need to help the 77 million elderly and disabled Americans who are in nursing homes by making sure they receive the highest quality care possible.

Mr. President, I look forward to working with my fellow Senators and with the chairman of the Finance Committee on this important bill in the upcoming months, and I urge my colleagues to join us in support of this legislation.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise to discuss a bill I am introducing today, ''The Long Term Care Quality and Consumer Information Act''.

As we begin discussions on how to assure that we reward quality health care, I believe we need to include long term care as part of that discussion. Nursing homes sever some of the most vulnerable among us, and assuring quality of care is encouraged and rewarded is important. I hope that this bill will spark a serious debate about how we pay for quality care. This proposal establishes a voluntary system under which nursing homes providing better quality of care would receive higher payment and in turn would provide more information about the quality of care provided. Information would include nurse staffing ratios and would be made public to consumers and their families.

Historically, Americans have been paying the same for quality health care as for mediocre care. Efforts have been made by some in the private sector to better recognize and provide incentives for those providers who consistently provide a higher level of care. The Institute of Medicine in its report ''Leading by Example,'' declared the government should take the lead in improving health care by giving financial rewards to hospitals and doctors who improve care for beneficiaries in six Federal programs, including Medicare and Medicaid and the Veterans Health Administration. The IOM report also said the government should collect and make available to the public data comparing

the quality of care among poviders. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has begun pilot programs. I think nursing homes should also be an area in which we explore payment policies that regard those providing a higher quality of care.

I look forward to continuing the discussion with all stakeholders about these concepts so we can assure a high level of care and find ways to help providers improve the level of care they provide.

By Mr. DEWINE (for himself, Mr. REED, Mr. BURR, and Mr. DODD):

S. 709. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a grant program to provide supportive services in permanent supportive housing for chronically homeless individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, today I rise with my colleague, Senator JACK REED, to reintroduce the Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act. I would like to thank Senator REED for his support in introducing this bill and for his dedication and commitment to this issue. I also would like to thank Senator BURR for his work on this bill. Senator BURR introduced a similar version of this bill when he was a member of the House of Representatives. I appreciate his support and the support of Senator DODD, as well. Both are cosponsors of this legislation.

The chronically homeless represent about 10 percent of the entire homeless population, but consume a majority of the services. There are approximately 200,000 to 250,000 people who experience chronic homelessness. Those numbers include the heads of families, as well.

Tragically, for these individuals, the periods of homelessness are measured in years—not weeks or months. They tend to have disabling health and behavioral health problems: 40 percent have substance abuse disorders, 25 percent have a physical disability, and 20 percent have serious mental illness. These factors often contribute to a person becoming homeless, in the first place, and are certainly an impediment to overcoming it.

The President has set a goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years. The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, chaired by the Ohio Department of Mental Health Director, Mike Hogan, recommended that a comprehensive program be created to facilitate access to permanent supportive housing for individuals and families who are chronically homeless. This recommendation is so important because affordable housing, alone, is not enough for this hard to reach group. And, temporary shelter-housing does not provide the stability and services needed to provide long-term positive outcomes. Only supportive housing, where the chronically homeless can receive shelter and services, such as mental health and substance abuse treatment, has been effective in decreasing their chances of returning to the streets and increasing their chances for leading productive lives.

Not only is it right to help this group of hard to reach individuals, but it is also fiscally responsible. This group is one of the most expensive groups to serve. As I mentioned previously, they represent 10 percent of the overall homeless population, however, they consume a majority of homeless services. They consume the most emergency housing and health care services, which are also the most costly to provide. By encouraging supportive housing, we are providing the services necessary for these individuals and families to really get back on their feet. We can either continue to provide expensive emergency services to these needy people or we can give them the right kind of help—the type of help they need for their long-term well-being and the long-term well-being of our communities.

Unfortunately, current programs for funding services in permanent supportive housing, other than those administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, were not designed to be coordinated with housing programs. These programs also were not designed to meet the challenging needs of this specific subgroup of the homeless. That is why the bill we are introducing today would provide the authorization to fund services for supportive housing by providing grants which can be used with existing programs through HUD and state and local communities.

Our bill also would encourage those who provide services to the chronically homeless, such as SAMHSA within the Department of Health and Human Services, to work with and coordinate their efforts with those who provide the physical housing, such as HUD. Under the current administration, these two departments have started to truly coordinate their efforts, and this bill would encourage and support that continued collaboration.

This is a good bill, Mr. President, and it could make a real difference in the lives of so many individuals in need. I ask my colleagues to join us in support.

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

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

S. 709

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 ''Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Nationally, there are approximately 200,000 to 250,000 people who experience chronic homelessness, including some families with children. Chronically homeless people often live in shelters or on the streets for years at a time, experience repeated episodes of homelessness without achieving housing stability, or cycle between homelessness, jails, mental health facilities, and hospitals.

(2) The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health recommended the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan designed to facilitate access to 150,000 units of permanent supportive housing for consumers and families who are chronically homeless. The Commission found that affordable housing alone is insufficient for many people with severe mental illness, and that flexible, mobile, individualized support services are also necessary to support and sustain consumers in their housing.

(3) Congress and the President have set a goal of ending chronic homelessness in 10 years.

(4) Permanent supportive housing is a proven and cost effective solution to chronic homelessness. A recent study by the University of Pennsylvania found that each unit of supportive housing for homeless people with mental illness in New York City resulted in public savings of $16,281 per year in systems of care such as mental health, human services, health care, veterans' affairs, and corrections.

(5) Current programs for funding services in permanent supportive housing, other than those administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development, were not designed to be closely coordinated with housing resources, nor were they designed to meet the multiple needs of people who are chronically homeless.

SEC. 3. DUTIES OF ADMINISTRATOR OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION.

Section 501(d) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290aa(d)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (17), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (18), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(19) collaborate with Federal departments and programs that are part of the President's Interagency Council on Homelessness, particularly the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and with other agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, particularly the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Administration on Children and Families, and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, to design national strategies for providing services in supportive housing that will assist in ending chronic homelessness and to implement programs that address chronic homelessness.''.

SEC. 4. GRANTS FOR SERVICES FOR CHRONICALLY HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING.

Title V of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290aa et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''PART J—GRANTS FOR SERVICES TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

''SEC. 596. GRANTS FOR SERVICES TO END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—

''(1) GRANTS.—The Secretary shall make grants to entities described in paragraph (2) for the purpose of carrying out projects to provide the services described in subsection (d) to chronically homeless individuals in permanent supportive housing.

''(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—For purposes of paragraph (1), an entity described in this paragraph is—

''(A) a State or political subdivision of a State, an Indian tribe or tribal organization, or a public or nonprofit private entity, including a community-based provider of

homelessness services, health care, housing, or other services important to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness; or

''(B) a consortium composed of entities described in subparagraph (A), which consortium includes a public or nonprofit private entity that serves as the lead applicant and has responsibility for coordinating the activities of the consortium.

''(b) PRIORITIES.—In making grants under subsection (a), the Secretary shall give priority to applicants demonstrating that the applicants—

''(1) target funds to individuals or families who—

''(A) have been homeless for longer periods of time or have experienced more episodes of homelessness than are required to meet the definition of chronic homelessness under this section;

''(B) have high rates of utilization of emergency public systems of care; or

''(C) have a history of interactions with law enforcement and the criminal justice system;

''(2) have greater funding commitments from State or local government agencies responsible for overseeing mental health treatment, substance abuse treatment, medical care, and employment (including commitments to provide Federal funds in accordance with subsection (e)(2)(B)(ii));

''(3) will provide for an increase in the number of units of permanent supportive housing that would serve chronically homeless individuals in the community as a result of an award of a grant under subsection (a); and

''(4) have demonstrated experience providing services to address the mental health and substance abuse problems of chronically homeless individuals living in permanent supportive housing settings.

''(c) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall ensure that consideration is given to geographic distribution (such as urban and rural areas) in the awarding of grants under subsection (a).

''(d) SERVICES.—The services referred to in subsection (a) are the following:

''(1) Services provided by the grantee or by qualified subcontractors that promote recovery and self-sufficiency and address barriers to housing stability, including but not limited to the following:

''(A) Mental health services, including treatment and recovery support services.

''(B) Substance abuse treatment and recovery support services, including counseling, treatment planning, recovery coaching, and relapse prevention.

''(C) Integrated, coordinated treatment and recovery support services for co-occurring disorders.

''(D) Health education, including referrals for medical and dental care.

''(E) Services designed to help individuals make progress toward self-sufficiency and recovery, including benefits advocacy, money management, life-skills training, self-help programs, and engagement and motivational interventions.

''(F) Parental skills and family support.

''(G) Case management.

''(H) Other supportive services that promote an end to chronic homelessness.

''(I) Coordination or partnership with other agencies, programs, or mainstream benefits to maximize the availability of services and resources to meet the needs of chronically homeless persons living in supportive housing using cost-effective approaches that avoid duplication.

''(J) Data collection and measuring performance outcomes as specified in subsection (k).

''(2) Services, as described in paragraph (1), that are delivered to individuals and families who are chronically homeless and who are scheduled to become residents of permanent supportive housing within 90 days pending the location or development of an appropriate unit of housing.

''(3) For individuals and families who are otherwise eligible, and who have voluntarily chosen to seek other housing opportunities after a period of tenancy in supportive housing, services, as described in paragraph (1), that are delivered, for a period of 90 days after exiting permanent supportive housing or until the individuals have transitioned to comprehensive services adequate to meet their current needs, provided that the purpose of the services is to support the individuals in their choice to transition into housing that is responsive to their individual needs and preferences.

''(e) MATCHING FUNDS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A condition for the receipt of a grant under subsection (a) is that, with respect to the cost of the project to be carried out by an applicant pursuant to such subsection, the applicant agree as follows:

''(A) In the case of the initial grant pursuant to subsection (j)(1)(A), the applicant will, in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3), make available contributions toward such costs in an amount that is not less than $1 for each $3 of Federal funds provided in the grant.

''(B) In the case of a renewal grant pursuant to subsection (j)(1)(B), the applicant will, in accordance with paragraphs (2) and (3), make available contributions toward such costs in an amount that is not less than $1 for each $1 of Federal funds provided in the grant.

''(2) SOURCE OF CONTRIBUTION.—For purposes of paragraph (1), contributions made by an applicant are in accordance with this paragraph if made as follows:

''(A) The contribution is made from funds of the applicant or from donations from public or private entities.

''(B) Of the contribution—

''(i) not less than 80 percent is from non-Federal funds; and

''(ii) not more than 20 percent is from Federal funds provided under programs that—

''(I) are not expressly directed at services for homeless individuals, but whose purposes are broad enough to include the provision of a service or services described in subsection (d) as authorized expenditures under such program; and

''(II) do not prohibit Federal funds under the program from being used to provide a contribution that is required as a condition for obtaining Federal funds.

''(3) DETERMINATION OF AMOUNT CONTRIBUTED.—Contributions required in paragraph (1) may be in cash or in kind, fairly evaluated, including plant, equipment, or services. Amounts provided by the Federal Government, or services assisted or subsidized to any significant extent by the Federal Government, may not be included in determining the amount of non-Federal contributions required in paragraph (2)(B)(i).

''(f) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—A condition for the receipt of a grant under subsection (a) is that the applicant involved agree that not more than 10 percent of the grant will be expended for administrative expenses with respect to the grant. Expenses for data collection and measuring performance outcomes as specified in subsection (k) shall not be considered as administrative expenses subject to the limitation in this subsection.

''(g) CERTAIN USES OF FUNDS.—Notwithstanding other provisions of this section, a grantee under subsection (a) may expend not more than 20 percent of the grant to provide the services described in subsection (d) to homeless individuals who are not chronically homeless.

''(h) APPLICATION FOR GRANT.—A grant may be made under subsection (a) only if an application for the grant is submitted to the Secretary and the application is in such form, is made in such manner, and contains such agreements, assurances, and information as the Secretary determines to be necessary to carry out this section.

''(i) CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS.—A condition for the receipt of a grant under subsection (a) is that the applicant involved demonstrate the following:

''(1) The applicant and all direct providers of services have the experience, infrastructure, and expertise needed to ensure the quality and effectiveness of services, which may be demonstrated by any of the following:

''(A) Compliance with all local, city, county, or State requirements for licensing, accreditation, or certification (if any) which are applicable to the proposed project.

''(B) A minimum of two years experience providing comparable services that do not require licensing, accreditation, or certification.

''(C) Certification as a Medicaid service provider, including health care for the homeless programs and community health centers.

''(D) An executed agreement with a relevant State or local government agency that will provide oversight over the mental health, substance abuse, or other services that will be delivered by the project.

''(2) There is a mechanism for determining whether residents are chronically homeless. Such a mechanism may rely on local data systems or records of shelter admission. If there are no sources of data regarding the duration or number of homeless episodes, or if such data are unreliable for the purposes of this subsection, an applicant must demonstrate that the project will implement appropriate procedures, taking into consideration the capacity of local homeless service providers to document episodes of homelessness and the challenges of engaging persons who have been chronically homeless, to verify that an individual or family meets the definition for being chronically homeless under this section.

''(3) The applicant participates in a local, regional, or statewide homeless management information system.

''(j) DURATION OF INITIAL AND RENEWAL GRANTS; ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS REGARDING RENEWAL GRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), the period during which payments are made to a grantee under subsection (a) shall be in accordance with the following:

''(A) In the case of the initial grant, the period of payments shall be not less than three years and not more than five years.

''(B) In the case of a subsequent grant (referred to in this subsection as a 'renewal grant'), the period of payments shall be not more than five years.

''(2) ANNUAL APPROVAL; AVAILABILITY OF APPROPRIATIONS; NUMBER OF GRANTS.—The provision of payments under an initial or renewal grant is subject to annual approval by the Secretary of the payments and to the availability of appropriations for the fiscal year involved to make the payments. This subsection may not be construed as establishing a limitation on the number of grants under subsection (a) that may be made to an entity.

''(3) ADDITIONAL PROVISIONS REGARDING RENEWAL GRANTS.—

''(A) COMPLIANCE WITH MINIMUM STANDARDS.—A renewal grant may be made by the Secretary only if the Secretary determines that the applicant involved has, in the

project carried out with the grant, maintained compliance with minimum standards for quality and successful outcomes for housing retention, as determined by the Secretary.

''(B) AMOUNT.—The maximum amount of a renewal grant under this subsection shall not exceed an amount equal to—

''(i) 75 percent of the amount of Federal funds provided in the final year of the initial grant period; or

''(ii) 50 percent of the total costs of sustaining the program funded under the grant at the level provided for in the year preceding the year for which the renewal grant is being awarded;

as determined by the Secretary.

''(k) STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES AND REPORTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, as a condition of the receipt of grants under subsection (a), require grantees to provide data regarding the performance outcomes of the projects carried out under the grants. Consistent with the requirements and procedures established by the Secretary, each grantee shall measure and report specific performance outcomes related to the long-term goals of increasing stability within the community for people who have been chronically homeless, and decreasing the recurrence of periods of homelessness.

''(2) PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES.—The performance outcomes described under paragraph (1) shall include, with respect to individuals who have been chronically homeless—

''(A) improvements in housing stability;

''(B) improvements in employment and education;

''(C) reductions in problems related to substance abuse;

''(D) reductions in problems related to mental health disorders; and

''(E) other areas as the Secretary determines appropriate.

''(3) COORDINATION AND CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER HOMELESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—

''(A) PROCEDURES.—In establishing strategic performance outcomes and reporting requirements under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall develop and implement procedures that minimize the costs and burdens to grantees and program participants, and that are practical, streamlined, and designed for consistency with the requirements of the homeless assistance programs administered by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

''(B) APPLICANT COORDINATION.—Applicants under this section shall coordinate with community stakeholders, including participants in the local homeless management information system, concerning the development of systems to measure performance outcomes and with the Secretary for assistance with data collection and measurements activities.

''(4) REPORT.—A grantee shall submit an annual report to the Secretary that—

''(A) identifies the grantee's progress towards achieving its strategic performance outcomes; and

''(B) describes other activities conducted by the grantee to increase the participation, housing stability, and other improvements in outcomes for individuals who have been chronically homeless.

''(l) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary, directly or through awards of grants or contracts to public or nonprofit private entities, shall provide training and technical assistance regarding the planning, development, and provision of services in projects under subsection (a).

''(m) BIENNIAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of the Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act, and biennially thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to the Congress a report on projects under subsection (a) that includes a summary of information received by the Secretary under subsection (k), and that describes the impact of the program under subsection (a) as part of a comprehensive strategy for ending long term homelessness and improving outcomes for individuals with mental illness and substance abuse problems.

''(n) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section:

''(1) The term 'chronically homeless' means an individual or family who—

''(A) is currently homeless;

''(B) has been homeless continuously for at least one year or has been homeless on at least four separate occasions in the last three years; and

''(C) has an adult head of household with a disabling condition, defined as a diagnosable substance use disorder, serious mental illness, developmental disability, or chronic physical illness or disability, including the co-occurrence of two or more of these conditions.

''(2) The term 'disabling condition' means a condition that limits an individual's ability to work or perform one or more activities of daily living.

''(3) The term 'homeless' means sleeping in a place not meant for human habitation or in an emergency homeless shelter.

''(4)(A) The term 'permanent supportive housing' means permanent, affordable housing with flexible support services that are available and designed to help the tenants stay housed and build the necessary skills to live as independently as possible. Such term does not include housing that is time-limited. Supportive housing offers residents assistance in reaching their full potential, which may include opportunities to secure other housing that meets their needs and preferences, based on individual choice instead of the requirements of time-limited transitional programs. Under this section, permanent affordable housing includes but is not limited to permanent housing funded or assisted through title IV of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and section (8) of the United States Housing Act of 1937.

''(B) For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'affordable' means within the financial means of individuals who are extremely low income, as defined by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

''(o) FUNDING.—

''(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For the purpose of carrying out this section, there are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2006 through 2010.

''(2) ALLOCATION FOR TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Of the amount appropriated under paragraph (1) for a fiscal year, the Secretary may reserve not more than 3 percent for carrying out subsection (l).''.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I join with my colleagues, Senators DEWINE, DODD and BURR to introduce the Services for Ending Long-Term Homelessness Act, (SELHA).

It is estimated that two to three million Americans experience a period of homelessness in a given year. While the majority of these individuals find themselves homeless for a brief period of time, a growing segment are experiencing prolonged periods of homelessness. Roughly 200,000 to 250,000 Americans fall under the category of chronically homeless.

In March 2003, former Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson issued a report from a work group and an interagency subcommittee that was assembled to define the issues and challenges facing the chronically homeless and develop a comprehensive approach to bringing the appropriate services and treatments to this population of individuals who typically fall outside of mainstream support programs.

Similarly, the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health recommended the development of a comprehensive plan to facilitate access to permanent supportive housing for individuals and families who are chronically homeless. However, affordable housing, alone, is not enough for many chronically homeless to achieve stability. This population also needs flexible, mobile, and individualized support services to sustain them in housing.

The legislation we are introducing today is critical to the development and implementation of more effective strategies to combat chronic homelessness through improved service delivery and coordination across Federal agencies serving this population. It directs the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to coordinate their efforts not only with the Department of Housing and Urban Development, but with other Federal departments and the various agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services that provide supportive services.

Mr. President, SELHA is an important bipartisan measure which will help to ensure that the growing number of Americans experiencing chronic homelessness have access to the range of supportive services they need to get them back on their feet, living in permanent supportive housing and taking the steps necessary to become productive and active members of our communities again.

I look forward to working with my colleagues toward expeditious passage of this legislation.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. STEVENS):

S. 711. A bill to amend the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000 to reauthorize that Act and to promote the research, identification, assessment, exploration, and development of methane hydrate resources; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a bill to re-authorize a critical program for our energy future. It is widely believed that the U.S. must diversify its energy portfolio and explore new domestic sources and technologies for energy to curb our dependence on foreign oil. As a senior member of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, I know we have

been assessing the potential for a variety of energy sources for the future including natural gas, clean coal technology, nuclear energy, renewable energy, and others. This bill, the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2005, will reauthorize a small but important program on methane hydrate research and development, a key and abundant nonconventional source of energy.

I would like to extend my appreciation to my cosponsors, Senators MURKOWSKI and STEVENS, who share my interest and determination in exploring the potential of methane hydrates for energy production. We share a common goal to see that we fully understand the prospects for this domestic energy resource. This new legislation will foster the research and development needed to expand our knowledge to better assess both the opportunities and challenges this potential energy resource presents. Our legislation provides for a higher level of scientific research and partnering between government agencies, academic institutions, and industry.

The United States and the world will require substantially increased quantities of natural gas, electricity, and transportation fuels over the next 20 years. Global competition for tightening supplies of oil and natural gas with emerging economies such as China and India will drive energy prices higher, and makes it apparent that the United States needs to capitalize upon its domestic energy resources. The United States must continue to diversify and expand the Nation's access to natural gas supplies through continuing research and development efforts in technologies for tapping non-conventional natural gas supplies, such as methane hydrates.

Methane hydrates were discovered in the 1960s and consist of methane gas trapped in lattice-like ice. They are found largely in ocean bottom sediments lying below 450 meters and in permafrost. There are several published estimates of the total amount of methane stored in gas hydrates worldwide. These estimates vary. However, it is widely believed that there is more energy potentially stored in methane hydrates than in all other known fossil fuel reserves, combined. The National Commission on Energy Policy's December 2004 report, Ending the Energy Stalemate—A Bipartisan Strategy To Meet America's Energy Challenges, estimated that the United States could possess one quarter of the world's supply of methane hydrates.

The United States will consume increasing volumes of natural gas well into the 21st century. United States natural gas consumption is expected to increase from approximately 22 trillion cubic feet in 2003 to more than 32 trillion cubic feet in 2020—a projected increase of 40 percent. Natural gas is expected to take on a greater role in power generation, largely because of the increasing demand for clean fuels and the relatively low capital costs of building new natural gas-fired power equipment. The National Commission on Energy Policy reported that the United States resource base may contain up to two hundred thousand trillion cubic feet of methane, onshore in the Alaskan permafrost, and offshore on much of the Nation's deep continental shelf. If even one percent of the estimated domestic resource base proves commercially viable, it would roughly double the Nation's technically recoverable natural gas reserves, according to the Department of Energy's Office of Fossil Energy.

Given the growing demand for natural gas, the development of new, cost-effective supplies can play a major role in moderating price increases and ensuring consumer confidence in the long-term availability of reliable, affordable fuel. Today, the potential to extract commercially-relevant quantities of natural gas from hydrates is not yet viable. With no incentive to fund its own research and development, the private sector is not vigorously pursuing the research currently needed that could make methane hydrates technically and economically viable. Therefore, cooperation between the federal government and private industry remains the best effort in which the United States can explore the viability of an energy resource whose long-range possibilities might one day dramatically change the world's energy portfolio.

Uncertainties exist regarding the nature of these deposits and, in particular, how best to extract the enormous quantity of natural gas they contain in an economic and environmentally sensitive manner. However, some alternatives are worse. For example, transporting natural gas from foreign gas fields to the United States by shipping it in liquid form at negative 162 degrees Celsius is an expensive undertaking and one that is attractive to terrorists. Methane hydrates, on the other hand, can be found domestically, in Alaska and the Gulf of Mexico, and with our ally to the north, Canada. Hydrates are likely to provide commercially viable natural gas supplies by 2025. Their long term potential to meet United States energy demands for natural gas is considerable.

The Methane Hydrate Research Act of 2000 invigorated methane hydrate research in the United States. The act also mandated that the National Research Council study the program initiated by the act and to make recommendations for future research and development needs. Without a doubt, the National Research Council concluded in its 2004 report, Charting the Future of Methane Hydrate Research in the United States, that the U.S. must continue its investment in hydrates research and development because of the size of the resource. Furthermore, the report commended the program's excellent coordination and cooperation between federal agencies, industry, and academia involved in methane hydrates research. The legislation I am introducing incorporates the recommendations of the National Research Council, and improves upon the act by requiring external scientific peer reviews, strengthening the advisory panel, broadening the field work proposals to include test wells, increasing the appropriations needed to conduct the research, and emphasizing the need to promote education and training in the field of methane hydrate research and resource development. The bill also incorporates comments from the Department of Energy.

Mr. President, science and technology have and will continue to help us learn more about our world, and I believe, help us solve some of our toughest problems, not only domestically but globally. These are complex and significant problems relating to the impact of human activities on our environment, our heavy dependence on finite fossil fuels from sources that may not prove reliable, and limited energy supplies in the face of growing demands of expanding national economies that are increasingly intertwined in a global economic network. I believe the Federal Government must continue to foster the needed research and development in the field of methane hydrate research.

Mr. President, 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. 711

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 ''Methane Hydrate Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2005''.

SEC. 2. METHANE HYDRATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT.

The Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000 (30 U.S.C. 1902 note; Public Law 106–193) is amended to read as follows:

''SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

''This Act may be cited as the 'Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000'.

''SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

''Congress finds that—

''(1) in order to promote energy independence and meet the increasing demand for energy, the United States will require a diversified portfolio of substantially increased quantities of electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuels;

''(2) according to the report submitted to Congress by the National Research Council entitled 'Charting the Future of Methane Hydrate Research in the United States', the total United States resources of gas hydrates have been estimated to be on the order of 200,000 trillion cubic feet;

''(3) according to the report of the National Commission on Energy Policy entitled 'Ending the Energy Stalemate - A Bipartisan Strategy to Meet America's Energy Challenge', and dated December 2004, the United States may be endowed with over 1/4 of the methane hydrate deposits in the world;

''(4) according to the Energy Information Administration, a shortfall in natural gas supply from conventional and unconventional sources is expected to occur in or about 2020; and

''(5) the National Academy of Science states that methane hydrate may have the potential to alleviate the projected shortfall in the natural gas supply.

''SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

''In this Act:

''(1) CONTRACT.—The term 'contract' means a procurement contract within the meaning of section 6303 of title 31, United States Code.

''(2) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—The term 'cooperative agreement' means a cooperative agreement within the meaning of section 6305 of title 31, United States Code.

''(3) DIRECTOR.—The term 'Director' means the Director of the National Science Foundation.

''(4) GRANT.—The term 'grant' means a grant awarded under a grant agreement (within the meaning of section 6304 of title 31, United States Code).

''(5) INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISE.—The term 'industrial enterprise' means a private, nongovernmental enterprise that has an expertise or capability that relates to methane hydrate research and development.

''(6) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term 'institution of higher education' means an institution of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)).

''(7) SECRETARY.—The term 'Secretary' means the Secretary of Energy, acting through the Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy.

''(8) SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.—The term 'Secretary of Commerce' means the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

''(9) SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.—The term 'Secretary of Defense' means the Secretary of Defense, acting through the Secretary of the Navy.

''(10) SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.—The term 'Secretary of the Interior' means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the United States Geological Survey, the Director of the Bureau of Land Management, and the Director of the Minerals Management Service.

''SEC. 4. METHANE HYDRATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—

''(1) COMMENCEMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2005, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Director, shall commence a program of methane hydrate research and development in accordance with this section.

''(2) DESIGNATIONS.—The Secretary, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Director shall designate individuals to carry out this section.

''(3) COORDINATION.—The individual designated by the Secretary shall coordinate all activities within the Department of Energy relating to methane hydrate research and development.

''(4) MEETINGS.—The individuals designated under paragraph (2) shall meet not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2005 and not less frequently than every 180 days thereafter to—

''(A) review the progress of the program under paragraph (1); and

''(B) coordinate interagency research and partnership efforts in carrying out the program.

''(b) GRANTS, CONTRACTS, COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, INTERAGENCY FUNDS TRANSFER AGREEMENTS, AND FIELD WORK PROPOSALS.—

''(1) ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION.—In carrying out the program of methane hydrate research and development authorized by this section, the Secretary may award grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, institutions of higher education and industrial enterprises to—

''(A) conduct basic and applied research to identify, explore, assess, and develop methane hydrate as a commercially viable source of energy;

''(B) identify methane hydrate resources through remote sensing;

''(C) acquire and reprocess seismic data suitable for characterizing methane hydrate accumulations;

''(D) assist in developing technologies required for efficient and environmentally sound development of methane hydrate resources;

''(E) promote education and training in methane hydrate resource research and resource development through fellowships or other means for graduate education and training;

''(F) conduct basic and applied research to assess and mitigate the environmental impact of hydrate degassing (including both natural degassing and degassing associated with commercial development);

''(G) develop technologies to reduce the risks of drilling through methane hydrates; and

''(H) conduct exploratory drilling, well testing, and production testing operations on permafrost and non-permafrost gas hydrates in support of the activities authorized by this paragraph, including drilling of 1 or more full-scale production test wells.

''(2) COMPETITIVE PEER REVIEW.—Funds made available under paragraph (1) shall be made available based on a competitive process using external scientific peer review of proposed research.

''(c) METHANE HYDRATES ADVISORY PANEL.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish an advisory panel (including the hiring of appropriate staff) consisting of representatives of industrial enterprises, institutions of higher education, oceanographic institutions, State agencies, and environmental organizations with knowledge and expertise in the natural gas hydrates field, to—

''(A) assist in developing recommendations and broad programmatic priorities for the methane hydrate research and development program carried out under subsection (a)(1);

''(B) provide scientific oversight for the methane hydrates program, including assessing progress toward program goals, evaluating program balance, and providing recommendations to enhance the quality of the program over time; and

''(C) not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2005, and at such later dates as the panel considers advisable, submit to Congress—

''(i) an assessment of the methane hydrate research program; and

''(ii) an assessment of the 5-year research plan of the Department of Energy.

''(2) CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.—In appointing each member of the advisory panel established under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the appointment of the member does not pose a conflict of interest with respect to the duties of the member under this Act.

''(3) MEETINGS.—The advisory panel shall—

''(A) hold the initial meeting of the advisory panel not later than 180 days after the date of establishment of the advisory panel; and

''(B) meet biennially thereafter.

''(4) COORDINATION.—The advisory panel shall coordinate activities of the advisory panel with program managers of the Department of Energy at appropriate national laboratories

''(d) CONSTRUCTION COSTS.—None of the funds made available to carry out this section may be used for the construction of a new building or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building (including site grading and improvement and architect fees).

''(e) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SECRETARY.—In carrying out subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall—

''(1) facilitate and develop partnerships among government, industrial enterprises, and institutions of higher education to research, identify, assess, and explore methane hydrate resources;

''(2) undertake programs to develop basic information necessary for promoting long-term interest in methane hydrate resources as an energy source;

''(3) ensure that the data and information developed through the program are accessible and widely disseminated as needed and appropriate;

''(4) promote cooperation among agencies that are developing technologies that may hold promise for methane hydrate resource development;

''(5) report annually to Congress on the results of actions taken to carry out this Act; and

''(6) ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, greater participation by the Department of Energy in international cooperative efforts.

''SEC. 5. NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL STUDY.

''(a) AGREEMENT FOR STUDY.—The Secretary shall offer to enter into an agreement with the National Research Council under which the National Research Council shall—

''(1) conduct a study of the progress made under the methane hydrate research and development program implemented under this Act; and

''(2) make recommendations for future methane hydrate research and development needs.

''(b) REPORT.—Not later than September 30, 2009, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report containing the findings and recommendations of the National Research Council under this section.

''SEC. 6. REPORTS AND STUDIES FOR CONGRESS.

''The Secretary shall provide to the Committee on Science of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate copies of any report or study that the Department of Energy prepares at the direction of any committee of Congress.

''SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this Act, to remain available until expended—

''(1) $15,000,000 for fiscal year 2006;

''(2) $20,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

''(3) $30,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;

''(4) $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

''(5) $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.''.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am proud to come to the floor today to introduce legislation of vital importance to our Nation. Enactment of the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2005

will provide the authorizations necessary to unlock a potentially huge supply of domestic natural gas, enough gas to supply our Nation for generations.

However, before I introduce this legislation, I would first like to thank my good friend and colleague, Senator AKAKA, for his dedication to helping address our Nation's energy crisis through legislation that should dramatically increase our domestic supply of environmentally friendly, clean burning natural gas. Without Senator AKAKA's hard work and focus on this issue we would not be introducing this legislation today.

Mr. President, our Nation is facing an energy crisis. Oil and natural gas prices are at historic or near historic high levels. Oil prices are over $50 a barrel. Natural gas prices are over $7.00 a MMBtu. Indeed, United States natural gas prices have increased by almost 350 percent since 1998 and are currently the highest in the world. Despite this huge increase in cost, domestic natural gas production has declined by almost 5 percent and Canadian imports have declined by almost 25 percent from 2001 to 2004. Estimates are that during the past 5 years United States natural gas consumers have paid nearly $200 billion more for natural gas than they paid in the preceding 5 years.

These extraordinarily high natural gas prices are having a profound impact on every segment of our economy. Chairman Greenspan identified our current natural gas price and supply situation as a crisis that could have a devastating impact on the United States economy. In fact, estimates are that the natural gas crisis has significantly contributed to the loss of 2.5 million United States manufacturing jobs. Indeed, the ongoing ''demand destruction'' caused by current gas prices with its devastating impact on United States manufacturing will only continue unless we address the current natural gas supply shortage and high prices.

Today, the United States produces about 22 trillion cubic feet of natural gas each year. By 2025, the Energy Information Administration estimates that United States natural gas consumption will reach 31 trillion cubic feet. That's an increase of more than 40 percent. Much of the new electric generation that will come on line during the next two decades will require natural gas according to a study by the American Gas Foundation. Indeed, clean burning natural gas remains the premium fossil fuel for electric power generation.

The EIA estimates that by 2025 the United States will produce only 21.8 trillion cubic feet of natural gas meeting just 70 percent of the Nation's expected demand. Thus, absent securing a new domestic supply of gas, the United States will have to import 30 percent of its natural gas supply. We have already gone down this path with our petroleum supplies. We have witnessed the unacceptable national security, balance of payments and general economic consequences of this level of reliance on foreign sources for our nation's critical supply of oil. We must not repeat this reality with natural gas.

This is why I am proud to introduce the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Reauthorization Act of 2005. As stated in the findings section of the legislation, the National Research Council has estimated the total United States methane hydrate resource base to be on the order of 200,000 trillion cubic feet. Alaska alone is thought to have potential hydrate resources of 32,000 trillion cubic feet. Indeed, a report issued by the National Commission on Energy Policy states that the United States may be endowed with over one-fourth of the methane hydrate deposits in the world. This is an immense supply of secure, domestic energy that could supply our country for many, many years.

The Methane Hydrate Reauthorization Act of 2005 builds upon the success of the original Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000. The new act incorporates certain changes to the 2000 legislation suggested by the National Research Council of the National Academies and the Department of Energy. The 2000 act established an advisory panel to advise the Secretary of Energy on potential applications of methane hydrate and to assist in developing recommendations and priorities for methane hydrate research and development programs. The new act strengthens the role of the advisory panel to ensure that the research funds are put to their most effective use. The 2005 act also increases the use of a scientific peer review process in determining which projects will be funded. Further, the new legislation directs the funding of fellowships and graduate education and training programs to establish a solid, scientific foundation of expertise in the United States on methane hydrates. Finally, the 2005 act authorizes increased funding for the methane hydrate program. The increased funding is critical in order to allow for the transition from a largely research oriented program to one that will foster the beginning of the commercialization of our Nation's methane hydrate resources.

Again, I thank Senator AKAKA and his staff for their hard work and commitment to this legislation that is so important to our nation's future.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 95—RELATING TO THE DEATH OF THE HOLY FATHER, POPE JOHN PAUL II

Mr. FRIST (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SANTORUM, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BOND, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BURNS, Mr. BURR, Mr. BYRD, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CORZINE, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DAYTON, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. DODD, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. GREGG, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. INOUYE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Mr. KOHL Mr. KYL, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LOTT, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MCCAIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SMITH, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. SPECTER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. TALENT, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. THUNE, Mr. VITTER, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 95

Whereas Pope John Paul II was one of the greatest spiritual leaders and moral teachers of the Modern Era; and

Whereas he set an extraordinary example of personal integrity and courage, not only for his fellow Catholics but for people of every religious and philosophical viewpoint; and

Whereas throughout the course of his pontificate he campaigned tirelessly for human rights and human dignity throughout the world; and

Whereas he practiced and inspired resistance to the great totalitarian systems and tyrannies that rose and, with his help, fell in the 20th Century; and

Whereas he fostered harmony between Catholics and Eastern Orthodox and Protestant Christians, reached out in friendship to Jews, Muslims and members of other faiths, and warmly promoted interfaith understanding and cooperation; and

Whereas he dedicated himself to the defense of the weakest and most vulnerable members of the human family; and

Whereas on his visits to our country he has called all Americans to be true and faithful to the great principles of liberty and justice inscribed in our Declaration of Independence and Constitution; and

Whereas his selfless service to God and man has been an inspiration to Americans and men and women of goodwill across the globe; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the United States joins the world in mourning his death, and pays tribute to him by pledging to be ever faithful to our national calling to be ''one Nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,'' and to help our neighbors in immeasurable ways.