

*Margrethe Lundsager, of Virginia, to be United States Executive Director of the International Monetary Fund for a term of two years.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Foreign Relations I report favorably the following nomination list which was printed in the RECORD on the date indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that this nomination lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Foreign Service nominations beginning with Natalie J. Freeman and ending with Deborah Ann McCarthy, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 10, 2007. (minus 2 nominees: Beth Pennock Dunford; Ross Marvin Hicks)

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. SPECTER):

S. 1003. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to emergency medical services and the quality and efficiency of care furnished in emergency departments of hospitals and critical access hospitals by establishing a bipartisan commission to examine factors that affect the effective delivery of such services, by providing for additional payments for certain physician services furnished in such emergency departments, and by establishing a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Working Group, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. DORGAN):

S. 1004. A bill to make ineligible for Federal contract awards any expatriated corporations and any companies that do business with, or won foreign subsidiaries that do business with, state sponsors of terrorism or foreign terrorist organizations; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. PRYOR, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1005. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to improve programs for veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. KERRY:

S. 1006. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to deny qualified dividend income treatment to certain foreign dividends; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LUGAR:

S. 1007. A bill to direct the Secretary of State to work with the Government of Brazil and other foreign governments to develop partnerships that will strengthen diplomatic

relations and energy security by accelerating the development of biofuels production, research, and infrastructure to alleviate poverty, create jobs, and increase income, while improving energy security and protecting the environment; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1008. A bill to amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to improve and strengthen the safety inspection process of nuclear facilities; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MARTINEZ (for himself and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 1009. A bill to amend part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve supplemental educational services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mr. CONRAD, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. COLLINS, and Mrs. CLINTON):

S. 1010. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage guaranteed lifetime income payments from annuities and similar payments of life insurance proceeds at dates later than death by excluding from income a portion of such payments; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. ENZI):

S. 1011. A bill to change the name of the National Institute on Drug Abuse to the National Institute on Diseases of Addiction and to change the name of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism to the National Institute on Alcohol Disorders and Health; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BOND, Mr. CRAIG, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LOTT, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. VITTER, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. CHAMBLISS):

S. 1012. A bill to amend the Consumer Credit Protection Act to assure meaningful disclosures of the terms of rental-purchase agreements, including disclosures of all costs to consumers under such agreements, to provide certain substantive rights to consumers under such agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. DODD, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 1013. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to encourage States to provide pregnant woman enrolled in the Medicaid program with access to comprehensive tobacco cessation services; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. MARTINEZ, and Mr. DEMINT):

S. 1014. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide parental choice for those students that attend schools that are in need of improvement and have been identified for restructuring; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. COCHRAN (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1015. A bill to reauthorize the National Writing Project; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 1016. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to promote energy independence and self-sufficiency by providing for the use of net metering by certain small electric energy generation systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. THOMAS, and Mr. CONRAD)):

S. 1017. A bill to amend the Packers and Stockyards Act, 1921, to prohibit the use of certain anti-competitive forward contracts; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1018. A bill to address security risks posed by global climate change and for other purposes; to the Select Committee on Intelligence.

By Mr. COBURN (for himself, Mr. BURR, Mr. CHAMBLISS, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 1019. A bill to provide comprehensive reform of the health care system of the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself, Mr. STEVENS, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. ALLARD, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 1020. A bill to move toward energy independence through a coordinated development of renewable energy sources, including wave, solar, wind, geothermal, and biofuels production; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. 1021. A bill to address the exchange-rate misalignment of the Japanese yen with respect to the United States dollar, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. THOMAS (for himself, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DOMENICI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. HATCH):

S. Res. 130. A resolution designating July 28, 2007, as "National Day of the American Cowboy"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. KENNEDY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 131. A resolution designating the first week of April 2007 as "National Asbestos Awareness Week"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. STEVENS (for himself, Mr. INOUE, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. Res. 132. A resolution recognizing the Civil Air Patrol for 65 years of service to the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. OBAMA (for himself, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Mr. CORKER):

S. Res. 133. A resolution celebrating the life of Bishop Gilbert Earl Patterson; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 147

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 147, a bill to empower women in Afghanistan, and for other purposes.

S. 223

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL), the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 223, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 254

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) were added as cosponsors of S. 254, a bill to award posthumously a Congressional gold medal to Constantino Brumidi.

S. 261

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 261, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to strengthen prohibitions against animal fighting, and for other purposes.

S. 293

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 293, a bill to extend the period in which States may spend funds from the additional allotments provided to States under the Social Services Block Grant program for necessary expenses related to the consequences of Hurricane Katrina and other hurricanes in the Gulf of Mexico.

S. 294

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 294, a bill to reauthorize Amtrak, and for other purposes.

S. 368

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 368, a bill to amend the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to enhance the COPS ON THE BEAT grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 382, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a State family support grant program to end the practice of parents giving legal custody of their seriously emotionally disturbed children to State agencies for the purpose of obtaining mental health services for those children.

S. 399

At the request of Mr. BUNNING, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 399, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to include podiatrists as physicians for purposes of covering physicians services under the Medicaid program.

S. 439

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 439, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 479, a bill to reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans.

S. 502

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 502, 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 gains rates.

S. 543

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 543, a bill to improve Medicare beneficiary access by extending the 60 percent compliance threshold used to determine whether a hospital or unit of a hospital is an inpatient rehabilitation facility under the Medicare program.

S. 557

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 557, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the depreciation classification of motorsports entertainment complexes.

S. 576

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 576, a bill to provide for the effective prosecution of terrorists and guarantee due process rights.

S. 617

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 617, a bill to make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available at a discount to certain veterans.

S. 624

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, his name and the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 624, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide waivers relating to grants for preventive health measures with respect to breast and cervical cancers.

S. 625

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Massachu-

setts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 625, a bill to protect the public health by providing the Food and Drug Administration with certain authority to regulate tobacco products.

S. 634

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 634, 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. 667

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 667, a bill to expand programs of early childhood home visitation that increase school readiness, child abuse and neglect prevention, and early identification of developmental and health delays, including potential mental health concerns, and for other purposes.

S. 742

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 742, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reduce the health risks posed by asbestos-containing products, and for other purposes.

S. 743

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 743, a bill to amend title 36, United States Code, to modify the individuals eligible for associate membership in the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the United States of America, Incorporated.

S. 773

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) were added as cosponsors of S. 773, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

S. 819

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 819, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand tax-free distributions from individual retirement accounts for charitable purposes.

S. 828

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) was added as a cosponsor of S. 828, a bill to amend the Food Security

Act of 1985 to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make cost-share payments for on-farm energy production under the environmental quality incentives program.

S. 845

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, his name and the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 845, a bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to expand and intensify programs with respect to research and related activities concerning elder falls.

S. 883

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 883, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend loan forgiveness for certain loans to Head Start teachers.

S. 913

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 913, a bill to clarify that the revocation of an alien's visa or other documentation is not subject to judicial review.

S. 959

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 959, a bill to award a grant to enable Teach for America, Inc., to implement and expand its teaching program.

S. 962

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 962, a bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to reauthorize and improve the carbon capture and storage research, development, and demonstration program of the Department of Energy and for other purposes.

S. 970

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 970, a bill to impose sanctions on Iran and on other countries for assisting Iran in developing a nuclear program, and for other purposes.

S. 991

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 991, a bill to establish the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation under the authorities of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961.

S. 992

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 992, a bill to achieve emission reductions and cost savings through accelerated use of cost-effective lighting technologies in public buildings, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 30

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 30, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the need for the United States to address global climate change through the negotiation of fair and effective international commitments.

S. RES. 65

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 65, a resolution condemning the murder of Turkish-Armenian journalist and human rights advocate Hrant Dink and urging the people of Turkey to honor his legacy of tolerance.

S. RES. 76

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 76, a resolution calling on the United States Government and the international community to promptly develop, fund, and implement a comprehensive regional strategy in Africa to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian operations, contain and reduce violence, and contribute to conditions for sustainable peace in eastern Chad, and Central African Republic, and Darfur, Sudan.

S. RES. 122

At the request of Mr. HAGEL, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 122, a resolution commemorating the 25th anniversary of the construction and dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

AMENDMENT NO. 661

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 661 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 687

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 687 proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supple-

mental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 690

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 690 proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 697

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 697 proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 707

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 707 proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 707 proposed to H.R. 1591, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 709

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 709 proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 719

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 719 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 739

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 739 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 773

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 773 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 784

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr.

REID) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 784 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 785

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 785 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 787

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 787 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1591, a bill making emergency supplemental appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2007, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. PRYOR, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1005. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to improve programs for veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small business and entrepreneurship.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague Senator HAGEL, the Senator from Nebraska, to introduce the Military Reservist and Veteran Small Business Reauthorization Act of 2007. There are currently 25 million veterans in America, including over one million who have left military service since September 11, 2001. As the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan continue, the number of veterans, including service disabled veterans, will increase and reservists will continue to carry more of the burden than ever before. As veterans and reservists reenter civilian life, the economic benefits and opportunities provided by the Federal Government will become even more critical, particularly in the field of entrepreneurship and business ownership. As the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I am serious about addressing the problems affecting veterans and reservists who wish or are already engaged in small business and this bill is another step forward in doing so.

As veterans, Senator HAGEL and I believe that the government has an obligation to help deployed reservists avoid economic hardship because of their service and to help veterans, particularly the service-disabled, return to civilian life when they retire. There are more veterans returning each day because of the war on terror—800,000 veterans were discharged between 2002 and 2005—and ensuring that these individuals have a secure financial future is not just a matter of fairness but of

national security. The treatment of our troops affects the Nation's ability to recruit and retain the best and brightest. Veterans have told me that they feel that they are being forgotten and that the government is simply not living up to its past promises of helping veteran entrepreneurs succeed. This bill is one step in ensuring that the government is doing all it can to help those who have served and sacrificed on our behalf.

The Military Reservist and Veteran Small Business Reauthorization Act of 2007 reauthorizes the veteran programs in the Small Business Administration. Specifically, this legislation increases the funding authorization for the Office of Veteran Business Development from \$2 million today to \$2.5 million in three years. In light of the large numbers of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and increased responsibilities placed on this office by Executive Order 13360, it is high time that the Office of Veteran Business Development receive the funding levels that it needs.

In addition, this bill permanently extends the SBA Advisory Committee on Veterans Business Affairs. The committee was created to serve as an independent source of advice and policy recommendations to the SBA, the Congress, and the President. The veteran small business owners who serve on this committee provide a unique perspective which is sorely needed at this challenging time. Unfortunately, continuing uncertainty about the Committee's future has, at times, distracted the committee from focusing on its core function. Therefore, I have called for its permanent extension. It is clear to me that more needs to be done to address the issues facing veterans and reservists, and the role this committee plays will continue to be important.

Additionally, I have taken a number of steps to better serve the reservists who are serving their country abroad while their businesses are suffering at home. Over the past decade, the Department of Defense has increased its reliance on the National Guard and reserves. This has intensified since September 11 and increased deployments are expected to continue. The effect of this increase on reservists and small businesses continues to remain of concern. A 2003 GAO report indicated that 41 percent of reservists lost income when mobilized. This had a higher effect on self-employed reservists, 55 percent of whom lost income.

In 1999, I created the Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan (MREIDL) program to provide loans to small businesses that incur economic injury as a result of an essential employee being called to active duty. However, since 2002, fewer than 300 of these loans have been approved by the SBA, despite record numbers of reservists being called to active duty. It is clear that changes need to be made, so that reservists are informed about the availability of the MREIDL program and that the program better meets their needs.

At a hearing of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship on January 31st, the first hearing we held in this Congress, we heard suggestions for a number of changes which would improve the Military Reservist Economic Injury Disaster Loan program, and I have included those changes in this bill. They include increasing the application deadline for such a loan from 90 days to one year following the date of discharge; creating a pre-deployment loan approval process; and improved outreach and technical assistance.

This bill also creates a non-collateralized loan program. Reservist families have already sacrificed enough when a family member goes away to serve their country and when their business is harmed as a result. This loan program would allow reservist dependent businesses to access the capital they need to stay afloat without having to sacrifice beyond the service of the key employees. In order to give reservists time to repay the loans, the non-collateralized loan created in this bill would not accumulate interest or require payments for one year or until after the deployment ends, whichever is longer.

In addition, because loans aren't the answer for every business—additional debt could permanently cripple some businesses—I have also included a grant program for reservists. This program would allow up to \$25,000 in grants for small businesses that can show economic injury because of deployment and prove that they have a viable business plan for the next three years. A grant program would help small businesses that cannot afford to take on a military reservist economic injury disaster loan or that were denied such a loan, but still are viable businesses and need assistance.

While addressing the funding needs of reservists is essential, I also want to make sure that reservists receive the technical and management assistance they need to succeed. For that reason, this bill also includes the establishment of the Reservists Enterprise Transition and Sustainability Task Force. This grant program would allow Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers and veteran centers to compete for grants to create programs that help small businesses prepare for and cope with the mobilization of reservist-employees and owners.

Veterans possess great technical skills and valuable leadership experience, but they require financial resources to turn that potential into a viable enterprise. A recent report by the Small Business Administration stated that 22 percent of veterans plan to start or are starting a business when they leave the military. For service-disabled veterans, this number rises to 28 percent. So the legislation I introduce today will create a new program, administered by the Small Business