

By Mr. DEMINT:

S. 2352. A bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on certain manufacturing equipment; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DEMINT:

S. 2353. A bill to suspend temporarily the duty on certain integrated machines for manufacturing pneumatic tires; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KERRY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. DORGAN, and Mr. KOHL):

S. 2354. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the coverage gap in prescription drug coverage under part D of such title based on savings to the Medicare program resulting from the negotiation of prescription drug prices; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. KYL, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. FRIST, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. DOMENICI, and Mr. BINGAMAN):

S. 2355. A bill to amend chapter 27 of title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the unauthorized construction, financing, or reckless permitting (on one's land) the construction or use of a tunnel or subterranean passage-way between the United States and another country; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LEAHY:

S. 2356. A bill to prohibit profiteering and fraud relating to military action, relief, and reconstruction efforts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 2357. A bill to provide for economic security and prosperity; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. OBAMA:

S. 2358. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a Hospital Quality Report Card Initiative to report on health care quality in Veterans Affairs hospitals; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. OBAMA:

S. 2359. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish a Hospital Quality Report Card Initiative under the Medicare program to assess and report on health care quality in hospitals; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 2360. A bill to ensure and promote a free and open Internet for all Americans; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. CARPER, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. DAYTON, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REID, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. KOHL, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. NELSON of Florida):

S. 2361. A bill to improve Federal contracting and procurement by eliminating fraud and abuse and improving competition in contracting and procurement and by enhancing administration of Federal contracting personnel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BYRD:

S. 2362. A bill to establish the National Commission on Surveillance Activities and the Rights of Americans; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. CARPER, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr.

KERRY, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. CORNIN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. FRIST):

S. 2363. A bill to extend the educational flexibility program under section 4 of the Education Flexibility Partnership Act of 1999; considered and passed.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. DODD, and Mr. KERRY):

S. 2364. A bill to provide lasting protection for inventoried roadless areas within the National Forest System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. COLEMAN (for himself, Mr. SMITH, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. COBURN, and Mr. KYL):

S. Res. 387. A resolution recognizing the need to replace the United Nations Human Rights Commission with a new Human Rights Council; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. FRIST (for himself, Mr. SANTORUM, and Mr. BROWNBACK):

S. Res. 388. A resolution urging the Government of National Unity of Sudan and the Government of Southern Sudan to implement fully the Comprehensive Peace Agreement that was signed on January 9, 2005; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 333

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 333, a bill to hold the current regime in Iran accountable for its threatening behavior and to support a transition to democracy in Iran.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 654, a bill to prohibit the expulsion, return, or extradition of persons by the United States to countries engaging in torture, and for other purposes.

S. 908

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 908, a bill to allow Congress, State legislatures, and regulatory agencies to determine appropriate laws, rules, and regulations to address the problems of weight gain, obesity, and health conditions associated with weight gain or obesity.

S. 985

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) were added as cosponsors of S. 985, a bill to establish kinship navigator programs, to establish kinship guardianship assistance payments for children, and for other purposes.

S. 1172

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1172, a bill to provide for programs to increase the awareness and knowledge of women and health care providers with respect to gynecologic cancers.

S. 1283

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. DAYTON), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1283, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a program to assist family caregivers in accessing affordable and high-quality respite care, and for other purposes.

S. 1289

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1289, a bill to provide for research and education with respect to uterine fibroids, and for other purposes.

S. 1376

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1376, a bill to improve and expand geographic literacy among kindergarten through grade 12 students in the United States by improving professional development programs for kindergarten through grade 12 teachers offered through institutions of higher education.

S. 2157

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BURNS) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2157, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the Purple Heart to be awarded to prisoners of war who die in captivity under circumstances not otherwise establishing eligibility for the Purple Heart.

S. 2178

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2178, a bill to make the stealing and selling of telephone records a criminal offense.

S. 2231

At the request of Mr. BYRD, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2231, a bill to direct the Secretary of Labor to prescribe additional coal mine safety standards, to require additional penalties for habitual violators, and for other purposes.

S. 2243

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from New Jersey

(Mr. LAUTENBERG) was added as a co-sponsor of S. 2243, a bill to make college more affordable by expanding and enhancing financial aid options for students and their families and providing loan forgiveness opportunities for public service employees, and for other purposes.

S. 2253

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) were added as co-sponsors of S. 2253, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to offer the 181 Area of the Gulf of Mexico for oil and gas leasing.

S. 2320

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2320, a bill to make available funds included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program for fiscal year 2006, and for other purposes.

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2320, *supra*.

S. 2333

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2333, a bill to require an investigation under the Defense Production Act of 1950 of the acquisition by Dubai Ports World of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, and for other purposes.

S. 2351

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2351, a bill to provide additional funding for mental health care for veterans, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 383

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 383, a resolution calling on the President to take immediate steps to help improve the security situation in Darfur, Sudan, with an emphasis on civilian protection.

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 383, *supra*.

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 383, *supra*.

At the request of Mr. FRIST, his name and the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 383, *supra*.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KERRY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. DORGAN, and Mr. KOHL):

S. 2354. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the coverage gap in prescription drug coverage under part D of such title based on savings to the Medicare program resulting from the negotiation of prescription drug prices; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by my colleague and cosponsor Senator SUSAN COLLINS as we introduce the Medicare Prescription Drug Gap Reduction Act of 2006.

For years now, I have advocated for providing seniors with meaningful prescription drug coverage. Seniors in this country should never have to choose between their meals and their medications.

Unfortunately, Congress created a Medicare prescription drug plan that is confusing and contains a huge coverage gap. These are some of the reasons that I did not support the legislation that created this program. But this flawed plan is what passed. Our job now is to help seniors by fixing the underlying law. I have spoken with Medicare beneficiaries across Florida and they are understandably concerned about the new prescription drug benefit. One issue of great concern to Floridians is the large gap in coverage called the “doughnut hole.”

The Medicare drug benefit contains a large coverage gap during which beneficiaries continue to pay premiums but get no drug coverage at all. For most plans, Medicare will pay 75 percent of initial drug costs up to \$2,250 after a \$250 deductible. But then the program pays nothing until drug expenses reach \$5,100. This lack of coverage for drug spending is often called Medicare’s doughnut hole.

More than one-third of all Medicare beneficiaries are projected to have drug spending that falls in the doughnut hole’s range, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). Millions of beneficiaries will pay premiums yet receive no coverage during this time. This is simply unacceptable.

In response, we are introducing the Medicare Prescription Drug Gap Reduction Act of 2006 which will reduce the impact of the doughnut hole on Medicare beneficiaries.

Our bill allows the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to negotiate on behalf of Medicare beneficiaries for lower drug prices. Unfortu-

nately, the law that created the new Medicare drug program actually prohibits the Secretary from using the purchasing power of over 40 million seniors to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices. The savings generated from allowing negotiations would then be applied towards reducing the doughnut hole, providing more drug coverage for Medicare beneficiaries.

A recent analysis was conducted by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Center for Hospital Finance and Management on the Medicare doughnut hole. They concluded that “the gap in coverage could be completely eliminated if Medicare paid the same prices as the Veterans’ Administration, or Department of Defense and 75 percent of the gap could be eliminated if Medicare paid the same prices as the Federal Ceiling Price.” Our bill gives the Secretary authority similar to entities like the Veterans’ Administration and the Department of Defense, to negotiate contracts and obtain the lowest possible prescription drug prices for Medicare beneficiaries.

Allowing the Federal Government to utilize market forces to negotiate for lower prescription drug prices and using these savings to alleviate the impact of the doughnut hole is a common-sense approach to providing Medicare beneficiaries with affordable prescription drugs.

This issue boils down to just one goal—helping seniors. We urge all of our colleagues, from both sides of the aisle, to join us in this effort to help lower prescription drug costs for Medicare beneficiaries.

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

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

S. 2354

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 “Medicare Prescription Drug Gap Reduction Act of 2006”.

SEC. 2. REDUCING COVERAGE GAP.

Section 1860D-2(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-102(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking “paragraph (4)” and inserting “paragraph (4), subject to the increase described in paragraph (7)”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(7) INCREASE OF INITIAL COVERAGE LIMIT BASED ON MEDICARE SAVINGS DUE TO NEGOTIATION OF DRUG PRICES.—For each year (beginning with 2006), the Secretary shall increase the initial coverage limit for the year specified in paragraph (3) so that the aggregate amount of increased expenditures from the Medicare Prescription Drug Account as a result of such increase under this paragraph in the year (as estimated by the Office of the Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) is equal to the aggregate amount of reduced expenditures from such Account that the Office of the Actuary estimates will result in the year as a result of