

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 3520. A bill to amend the International Claims Settlement Act of 1949 to allow for certain claims of nationals of the United States against Turkey, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. GREGG (for himself, Mr. FRIST, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. ENZI, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. KYL, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. VITTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BUNNING, and Mr. DOMENICI):

S. 3521. A bill to establish a new budget process to create a comprehensive plan to rein in spending, reduce the deficit, and regain control of the Federal budget process; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. SMITH, Mr. CRAIG, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 3522. A bill to amend the Bonneville Power Administration portions of the Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act of 2000 to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2006 through 2012, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. KYL):

S. 3523. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that the Tax Court may review claims for equitable innocent spouse relief and to suspend the running on the period of limitations while such claims are pending; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 3524. An original bill to amend titles XVIII, XIX, and XXI of the Social Security Act to improve health care provided to Indians under the Medicare, Medicaid, and State Children's Health Insurance Programs, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Finance; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 3525. A bill to amend subpart 2 of part B of title IV of the Social Security Act to improve outcomes for children in families affected by methamphetamine abuse and addiction, to reauthorize the promoting safe and stable families program, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Finance; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 3526. A bill to amend the Indian Land Consolidation Act to modify certain requirements under that Act; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. DEWINE (for himself and Mr. KOHL):

S. 3527. A bill to require the Under Secretary of Technology of the Department of Commerce to establish an Advanced Multi-disciplinary Computing Software Institute; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. CLINTON (for herself and Mr. DAYTON):

S. 3528. A bill to provide higher education assistance for nontraditional students, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 3529. A bill to ensure that new mothers and their families are educated about postpartum depression, screened for symptoms, and provided with essential services, and to increase research at the National Institutes of Health on postpartum depression; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. CLINTON (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 3530. A bill to revise the limitation on Impact Aid special payments; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

#### SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. KERRY, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. TALENT, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. VOINOVICH, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. DODD, Mr. LOTT, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. BAYH, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. BURR, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BIDEN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mrs. DOLE):

S. Res. 513. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the President should designate the week beginning September 10, 2006, as "National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week"; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SANTORUM:

S. Con. Res. 102. A concurrent resolution condemning the decision by the city of St. Denis, France, to name a street in honor of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the convicted murderer of Philadelphia Police Officer Danny Faulkner; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 337

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 337, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to revise the age and service requirements for eligibility to receive retired pay for non-regular service, to expand certain authorities to provide health care benefits for Reserves and their families, and for other purposes.

S. 809

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 809, a bill to establish certain duties for pharmacies when pharmacists employed by the pharmacies refuse to fill valid prescriptions for drugs or devices on the basis of personal beliefs, and for other purposes.

S. 900

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 900, a bill to reinstate the Federal Communications Commission's rules for the description of video programming.

S. 914

At the request of Mr. ALLARD, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) were added as cosponsors of S. 914, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a competitive grant program to build capacity in veterinary medical education and expand the workforce of veterinarians engaged in public health practice and biomedical research.

S. 1353

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1353, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the establishment of an Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Registry.

S. 1496

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1496, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a pilot program under which up to 15 States may issue electronic Federal migratory bird hunting stamps.

S. 1524

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. ALLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1524, a bill to repeal the sunset on the reduction of capital gains rates for individuals and on the taxation of dividends of individuals at capital gain rates.

S. 2140

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2140, a bill to enhance protection of children from sexual exploitation by strengthening section 2257 of title 18, United States Code, requiring producers of sexually explicit material to keep and permit inspection of records regarding the age of performers, and for other purposes.

S. 2246

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2246, a bill to establish within the United States Marshals Service a short term State witness protection program to provide assistance to State and local district attorneys to protect their witnesses in homicide and major violent crime cases and to provide Federal grants for such protection.

S. 2253

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2253, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to offer the 181 Area of the Gulf of Mexico for oil and gas leasing.

S. 2354

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2354, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the coverage gap in prescription drug coverage under part D of such title based on savings to the Medicare program resulting from the negotiation of prescription drug prices.

S. 2465

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2465, a bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to provide increased assistance for the prevention,

treatment, and control of tuberculosis, and for other purposes.

S. 2548

At the request of Mr. STEVENS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2548, a bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to ensure that State and local emergency preparedness operational plans address the needs of individuals with household pets and service animals following a major disaster or emergency.

S. 2563

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2563, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require prompt payment to pharmacies under part D, to restrict pharmacy co-branding on prescription drug cards issued under such part, and to provide guidelines for Medication Therapy Management Services programs offered by prescription drug plans and MA-PD plans under such part.

S. 2599

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS) 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. 2663

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2663, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish grant programs to provide for education and outreach on newborn screening and coordinated followup care once newborn screening has been conducted, to reauthorize programs under part A of title XI of such Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2703

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2703, a bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2703, *supra*.

S. 2814

At the request of Mr. BURNS, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2814, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for support of funeral ceremonies for veterans provided by details that consist solely of members of veterans organizations and other organizations, and for other purposes.

S. 2915

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2915, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to improve screen-

ing for colorectal cancer for TRICARE beneficiaries over the age of 50.

S. 2970

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) 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 name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS) was added as a cosponsor 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. 3475

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3475, a bill to provide housing assistance for very-low-income veterans.

S. 3506

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. DAYTON), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) were added as cosponsors of S. 3506, a bill to prohibit the unauthorized removal or use of personal information contained in a database owned, operated, or maintained by the Federal government.

S. CON. RES. 20

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 20, a concurrent resolution expressing the need for enhanced public awareness of traumatic brain injury and support for the designation of a National Brain Injury Awareness Month.

S. CON. RES. 96

At the request of Mr. BYRD, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) 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.

S. RES. 482

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 482, a resolution supporting the goals of an annual National Time-Out Day to promote patient safety and optimal outcomes in the operating room.

S. RES. 507

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. CHAFEE) and the Senator

from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 507, a resolution designating the week of November 5 through November 11, 2006, as "National Veterans Awareness Week" to emphasize the need to develop educational programs regarding the contributions of veterans to the country.

S. RES. 508

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 508, a resolution designating October 20, 2006 as "National Mammography Day".

S. RES. 512

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 512, a resolution celebrating the 231st birthday of the Army and commending the men and women of the Army as exceptional individuals who live by the values of loyalty, duty, and selfless service.

AMENDMENT NO. 4199

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4199 proposed to S. 2766, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4205

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4205 proposed to S. 2766, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 4224

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) and the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. FRIST) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 4224 intended to be proposed to S. 2766, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

## AMENDMENT NO. 4234

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4234 proposed to S. 2766, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

## AMENDMENT NO. 4243

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 4243 intended to be proposed to S. 2766, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

## AMENDMENT NO. 4252

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4252 proposed to S. 2766, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2007 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe personnel strengths for such fiscal year for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

## STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. DOMENICI, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. JEFFORDS, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SALAZAR, and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. 3516. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permanently extend the floor on the Medicare work geographic adjustment under the fee schedule for physicians' services; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I am introducing legislation today with Senators SNOWE, COCHRAN, CANTWELL, DOMENICI, LINCOLN, JEFFORDS, COLLINS, MURRAY, HARKIN, LANDRIEU, OBAMA, SALAZAR, and SESSIONS entitled the "Rural Equity Payment Index Reform Extension Act of 2006." The legislation would extend a provision that was included as part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003 and came from my original legislation, S. 881 in the 108th Congress, with Congressman DOUG BEREUTER of Nebraska to ensure that the work component of the Medicare physician payment formula is set

to ensure that no geographic region is paid less than the national average.

The Medicare physician payment formula, known as the Medicare Resource-Based Relative Value Scale, or RBRVS, is based on three components of each service: work, practice expense, and professional liability insurance. The relative value of each service is then multiplied by a geographic adjuster for each Medicare locality, which is known as the Geographic Practice Cost Indices, or GPCIs.

Prior to the enactment of this provision as part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, the physicians in States that have the worst workforce shortages were being paid far less than their counterparts in States with adequate or even an oversupply of physicians due to the GPCI adjustment. For the "work component" in particular, which accounts for about 55 percent of the total Medicare physician payment, an adjustment based on geographic adjustments made little sense. An office visit to a rural physician is no different in time, effort, or workload compared to an office visit to an urban physician.

As National Rural Health Association president Dr. Wayne Myers said on January 7, 2003, prior to the legislation's passage, "An office visit to a rural physician is no different than an office visit to an urban physician. The idea that physicians are reimbursed for their work and their skills at a lower rate simply on the basis that they choose to practice in a rural area and serve our rural communities is completely ludicrous."

In addition, since Medicare beneficiaries pay the same premium for all Part B services, inequitable physician fee payments result in substantial cross-subsidization from people living in low payment States to people living in higher payment States.

Congress determined that such extensive geographic disparities were unfair and, as part of the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, language from my bill was included that brought all geographic areas up to the national average for the calculation of this piece of the Medicare physician payment formula.

It is important to highlight that the importance of this formula extends well beyond Medicare. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics in its February 8, 2006, update on the Medicare payment formula, "... over 74 percent of public and private payors, including state Medicaid programs, have adopted components of the Medicare RBRVS to reimburse physicians, while many other payors are exploring its implementation."

Furthermore, Medicare Advantage plan payments are based in large part on fee-for-service payments made in various geographic locations. Disparities in Medicare Advantage payments are also caused, in part, by such geographic adjustments made to physician payments.

Unfortunately, these disparities will increase if the "work component" in

the physician payment rate is allowed to once again fully adjust based on geography. The provision bringing payment levels up to the national average for every geographic area was in effect for 2004-2006 and is set to expire at the end of this calendar year. As a result, physicians, who already face a potential reduction in their overall Medicare payment rate, might also see their payment rates further reduced unless this legislative extension is passed.

According to the November 21, 2005, Federal Register notice, if payment rates were not brought up to the national average, there would be reductions in physician payments to the following States: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia outside of Atlanta, Idaho, parts of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland outside of Baltimore region, Michigan outside of Detroit, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, most of New York outside of New York City and suburbs, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon outside of Portland, Pennsylvania outside of Philadelphia, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas outside of Houston, Dallas, and Brazoria, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington outside of Seattle, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Lack of equitable reimbursement is a critical factor leading to the shortage of physicians in many rural areas, including the State of New Mexico. The extension of the Rural Equity Payment Index Reform Extension Act of 2006 will ensure that the disparity in physician payments between states such as New Mexico and other geographic areas does not once again widen.

I urge prompt passage of this important legislation and ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 3516

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

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Rural Equity Payment Index Reform Extension Act of 2006".

**SEC. 2. PERMANENT EXTENSION OF FLOOR ON MEDICARE WORK GEOGRAPHIC ADJUSTMENT.**

Section 1848(e)(1)(E) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w-4(e)(1)(E)) is amended by striking "and before January 1, 2007,".

By Mrs. CLINTON:

S. 3517. A bill to enhance the services available to members of the Armed Forces returning from deployment in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom to assist such members in transitioning to civilian life, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, I am pleased today to introduce the Heroes