

STOPPING GUN VIOLENCE THROUGH PUBLIC AWARENESS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to make my colleagues aware of one of the many organizations working to bring an end to the gun violence problem in this country, the PAX organization based in New York City. According to their Web site, PAX is "the largest non-political, nonprofit organization dedicated to ending the gun violence epidemic in America." As part of its public health campaigns, PAX promotes commonsense solutions to help protect families, teenagers, and children from the tragedy of gun violence.

One national program run by PAX, known as the Asking Saves Kids or ASK Campaign, encourages parents to simply ask other parents if there are guns in the homes where their children play. According to statistics cited by the ASK Campaign, more than 40 percent of households with children have guns. In the overwhelming majority of these households, the child also knows where the gun is hidden. Using public service advertising and grassroots education, the ASK Campaign is working to prevent accidental shootings involving children by encouraging parents to take common sense steps to protect their children. The ASK Campaign is a partnership between PAX and the Academy of Pediatrics and is supported by more than 400 organizations nationwide including the American Medical Association, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, the Children's Defense Fund, and the Police Executive Research Forum.

According to PAX, in 75 percent of the school shootings in our country, the attackers told other students of their plans prior to the attack. In addition, PAX states that students bring more than 100,000 guns to school every day. To help address these issues, PAX has created the Speak Up Campaign. The centerpiece of the campaign is a national hotline, 1-866-SPEAK-UP, where children and teenagers can call to anonymously report threats involving weapons at their school. Since the creation of the hotline in 2002, the Speak Up Campaign has received more than 5,000 calls which were then passed along to appropriate law enforcement officials. To increase public awareness of school violence prevention and the Speak Up hotline, the campaign has created an outreach program for schools and other community organizations. PAX has also partnered with various cable networks including MTV, NBC, ABC, and CBS to help reach children, teens, and parents with its message.

I thank the PAX organization and their partners for their work to end gun violence. Their commonsense approach provides families with practical solutions to help protect themselves from the tragedy of gun violence. I am hopeful that the 109th Congress will do more to support their efforts by taking up and passing sensible gun safety legislation.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BOND, Mr. BURNS, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1411. A bill to direct the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to establish a pilot program to provide regulatory compliance assistance to small business concerns, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. DORGAN:

S. 1412. A bill to prohibit the merger, acquisition, or takeover of Unocal Corporation by CNOOC Ltd. of China; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LUGAR (for himself and Mr. BIDEN):

S. 1413. A bill to redesignate the Crowne Plaza in Kingston, Jamaica, as the Colin L. Powell Residential Plaza; considered and passed.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 1414. A bill to provide for the conduct of a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Trail of the Ancients National Heritage Area in the Four Corners region of the States of Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 757

At the request of Mr. CHAFEE, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 757, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to make grants for the development and operation of research centers regarding environmental factors that may be related to the etiology of breast cancer.

S. 969

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 969, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to preparation for an influenza pandemic, including an avian influenza pandemic, and for other purposes.

S. 1089

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1089, a bill to establish the National Foreign Language Coordination Council to develop and implement a foreign language strategy, and for other purposes.

S. 1112

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. ALLEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1112, a bill to make permanent the enhanced educational savings provisions for qualified tuition programs enacted as part of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1174, a bill to authorize the President to posthumously award a gold medal on behalf of Congress to Robert M. La Follette, Sr., in recognition of his important contributions to the Progressive movement, the State of Wisconsin, and the United States.

S. 1249

At the request of Mr. CORZINE, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 1249, a bill to require the Secretary of Education to rebate the amount of Federal Pell Grant aid lost as a result of the update to the tables for State and other taxes used in the Federal student aid need analysis for award year 2005-2006.

At the request of Mr. CORZINE, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1249, supra.

S. 1265

At the request of Mr. VOINOVICH, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1265, a bill to make grants and loans available to States and other organizations to strengthen the economy, public health, and environment of the United States by reducing emissions from diesel engines.

S. 1317

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1317, a bill to provide for the collection and maintenance of cord blood units for the treatment of patients and research, and to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize the Bone Marrow and Cord Blood Cell Transplantation Program to increase the number of transplants for recipients suitably matched to donors of bone marrow and cord blood.

S. 1325

At the request of Mr. FRIST, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1325, a bill to establish grants to provide health services for improved nutrition, increased physical activity, obesity and eating disorder prevention, and for other purposes.

S. 1358

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1358, a bill to protect scientific integrity in Federal research and policymaking.

S. 1388

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1388, a bill to amend chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Regulatory Flexibility Act), to ensure complete analysis of potential impacts on small entities of rules, and for other purposes.

S. 1399

At the request of Mr. THOMAS, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1399, a bill to improve the results the executive branch achieves on behalf of the American people.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BOND, Mr. BURNS, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1411. A bill to direct the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to establish a pilot program to provide regulatory compliance assistance to small business concerns, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my distinguished colleague from Maine and Chair of the Small Business and Entrepreneurship Committee, Senator OLYMPIA J. SNOWE, in reintroducing the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act. This bill has a long history of bipartisan support in Congress because of the critical assistance it provides to small businesses.

Small businesses, particularly small businesses with very few employees, often are overwhelmed with the task of complying with Federal regulations, especially when implementation varies for different regions of the country, or from State to State. Many small businesses fail to comply with important and needed labor and environmental regulations not because they want to break the law, but because they are unaware of the actions they need to take to comply. In addition, small business owners are often afraid to seek guidance from Federal agencies for fear of exposing problems at their businesses.

One important way to help small businesses comply with Federal regulations is to provide them with free, confidential advice outside of the normal relationship between a small business and a regulatory agency. The Small Business Administration's Small Business Development Centers, SBDCs, are in a unique position to provide this type of assistance, with some 1,000 centers around the country, well-established relationships and visibility within local communities, and the trust of area small businesses.

Our bill establishes a 4-year pilot program to award competitive matching grants to 20 selected SBDCs, two from each SBA region, which would allow these SBDCs to provide regulatory compliance assistance to small businesses. The SBA would be authorized to award grants between \$150,000 and \$300,000, depending on the population of the SBDC's state.

Under our legislation, the SBDCs would need to form partnerships with

Federal compliance programs, conduct educational and training activities, offer free-of-charge compliance counseling to small business owners, and consult with the SBA's independent Office of Advocacy. The legislation will complement, not duplicate, current small business development assistance and expand upon existing regulatory compliance help.

The legislation we are reintroducing today uses only SBA funds and will serve to complement current small-business development assistance as well as existing compliance assistance programs. Versions of this legislation introduced in previous Congresses had used Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, enforcement funds to pay for these grants.

The SBA's independent Office of Advocacy estimates that small businesses with fewer than 20 employees—which make up 89 percent of all U.S. businesses—pay nearly \$7,000 per employee to comply with Federal regulations. This is nearly 60 percent higher than the cost to larger firms. While all small businesses should be complying with Federal regulations, the Federal Government should also do its best to ensure that the burden on small businesses is minimized, that small businesses are taken into account when new regulations are drafted, and that unnecessarily burdensome regulations are eliminated. In addition, the government should make sure that small businesses understand the regulations. Often, noncompliance is due to confusion not ill intent. By providing free, private regulatory assistance, we can increase compliance while decreasing the burden on small businesses.

Small-business owners have enough on their plates without worrying about complying with confusing regulations. This legislation will decrease the burden on small businesses by helping them cut through government red tape. Small businesses can succeed when it comes to complying with Federal regulations, if provided with the necessary tools and information. The National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act will go a long way toward assisting our Nation's small businesses that want to comply with Federal regulations.

The legislation we are introducing today is nearly identical to the Kerry-Ensign legislation introduced last Congress. On the House side, the National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act, H.R. 230, has been introduced and passed by Congressman John Sweeney of New York in each of the past three Congresses and was just approved by the Small Business Committee yesterday. In 2002, our Senate version passed the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship but was not taken up by the full Senate.

I am pleased to say that we have the full support of the Association of Small Business Development Centers, which has been working closely with us to reintroduce the Senate version of this

legislation, as well as support from the National Small Business Association, the American Industrial Hygiene Association, and Congressman Sweeney.

I want to express my sincere thanks to Chair SNOWE for her hard work and support on this issue. I also want to thank our cosponsors, Senators CANTWELL, BOND, BURNS, LEAHY, JEFFORDS, CARPER, BINGAMAN, and ROCKEFELLER for their ongoing efforts to pass this important assistance. I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

S. 1411

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 "National Small Business Regulatory Assistance Act of 2005".

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to establish a 4-year pilot program to—

- (1) provide confidential assistance to small business concerns;
- (2) provide small business concerns with the information necessary to improve their rate of compliance with Federal and State regulations derived from Federal law;
- (3) create a partnership among Federal agencies to increase outreach efforts to small business concerns with respect to regulatory compliance;
- (4) provide a mechanism for unbiased feedback to Federal agencies on the regulatory environment for small business concerns; and
- (5) expand the services delivered by the Small Business Development Centers under section 21(c)(3)(H) of the Small Business Act to improve access to programs to assist small business concerns with regulatory compliance.

SEC. 3. SMALL BUSINESS REGULATORY ASSISTANCE PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions shall apply:

- (1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term "Administration" means the Small Business Administration.
- (2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term "Administrator" means the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, acting through the Associate Administrator for Small Business Development Centers.
- (3) ASSOCIATION.—The term "association" means the association established pursuant to section 21(a)(3)(A) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648(a)(3)(A)) representing a majority of Small Business Development Centers.
- (4) PARTICIPATING SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER.—The term "participating Small Business Development Center" means a Small Business Development Center participating in the pilot program established under this Act.
- (5) REGULATORY COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE.—The term "regulatory compliance assistance" means assistance provided by a Small Business Development Center to a small business concern to assist and facilitate the concern in complying with Federal and State regulatory requirements derived from Federal law.

(6) SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER.—The term "Small Business Development Center" means a Small Business Development Center described in section 21 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 648).