

SMITH), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2566, a bill to provide for coordination of proliferation interdiction activities and conventional arms disarmament, and for other purposes.

S. 2592

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2592, a bill to amend the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to improve the nutrition and health of schoolchildren by updating the definition of "food of minimal nutritional value" to conform to current nutrition science and to protect the Federal investment in the national school lunch and breakfast programs.

S. 2599

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2599, a bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to prohibit the confiscation of firearms during certain national emergencies.

S. 2629

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2629, a bill to improve the tracking of stolen firearms and firearms used in a crime, to allow more frequent inspections of gun dealers to ensure compliance with Federal gun law, to enhance the penalties for gun trafficking, and for other purposes.

S. 2704

At the request of Mr. DEWINE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2704, a bill to revise and extend the National Police Athletic League Youth Enrichment Act of 2000.

S. 2787

At the request of Mr. CRAIG, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2787, a bill to permit United States persons to participate in the exploration for and the extraction of hydrocarbon resources from any portion of a foreign maritime exclusive economic zone that is contiguous to the exclusive economic zone of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 2970

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2970, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide free credit monitoring and credit reports for veterans and others affected by the theft of veterans' personal data, to ensure that such persons are appropriately notified of such thefts, and for other purposes.

S. 3275

At the request of Mr. ALLEN, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) and the Senator from

Utah (Mr. HATCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 3275, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a national standard in accordance with which nonresidents of a State may carry concealed firearms in the State.

S. CON. RES. 96

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 96, a concurrent resolution to commemorate, celebrate, and reaffirm the national motto of the United States on the 50th anniversary of its formal adoption.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

Mr. BOND (for himself and Mr. TALENT):

S. 3478. A bill to amend the National Trails System Act relating to the statute of limitations that applies to certain claims; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BOND. Today, I and Senator JIM TALENT introduce the Easement Owners Fair Compensation Act of 2006. This bill will right a wrong done to property owners from whom the government took property without compensation. It will also ensure that future property owners are treated fairly when the government seeks to take their property through eminent domain.

In 1992, the federal government confiscated property owned by 102 St. Louis County, Missouri residents through the Federal Rails to Trails Act. The taking imposed an easement on their property for a public recreational hiking/biking trail. A trail easement was established on their property on December 20, 1992. After twelve years of bureaucratic fighting and delay, the Justice Department admitted the government's takings liability and agreed to pay the property owners \$2,385,000.85 for their property, interest and legal fees.

However, two days before the U.S. Court of Claims was scheduled to approve the compensation agreement, the U.S. Federal Circuit issued the Caldwell decision regarding a rails-to-trails takings case in Georgia. That decision established the statute of limitations for rails-to-trails claims as the date of notice of interim trail use, not the date the trail easement was imposed on the property, as previously assumed. Under the new date, the statute of limitations on the St. Louis County takings claim had expired. The Justice Department accordingly sought dismissal of the claims without payment and the Court of Claims judge agreed.

This bill is a Senate companion to H.R. 4581 introduced by Representative AKIN and cosponsored by Representatives CARNAHAN and EMERSON. The legislation sets the statute of limitations as beginning on the date an interest is conveyed. It also allows for reconsideration of past claims dismissed because of this issue.

Without this bill, we will allow the wrong committed by the federal government to stand. The federal government took private property, admitted it owed the property owners over \$2,000,000, and then refused to pay because of a technicality. That is no way to treat our citizens. That is no way to run a rails-to-trails program. That is no way to encourage future recreational hiking and biking. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. COLEMAN):

S. 3480. A bill to prevent abuse of Government credit cards; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I am reintroducing the Government Credit Card Abuse Prevention Act to address, in a comprehensive way, the abuse, misuse, and fraud that has occurred with Government charge cards. Some people might ask, "Why are you bothering with legislation? Is it that big of a problem?" It is true that most Government employees who are entrusted with a travel card or a purchase card do not abuse it. It may also be true that the amount of money concerned is only a fraction of any agency's annual budget. Well, when you have agencies like the Department of Defense with an over \$500 billion budget, even a small fraction means a lot of taxpayers' money. When I asked GAO to look into instances of waste, fraud, and abuse with Government charge cards, starting with the Department of Defense, we found that purchase cards were used to spend taxpayer money for a sapphire ring, LA-Z-Boy reclining rocking chairs, and a dinner party for a general at Treasure Island Hotel and Casino that included \$800 for alcohol. Government travel cards were used for gambling, sporting events, concerts, cruises, and even gentlemen's clubs and legalized brothels. Government travel cards are for official travel-related expenses only, not tickets to a Dallas Cowboys game or a Janet Jackson concert, but these are real examples of improper purchases GAO uncovered in reports I had requested. While travel cards are not paid directly with taxpayers' money like purchase cards, failure by employees to repay these cards results in the loss of millions of dollars in rebates to the Federal Government. Also, when credit card companies are forced to charge off bad debt, they raise interest rates and fees on everyone else.

Based on what we found in DoD, I worked with GAO to uncover similar problems in the U.S. Forest Service where one employee purchased five digital cameras at a cost of \$2,960, six computers for \$6,019, three palm pilots totaling \$736, jewelry worth \$1,967, and \$6,101 in other items like cordless telephones, figurines, and Sony Playstations, all for personal use and all at taxpayer expense. GAO subsequently found similar problems at

other agencies like the Federal Aviation Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. I have cited just some of the extreme examples, but there are many more instances where employees purchased items that were not needed by the agency or where a cheaper alternative would meet the purpose just as well. This occurred because of weak internal controls within the agencies and is something that clearly needs to be addressed governmentwide. Based on oversight from Congress, GAO, and agency inspectors general, the situation has improved in many agencies and I am pleased that the Office of Management and Budget has begun to bring about an improved control environment through direction contained in OMB Circular 123. However, there is more to be done and my experience has convinced me that legislation is necessary.

The Government Credit Card Abuse Prevention Act is largely based on the recommendations by GAO regarding what controls are necessary to prevent the kinds of waste, fraud, and abuse we have uncovered. Since I originally introduced this legislation in the last Congress, I have collected input and ideas and worked to refine the bill to make it both comprehensive and workable. The provisions in my bill are simply commonsense internal controls that should be present in every Federal agency to prevent improper purchases. These include: performing credit checks for travel cardholders and issuing restricted cards for those with poor or no credit to reduce the potential for misuse; maintaining a record of each cardholder, including single transaction limits and total credit limits so agencies can effectively manage their cardholders; implementing periodic reviews to determine if cardholders have a need for a card; properly recording rebates to the Government based on prompt payment; providing training for cardholders and managers; utilizing available technologies to prevent or catch fraudulent purchases; establishing specific policies about the number of cards to be issued, the credit limits for certain categories of cardholders, and categories of employees eligible to be issued cards; invalidating cards when employees leave the agency or transfer; establishing an approving official other than the purchase cardholder so employees cannot approve their own purchases; reconciling purchase card charges on the bill with receipts and supporting documentation; submitting disputed purchase card charges to the bank according to the proper procedure; making purchase card payments promptly to avoid interest penalties; retaining records of purchase card transactions in accordance with standard Government record-keeping policies; utilizing mandatory split disbursements when reimbursing employees for travel card purchases to ensure that travel card bills get paid; comparing items submitted on travel

vouchers with items already paid for with centrally billed accounts to avoid reimbursing employees for items already paid for by the agency; and submitting refund requests for unused airline tickets so the taxpayers don't pay for tickets that were not used.

My bill would also provide that each agency inspector general will periodically conduct risk assessments of agency purchase card and travel card programs and perform periodic audits to identify potential fraudulent, improper, and abusive use of cards. We have had great success working with inspectors general using techniques like data mining to reveal instances of improper use of government charge cards. Having this information on an ongoing basis will help in strengthening and maintaining a rigorous system of internal controls to prevent future instances of waste, fraud, and abuse with government charge cards. In addition, my bill requires penalties so that employees who abuse Government charge cards cannot get away scotfree. In cases of serious misuse or fraud, the bill provides that employees must be dismissed and suspected cases of fraud will also be referred to the appropriate U.S. attorney for prosecution under Federal antifraud laws. Hopefully this will send a clear message that such activity will not be tolerated so as to act as a deterrent for others.

I am proud of the oversight work that I do to uncover waste, fraud, and abuse, but sometimes I feel like Sisyphus, doomed to eternally roll a boulder up a hill only to see it fall again. Instead of eternally looking over the shoulder of agencies to find waste that should never have occurred and then poking and prodding them to close the barn door after the horse has gotten out, we need to put the internal controls in place to make sure these problems don't happen in the first place. This bill will accomplish that for the Government charge card programs so that American taxpayers can sleep soundly knowing that their money isn't being charged away by some bureaucrat. I hope my colleagues will support this commonsense measure and that it will be enacted into law in short order.

By Mr. ENSIGN (for himself and Mr. LIEBERMAN):

S. 3483. A bill to improve national competitiveness through enhanced education initiatives; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce, along with my colleague from Nevada, Senator ENSIGN, the "National Innovation Education Act". The intent of this bill is to enhance our science and technology talent base and improve national competitiveness through strengthened education initiatives. Enhancing academic success, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math—often called the STEM dis-

ciplines—through innovative educational programs will stimulate change and growth within elementary, secondary and postsecondary institutions, improve current educational opportunities for all students, allow graduates greater opportunity for economic success and greater ability to successfully compete in the global market.

This bill proposes initiatives spanning the education spectrum that seek to improve quality instruction and access to STEM learning for all students. Recent recommendations from the Council on Competitiveness and The Augustine Commission at the National Academy of Sciences, among others, target national concerns around the content and quality of K-16 in STEM disciplines, particularly with regard to minority and low-income students, the need to stimulate innovation, and the need to enhance teacher preparation and professional development in the STEM fields.

An increasing number of researchers express alarm at the nearly one out of three public high school students who won't graduate and the failure of our systems to adequately prepare high school graduates, and particularly minorities, for success in college and the work place. Addressing the challenge of successfully thriving in a world of change, the Council on Competitiveness examined the pressing issue of attracting more young Americans to science and engineering fields. Currently, less than 15 percent of U.S. students have the prerequisite skills to pursue scientific or technical degrees in college. Only 5.5 percent of the 1.1 million high school seniors who took the college entrance exam in 2002 planned to pursue an engineering degree. And there continues to be poor representation of women and minorities in these fields. The National Academies report, "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," notes that amongst the U.S. science and technology workforce 38 percent of PhDs were foreign born. Changes need to be enacted to not only increase the number of students pursuing math and science degrees but to prepare them to pursue these degrees.

Indeed, numerous national reports in recent years have called for efforts to improve K-12 education, teacher preparation and professional development in the STEM areas. Recommendations include increasing the numbers of postsecondary students pursuing careers in the areas of mathematics, science, engineering, and technology and increasing the numbers of postsecondary students in the STEM fields who will then pursue concurrent degrees in education. Increasing funding for not only STEM education but STEM research has received strong recommendations as an important and timely approach to addressing improvements in education and innovation. Finally, a critical factor to ensuring program success is the ability to engage and then hold students' interests in the various STEM fields enough to encourage them to pursue STEM careers.

Our bill seeks to craft a comprehensive response to many of these issues, and includes the following provisions.

Title I—Improving Pre-kindergarten Through Grade 16, supplies a remedy to the critical issue of the disconnect existing between high school outcomes and college expectations. Through the formation of partnerships between P-12 and higher education systems in the states—P-16 Commissions—academic success in postsecondary education becomes the priority agenda item for reform. We anticipate that P-16 Commissions will bring about an increase in the percentage of academically prepared students, particularly low-income and minority students, and a decrease in the percentage of college students requiring remedial coursework, particularly with respect to math, science, and engineering.

Many States across our country have already seen the wisdom of a P-16 Commission and have been working on goals and implementation. The results, although preliminary for many States, are vastly encouraging. Title I will provide support both to States with existing P-16 bodies, or States seeking to establish such commissions. It will give priority to the States also seeking to establish or enhance data systems. We hope that States will have an opportunity to craft a vision that will reach all students over time so that their educational pathway of access to and success in college will be ensured.

Magnet schools have the capacity to create learning environments tailored to the interests and needs of its community and can offer a focused curriculum capable of attracting substantial numbers of students of different racial backgrounds. Title II of our bill authorizes the National Science Foundation to award grants to assist in the promotion of innovation and competitiveness through the development and implementation of magnet school programs. These programs would encourage students to meet state academic content standards through the development and design of innovative educational methods, practices and curricula that promote student achievement in STEM courses and encourage student enrollment in postsecondary institutions.

In addition, Title II authorizes NSF grants to elementary and middle schools creating pilot programs implementing innovation-based experiential learning environments. Innovation-based experiential learning is a teaching model that seeks to seed traditional technical studies with new exposure to methods for creative thinking and translating ideas into practical applications. Such programs would likely involve immersing students in hands-on experimentation that helps students discover new concepts and use those concepts to solve real-world problems.

The interrelated demands that mathematics and science education places upon schools to prepare both teachers and students must be addressed con-

secutively. Teachers need to be better prepared to teach STEM topics across the board and students need to have access to teachers who are well versed in their content subjects.

Title III of our bill authorizes funding to increase the number of graduates from postsecondary institutions with concurrent degrees in education and STEM fields. This program is based on the successful UTeach model at the University of Texas at Austin. Encouraging science and math majors to concurrently pursue certification in the field of education will help increase the number and quality of teachers in these fields. The model program at the University of Texas has experienced impressive success in attracting and keeping promising young STEM teachers. Our bill also calls for the establishment of Teacher Professional Development Institutes to promote innovative and effective approaches to improving teacher quality by providing professional development support for educators already in the classroom. The Teacher Institute Model encourages collaboration between urban teachers and university faculty to improve student learning by enhancing teacher mastery of subject matter. It is based upon the model which has been in operation at Yale University in New Haven, CT for over 25 years.

Our Nation recognizes the pressing need to increase funding for STEM research and boost the number of students in undergraduate and graduate programs pursuing mathematics and science degrees for our country's continued development, prosperity and security.

Within the final title of our bill, Title IV, NSF basic research funding is doubled. NSF is authorized to expand funding for STEM education through increased fellowships and trainee programs at the undergraduate and graduate level. A clearinghouse at the National Science Foundation of successful professional science master's degree program elements will be made available to postsecondary institutions as well as grants for developing pilot programs or improving current programs. In addition the NSF Tech Talent program is reauthorized with increased funding. This program provides competitive grants to undergraduate universities to develop new methods of increasing the number of students receiving degrees in science, math, and engineering. Finally, it is in our interest to examine and understand the emerging field of services sciences, a multidisciplinary curriculum partnering science, technology, engineering, and math with management and business disciplines. To this end, the National Science Foundation will conduct a collaborative study with leaders from institutions of higher education to come to an understanding of how best to support this new field.

Our National Innovation Education Act takes a broad and comprehensive approach to addressing national pros-

perity, security and our ability to compete internationally with recommendations for enhanced education initiatives in order to improve our national competitiveness. Improving current education for all students will allow graduates greater opportunity for economic success and greater ability to successfully compete in the global market. Our very Nation's future prosperity and security depends upon our willingness as leaders to infuse education with the requisite innovative vision that will inspire our youth to reach for goals that are achievable only beyond the ordinary bounds.

I urge my colleagues to act favorably on this measure. I ask unanimous consent that the text of this 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. 3483

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 Innovation Education Act".

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title.
- Sec. 2. Table of contents.

TITLE I—IMPROVING PREKINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 16 EDUCATION

- Sec. 101. Short title.
- Sec. 102. Purposes.
- Sec. 103. Definitions.
- Sec. 104. P-16 education stewardship system grants.
- Sec. 105. State application and plan.
- Sec. 106. P-16 education stewardship commission.
- Sec. 107. P-16 education data system.
- Sec. 108. Reports; technical assistance.
- Sec. 109. Authorization of appropriations.

TITLE II—NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION MAGNET SCHOOLS AND INNOVATION-BASED LEARNING

- Sec. 201. General definitions.
- Sec. 202. Magnet schools.
- Sec. 203. Innovation-based experiential learning.

TITLE III—TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Sec. 301 Baccalaureate degrees in mathematics and science with teacher certification.
- Sec. 302. Teachers professional development institutes.

TITLE IV—STEM EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

- Sec. 401. Definitions.
- Sec. 402. Graduate fellowships and graduate traineeships.
- Sec. 403. Professional science master's degree programs.
- Sec. 404. Increased support for science education through the National Science Foundation.
- Sec. 405. A national commitment to basic research.
- Sec. 406. Study on service science.

TITLE I—IMPROVING PREKINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 16 EDUCATION

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the "College Pathway Act of 2006".

SEC. 102. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this title are the following:

(1) To broaden the focus of Federal, State, and local higher education programs to promote academic success in postsecondary education, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, engineering, and technology.

(2) To increase the percentage of low-income and minority students who are academically prepared to enter and successfully complete postsecondary-level general education coursework.

(3) To decrease the percentage of students requiring developmental coursework through grants that enable States to coordinate the public prekindergarten through grade 12 education system and the postsecondary education system—

(A) to ensure that covered institutions articulate and publicize the prerequisite skills and knowledge expected of incoming postsecondary students attending covered institutions, in order to provide students and other interested parties with accurate information pertaining to the students' necessary preparations for postsecondary education;

(B) to establish and implement middle school and secondary school course enrollment guidelines while ensuring rigorous content standards—

(i) to ensure that public secondary school students, in all major racial and ethnic groups, and income levels, complete academic courses linked with academic success in mathematics, science, engineering, and technology at the postsecondary level; and

(ii) to increase the percentage of students in each major racial group, ethnic group, and income level who graduate from secondary school and enter postsecondary education with the academic preparation necessary to successfully complete postsecondary-level general education coursework, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, engineering, and technology;

(C) to implement programs and policies that increase secondary school graduation rates while ensuring rigorous content standards; and

(D) to collect and analyze disaggregated longitudinal student data throughout P-16 education in order to—

(i) understand and improve students' progress throughout P-16 education;

(ii) understand problems and needs throughout P-16 education; and

(iii) align prekindergarten through grade 12 academic standards and higher education standards so that more students are prepared to successfully complete postsecondary-level general education coursework.

SEC. 103. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The terms “local educational agency”, “parent”, “secondary school”, and “State” have the meanings given the terms in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(2) **ACADEMIC ASSESSMENTS.**—The term “academic assessments” means the academic assessments implemented by a State educational agency pursuant to section 1111(b)(3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(3)).

(3) **ACADEMIC STANDARDS.**—The term “academic standards” means the challenging academic content standards and challenging student academic achievement standards adopted by a State pursuant to section 1111(b)(1) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)(1)).

(4) **COVERED INSTITUTION.**—The term “covered institution” means an institution of higher education that participates in a program under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.).

(5) **DEVELOPMENTAL COURSEWORK.**—The term “developmental coursework” means coursework that a student is required to complete in order to attain prerequisite knowledge or skills necessary for entrance into a postsecondary degree or certification program.

(6) **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**—The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

(7) **P-16 EDUCATION.**—The term “P-16 education” means the educational system from prekindergarten through the conferring of a baccalaureate degree.

(8) **P-16 EDUCATOR.**—The term “P-16 educator” means an individual teaching in P-16 education.

(9) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Education.

(10) **STUDENT.**—The term “student” means any student enrolled in a public school.

SEC. 104. P-16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP SYSTEM GRANTS.

(a) **PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**—From amounts appropriated under section 109 for a fiscal year, and subject to subsection (b), the Secretary shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to States to enable the States—

(1) to establish—

(A) P-16 education stewardship commissions in accordance with section 106; or

(B) P-16 education stewardship systems consisting of—

(i) a P-16 education stewardship commission in accordance with section 106; and

(ii) a P-16 education data system in accordance with section 107; and

(2) to carry out the activities and programs described in the State application and plan submitted under section 105.

(b) **AWARD BASIS.**—In determining the approval and amount of a grant under subsection (a), the Secretary shall give priority to an application from a State that desires the grant to establish a P-16 education stewardship system described in subsection (a)(1)(B).

(c) **PERIOD OF GRANTS.**—

(1) **STATES ESTABLISHING P-16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP SYSTEMS.**—Each grant made under this section to a State to establish a P-16 education stewardship system described in subsection (a)(1)(B) shall be awarded for a period of 5 years.

(2) **STATES ESTABLISHING P-16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP COMMISSIONS.**—Each grant made under this section to a State to establish a P-16 education stewardship commission described in subsection (a)(1)(A) shall be awarded for a period of 3 years.

SEC. 105. STATE APPLICATION AND PLAN.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—A State desiring a grant under section 104 shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(b) **CONTENTS.**—Each application submitted under this section shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) A demonstration that the State, not later than 5 months after receiving grant funds under this title, will establish a P-16 education stewardship commission described in section 106.

(2) For a state applying for a grant under section 104(a)(1)(B), a demonstration that the State, not later than 2 years after receiving grant funds under this title, will implement, expand, or improve a P-16 education data system described in section 107.

(3) A demonstration that the State will work with the State P-16 education stewardship commission and others as necessary to examine the relationship among the content of postsecondary education admission and

placement exams, the prerequisite skills and knowledge required to successfully take postsecondary-level general education coursework, the prekindergarten through grade 12 courses and academic factors associated with academic success at the postsecondary level, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, engineering, and technology, and existing academic standards and aligned academic assessments.

(4) A description of how the State will, using the information from the State P-16 education stewardship commission, increase the percentage of students taking courses that have the highest correlation of academic success at the postsecondary level, for each of the following groups of students:

(A) Economically disadvantaged students.

(B) Students from each major racial and ethnic group.

(C) Students with disabilities.

(D) Students with limited English proficiency.

(5) A description of how the State will distribute the information in the P-16 education stewardship commission's report under section 106(c)(4) to the public in the State, including public secondary schools, local educational agencies, school counselors, P-16 educators, institutions of higher education, students, and parents.

(6) An assurance that the State will continue to pursue effective P-16 education alignment strategies after the end of the grant period.

SEC. 106. P-16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION.

(a) **P-16 EDUCATION STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Each State receiving a grant under section 104 shall establish a P-16 education stewardship commission that has the policymaking ability to meet the requirements of this section.

(2) **EXISTING COMMISSION.**—The State may designate an existing coordinating body or commission as the State P-16 education stewardship commission for purposes of this title, if the body or commission meets, or is amended to meet, the basic requirements of this section.

(b) **MEMBERSHIP.**—

(1) **COMPOSITION.**—Each P-16 education stewardship commission shall be composed of the Governor of the State, or the designee of the Governor, and the stakeholders of the statewide education community, as determined by the Governor or the designee of the Governor, such as—

(A) the chief State official responsible for administering prekindergarten through grade 12 education in the State;

(B) the chief State official of the entity primarily responsible for the supervision of institutions of higher education in the State;

(C) bipartisan representation from the State legislative committee with jurisdiction over prekindergarten through grade 12 education and higher education;

(D) representatives of 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education in the State;

(E) representatives of the business community; and

(F) at the discretion of the Governor, or the designee of the Governor, representatives from prekindergarten through grade 12 and higher education governing boards and other organizations.

(2) **CHAIRPERSON; MEETINGS.**—The Governor of the State, or the designee of the Governor, shall serve as chairperson of the P-16 education stewardship commission and shall convene regular meetings of the commission.

(c) **DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.**—

(1) **MEETINGS OF COVERED INSTITUTIONS.**—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each State P-16 education stewardship commission shall convene regular meetings of the covered institutions in the State for the purpose of assessing and reaching consensus regarding—

(i) the prerequisite skills and knowledge expected of incoming freshmen to successfully engage in and complete postsecondary-level general education coursework without the prior need to enroll in developmental coursework; and

(ii) patterns of coursework and other academic factors that demonstrate the highest correlation with success in completing postsecondary-level general education coursework and degree or certification programs, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, engineering, and technology.

(B) FINDINGS OF COVERED INSTITUTIONS.—The covered institutions shall communicate to the P-16 education stewardship commission the findings of the covered institutions, which—

(i) shall include the consensus on the prerequisite skills and knowledge, patterns of coursework, and other academic factors described in subparagraph (A);

(ii) shall address, at minimum, the subjects of reading or language arts, history, mathematics, science, technology, and engineering, and may cover additional academic content areas;

(iii) shall be descriptive of content and purpose, and shall not be limited to a simple listing of secondary course names; and

(iv) may be different for 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education.

(2) COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 18 months after a State receives a grant under section 104, and annually thereafter for each year in the grant period, the State P-16 education stewardship commission shall—

(A) develop recommendations regarding the prerequisite skills and knowledge, patterns of coursework, and other academic factors described in paragraph (1)(A); and

(B) develop recommendations and enact policies to increase the success rate of students in the students' transition from secondary school to postsecondary education, including policies to increase success rates for—

(i) students of economic disadvantage;

(ii) students of racial and ethnic minorities;

(iii) students with disabilities; and

(iv) students with limited English proficiency.

(3) COMMISSION FINDINGS.—Not later than 3 years after a State receives a grant under section 104(a)(1)(B), the State P-16 education stewardship commission shall—

(A) compile and interpret the findings from the P-16 education data system; and

(B) include the compilation and interpretation of the findings in the report described in paragraph (4)(A).

(4) REPORTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months after a State receives a grant under section 104, and annually thereafter for each year in the grant period, the State P-16 education stewardship commission shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a clear and concise report that shall include the recommendations described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2).

(B) DISTRIBUTION TO THE PUBLIC.—Not later than 60 days after the submission of a report under subparagraph (A), each State P-16 education stewardship commission shall publish and widely distribute the information in the report to the public in the State, including—

(i) all public secondary schools and local educational agencies;

(ii) school counselors;

(iii) P-16 educators;

(iv) institutions of higher education; and

(v) students and parents, especially students and parents of students listed in clauses (i) through (iv) of paragraph (2)(B) and those entering grade 9 in the next academic year, to assist students and parents in making informed and strategic course enrollment decisions.

SEC. 107. P-16 EDUCATION DATA SYSTEM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 2 years after a State receives a grant under section 104(a)(1)(B), the State shall establish a Statewide longitudinal data system that provides each student, upon enrollment in a public school or in a covered institution in the State, with a unique identifier that is retained throughout the student's enrollment in P-16 education in the State.

(b) VALID DATA AND COMPLIANCE WITH FERPA.—The State, through the implementation of the data system described in subsection (a), shall—

(1) ensure the implementation and use of valid and reliable secondary school dropout data; and

(2) ensure that the data system is compliant with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. 1232g).

(c) REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF A STATEWIDE DATA SYSTEM.—The State shall ensure that the data system described in subsection (a) includes the following elements:

(1) A unique statewide student identifier.

(2) Student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information.

(3) Individual students' yearly test records.

(4) Information on students not tested by grade and subject.

(5) A teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students.

(6) Student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned.

(7) Student-level college readiness test scores.

(8) Student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or graduate P-16 education.

(9) The capacity to communicate with higher education data systems.

(10) A State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability.

(d) FUNCTIONS OF THE STATEWIDE DATA SYSTEM.—In implementing the data system described in subsection (a), the State shall—

(1) identify factors that correlate to students' ability to successfully engage in and complete postsecondary-level general education coursework without the need for prior developmental coursework;

(2) identify factors to increase the percentage of low-income and minority students who are academically prepared to enter and successfully complete postsecondary-level general education coursework; and

(3) use data to otherwise inform education policy and practice.

(e) EXISTING DATA SYSTEMS.—A State may employ, coordinate, or revise an existing data system for purposes of this section if such data system produces valid and reliable information that satisfies the requirements of subsections (b) through (d).

SEC. 108. REPORTS; TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) STATE REPORTS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—Each State that receives a grant under section 104 shall submit an annual report to the Secretary for each year of the grant period that shall include a description of the activities undertaken under the grant to improve academic readiness for postsecondary-level general education coursework and course completion.

(2) DISSEMINATION.—Each State shall prepare and widely disseminate the report de-

scribed in paragraph (1) to the public in the State, including secondary schools, local educational agencies, school counselors, P-16 educators, institutions of higher education, students, and parents.

(b) SECRETARY REPORTS.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit an annual report to Congress that includes—

(A) findings from the State reports submitted under subsection (a)(1);

(B) a description of the actions taken by the Department of Education to assist States with creating P-16 education stewardship commissions and P-16 education data systems;

(C) a description of the actions and incentives planned by the States' P-16 education stewardship commissions—

(i) to help States align academic standards, courses, and academic assessments with postsecondary academic expectations, courses, and assessments;

(ii) to help States increase the percentage of minority and low-income students prepared to enter and succeed at the postsecondary level; and

(iii) to decrease postsecondary developmental coursework enrollment rates of minority and low-income students;

(D) a description of the actions and incentives planned to help States reduce postsecondary developmental coursework enrollment rates;

(E) an assessment of the effectiveness of P-16 education stewardship commissions in improving college readiness and eliminating the need for developmental coursework; and

(F) recommendations regarding how to make the P-16 education stewardship commissions more effective, and whether the establishment of such commissions should be encouraged throughout the United States.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make the annual report described in paragraph (1) available to the public and to each State and institution of higher education.

(c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide, to the extent practicable, technical assistance to States and institutions of higher education seeking technical assistance under this title.

SEC. 109. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this title \$55,000,000 for fiscal year 2007 and such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2011.

TITLE II—NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION MAGNET SCHOOLS AND INNOVATION-BASED LEARNING

SEC. 201. GENERAL DEFINITIONS.

Except as otherwise provided, the terms used in this title have the meanings given the terms in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

SEC. 202. MAGNET SCHOOLS.

(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to assist in the promotion of innovation and competitiveness by providing financial assistance to eligible local educational agencies for—

(1) the development and implementation of magnet school programs that will assist eligible local educational agencies in achieving systemic reforms and providing all students the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content standards and student academic achievement standards;

(2) the development and design of innovative educational methods, practices, and curriculum that promote student achievement in science, mathematics, and technology courses;

(3) improving the capacity of eligible local educational agencies, including through professional development, to continue operating

magnet schools after Federal funding for the magnet schools is terminated; and

(4) ensuring that students enrolled in such schools have access to a high quality education that will enable such students to succeed academically and enroll in postsecondary education at a high level.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means the Director of the National Science Foundation.

(2) ELIGIBLE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—The term “eligible local educational agency” means a local educational agency described in section 5304 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7231c).

(3) MAGNET SCHOOL.—The term “magnet school” means a public elementary school or public secondary school that—

(A) offers a curriculum focused on science, mathematics, and technology; and

(B) attracts a substantial number of students from different racial backgrounds.

(c) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Director, in accordance with this section, is authorized to award grants to eligible local educational agencies, and consortia of such agencies where appropriate, to carry out the purpose of this section for magnet schools.

(d) APPLICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) APPLICATIONS.—An eligible local educational agency, or consortium of such agencies, desiring to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Director at such time, in such manner, and containing such information and assurances as the Director may reasonably require.

(2) INFORMATION AND ASSURANCES.—Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a description of—

(i) how a grant awarded under this section will be used to promote instruction in science, mathematics, and technology;

(ii) the manner and extent to which the magnet school program will increase student academic achievement in the instructional areas offered by the school;

(iii) how the applicant will continue the magnet school program after assistance under this section is no longer available;

(iv) how grant funds under this section will be used—

(I) to improve student academic achievement for all students attending the magnet school programs; and

(II) to implement services and activities that are consistent with programs under part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311 et seq.); and

(v) the criteria to be used in selecting students to attend the proposed magnet school program; and

(B) assurances that the applicant will—

(i) use grant funds under this section for the purpose specified in subsection (a);

(ii) employ highly qualified teachers in the courses of instruction assisted under this section; and

(iii) carry out a high-quality education program that will encourage greater parental involvement in decision making.

(e) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this section, the Director shall give priority to applicants that propose to carry out new magnet school programs or significantly revise existing magnet school programs.

(f) USE OF FUNDS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Grant funds made available under this section may be used by an eligible local educational agency or consortium of such agencies—

(A) for planning and promotional activities directly related to the development, expansion, continuation, or enhancement of aca-

demic programs and services offered at magnet schools;

(B) for the acquisition of books, materials, and equipment (including computers), and the maintenance and operation of materials, equipment, and computers, necessary to conduct programs in magnet schools;

(C) for the compensation, or subsidization of the compensation, of elementary school and secondary school teachers who are highly qualified, and instructional staff where applicable, who are necessary to conduct programs in magnet schools;

(D) for activities, which may include professional development, that will build the capacity of the eligible local educational agency, or consortium of such agencies, to operate magnet school programs once the grant period has ended;

(E) to enable the eligible local educational agency, or consortium of such agencies, to have more flexibility in the administration of a magnet school program in order to serve students attending a school who are not enrolled in a magnet school program; and

(F) to enable the eligible local educational agency, or consortium of such agencies, to have flexibility in designing magnet schools for students in all elementary school and secondary school grades.

(2) SPECIAL RULE.—Grant funds under this section may be used for activities described in paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (a) only if the activities are directly related to improving—

(A) student academic achievement based on the State's challenging academic content standards and student academic achievement standards; or

(B) student skills in or knowledge of mathematics, science, and technology as well as other core academic subjects.

(g) PROHIBITION.—Grants under this section may not be used for transportation or any activity that does not augment academic improvement.

(h) LIMITATION.—

(1) DURATION OF AWARDS.—A grant under this section shall be awarded for a period that shall not exceed 3 fiscal years.

(2) LIMITATION ON PLANNING FUNDS.—An eligible local educational agency, or consortium of agencies, may expend for planning (professional development shall not be considered to be planning for the purposes of this subsection) not more than 50 percent of the grant funds received under this section for the first year of the program and not more than 15 percent of such funds for each of the second and third such years.

(3) AMOUNT.—No eligible local educational agency, or consortium of such agencies, awarded a grant under this section shall receive more than \$4,000,000 under this section for any one fiscal year.

(4) TIMING.—To the extent practicable, the Secretary shall award grants for any fiscal year under this section not later than July 1 of the applicable fiscal year.

(i) EVALUATIONS.—

(1) RESERVATION.—The Director may reserve not more than 2 percent of the funds appropriated to carry out this section for any fiscal year to carry out evaluations, provide technical assistance, and carry out dissemination projects with respect to magnet school programs assisted under this section.

(2) CONTENTS.—Each evaluation described in paragraph (1) at a minimum shall address—

(A) how and the extent to which magnet school programs lead to educational quality and improvement;

(B) the extent to which magnet school programs enhance student access to high quality education; and

(C) the extent to which magnet school programs differ from other school programs in

terms of the organizational characteristics and resource allocation of such magnet school programs.

SEC. 203. INNOVATION-BASED EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—

(1) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Director of the National Science Foundation shall award grants to local educational agencies to enable the local educational agencies to implement innovation-based experiential learning in a total of 500 elementary schools or middle schools in the United States.

(2) APPLICATION.—A local educational agency desiring a grant under this section shall submit an application at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Director of the National Science Foundation may require.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2007 and \$20,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2008 and 2009.

TITLE III—TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SEC. 301. BACCALAUREATE DEGREES IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE WITH TEACHER CERTIFICATION.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Unless otherwise specified in this section, the terms used in this section have the meanings given the terms in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(b) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—From the amounts authorized under subsection (h), the Secretary shall award grants to eligible recipients to enable the eligible recipients to provide integrated courses of study in mathematics, science, or engineering and teacher education, that lead to a baccalaureate degree in mathematics, science, or engineering with concurrent teacher certification.

(c) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT.—In this section, the term “eligible recipient” means any department of mathematics, science, or engineering of an institution of higher education.

(d) AWARD AND DURATION.—

(1) AWARD.—The Secretary shall award a grant under this section to each eligible recipient that collaborates with a teacher preparation program at an institution of higher education to develop undergraduate degrees in mathematics, science, or engineering with pedagogy education and teacher certification.

(2) DURATION.—The Secretary shall award a grant under this section to each eligible recipient in an amount that is not more than \$1,000,000 per year for a period of 5 years.

(e) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—Each eligible recipient receiving a grant under this section shall provide, from non-Federal sources (provided in cash or in kind), to carry out the activities supported by the grant, an amount that is not less than 25 percent of the amount of the grant for the first year of the grant, not less than 35 percent of the amount of the grant for the second year of the grant, and not less than 50 percent of the amount of the grant for each succeeding fiscal year of the grant.

(f) APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible recipient desiring a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may require.

(2) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) a description of how the eligible recipient will use grant funds to develop and administer undergraduate degrees in mathematics, science, or engineering with pedagogy education and teacher certification, including a description of proposed high-quality research and laboratory experiences that will be available to students;

(B) a description of how the mathematics, science, or engineering departments will coordinate with a teacher preparation program to carry out the activities authorized under this section;

(C) a resource assessment that describes the resources available to the eligible recipient, the intended use of the grant funds, and the commitment of the resources of the eligible recipient to the activities assisted under this section, including financial support, faculty participation, time commitments, and continuation of the activities assisted under the grant when the grant period ends;

(D) an evaluation plan, including measurable objectives and benchmarks for—

(i) improving student retention;

(ii) increasing the percentage of highly qualified mathematics and science teachers; and

(iii) improving kindergarten through grade 12 student academic performance in mathematics and science;

(E) a description of the activities the eligible recipient will conduct to ensure graduates of the program keep informed of the latest developments in the respective fields;

(F) a description of how the eligible recipient will work with local educational agencies in the area in which the eligible recipient is located and, to the extent practicable, with local educational agencies where graduates of the program authorized under this section are employed, to ensure that the activities required under subsection (g)(3) are carried out; and

(G) a description of efforts to encourage applications to the program from underrepresented groups, including women and minority groups.

(g) **AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.**—An eligible recipient shall use the funds received under this section—

(1) to develop and administer teacher education and certification programs with in-depth content education and subject-specific education in pedagogy, leading to baccalaureate degrees in mathematics, science, or engineering with concurrent teacher certification;

(2) to offer high-quality research experiences and training in the use of educational technology; and

(3) to work with local educational agencies in the area in which the eligible recipient is located and, to the extent practicable, with local educational agencies where graduates of the program authorized under this section are employed, to support the new teachers during the initial years of teaching, which may include—

(A) promoting effective teaching skills;

(B) development of skills in educational interventions based on scientifically-based research;

(C) providing opportunities for high-quality teacher mentoring;

(D) providing opportunities for regular professional development;

(E) interdisciplinary collaboration among exemplary teachers, faculty, researchers, and other staff who prepare new teachers; and

(F) allowing time for joint lesson planning and other constructive collaborative activities.

(h) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$30,000,000 for fiscal

year 2007 and such sums as may be necessary for each of the fiscal years 2008 through 2013.

SEC. 302. TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES.

Title II of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1021 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“PART C—TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTES

“SEC. 241. SHORT TITLE.

“This part may be cited as the ‘Teachers Professional Development Institutes Act’.

“SEC. 242. PURPOSE.

“The purpose of this part is to provide Federal assistance to support the establishment and operation of Teachers Professional Development Institutes for local educational agencies that serve significant low-income populations in States throughout the Nation—

“(1) to promote innovative and effective approaches to improving teacher quality through the use of the Teacher Institute Model that encourages collaboration between urban school teachers and university faculty;

“(2) to improve student learning; and

“(3) to enhance the quality of teaching by strengthening the subject matter mastery and pedagogical skills of current teachers through continuing teacher preparation, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, technology, and engineering.

“SEC. 243. DEFINITIONS.

“In this part:

“(1) **POVERTY LINE.**—The term ‘poverty line’ means the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget, and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act) applicable to a family of the size involved.

“(2) **SIGNIFICANT LOW-INCOME POPULATION.**—The term ‘significant low-income population’ means a student population of which not less than 25 percent are from families with incomes below the poverty line.

“(3) **STATE.**—The term ‘State’ means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

“(4) **TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE.**—The term ‘Teachers Professional Development Institute’ means a partnership or joint venture between or among 1 or more institutions of higher education, and 1 or more local educational agencies serving a significant low-income population, which partnership or joint venture—

“(A) is entered into for the purpose of improving the quality of teaching and learning through collaborative seminars designed to enhance both the subject matter and the pedagogical resources of the seminar participants, particularly with respect to mathematics, science, technology, and engineering; and

“(B) works in collaboration to determine the direction and content of the collaborative seminars.

“SEC. 244. GRANT AUTHORITY.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary is authorized—

“(1) to award grants to Teachers Professional Development Institutes to encourage the establishment and operation of Teachers Professional Development Institutes where not less than 50 percent of collaborative seminars are targeted to the fields of mathematics, science, technology, and engineering; and

“(2) to provide technical assistance, either directly or through existing Teachers Professional Development Institutes, to assist local educational agencies and institutions of higher education in preparing to establish

and in operating Teachers Professional Development Institutes.

“(b) **SELECTION CRITERIA.**—In selecting a Teachers Professional Development Institute for a grant under this part, the Secretary shall consider—

“(1) the extent to which the proposed Teachers Professional Development Institute will serve a community with a significant low-income population;

“(2) the extent to which the proposed Teachers Professional Development Institute will follow the Understandings and Necessary Procedures that have been developed following the National Demonstration Project;

“(3) the extent to which the local educational agency participating in the proposed Teachers Professional Development Institute has a high percentage of teachers who are unprepared or under prepared to teach the core academic subjects the teachers are assigned to teach, particularly in the areas of mathematics, science, technology, and engineering; and

“(4) the extent to which the proposed Teachers Professional Development Institute will receive a level of support from the community and other sources that will ensure the requisite long-term commitment for the success of a Teachers Professional Development Institute.

“(c) CONSULTATION.—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—In evaluating applications under subsection (b), the Secretary may request the advice and assistance of existing Teachers Professional Development Institutes.

“(2) **STATE AGENCIES.**—If the Secretary receives 2 or more applications for new Teachers Professional Development Institutes that propose serving the same State, the Secretary shall consult with the State educational agency regarding the applications.

“(d) **FISCAL AGENT.**—For the purpose of this part, an institution of higher education participating in a Teachers Professional Development Institute shall serve as the fiscal agent for the receipt of grant funds under this part.

“(e) **LIMITATIONS.**—A grant under this part—

“(1) shall be awarded for a period not to exceed 5 years; and

“(2) shall not exceed 50 percent of the total costs of the eligible activities, as determined by the Secretary.

“SEC. 245. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—A Teachers Professional Development Institute that receives a grant under this part may use the grant funds—

“(1) for the planning and development of applications for the establishment of Teachers Professional Development Institutes;

“(2) to provide assistance to existing Teachers Professional Development Institutes established during the National Demonstration Project to enable the Teachers Professional Development Institutes—

“(A) to further develop existing Teachers Professional Development Institutes; or

“(B) to support the planning and development of applications for new Teachers Professional Development Institutes;

“(3) for the salary and necessary expenses of a full-time director to plan and manage such Teachers Professional Development Institute and to act as liaison between the participating local educational agency and institution of higher education;

“(4) to provide staff, equipment, and supplies, and to pay other operating expenses for the development and maintenance of Teachers Professional Development Institutes;

“(5) to provide stipends for teachers participating in collaborative seminars in the

sciences and humanities, and to provide remuneration for those members of the higher education faculty who lead the seminars; and

“(6) to provide for the dissemination through print and electronic means of curriculum units prepared in conjunction with Teachers Professional Development Institutes seminars.

“(b) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may use not more than 25 percent of the funds appropriated to carry out this part to provide technical assistance to facilitate the establishment and operation of Teachers Professional Development Institutes. For the purpose of this subsection, the Secretary may contract with existing Teachers Professional Development Institutes to provide all or a part of the technical assistance under this subsection.

“SEC. 246. APPLICATION, APPROVAL, AND AGREEMENT.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—To receive a grant under this part, a Teachers Professional Development Institute shall submit an application to the Secretary that—

“(1) meets the requirement of this part and any regulations under this part;

“(2) includes a description of how the Teachers Professional Development Institute intends to use funds provided under the grant;

“(3) includes such information as the Secretary may require to apply the criteria described in section 244(b);

“(4) includes measurable objectives for the use of the funds provided under the grant; and

“(5) contains such other information and assurances as the Secretary may require.

“(b) APPROVAL.—The Secretary shall—

“(1) promptly evaluate an application received for a grant under this part; and

“(2) notify the applicant within 90 days of the receipt of a completed application of the Secretary's approval or disapproval of the application.

“(c) AGREEMENT.—Upon approval of an application, the Secretary and the Teachers Professional Development Institute shall enter into a comprehensive agreement covering the entire period of the grant.

“SEC. 247. REPORTS AND EVALUATIONS.

“(a) REPORT.—Each Teachers Professional Development Institute receiving a grant under this part shall report annually on the progress of the Teachers Professional Development Institute in achieving the purpose of this part and the purposes of the grant.

“(b) EVALUATION AND DISSEMINATION.—

“(1) EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall evaluate the activities funded under this part and submit an annual report regarding the activities to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives.

“(2) DISSEMINATION.—The Secretary shall broadly disseminate successful practices developed by Teachers Professional Development Institutes.

“(c) REVOCATION.—If the Secretary determines that a Teachers Professional Development Institute is not making substantial progress in achieving the purpose of this part and the purposes of the grant by the end of the second year of the grant under this part, the Secretary may take appropriate action, including revocation of further payments under the grant, to ensure that the funds available under this part are used in the most effective manner.

“SEC. 248. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

“There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this part—

“(1) \$4,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

“(2) \$5,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;

“(3) \$6,000,000 for fiscal year 2009;

“(4) \$7,000,000 for fiscal year 2010; and

“(5) \$8,000,000 for fiscal year 2011.”.

TITLE IV—STEM EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

SEC. 401. DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

(2) PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM.—The term “professional science master's degree program” means a graduate degree program in science and mathematics that extends science training to strategic planning and business management and focuses on multidisciplinary specialties such as business and information technology (IT), biology and IT (bioinformatics), and computational chemistry.

(3) SERVICE SCIENCE.—The term “service science” means curriculums, research programs, and training regimens, including service sciences, management, and engineering (SSME) programs, that exist or that are being developed to teach individuals to apply technology, organizational process management, and industry-specific knowledge to solve complex problems.

(4) SSME.—The term “SSME” means the discipline known as service sciences, management, and engineering that—

(A) applies scientific, engineering, and management disciplines to tasks that one organization performs beneficially for others, generally as part of the services sector of the economy; and

(B) integrates computer science, operations research, industrial engineering, business strategy, management sciences, and social and legal sciences, in order to encourage innovation in how organizations create value for customers and shareholders that could not be achieved through such disciplines working in isolation.

SEC. 402. GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS AND GRADUATE TRAINEESHIPS.

(a) GRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Science Foundation shall expand the Graduate Research Fellowship Program of the Foundation so that an additional 1250 fellowships are awarded to United States citizens under such Program during such period.

(2) EXTENSION OF FELLOWSHIP PERIOD.—The Director of the National Science Foundation is authorized to award fellowships under the Graduate Research Fellowship Program for a period of 5 years, subject to funds being made available for such purpose.

(3) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to any other amounts authorized to be appropriated, there are authorized to be appropriated \$51,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2007 through 2011 to provide an additional 250 fellowships under the Graduate Research Fellowship Program during each such fiscal year.

(b) INTEGRATIVE GRADUATE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH TRAINEESHIP PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—During the 5-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Science Foundation shall expand the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship program of the Foundation so that an additional 1,250 United States citizens are awarded grants under such program during such period.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to any other amounts authorized to be appropriated, there are authorized to be appropriated \$51,000,000 for each of the fiscal

years 2007 through 2011 to provide grants to an additional 250 individuals under the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship program during each such fiscal year.

SEC. 403. PROFESSIONAL SCIENCE MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAMS.

(a) CLEARINGHOUSE.—

(1) DEVELOPMENT.—From amounts appropriated under subsection (c), the Director of the National Science Foundation shall establish a clearinghouse, in collaboration with 4-year institutions of higher education, industries, and Federal agencies that employ science-trained personnel, to share program elements used in successful professional science master's degree programs.

(2) AVAILABILITY.—The Director of the National Science Foundation shall make the clearinghouse of program elements developed under paragraph (1) available to institutions of higher education that are developing professional science master's degree programs.

(b) PILOT PROGRAMS.—

(1) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—From amounts appropriated under subsection (c), the Director of the National Science Foundation shall award grants for pilot programs to 4-year institutions of higher education to facilitate the institutions' creation or improvement of professional science master's degree programs.

(2) APPLICATION.—A 4-year institution of higher education desiring a grant under this section shall submit an application at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Director of the National Science Foundation may require. The application shall include—

(A) a description of the professional science master's degree program that the institution of higher education will implement;

(B) the amount of funding from non-Federal sources, including from private industries, that the institution of higher education shall use to support the professional science master's degree program; and

(C) an assurance that the institution of higher education shall encourage students in the professional science master's degree program to apply for all forms of Federal assistance available to such students, including applicable graduate fellowships and student financial assistance under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.).

(3) PREFERENCE FOR ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES.—The Director of the National Science Foundation shall give preference in making awards to 4-year institutions of higher education seeking Federal funding to support pilot professional science master's degree programs, to those applicants that secure more than ⅓ of the funding for such professional science master's degree programs from sources other than the Federal Government.

(4) NUMBER OF GRANTS; TIME PERIOD OF GRANTS.—

(A) NUMBER OF GRANTS.—Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, the Director of the National Science Foundation shall award grants under paragraph (1) to a maximum of 200 4-year institutions of higher education.

(B) TIME PERIOD OF GRANTS.—Grants awarded under this section shall be for one 3-year term. Grants may be renewed only once for a maximum of 2 additional years.

(5) EVALUATION AND REPORTS.—

(A) DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS.—Prior to the start of the grant program, the National Science Foundation, in collaboration with 4-year institutions of higher education, shall develop performance

benchmarks to evaluate the pilot programs assisted by grants under this section.

(B) **EVALUATION.**—For each year of the grant period, the Director of the National Science Foundation, in consultation with 4-year institutions of higher education, industry, and Federal agencies that employ science-trained personnel, shall complete an evaluation of each pilot program assisted by grants under this section. Any pilot program that fails to satisfy the performance benchmarks developed under subparagraph (A) shall not be eligible for further funding.

(C) **REPORT.**—Not later than 180 days after the completion of an evaluation described in subparagraph (B), the Director of the National Science Foundation, in consultation with industries and Federal agencies that employ science-trained personnel, shall submit a report to Congress that includes—

(i) the results of the evaluation described in subparagraph (B); and

(ii) recommendations for administrative and legislative action that could optimize the effectiveness of the pilot programs, as the Director determines to be appropriate.

(C) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2007 and such sums as may be necessary for each succeeding fiscal year.

SEC. 404. INCREASED SUPPORT FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION THROUGH THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the science, mathematics, engineering, and technology talent expansion program under section 8(7) of the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-368, 116 Stat. 3042) the following amounts:

- (1) For fiscal year 2007, \$35,000,000.
- (2) For fiscal year 2008, \$50,000,000.
- (3) For fiscal year 2009, \$100,000,000.
- (4) For fiscal year 2010, \$150,000,000.

SEC. 405. A NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO BASIC RESEARCH.

(A) **PLAN FOR INCREASED RESEARCH.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Science Foundation shall submit to Congress a comprehensive, multiyear plan that describes how the funds authorized in subsection (b) shall be used. Such plan shall be developed with a focus on utilizing basic research in physical science and engineering to optimize the United States economy as a global competitor and leader in productive innovation.

(B) **INCREASED FUNDING FOR NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to the National Science Foundation for the purpose of doubling research funding the following amounts:

- (1) \$6,440,000,000 for fiscal year 2007.
- (2) \$7,280,000,000 for fiscal year 2008.
- (3) \$8,120,000,000 for fiscal year 2009.
- (4) \$8,960,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.
- (5) \$9,800,000,000 for fiscal year 2011.

(C) **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDING.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy shall evaluate and, as appropriate, submit to Congress recommendations for an increase in funding for research and development in physical sciences and engineering in consultation with agencies and departments of the United States with significant research and development budgets.

SEC. 406. STUDY ON SERVICE SCIENCE.

(A) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that, in order to strengthen the competitiveness of United States enterprises and institutions and to prepare the people of the United States for high-wage, high-skill employment, the Federal Government

should better understand and respond strategically to the emerging vocation and learning discipline known as service science.

(B) **STUDY.**—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Science Foundation shall conduct a study and report to Congress regarding how the Federal Government should support, through research, education, and training, the new discipline of service science.

(C) **OUTSIDE RESOURCES.**—In conducting the study under subsection (b), the Director of the National Science Foundation shall consult with leaders from 2- and 4-year institutions of higher education, leaders from corporations, and other relevant parties.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 3484. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to extend the food labeling requirements of the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 to enable customers to make informed choices about the nutritional content of standard menu items in large chain restaurants; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce the Menu Education and Labeling Act of 2006, along with my colleague, Senator CANTWELL of Washington. Our bill would extend the successful nutrition labeling that has been on packaged foods since the mid nineties to include foods at chain restaurants with 20 or more outlets and food sold in vending machines. The aim of this bill is to help Americans to take better charge of their health by giving them the tools that they need to make sound nutrition choices for themselves and their children.

It is no secret that poor health and the resulting health costs are major problems in the United States. According to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, total health care spending in the United States in 2004 was \$1.8 trillion, and is expected to double by approximately 2014. Furthermore, chronic diseases, which are, in many cases preventable, account for approximately 75 percent of health care costs annually.

Poor nutrition, diet-related chronic diseases, overweight, and obesity are public health threats of the first order. Heart disease and stroke are the first and third leading causes of death in the United States and together, they account for about 40 percent of annual deaths in the United States. In addition, nearly two-thirds of adults are either overweight or obese.

But it is not just adults who are affected by poor diets. Kids are increasingly at risk as well. According to the National Academy of Sciences, over the last three decades, the obesity rate has doubled among preschoolers and adolescents, and tripled for kids between ages 6 and 11. For children born today, it is estimated that 30 percent of boys and 40 percent of girls will develop diabetes. Some scientists are predicting that the current generation of children may well be the first in Amer-

ican history to live shorter lives than their parents, largely because of poor diets and diet-related chronic disease.

The issues are economic as well. The economic impact of chronic disease can be seen in the annual costs associated with various conditions. Cardiovascular disease and stroke are estimated to cost \$352 billion annually. The yearly economic impacts of obesity, cancer, and diabetes are estimated at \$117 billion, \$172 billion, and \$132 billion, respectively. So we need to promote common-sense steps to prevent these conditions. Increasing consumer knowledge is one of them.

This bill will give consumers a much-needed tool to make wiser choices and achieve healthier lifestyles. Will individual steps like this, by themselves, be enough to turn the tide of chronic disease and poor health? Of course not. But we must look for opportunities to give consumers information they can use to take better control of their health.

In 1990, Congress passed the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act, NLEA, requiring food manufacturers to provide nutrition information on nearly all packaged foods. The impact has been extremely positive. Not only do nearly three-quarters of adults read and use the food labels on packaged foods, but studies indicate that consumers who read labels have healthier diets. It's time to extend this same opportunity to consumers who want to make smart nutrition choices in restaurants and at vending machines.

More and more of Americans' food dollars are spent in restaurants. Restaurants play an increasingly important role in Americans' diet and health. But restaurants were excluded from the NLEA.

Today, American adults and children consume a third of their calories at restaurants. Nutrition and health experts say that rising caloric consumption and growing portion sizes are causes of overweight and obesity. We also know that when children eat in restaurants, they consume twice as many calories as when they eat at home. Consumers say that they would like nutrition information provided when they order their food at restaurants. However, while they are fully informed about the nutrition content of food available in supermarkets, consumers at restaurants are almost totally in the dark, left to guess about what is in the foods they are ordering. This legislation seeks to remedy this so that consumers can make the same informed choices in a restaurant that they are currently able to make in the grocery store.

This legislation requires restaurants to convey only minimal but essential information, including calories, grams of fat and trans fat, and milligrams of sodium for each serving. In addition, it recognizes there may be inadvertent human errors that affect things such as variations in serving sizes and food preparation, so the bill directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services,

in promulgating regulations, to allow for some reasonable leeway. And finally, it recognizes that menus change from time to time, so the labeling requirements would not apply to daily specials or to temporary menu items. In short, we are not trying to require information for every individual thing that is made available at restaurants, but we are asking restaurants to provide clear and consistent information on those menu items that are broadly and consistently available.

There are some who will say this is impractical and an extraordinary burden on restaurants. I disagree. I have been through this debate before, when Congress was considering the NLEA. We heard the same parade of arguments and horror stories. But the law was passed anyway and, lo and behold, the sky did not fall. To the contrary, businesses made simple adjustments. Americans got access to the necessary information. It had positive health benefits. And at the end of the day, things worked out just fine.

In fact, you can even look at the Senate to see the potential success of this law. A couple of years ago, I wrote to the administrator of the Senate cafeteria, to which I often send out for lunch. I simply requested that the cafeteria, if possible, provide nutrition information on standard menu items. Not more than a couple of months later, printed handouts were available in the cafeteria with detailed nutrition information on the daily menu. This is not McDonald's, Burger King or Arby's. This is the Senate cafeteria. And by gosh, if the Senate cafeteria can do this without an undue burden, then surely so can the largest restaurant chains in the country.

I believe that most Americans want to take more charge of their health. They want to make the best decisions for both themselves and for their children. But it is hard to do so without nutrition information upon which they can base their informed decisions. This legislation seeks to give Americans the information they want and need. This will be a simple but very important step in the right direction, helping ourselves and our children to live healthier, happier, and more productive lives. I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting the Menu Education and Labeling Act of 2006.

By Mr. REID (for Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself, Mr. JEFFORDS, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. LEAHY, and Ms. STABENOW)):

S. 3486. A bill to protect the privacy of veterans, spouses of veterans, and other persons affected by the security breach at the Department of Veterans Affairs on May 3, 2006, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

(At the request of Mr. REID, the following statement was ordered to be printed in the RECORD.)

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today's headline is sad and stunning.

The VA Secretary now reports that 2.2 million active-duty military personnel were also exposed in the massive security breach at VA on May 3. This means that 1.1 million active-duty military personnel, 430,000 National Guard members and 645,000 reservists are exposed to potential identity theft. The brave men and women, who are serving and protecting our country, are not being protected by their own government.

This is deeply disturbing and we owe each servicemember and veteran real support to protect their financial information.

I have revised my legislation, S. 3176, the Veterans' Privacy Protection Act, to expand coverage to our military personnel. I am proud to have the cosponsorship of Senators JEFFORDS and BAUCUS.

Every American has the justifiable expectation that the Federal Government will protect their private personal information—information that they are required to provide to Federal agencies. It is a basic and fundamental responsibility of government to make sure that this sensitive data is handled appropriately, accessed only by authorized personnel, and used only for intended purposes.

On May 22, the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, announced that computer disks containing as many as 26.5 million veterans' personal information were stolen from an employee who had taken the information home. I, along with many of my colleagues, am outraged at this enormous lapse in security. The VA has an obligation to make sure that veterans and military personnel are not harmed because of the agency's failure to protect sensitive personal data.

This information includes social security numbers and dates of birth, the underpinnings of almost all of our financial information. In the wrong hands, this information can be used to steal a person's identity causing substantial harm. All of us have constituents who have been victims of identity theft. When a person's identity is stolen, it can have devastating financial consequences for that person and that family. Even if the financial harm is minimal, it often takes years to clear your name. Plus, veterans and military families must live with the uncertainty about the financial records.

I understand that the VA, FBI and local law enforcement are working on the investigation, but Congress must also conduct a thorough investigation into how this security breach occurred. I want to know why the VA waited almost three weeks for its first announcement. I want to know why it took another two weeks to compare files and realize that 2.2 million military personnel were also exposed.

In my opinion, it is inexcusable that veterans and military were not notified immediately that their personal information had been stolen and were not given any guidance as to the steps they

should take to protect themselves from identity theft. I understand the VA inspector general has cited the agency for poor security policies and procedures. Congress must also begin a comprehensive review of the agency's security protocols and policies and force the agency to adopt stricter security measures to make sure that the personal data our veterans are required to provide the agency is not ever again at risk.

It is for this reason that I am re-introducing the Veterans' and Military Privacy Protection Act today. Although all Federal agencies need comprehensive data privacy policies, this is a targeted bill to address the security breach at the VA on an urgent basis.

Congress has required the Federal Trade Commission to address identity theft and its consequences. The agency has taken an aggressive approach in combating this devastating crime. My bill would require the Federal Trade Commission to develop a hotline explicitly for veterans and military personnel to provide the information, counseling, and help necessary to allow each person to protect himself from the loss of personal data.

At this point, our legislative response must cover all 28.7 million veterans and servicemembers that the VA believes may have had their personal information compromise. My bill would make it easier for them to request a long-term credit alert for their records so credit agencies are aware that their personal information could be being used by others. It is my understanding that a security freeze on an individual's record can have a modest cost, and VA has the obligation to cover the costs of this enormous security breach.

Finally, my bill requires the General Accountability Office to evaluate the VA response to this incident and to analyze the agency's security protocols. I believe that an independent investigation could generate a number of recommendations to improve the security of personal information not just in the VA but in all Federal agencies.

The VA has exposed millions of veterans and military to identity theft and potential financial problems. It is inconceivable to me how any Federal agency could have let this happen, and how the investigation and followup could be so haphazard. We all have heard the stories during the past year regarding massive breaches of private and confidential data by private entities. The Federal Government acted quickly to respond to these breaches and now it must act just as quickly if not more so to address its own failings. My bill is a critical step in providing the necessary assistance that millions of veterans and servicemembers may require, and I urge my colleagues to act on it with the urgency this situation demands.●

By Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 3487. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to reauthorize and improve the disaster loan program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, June brings the beginning of the 2006 Atlantic Hurricane season, and according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, we can expect it to be a busy one. The administration is predicting 13 to 16 named storms, with as many as 4 to 6 predicted to become major hurricanes of category three strength or higher.

As our gulf coast communities learned last fall, it only takes one of these storms to utterly destroy the homes, businesses and lives of millions of Americans. We owe it to the victims of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita and Wilma, as well as to the unsuspecting victims of future disasters, to fix the Federal disaster loan program and build it to be responsive to the needs of disaster victims.

That's why I am introducing the Small Business Disaster Loan Reauthorization and Improvement Act of 2006. This bill seeks to improve coordination between responding agencies in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. The priority of first responders should be addressing the needs of victims, and the laws establishing disaster response should allow for maximum agency collaboration in addressing those needs.

To this end, we have directed the Administrator of the Small Business Administration and the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to coordinate disaster assistance application periods when possible. The Small Business Administration is directed to address any inconsistencies between the Federal regulations and the administration's standard operating procedures that govern the disaster loan program. The Administrator is also directed to work to the maximum extent practicable to gain speedy access to all relevant tax records for loan applicant consideration, and when considering applications, is directed to consider an applicant's credit rating from the day prior to the disaster's occurrence.

The Comptroller General is directed to study the current disaster assistance application and referral process that has resulted in an approval rate of only 35 percent of total disaster loan applicants. The Administrator is also directed to report on how this process can be improved. To increase awareness of available disaster loan assistance, the bill directs the Administrator to develop a proactive marketing plan that will get information on disaster loans in the hands of those who need it. The bill includes an additional study to be conducted by the Comptroller General on industries that may have difficulty accessing disaster loans.

In addition to reauthorizing the disaster loan program for a period of 3 years beginning in 2007, this bill pro-

vides the increased capital that homeowners and small business owners need and currently have trouble accessing following a major disaster. A presidential declaration of catastrophic national disaster will allow the Administrator to offer economic injury disaster loans to adversely affected business owners beyond the geographic reach of the disaster area. In addition, private lenders are encouraged to make disaster loans through the 7(a) and 504 lending programs with reduced fees, and the Administrator is authorized to enter into agreements with private contractors in order to expedite loan application processing for direct disaster loans.

Disaster victims are often in need of capital prior to when traditional assistance programs are available. To address this need, this bill establishes a process for providing Federal bridge loans, allowing States to redirect funding previously designated for Community Development Block Grants and use these funds to provide bridge loans and grants to disaster victims. Having this waiver in place will allow States to ensure that victims have the speedy access to capital while they wait for alternative sources of assistance.

Non-profit entities working to provide services to victims should be rewarded and given access to the capital they require to continue their services. To this end, the Administrator is authorized to make disaster loans to non-profit entities, including religious organizations.

So that businesses are not limited during major disasters by a loan cap that is not sufficient to meet their needs, the bill increases the aggregate amount of loans available to \$10,000,000 during a declared major disaster or a catastrophic national disaster.

This bill strengthens the Stafford Act by requiring a 10 percent goal for local firms to participate in the recovery and reconstruction effort. The bill also encourages the utilization of expedited procurement tools for small, small disadvantaged, service-disabled, and historically underutilized businesses.

Construction and rebuilding contracts being awarded are likely to be larger than the current \$2 million threshold currently applied to the SBA Surety Bond Program which helps small construction firms gain access to contracts. This bill increases the guarantee against loss for small business contracts up to \$5 million and allows the Administrator to increase that level to \$10 million, if deemed necessary.

The bill also allows faster payments to small firms in order to increase their ability to gain access to bonds. To make bonding more attractive to surety providers in the disaster area, the Administrator may wave fees for sureties offering bonding in the disaster area and allows the sureties to use the State-approved rates for bonds awarded in the disaster area.

The bill also provides for small business development centers to offer business counseling in disaster areas, and to travel beyond traditional geographic boundaries to provide services during declared disasters. To encourage small business development centers located in disaster areas to keep their doors open, the maximum grant amount of \$100,000 is waived.

So that Congress may remain better aware of the status of the administration's disaster loan program, this bill directs the administration to report to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and to the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives regularly on the fiscal status of the disaster loan program as well as the need for supplemental funding. The administration is also directed to report on the number of Federal contracts awarded to small businesses, minority-owned small businesses, women-owned businesses, and local businesses during a disaster declaration.

Many small businesses depend on the contributions of America's military reservists, and have been struggling through the months that these brave men and women have served their country through active duty. This bill authorizes the Administrator to provide grants to the smallest of these firms to assist them as they seek to remain open.

Gas prices continue to soar, and fuel dependent small businesses are struggling with the cost of energy. This bill provides relief to small business owners during times of above average energy price increases, authorizing energy disaster loans through the Small Business Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture to companies dependent on fuel.

Residents of the gulf coast continue to rebuild from last year's hurricane season, and they do so despite the slow and inadequate response from their Federal Government. By increasing access to capital for small businesses suffering as a result of a disaster, and by ensuring that Federal agencies charged with disaster response are doing their jobs in a coordinated manner that puts the needs of victims first, we can ensure that the Federal Government is better prepared to respond to future disasters.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 505—AUTHORIZING THE TAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE CHAMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

Mr. FRIST (for himself and Mr. REID) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 505

Resolved. That paragraph 1 of rule IV of the Rules for the Regulation of the Senate Wing of the United States Capitol (prohibiting the taking of pictures in the Senate Chamber) be