

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Eric M. Thorson, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, Small Business Administration.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Sharee M. Freeman, of Virginia, to be Director, Community Relations Service, for a term of four years.

Jeffrey L. Sedgwick, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

PROTOCOL AMENDING THE TAX CONVENTION WITH FRANCE

TAX CONVENTION WITH BANGLADESH

PROTOCOL AMENDING TAX CONVENTION ON INHERITANCES WITH FRANCE

PROTOCOL AMENDING THE CONVENTION WITH SWEDEN ON TAXES ON INCOME

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consider the following treaties on today's Executive Calendar: Nos. 8, 9, 10, and 11; I further ask unanimous consent that the treaties be considered as having passed through their various parliamentary stages up to and including the presentation of the resolutions of ratification, that any statements be printed in the RECORD as if read, and that the Senate take one vote on the resolutions of ratification to be considered as separate votes; further that when the resolutions of ratification are voted upon, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, the President be notified of the Senate's action, and that following the disposition of the treaties, the Senate return to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask for a division vote on the resolutions of ratification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A division is requested. Senators in favor of the motion will rise and stand until counted.

Those opposed will rise and stand until counted.

In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of the Senators present having voted in the affirmative, the resolutions of ratification are agreed to en bloc.

The resolutions of ratification are as follows:

[Protocol Amending the Tax Convention with France (Treaty Doc. 109-4)]

Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein), That the Senate advise and consent to the ratification of the Protocol Amending the Convention Between the United States of America and France for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income of August 31, 1994, signed at Washington on December 8, 2004 (Treaty Doc. 109-4).

[Tax Convention with Bangladesh (Treaty Doc. 109-5)]

Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein), That the Senate advise and consent to the ratification of the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Dhaka on September 26, 2004 (Treaty Doc. 109-5).

[Protocol Amending Tax Convention on Inheritances with France (Treaty Doc. 109-7)]

Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein), That the Senate advise and consent to the ratification of the Protocol Amending the Convention Between the United States of America and the French Republic for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Estates, Inheritances, and Gifts of November 24, 1978, signed at Washington on December 8, 2004 (Treaty Doc. 109-7).

[Protocol Amending the Convention with Sweden on Taxes on Income (Treaty Doc. 109-8)]

Resolved (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein), That the Senate advise and consent to the ratification of the Protocol Amending the Convention Between the United States of America and Sweden for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income of September 1, 1994, together with an Exchange of Notes, signed at Washington on September 30, 2005 (Treaty Doc. 109-8).

RECOGNIZING THE VICTIMS OF HURRICANE RITA IN LOUISIANA AND TEXAS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 416, which was submitted earlier today. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 416) recognizing the victims of Hurricane Rita 6 months after the disaster, commending the resiliency of the people of Southwest Louisiana and Southeast Texas, and committing to stand by them in their relief and rebuilding efforts.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 416) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 416

Whereas, on September 24, 2005, Hurricane Rita reached landfall causing extensive and significant damage along the Louisiana and extreme southeastern Texas coasts;

Whereas Hurricane Rita was named the fourth most intense Atlantic Hurricane ever recorded and the most intense tropical cyclone observed in the Gulf of Mexico;

Whereas the storm caused the loss of power in 700,000 homes in the State of Louisiana;

Whereas the total damage is estimated at \$9,400,000,000, making Hurricane Rita the ninth-costliest storm in the history of the United States;

Whereas the human suffering continues for thousands of people who have lost loved ones, homes, and livelihoods;

Whereas immediate humanitarian aid is still critically needed in many of the areas affected by Hurricane Rita;

Whereas Federal, State, and local first responders, the National Guard, and many ordinary citizens have risked their lives to save others;

Whereas the American Red Cross, the Salvation Army, local religious organizations, and other volunteer organizations and charities continue to supply victims with necessities;

Whereas the State of Texas and numerous other States have welcomed thousands of victims from Louisiana and continue to provide them with aid and comfort; and

Whereas thousands of volunteers and government employees from across the Nation have committed time and resources to help with recovery efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses the condolences of the Nation to the victims of Hurricane Rita;

(2) recognizes the 6-month anniversary of the disaster;

(3) commends the resiliency and courage of the people of the States of Louisiana and Texas; and

(4) commits to providing the necessary resources and to standing by the people of the States of Louisiana and Texas in the relief, recovery, and rebuilding efforts in the areas impacted by Hurricane Rita.

HONORING THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE VETERANS HOMES

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 417, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 417) honoring the National Association of State Veterans Homes and the 119 State veterans homes providing long-term care to veterans.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I am pleased that the Senate is considering this Senate resolution, which I submitted with Senator DOLE and 23 additional co-sponsors.

This resolution honors the National Association of State Veterans Homes, NASVH, and its 119 State homes for their support in caring for our Nation's military veterans. The State veterans' home program has been a successful partnership between the Federal Government and the States. It is responsible for the bulk of VA-supported long-term care services to veterans and their families.

The NASVH was first established in 1954 as a volunteer, nonprofit organization. Now, 119 State homes provide nursing home care, domiciliary care, and hospital-type care to over 27,500 veterans in 47 States and Puerto Rico. My State of New Jersey has three Veterans Homes, which serve approximately 1,000 veterans.

The NASVH has been vitally important in developing new methods for caring for elderly veterans, such as hospice care, respite care, Alzheimer's care, and adult day health care.

The State veterans home program has been remarkably successful. This resolution recognizes the importance of this Federal-State partnership and honors the dedicated men and women of the National Association of State Veterans Homes for caring for our Nation's aging and disabled military heroes.

I served in the Army Signal Corps during World War II. Consequently, I am well aware of the sacrifices brave young men and women make on behalf of our country. It's important that our Nation honors its commitment to look after our veterans. That's where organizations like the NASVH come in and do their part. So it's appropriate to honor this group for its commitment to serving our veterans. I thank the Senate for adopting this resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble agreed to, the motion to reconsider laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 417) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 417

Whereas the National Association of State Veterans Homes was established in 1954 by a group of administrators of State veterans homes to represent the interests of those homes in a unified voice before Congress and the executive branch;

Whereas the National Association of State Veterans Homes functions on an all-volunteer basis and focuses on endeavors that improve the conditions of care furnished to veterans by State veterans homes, elevate and monitor the qualifications for managers of such homes, and provide continuing education standards for staff who provide care to veterans in such homes;

Whereas the National Association of State Veterans Homes has been and continues to be in the forefront of developing and supporting new methods and models for providing long-term care services to elderly veterans, such as hospice care, respite care, Alzheimer's care, and adult day health care;

Whereas State veterans homes, which provide long-term care to thousands of veterans, were established initially in the States of Connecticut, Kansas, Ohio, and Maine in 1868 to house, feed, and care for thousands of homeless, wounded, and permanently scarred Union soldiers and thus have been in existence since before the establishment of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the earlier Veterans' Administration, and its predecessor agencies;

Whereas in 1888 Congress authorized the Federal payment of a daily allowance for the care of each former soldier or sailor in a State home-hospital, an allowance that continues today in the form of a per diem grant program administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs that is authorized to provide up to 50 percent of the average daily cost of care, but currently provides only approximately 30 percent;

Whereas the Department of Veterans Affairs further participates in the care of veterans in State homes with a matching grant program to support construction and major renovation projects to sustain those homes and build towards sufficient levels of available, high-quality health care;

Whereas State veterans homes offer long-term services to eligible veterans in need of such services on certification of the Department of Veterans Affairs at 119 facilities in 47 States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

Whereas the States determine the allocation of nursing home beds in individual State veterans home facilities, and establish the eligibility of veterans and their dependents to occupy those beds, following Federal guidelines;

Whereas within the limits of their capacities, State veterans homes provide care for more than 27,500 veterans each day, accounting for more than 50 percent of the total national long-term care bed capacity for veterans, thereby sharing the enormous responsibility of caring for veterans with the Department of Veterans Affairs in an admirable partnership;

Whereas State veterans homes provide quality care for elderly and disabled veterans at an average daily cost that is significantly less than nursing homes operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs;

Whereas the number of elderly veterans, particularly those over age 85, continues to rise, and the need for long-term care services for those veterans will continue to rise in the coming years; and

Whereas the Nation's State veterans homes continue to achieve their purpose of improving and sustaining the health of elderly, sick, and severely disabled veterans by assuring access to affordable nursing care in settings that provide personal dignity to truly deserving veterans, often at the end of lives spent in service to the Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the National Association of State Veterans Homes and the 119 State veterans homes providing long-term care to veterans that are represented by that association for their significant contributions to the health care of veterans and to the health care system of the Nation;

(2) commends the thousands of individuals who work in, or on behalf of, State veterans homes for their contributions in caring for elderly and disabled veterans;

(3) recognizes the importance of the partnership between the States and the Department of Veterans Affairs in providing long-term care to veterans; and

(4) affirms the support of Congress for continuation of the State homes program to address the known and anticipated needs of the Nation's veterans for institutional long-term care services.

WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 418, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 418) designating the week April 2, 2006, as "Week of the Young Child."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 418) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 418

Whereas there are 20,000,000 children under the age of 5 in the United States;

Whereas numerous studies, including the Abecedarian Study, the Study of the Chicago Child-Parent Center, and the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study, indicate that low-income children who have enrolled in quality, comprehensive early childhood education programs—

(1) improve their cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional development; and

(2) are less likely to—

(A) be placed in special education;

(B) drop out of school; or

(C) engage in juvenile delinquency;

Whereas the enrollment rates of children under the age of 5 in early childhood education programs have steadily increased since 1965 with—

(1) the creation of the Head Start program carried out under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.);

(2) the establishment of the Early Head Start program carried out under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.); and

(3) the enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.);

Whereas many children eligible for, and in need of, quality early childhood education services are not served due to inadequate funding;

Whereas over 4,000,000 children under the age of 5 live in poverty;

Whereas only about 1/2 of all preschoolers who are eligible to participate in Head Start programs have the opportunity to do so, and even fewer eligible babies and toddlers receive the opportunity to participate in Early Head Start;

Whereas only about 1 out of every 7 eligible children receives an amount of child care assistance sufficient to—

(1) enable the parents of the child to continue working; and

(2) provide the child with safe and nurturing early childhood care and education;

Whereas, although State and local governments have responded to the numerous benefits of early childhood education by making significant investments in programs and classrooms, there remains—

(1) a large unmet need for those services; and

(2) a need to improve the quality of those programs; and

Whereas, according to numerous studies on the impact of investments in high-quality early childhood education, the programs yield to the public a return of 4 dollars to 13 dollars for each dollar invested: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning April 2, 2006, as "Week of the Young Child";

(2) encourages the citizens of the United States to celebrate—

(A) young children; and

(B) the citizens who provide care and early childhood education to the young children of the United States; and