

S. 3569. A bill to implement the United States-Oman Free Trade Agreement, to the Committee on Finance pursuant to section 2103(b)3 of Public Law 107-210.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am proud to introduce today with Senator DORGAN the Restitution for Victims of Crime Act of 2006.

This bill is needed to recover some of the mounting uncollected Federal criminal debt. The Federal Government is collecting just pennies on each dollar of Federal criminal debt that is owed. In my home State of Iowa for fiscal year 2005, for example, the Justice Department has an outstanding balance of nearly \$82 million in uncollected criminal debt. Compared to other districts, Iowa's northern and southern districts have relatively small outstanding balances. Nationwide, over \$41 billion remains outstanding.

The Restitution for Victims of Crime Act improves the procedures used to collect restitution. It also provides the authority to preserve assets to satisfy restitution orders. This bill gives our Federal criminal justice system the channels they need to not only successfully prosecute criminals but to recover the debts owed.

Both the Justice Department and the victims' rights community support this bill and recognize that it will significantly improve the current collection system.

This is an important bill and I am glad to join my good friend from North Dakota in introducing it.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 105—COMMENDING THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA FOR ITS RENEWED COMMITMENT TO THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR IN AFGHANISTAN

Mr. COLEMAN (for himself and Mr. LUGAR) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 105

Whereas twenty-four Canadian citizens were killed as a result of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States;

Whereas the people of Gander, Newfoundland, provided food, clothing, and shelter to thousands of stranded passengers and temporary aircraft parking to thirty-nine planes diverted from United States airspace as a result of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States;

Whereas the Government of Canada, as led by former Prime Ministers Jean Jacques Chrétien and Paul Martin and continued by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, has provided humanitarian, diplomatic, and security personnel on the invitation of the Government of Afghanistan since 2001;

Whereas Canada has pledged \$650,000,000 in development aid to Afghanistan;

Whereas Afghanistan is Canada's largest recipient of bilateral development aid;

Whereas Canada has stationed approximately 2,300 defense personnel who comprise

Task Force Afghanistan, in order to improve security in southern Afghanistan, particularly in the province of Kandahar;

Whereas Canada has over 70 diplomatic officers worldwide who are dedicated to growing democracy and equality in Afghanistan;

Whereas at least seventeen Canadians have given the ultimate sacrifice in the Global War on Terror;

Whereas Canada's commitment to the Government of Afghanistan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Hamid Karzai, was due to expire in February 2007;

Whereas on May 17, 2006, the Canadian Government led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper requested that the Canadian House of Commons extend Canada's commitment in the Global War on Terror;

Whereas on May 17, 2006, the Canadian Parliament voted to extend peace and security operations in Afghanistan until 2009, to increase its development assistance by \$310 million, and to build a permanent and secure embassy in Afghanistan to replace its current facility; and

Whereas this was the latest sign of the renewed commitment of numerous United States allies in the Global War on Terror: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) commends the Government of Canada for its renewed and long-term commitment to the Global War on Terror;

(2) commends the leadership of former Canadian Prime Ministers Jean Jacques Chrétien and Paul Martin and current Prime Minister Stephen Harper for their steadfast commitment to democracy, human rights, and freedom throughout the world;

(3) commends the Government of Canada for working to secure a democratic and equal Afghanistan;

(4) commends the Government of Canada's commitment to reducing poverty, aiding the counternarcotics efforts through counterterrorism and counterinsurgency campaigns, and ensuring a peaceful and terror-free Afghanistan;

(5) commends the Government of Canada for its three-pronged commitment to Afghanistan: diplomacy, development, and defense; and

(6) expresses the gratitude and appreciation of the United States for Canada's enduring friendship and leadership in the Global War on Terror in Afghanistan.

HONORING AND PRAISING THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to immediate consideration of H. Con. Res. 367, which was received from the House.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 367) honoring and praising the National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution on the 100th anniversary of being granted its congressional charter.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the

table, and any statements be printed in the RECORD.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 367) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 5638

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk due for its second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5638) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the unified credit against the estate tax to an exclusion equivalent of \$5,000,000 and to repeal the sunset provision for the estate and generation-skipping taxes, and for other purposes.

Mr. McCONNELL. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceeding.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

The bill will be placed on the calendar.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. At the end of my closing remarks, Senator DODD should be recognized for up to 20 minutes. After his remarks, the Senate will be in adjournment for the evening.

ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JUNE 27, 2006

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand in adjournment until 9:45 a.m. tomorrow, June 27. I further ask that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved, and the Senate proceed to a period of morning business until 11 a.m., with the first 15 minutes under the control of the majority leader or his designee, the next 15 minutes under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee, and the remaining time until 11 a.m. be equally divided; further, that the Senate then resume consideration of S.J. Res. 12, the flag antidesecration resolution. I further ask that the Senate stand in recess from 12:30 until 2:15 to accommodate the weekly policy luncheons.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that once the Senate resumes consideration of the flag resolution at 11 a.m., the time be divided as follows: 11 to 11:30, the majority side; 11:30 to 12, the minority side; 12 to 12:30, the majority side; 2:15 to 2:30, equally divided; 2:30 to 3, the minority side; and alternating each half hour until 5 p.m.

I further ask that consideration be for debate only until 2:15.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today the Senate began the debate on the flag resolution. Tomorrow we will be rotating half-hour blocks of time, starting at 11 with the majority side for 30 minutes and the minority side for 30 minutes, rotating back and forth in this fashion until 5 p.m. There will be no votes until after the policy luncheons tomorrow.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand in adjournment under the previous order following the remarks of the senior Senator from Connecticut for up to 20 minutes.

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

The Senator from Connecticut.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT TO BAN FLAG DESECRATION

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the pending matter before us, S.J. Res. 12 which would amend the Constitution of the United States. There are only seventeen words in the amendment: The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States. These seventeen words have great significance.

I hold dear the great genius of our wonderful Constitution. I have carried this tattered copy with me every day for as long as I have been a Member of this body. It was given to me by my seatmate here, the senior Senator BYRD from West Virginia. I treasure this copy of that document for many reasons, not the least of which is because it was given to me by Senator BYRD, but also because I find myself referring to it almost on a daily basis.

This copy includes not only the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, but also the Declaration of Independence. It is a part of my daily wardrobe, be it weekends or during the week here. It is a reminder of how fortunate we are to live in a country that has, as its founding document, a set of words, language, that not only speaks to the hopes and dreams of all Americans, but even beyond the borders of this country, because the Founders, the Framers of the Constitution, spoke of eternal truths in this document.

While the language applies to only those who live in this country, their words have, of course, inspired millions of other people all across the globe. It is not uncommon to read the constitutions of developing countries and find literally verbatim the language in our own U.S. Constitution. This is a great

tribute to not only the Framers but to those who came after them. Those that have upheld, supported, and defended—as millions of Americans have, some with the ultimate sacrifice—their lives, to protect and defend this country and the principles and ideals on which it was founded. The Constitution has sustained itself now for the more than 200 years. Giving us the power to be free and independent people.

So this great genius of our Constitution enshrines in it the words of the eternal aspirations of humanity. I believe that Alexander Hamilton laid out a framework for constitutional amendments and how we ought to think of this remarkable document that serves as the basis of all that we believe and hold dear when he said:

The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for, among old parchments, or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the divinity itself; and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.

It is a rather beautiful quotation that I think captures what many of us believe to be the case when we talk about our Constitution, talking about the hand of divinity itself helping scribe these words, that it is “not to be rummaged for, among old parchments, or musty records” but rather “written, as with a sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature.”

So it is important, when we consider this document and particularly the Bill of Rights, which speak to our personal freedoms, that we consider all and any proposal to challenge the words included in those 10 amendments.

There have been over 11,000 attempts in the last 200 years to amend our Constitution. Throughout the years, there have been only a handful of those proposals that have actually been adopted, usually when there was a described constitutional crisis before us. We did so to extend the right to vote to women and we did so to abolish slavery.

These are just two examples throughout our history when we have found it appropriate and proper to amend the Constitution, but always when we felt there was an underlying principle dealing with basic fundamental rights.

Now, we all know that the horrible act of flag burning does occur. We have all seen the visions on television describing some group in some country or another that decides it is going to burn the American flag. We all know how we feel when we see that. But, of course, all my colleagues know—and I am sure the overwhelming majority of American citizens know—we can not change their behavior by altering the Constitution. As annoying as it is, as troubling as it is, and how I know we all react to it, we can not affect those particular acts of desecration.

Today we are talking about these acts that occur in this country. Let me quickly say I think it is worthy to try to come up with some language statu-

torily to deal with this issue. But my hope is my colleagues, regardless of political persuasion, would think long and hard about what we are about to do here; and that is, to change the Constitution.

A proposal similar to this one was offered in 1989, again in 1990, in 1995, and in the year 2000. In every single case, the proposals have been rejected. I do not question any of my colleagues over their dismay and horror in watching our flag be desecrated. Yet, in every single instance, we have found it appropriate to reject an amendment to the Constitution. I would hope that would be the case again today.

Mr. President, I fly the American flag every day at my home in Connecticut when I am there. I take great pride in doing so. In fact, my neighbors can always tell when I am home. I live in a house, an old schoolhouse built in 1853. It was the successor schoolhouse to where Nathan Hale taught in Connecticut. The Nathan Hale Schoolhouse is about 150 yards from where I live in Connecticut. When that one-room schoolhouse became too small in the 1850s, they built a two-room schoolhouse that served the neighborhood where I live in East Haddam, CT, for almost 100 years until the 1940s. I bought that schoolhouse about 25 years ago, and it has been my family’s home for a quarter of a century.

My neighbors always know when I am home because I fly the American flag from that old schoolhouse. I take great pride in doing so. I don’t just do it on Memorial Day or the Fourth of July or other national holidays, but every single day I am home. As a way of expressing my affection for what that flag means, what it stands for, and what it has meant to generation after generation of people in our great country.

I will not take a back seat to anyone in my reverence for the flag, how important it is and what it means. But I also believe it is important to be a patriot, a true patriot, where we not only defend our flag but we also defend the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. That is really what is at risk here today, when we talk about this resolution. It is not so much the flag that is at risk but our Bill of Rights, if we attack this document because the passions of some get aroused over the acts of those who would desecrate our flag. That really is the issue before us.

Let us have a statutory law but let us not attack this wonderful Bill of Rights of ours. The proposed amendment is made up of 17 words, 17 words that would dramatically alter the importance of the Bill of Rights and diminish the freedoms provided by that document. I don’t doubt the patriotism of any Member of this Chamber. I strongly believe we all love our country. We love our Constitution. We love our flag. In my view, desecration of the flag, as a symbol of our freedom, the Constitution, and our democracy, is deplorable and should not be tolerated. It