

S. 280. A bill to provide for a program to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States by establishing a market-driven system of greenhouse gas tradeable allowances, to support the deployment of new climate change-related technologies, and to ensure benefits to consumers from the trading in such allowances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 281. A bill to amend title 44 of the United States Code, to provide for the suspension of fines under certain circumstances for first-time paperwork violations by small business concerns; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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

S. 282. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reduce over a 5-year period the interest rate on certain undergraduate student loans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. DOMENICI):

S. 283. A bill to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CONRAD (for himself, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. THUNE, Mr. DORGAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. TESTER, Mr. INOUE, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 284. A bill to provide emergency agricultural disaster assistance; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. HAGEL (for himself and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 285. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit to certain concentrated animal feeding operations for the cost of complying with environmental protection regulations; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HAGEL:

S. 286. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude from gross income interest received on loans secured by agricultural real property; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KERRY, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 287. A bill to prohibit the use of funds for an escalation of United States military forces in Iraq above the numbers existing as of January 9, 2007; read the first time.

By Mr. KERRY:

S. 288. A bill to amend titles 10 and 14, United States Code, to provide for the use of gold in the metal content of the Medal of Honor; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. WEBB, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 289. A bill to establish the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. STEVENS):

S. 290. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit to rural primary health providers; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 291. A bill to establish a digital and wireless network technology program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LOTT, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 292. A bill to establish a bipartisan commission on insurance reform; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. LANDRIEU:

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; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S.J. Res. 2. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. REID:

S. Res. 27. A resolution to constitute the majority party's membership on certain committees of the One Hundred Tenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. Res. 28. A resolution to constitute the minority party's membership on certain committees of the One Hundred Tenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. STABENOW (for herself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. KERRY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. KOHL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. WEBB, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. DODD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SALAZAR, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BYRD, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BAYH, Mr. REED, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. REID, and Mr. SPECTER):

S. Res. 29. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and the many lessons still to be learned from Dr. King's example of non-violence, courage, compassion, dignity, and public service; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 21

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 21, a bill to expand access to preventive health care services that help reduce unintended pregnancy, reduce abortions, and improve access to women's health care.

S. 138

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 138, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to apply the joint

return limitation for capital gains exclusion to certain post-marriage sales of principal residences by surviving spouses.

S. 206

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 206, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 215

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 215, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure net neutrality.

S. 233

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 233, a bill to prohibit the use of funds for an escalation of United States military forces in Iraq above the numbers existing as of January 9, 2007.

S. 234

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 234, a bill to require the FCC to issue a final order regarding television white spaces.

S. 259

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 259, a bill to authorize the establishment of the Henry Kuualoha Giugni Kupuna Memorial Archives at the University of Hawaii.

AMENDMENT NO. 1

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1 proposed to S. 1, a bill to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

AMENDMENT NO. 20

At the request of Mr. BENNETT, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 20 proposed to S. 1, a bill to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

AMENDMENT NO. 37

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 37 proposed to S. 1, a bill to provide greater transparency in the legislative process.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. DOMENICI):

S. 279. A bill to repeal certain sections of the Act of May 26, 1936, pertaining to the Virgin Islands; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. DOMENICI):

S. 283. A bill to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, today I am joined by my colleague, and the Ranking Member of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, PETE DOMENICI, on the introduction of two bills regarding the insular areas affiliated with the United States. The text of both of these bills is identical to the text of bills that passed the Senate by unanimous consent on September 29, 2006.

The first bill, "To Repeal Certain Sections of the Act of May 26, 1936 Pertaining to the Virgin Islands," would repeal sections of a 1936 law governing local U.S. Virgin Islands tax policy that were thought to have been effectively repealed in 1952. That year, Congress enacted the Virgin Islands Organic Act to establish local self-government and to delegate certain local functions, including the development and administration of local property taxes, to a newly established local government. Notwithstanding this intent, in 2004, a Federal court ruled that these sections of the Act of 1936 are still in effect.

The text of the bill introduced today is identical to S. 1829, as passed by the Senate four months ago. A hearing was held on that bill on October 25, 2005, and it was reported from the Committee on April 20, 2006. Details on the background, purpose, and need for this legislation is available in Senate Hearing 109-291, and in Senate Report 109-236.

The second bill being introduced today, "To Amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and For Other Purposes," would make several relatively minor, clarifying, and technical changes to Public Law 108-188 which approved the Compact of Free Association between the U.S. and the Marshall Islands, and the Compact between the U.S. and Micronesia. The text of this bill is identical to S. 1830, as passed by the Senate four months ago. A hearing was held on that bill on October 25, 2005, and it was reported from the Committee on April 20, 2006. Details on the background, purpose, and need for this legislation is available in Senate Hearing 109-291, and in Senate Report 109-237.

Although relatively small and remote, the U.S.-affiliated insular areas are the home for many U.S. citizens, or for communities with which our Nation has special historical and political relationships. Maintaining and strengthening these relationships is a particular concern of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources because of its jurisdiction over matters relating to the territories and freely associated states. It is unfortunate that, last year, Senate passage of these bills was delayed leaving insufficient time for en-

actment. I look forward to working with members of the Committee and the Senate on their prompt consideration this session, and to their enactment as soon as possible.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bills be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the texts of the bills were ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 279

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

SECTION 1. REPEAL OF CERTAIN LAWS PERTAINING TO THE VIRGIN ISLANDS.

(a) REPEAL.—Sections 1 through 6 of the Act of May 26, 1936 (48 U.S.C. 1401 et seq.), are repealed.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section takes effect on July 22, 1954.

S. 283

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 "Compacts of Free Association Amendments Act of 2007"

SEC. 2. APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS.

Section 101 of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence of subsection (a), by inserting before the period at the end the following: ", including Article X of the Federal Programs and Services Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, as amended under the Agreement to Amend Article X that was signed by those 2 Governments on June 30, 2004, which shall serve as the authority to implement the provisions thereof"; and

(2) in the first sentence of subsection (b), by inserting before the period at the end the following: ", including Article X of the Federal Programs and Services Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, as amended under the Agreement to Amend Article X that was signed by those 2 Governments on June 18, 2004, which shall serve as the authority to implement the provisions thereof".

SEC. 3. CONFORMING AMENDMENT.

Section 105(f)(1) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921d(f)(1)) is amended by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

"(A) EMERGENCY AND DISASTER ASSISTANCE.—

"(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), section 221(a)(6) of the U.S.-FSM Compact and section 221(a)(5) of the U.S.-RMI Compact shall each be construed and applied in accordance with the 2 Agreements to Amend Article X of the Federal Programs and Service Agreements signed on June 30, 2004, and on June 18, 2004, respectively.

"(ii) DEFINITION OF WILL PROVIDE FUNDING.—In the second sentence of paragraph 12 of each of the Agreements described in clause (i), the term 'will provide funding' means will provide funding through a transfer of funds using Standard Form 1151 or a similar document or through an interagency, reimbursable agreement."

SEC. 4. CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING PALAU.

Section 105(f)(1)(B) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921d(f)(1)(B)) is amended—

(1) in clause (ii)(II), by striking "and its territories" and inserting ", its territories, and the Republic of Palau";

(2) in clause (iii)(II), by striking ", or the Republic of the Marshall Islands" and inserting ", the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau"; and

(3) in clause (ix)—

(A) by striking "Republic" both places it appears and inserting "government, institutions, and people";

(B) by striking "2007" and inserting "2009"; and

(C) by striking "was" and inserting "were".

SEC. 5. AVAILABILITY OF LEGAL SERVICES.

Section 105(f)(1)(C) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921d(f)(1)(C)) is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: ", which shall also continue to be available to the citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands who legally reside in the United States (including territories and possessions)".

SEC. 6. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS.

(a) TITLE I.—

(1) SECTION 177 AGREEMENT.—Section 103(c)(1) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921b(c)(1)) is amended by striking "section 177" and inserting "Section 177".

(2) INTERPRETATION AND UNITED STATES POLICY.—Section 104 of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921c) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)(1), by inserting "the" before "U.S.-RMI Compact,";

(B) in subsection (e)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) of paragraph (8), by striking "to include" and inserting "and include";

(ii) in paragraph (9)(A), by inserting a comma after "may"; and

(iii) in paragraph (10), by striking "related to service" and inserting "related to such services"; and

(C) in the first sentence of subsection (j), by inserting "the" before "Interior".

(3) SUPPLEMENTAL PROVISIONS.—Section 105(b)(1) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (48 U.S.C. 1921d(b)(1)) is amended by striking "Trust Fund" and inserting "Trust Funds".

(b) TITLE II.—

(1) U.S.-FSM COMPACT.—The Compact of Free Association, as amended, between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia (as provided in section 201(a) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (117 Stat. 2757)) is amended—

(A) in section 174—

(i) in subsection (a), by striking "courts" and inserting "court"; and

(ii) in subsection (b)(2), by striking "the" before "November";

(B) in section 177(a), by striking ", or Palau" and inserting "(or Palau)";

(C) in section 179(b), strike "amended Compact" and inserting "Compact, as amended,";

(D) in section 211—

(i) in the fourth sentence of subsection (a), by striking "Compact, as Amended, of Free Association" and inserting "Compact of Free Association, as amended";

(ii) in the fifth sentence of subsection (a), by striking "Trust Fund Agreement," and inserting "Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia Implementing Section 215 and Section 216 of the Compact, as Amended, Regarding a Trust Fund (Trust Fund Agreement),";

(iii) in subsection (b)—

(I) in the first sentence, by striking “Government of the” before “Federated”; and

(II) in the second sentence, by striking “Sections 321 and 323 of the Compact of Free Association, as Amended” and inserting “Sections 211(b), 321, and 323 of the Compact of Free Association, as amended.”; and

(iv) in the last sentence of subsection (d), by inserting before the period at the end the following: “and the Federal Programs and Services Agreement referred to in section 231”;

(E) in the first sentence of section 215(b), by striking “subsection(a)” and inserting “subsection (a)”;

(F) in section 221—

(i) in subsection (a)(6), by inserting “(Federal Emergency Management Agency)” after “Homeland Security”; and

(ii) in the first sentence of subsection (c), by striking “agreements” and inserting “agreement”;

(G) in the second sentence of section 222, by inserting “in” after “referred to”;

(H) in the second sentence of section 232, by striking “sections 102 (c)” and all that follows through “January 14, 1986)” and inserting “section 102(b) of Public Law 108-188, 117 Stat. 2726, December 17, 2003”;

(I) in the second sentence of section 252, by inserting “, as amended,” after “Compact”;

(J) in the first sentence of the first undesignated paragraph of section 341, by striking “Section 141” and inserting “section 141”;

(K) in section 342—

(i) in subsection (a), by striking “14 U.S.C. 195” and inserting “section 195 of title 14, United States Code”; and

(ii) in subsection (b)—

(I) by striking “46 U.S.C. 1295(b)(6)” and inserting “section 1303(b)(6) of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 U.S.C. 1295b(b)(6))”; and

(II) by striking “46 U.S.C. 1295b(b)(6)(C)” and inserting “section 1303(b)(6)(C) of that Act”;

(L) in the third sentence of section 354(a), by striking “section 442 and 452” and inserting “sections 442 and 452”;

(M) in section 461(h), by striking “Telecommunications” and inserting “Telecommunication”;

(N) in section 462(b)(4), by striking “of Free Association” the second place it appears; and

(O) in section 463(b), by striking “Articles IV” and inserting “Article IV”.

(2) U.S.—RMI COMPACT.—The Compact of Free Association, as amended, between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (as provided in section 201(b) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (117 Stat. 2795)) is amended—

(A) in section 174(a), by striking “court” and inserting “courts”;

(B) in section 177(a), by striking the comma before “(or Palau)”;

(C) in section 179(b), by striking “amended Compact,” and inserting “Compact, as amended.”;

(D) in section 211—

(i) in the fourth sentence of subsection (a), by striking “Compact, as Amended, of Free Association” and inserting “Compact of Free Association, as amended”;

(ii) in the first sentence of subsection (b), by striking “Agreement between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands Regarding Military Use and Operating Rights” and inserting “Agreement Regarding the Military Use and Operating Rights of the Government of the United States in the Republic of the Marshall Islands concluded Pursuant to Sections 321 and 323 of the Compact of Free Association, as Amended (Agreement between the Government of the

United States and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands Regarding Military Use and Operating Rights)”;

(iii) in the last sentence of subsection (e), by inserting before the period at the end the following: “and the Federal Programs and Services Agreement referred to in section 231”;

(E) in section 221(a)—

(i) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “Section 231” and inserting “section 231”;

(ii) in paragraph (5), by inserting “(Federal Emergency Management Agency)” after “Homeland Security”;

(F) in the second sentence of section 232, by striking “sections 103(m)” and all that follows through “(January 14, 1986)” and inserting “section 103(k) of Public Law 108-188, 117 Stat. 2734, December 17, 2003”;

(G) in the first sentence of section 341, by striking “Section 141” and inserting “section 141”;

(H) in section 342—

(i) in subsection (a), by striking “14 U.S.C. 195” and inserting “section 195 of title 14, United States Code”; and

(ii) in subsection (b)—

(I) by striking “46 U.S.C. 1295(b)(6)” and inserting “section 1303(b)(6) of the Merchant Marine Act, 1936 (46 U.S.C. 1295b(b)(6))”; and

(II) by striking “46 U.S.C. 1295b(b)(6)(C)” and inserting “section 1303(b)(6)(C) of that Act”;

(I) in the third sentence of section 354(a), by striking “section 442 and 452” and inserting “sections 442 and 452”;

(J) in the first sentence of section 443, by inserting “, as amended.” after “the Compact”;

(K) in the matter preceding paragraph (1) of section 461(h)—

(i) by striking “1978” and inserting “1998”;

(ii) by striking “Telecommunications” and inserting “Telecommunication Union”; and

(L) in section 463(b), by striking “Article” and inserting “Articles”.

SEC. 7. TRANSMISSION OF VIDEOTAPE PROGRAMMING.

Section 111(e)(2) of title 17, United States Code, is amended by striking “or the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands” and inserting “the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, or the Republic of the Marshall Islands”.

SEC. 8. PALAU ROAD MAINTENANCE.

The Government of the Republic of Palau may deposit the payment otherwise payable to the Government of the United States under section 111 of Public Law 101-219 (48 U.S.C. 1960) into a trust fund if—

(1) the earnings of the trust fund are expended solely for maintenance of the road system constructed pursuant to section 212 of the Compact of Free Association between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Palau (48 U.S.C. 1931 note); and

(2) the trust fund is established and operated pursuant to an agreement entered into between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Republic of Palau.

SEC. 9. CLARIFICATION OF TAX-FREE STATUS OF TRUST FUNDS.

In the U.S.—RMI Compact, the U.S.—FSM Compact, and their respective trust fund subsidiary agreements, for the purposes of taxation by the United States or its subsidiary jurisdictions, the term “State” means “State, territory, or the District of Columbia”.

By Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 280. A bill to provide for a program to accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States by establishing a market-driven system of greenhouse gas tradeable allowances, to support the deployment of new climate change-related technologies, and to ensure benefits to consumers from the trading in such allowances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, on October 4 of last year, the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research, which houses Great Britain’s leading climate scientists, projected that in the absence of prompt action to curb global warming, extreme drought will spread across one third of the Earth’s land surface by the end of this century.

On October 30, the head of the United Kingdom’s Government Economic Service forecasted that unchecked global warming will cost the world between five and twenty percent of gross domestic product each year.

On December 4, the director of the U.S. Center for Disease Control’s National Center for Environmental Health cited global warming as “the largest looming public health challenge we face.” Insect-borne diseases such as malaria are expected to spike as tropical ecosystems expand; hotter air will exacerbate the air pollutants that send our children to the hospital with asthma attacks; food insecurity from shifting agricultural zones will spark border wars; and storms and coastal flooding from sea-level rise will cause mortality and dislocation.

On December 14, in fact, the journal Science published a peer-reviewed study projecting that unchecked global warming could cause sea levels to rise between a half meter and one-and-a-half meters above 1990 levels by the end of this century. A sealevel rise in the middle of that range would submerge every city on the East Coast of the United States, from Miami to Boston.

And on December 27, the Interior Department proposed to list the polar bear as threatened with extinction due to Arctic ice melt from global warming.

When even erstwhile skeptics cite melting habitat as the reason polar bears are now threatened, I say the global warming debate is over. The American people want action, and they want it now.

As you know, Senator MCCAIN and I have brought our legislation to solve global warming to a vote in this chamber twice already, first in 2003 and then again in 2005. On the same day that the Senate failed for a second time to pass our bill, in June 2005, this body fortunately did pass Senator BINGAMAN’s resolution that the Congress should enact “a comprehensive and effective national program of mandatory, market-based limits on emissions of greenhouse gases that slow, stop, and reverse the growth of such emissions.”

Today I am reintroducing an improved version of my and Senator McCAIN's Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act. As the last version of the Act did, the version I introduce today carries the co-sponsorship of Senators OBAMA and SNOWE. I am proud to say that improvements to the bill have now attracted the additional co-sponsorship of Senators LINCOLN and COLLINS. Very shortly, I understand, Representatives OLVER and GILCHREST will reintroduce this bill's companion in the House.

The 2005 version of the Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act would have capped U.S. greenhouse gas emissions at year 2000 levels without mandating further reductions. The new bill will gradually lower the emissions cap, such that it reaches approximately one third of 2000 levels by 2050. Those long-term reductions will forestall catastrophic, manmade climate change, provided the world's other major economies follow suit within the next decade. Like the 2005 version, the reintroduced bill will control compliance costs by allowing companies to trade, save, and borrow emissions credits, and by allowing them to generate "offset" credits by inducing noncovered businesses, farms, and others to reduce their emissions or capture and store greenhouse gases. The reintroduced bill, however, will increase the availability of borrowing and offsets in order to control costs further.

This bill will be referred to the Environment and Public Works Committee, where I will chair a subcommittee on climate change. Colleagues of mine on that committee, including our esteemed chairwoman and my good friend, Senator BOXER, will have their own strong proposals for curbing global warming. I look forward to working with them to get comprehensive legislation reported favorably to the floor in a bipartisan manner. Senator BINGAMAN, the chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, has invested a great deal of work and expertise in a comprehensive climate bill of his own. I believe Senator BINGAMAN will be highly influential in this process, and I look forward to working with him closely to solve this problem.

With American know-how we can and will solve this problem. We will use the power of the free market to promote the rapid and widespread deployment of advanced technologies and practices for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. And we will do so without weakening the economic position of the United States or otherwise imposing hardship on its citizens.

I would like to close by extending my heartfelt thanks to the distinguished majority leader, Senator REID, for placing legislation to curb global warming among his top ten priorities for this Congress, and for memorializing that commitment with the introduction, as S. 6, of the National Energy and Environmental Security Act, a bill that I was proud to co-sponsor.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator LIEBERMAN today, along with our co-sponsors, Senators SNOWE, OBAMA, COLLINS, and LINCOLN, in introducing the Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act of 2007. This legislation is designed to significantly reduce the Nation's greenhouse gas emissions to prevent the dangerous impacts of climate change, enhance our national security and maintain the strength to our economy. It would be accomplished through a combination of trading markets and the deployment of advanced technologies.

As I have stated on previous occasions, the design of this legislation is an evolving process. The legislation we are introducing today represents yet another step in that effort. Since our last vote on this legislation, Senator Lieberman and I have continued work on this proposal with the goal of producing the most innovative, meaningful, and economically feasible measure that can be embraced by the Senate. We believe the changes which we have made since we first introduced climate change legislation in the 108th Congress puts us on the path to achieving this goal, and we intend to make further improvements to this comprehensive legislation in the days ahead.

We have continually worked with scientists, industry, environmentalists, as well as the faith-based community, to ensure that we are fully addressing the serious problem of global warming. We continue to learn more about the science and the impacts of climate change on a daily basis. We continue to work with economists and industry experts to ensure that our emissions goals do not hamstring our economic objectives. In particular, we continue to learn more about the power of the markets to control costs as emission credit trading continues in Europe and here in the U.S. I am confident that given the will, the Federal Government can be a lead advocate for ensuring that America is doing its part to reduce global warming, and join in the global effort that is needed to address this world-wide environmental issue.

I want to mention the efforts of States like California, which has already enacted legislation requiring mandatory reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and the Northeast States of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, and Vermont, which are also seeking to limit emissions from power plants. Over 300 U.S. mayors have signed an agreement to reduce emissions in their cities.

As these State plans and legislation are implemented, they will offer Congress and the Administration unique opportunities to review and incorporate lessons learned from these efforts into Federal legislation. Despite the improvements we have made in this version of our bill to be environmentally responsible and to minimize economic costs, we will continue to pursue new and innovative ideas that

will further these objectives, and we will modify our bill accordingly.

The legislation we submit today is designed to protect our environment from the impacts of the climate change resulting from the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, improve our national security by reducing reliance on fossil fuels that often carry with them geopolitical costs, and position our economy to become a world leader in the expanding markets for development and deployment of new energy efficient technologies and renewable energy sources. It proposes the utilization of the "cap and trade" approach and promotes the commercialization of technologies that can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and increase the nation's energy independence. And it will help to keep America at the cutting edge of innovation where the jobs and trade opportunities of the new economy are to be found. It will also serve to protect our country and the world from the security threat posed by populations whose health, livelihood, and variability are potentially threatened by global rising temperatures and altered environments.

In fact, the cap and trade provisions and the technology title are complementary parts of a comprehensive program that will allow us to usher in a new energy era, an era of responsible and innovative energy production and use that will yield enormous environmental, economic, and diplomatic benefits. The cap and trade portion provides the economic driver for existing and new technologies capable of supplying reliable and clean energy and making the best use of America's available energy resources. Because of the multiple benefits promised by this comprehensive program, we expect that the new bill will attract additional support for the vital purposes of the Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act. We simply need the political will to match the public's concern about climate change, desire for national security, the economic interests of business and consumers, and American technological ingenuity and expertise.

As I mentioned, we continue to learn more about the science of climate change and the dangerous precedence of not addressing this environmental problem. The science tells us that urgent and significant action is needed. Our National Academies of Sciences, along with the national academies from the other G8 nations, China, India, and Brazil, has said in a joint statement that "there is now strong evidence that significant global warming is occurring." and "[t]he scientific understanding of climate change is now sufficiently clear to justify nations taking prompt action."

We recognize that many fear the costs of taking action. But there are costs to delay as well. Failure to implement significant reductions in net

greenhouse gas emissions in the near term will yield only more climate change and a much harder job in the future. Our comprehensive legislation is one approach to a productive, secure, and clean energy future. But it is only one approach and we welcome other proposals—let a thousand flowers bloom.

Significant reductions in greenhouse gases—well beyond those required by this bill—are feasible over the next 15–20 years using technologies available today. Also, the most important technological deployment opportunities to reduce emissions over the next two decades lie with energy efficient technologies and renewable energy sources, including nuclear, solar, wind, and bio-fuels. For example, in the electric power sector, which accounts for one-third of U.S. emissions, major pollution reductions can be achieved by improving the efficiency of existing fossil fuel plants, adding new reactors designs for nuclear power, expanding use of renewable power sources, and significantly reducing electricity demand with the use of energy-saving technologies currently available to residential and commercial consumers. These clean technologies need to be promoted and that is what spurs our action today.

Let me take a moment to address a section of our legislation that has been the target of some concerns by environmentalists and others—concerns that I believe are entirely unwarranted. The provisions in our bill to promote nuclear energy are an important part of the comprehensive technology package.

I know that some of our friends here in the Senate and in the environmental community maintain strong objections to nuclear energy, even though today it supplies nearly 20 percent of the electricity generated in the U.S. and much higher proportions in places such as France, Belgium, Sweden and Switzerland—countries that are not exactly known for their environmental disregard. The fact is, nuclear energy is CLEAN. It produces ZERO emissions, while the burning of fossil fuels to generate electricity produces approximately 33 percent of the greenhouse gases accumulating in the atmosphere, and is a major contributor to air pollution affecting our communities.

The idea that nuclear power should play no role in our future energy mix is an unsustainable position, particularly given the urgency and magnitude of the threat posed by global warming which most regard as the greatest environmental threat to the planet.

The International Energy Agency estimates that the world's energy consumption is expected to rise over 65 percent within the next fifteen years. If the demand for electricity is met using traditional coal-fired power plants, not only will we fail to reduce carbon emissions as necessary, but the level of carbon in the atmosphere will skyrocket and intensify the greenhouse effect and the global warming it produces.

As nuclear plants are decommissioned, the percentage of U.S. electricity produced by this zero-emission technology will actually decline. Therefore, at a minimum, we must make efforts to maintain nuclear energy's level of contribution, so that this capacity is not replaced with higher-emitting alternatives.

No doubt, some people will object to the idea of the Federal Government playing any role in helping demonstrate and commercialize new and beneficial energy technologies, and particularly nuclear designs. We understand the power of markets to spur innovation and our proposals is built on this fundamental lesson. But the fact remains that the market playing field has been highly uneven—fossil fuels have been subsidized for many decades at levels that can scarcely be calculated. The enormous economic costs of damage caused by air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions to the environment and human health are not factored into the price of power produced by fossil-fueled technologies. Yet, it's a cost that we all bear, too often in terms of ill-health and diminished quality of life. That is simply a matter of fact.

It is also inescapable that the ability to avoid internalizing these costs placed produces at a great advantage over clean competitors. Based on that fact, and in light of the enormous environmental and economic risk posed by global warming, I believe that providing zero and low emission technologies such as nuclear a boost into the market place so that these clean technologies can be utilized as soon as possible is responsible public policy, and a matter of simple public necessity, particularly, as we work to promote America's energy independence.

The Navy has operated nuclear powered submarines for more than 50 years and has an impressive safety and performance record. The Naval Reactors program has demonstrated that nuclear power can be done safely. One of the underpinning of its safety record is the approach used in its reactor designs, which is to learn and built upon previous designs. Unfortunately for the commercial nuclear industry, they have not had the opportunity to use such an approach since the industry has not been able to build a reactor in over the past 25 years. This lapse in construction has led us to where we are today with the industry's aging infrastructure. As we have learned from other industries, this in itself represents a great risk to public safety.

As Senator LIEBERMAN and I have continued working for passage of legislation to address climate change in a meaningful way, it has become clear to us that any responsible climate change measure must contain five essential components:

First, it must have rational, mandatory emission reduction targets and timetables. It must be goal oriented, and has both environmental and eco-

nomics integrity. We need policy that will produce necessary outcomes, not merely check political boxes. The goal must be feasible and based on sound science, and this is what we have tried to do in this bill.

Second, it must utilize a market-based cap and trade system. It must limit greenhouse gas emissions and allow the trading of emission credits to drive enterprise, innovation and efficiency. This is the central component of our legislation. Voluntary efforts will not change the status quo, taxes are counterproductive, and markets are more dependable than regulators in effecting sustainable change.

Third, it must include mechanisms to minimize costs and work effectively with other markets. The "trade" part of "cap and trade" is such a mechanism, but it's clear it must be bolstered by other assurances that costs will be minimized. I am as concerned as anyone about the economic impacts associated with any climate change legislation. I know that many economists are developing increasingly sophisticated ways to project future costs of compliance. Lately, we have seen the increased interest in this area of research. As we learn more from these models about additional action items to further reduce costs, we intend to incorporate them. Already, based upon earlier economic analysis, we have added "offsets" provisions in this bill in an effort to minimize costs and to provide for the creation of new markets. And, I assure my colleagues, we will continue to seek new and innovative ways to further minimize costs.

Fourth, it must spur the development and deployment of advanced technology. Nuclear, solar, and other alternative energy must be part of the equation and we need a dedicated national commitment to develop and bring to market the technologies of the future as a matter of good environmental and economic policy. There will be a growing global market for these technologies and the U.S. will benefit greatly from being competitive and capturing its share of these markets. This legislation includes a detailed technology title that would go a long way toward meeting this goal. Unlike the Energy bill, it would be funded using the proceeds from the auctioning of allowable emission credits, rather than from the use of taxpayers' funds or appropriations that will never materialize.

And fifth, it must facilitate international efforts to solve the problem. Global warming is an international problem requiring an international effort. The United States has an obligation to lead. Our leadership cannot replace the need for action by countries such as India and China. We must spur and facilitate it. We have added provisions that would allow U.S. companies to enter into partnerships in developing countries for the purpose of conducting projects to achieve certified emission reductions, which may be traded on the international market.

These five components represent a serious challenge that will require a great deal of effort, the concentration of substantial intellectual power, and the continued efforts of our colleagues and those in the environmental, industry, economic, and national security communities. We look forward to collaborating in this effort as we continue to shape our legislation to its most effective form.

The status quo is a strong and stubborn force. People and institutions are averse to change, even when that change is critical for their own well-being, and that of their children and grandchildren. If the scientists are right and temperatures continue to rise, we could face environmental, economic, and national security consequences far beyond our ability to imagine. If they are wrong and the Earth finds a way to compensate for the unprecedented levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, what will we have accomplished? Cleaner air; greater energy efficiency, a more diverse and secure energy mix, and U.S. leadership in the technologies of the future. There is no doubt; failure to act is the far greater risk.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to offer, with my colleagues Senators LIEBERMAN, MCCAIN, OBAMA, LINCOLN, and COLLINS, S. 280, the bipartisan Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act that requires the United States to take actions to reduce man-made greenhouse gas emissions for the protection of both our environment and our economy. This legislation takes concrete steps by using a fair, market-based system to once and for all demonstrate leadership on climate change and reduce emissions in the United States. Furthermore, it will do so without weakening the economic position of the United States or otherwise imposing hardship on its citizens.

Ongoing peer-reviewed scientific and economic research demonstrates that climate change is one of the most significant environmental and economical issues of the 21st century, impacting the planet's weather patterns, resulting in more severe, sustained storm systems, floods, heat waves, and droughts. Yet, I have grave concerns that the lack of domestic climate change policy is akin to Nero's approach, fiddling as the planet warms.

With overwhelming scientific evidence that global warming is adversely impacting the health of our planet, the time has come for the Congress to step up and take action. Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions that enter the atmosphere today from all sectors of our society will last for generations to come threatening our oceans, our environment and the economic well-being of our country and the world. It is beyond dispute that we cannot afford the price of inaction.

The urgency is clear as climate change is no longer an abstract concept. Sea levels are rising, polar ice caps are melting. Indeed, earlier this

month the Bush administration listed the polar bear a threatened species. Department of Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne stated, "Polar bears are one of nature's ultimate survivors. They're able to live and thrive in one of the world's harshest environments, but there's concern that their habitat may literally be melting away." The listing document says that the polar bear's ice habitat that is used as platforms for hunting, mating and resting could vanish within half a century.

The majestic polar bear of the Arctic may well be the symbol of climate change just as the bald eagle was when Rachel Carson published her stunning book "Silent Spring" in 1962 that linked the DDT pesticide to the fate of our national symbol—and created an environmental conscience for the country.

It is obvious that new and longer term ideas for securing both domestic and international cooperation are necessary as we cannot get to the heart of this global problem without the world's major economies taking domestic actions. Clearly, as the causes of climate change are global and the atmosphere knows no boundaries, the challenge can only be met with all the countries of the world working together.

That is why when asked by three major independent think tanks—the Center for American Progress in the U.S., the Institute for Public Policy Research in the U.K. and the Australia Institute—I accepted the co-chairmanship of the high-level International Climate Change Taskforce—the ICCT—to chart a way forward on climate change on a parallel track with the Kyoto Protocol process. The report from this Taskforce, Meeting the Climate Challenge, recommends ways to involve the world's largest economies in the effort, including the U.S. and major developing nations, focusing on creating new agreements to achieve the deployment of clean energy technologies, and a new global policy framework that is both inclusive and fair.

The Taskforce, along with Co-chair, the Rt. Honorable Stephen Byers of the U.K., includes an international, cross-party, cross-sector collaboration of leaders from public service, science, business and civil society from both developed and developing countries. We set out a pathway to solve climate change issues in tandem—collaboratively finding common ground through recommendations that are both ambitious and realistic to engage all countries, and, critically, including those not bound by the Kyoto Protocol and major developing countries. We hope our proposals will be a prelude to the international dialogue and, ultimately, set the score for lasting change.

The Report calls for the establishment of a long-term objective of preventing global average temperature from rising more than 3.6 degree Fahrenheit, 2 degrees Centigrade, above the pre-industrial level by the end of the century.

The Taskforce arrived at the 2 degrees Centigrade—or 3.6 degree Fahrenheit—temperature increase goal on the basis of an extensive review of the relevant scientific literature that shows that, as the ICCT Report states, "Beyond the 2 degree Centigrade level, the risks to human societies and ecosystems grow significantly. It is likely, for example, that average temperature increases larger than this will entail substantial agricultural losses, greatly increases numbers of people at risk of water shortages, and widespread adverse health impacts."

Our Report goes on to say that, "Climate science is not yet able to specify the trajectory of atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases that corresponds precisely to any particular global temperature rise. Based on current knowledge, however, it appears that achieving a high probability of limiting global average temperature rise to 2 degrees C will require that the increase in greenhouse-gas concentrations as well as all the other warming and cooling influences on global climate in the year 2100, as compared with 1750, should add up to a net warming no greater than what would be associated with a CO₂ concentration of about 400 parts per million (ppm)".

This goal of the ICCT comports well with the Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act we are introducing today because the legislation creates a domestic market-based cap-and-trade system to reduce manmade carbon dioxide emissions with specific targets to meet specific dates. The bill will also make the U.S. a partner in the vast community of developed countries who have adopted national mandatory cap-and-trade systems for carbon emissions. I believe it will also bring emerging economies to the international negotiating table, such as China, who is predicted to surpass the U.S. as the largest emitter of greenhouse gases by 2010—China who is putting on line one carbon-spewing coal-fired power plant each week.

Achieving success for climate change legislation that calls for realistic reductions of greenhouse gases by setting certain targets means disabusing skeptics and opponents alike of cherished mythologies that environmental protection and economic growth are mutually exclusive. The irony is both are actually increasingly interdependent and will only become more so as the 21st century progresses. Robust companies dedicated to reducing emissions are proof-positive "going-green" represents a burgeoning sector of our economy, not the drain and hindrance we've been led to believe for so many years. This bill accommodates for the early actions these companies have taken to reduce emissions.

And to their credit—the most progressive U.S. companies have reduced emissions even further than required in the Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act. In an act of economic acumen, they are hedging their bets by

adopting internal targets. And, these companies are saving money by reducing their energy consumption and positioning themselves to compete in the growing global market for climate-friendly technologies. Any cost-conscious CFO—or forward-thinking CEO for that matter—should admit that to prevent pollution now will most certainly cost less than cleaning it up later.

The economics of prevention and stewardship resonate more when you consider property that erodes because of rising sea levels, farm land that fails to yield crops and becomes barren and arid, and revenue opportunities squandered because of dwindling fishing stocks caused by hotter temperatures. These represent real costs to the bottom line—not to mention irreparable damage to our health and quality of life. We procrastinate on these policy imperatives at the peril of both our country and our planet. Congress is quite facile at deferring costs to the future, often with enormous consequences. No one was more aware of this tendency than Abraham Lincoln, who—in his Message to Congress in 1862—offered this challenge to the legislative branch, “The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew.”

We have a choice between an ever more treacherous path of greater environmental damage and economic harm, or an upward path to a better future for our planet, and enhanced competitiveness for our industries. I urge my colleagues to join with those of us who believe we should move forward by taking appropriate actions now for global warming reductions so that we may leave behind a better environment that was bestowed to us.

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, more than 18 months ago I stood in this Chamber to express my support for a previous version of the Climate Stewardship and Innovation Act, and to urge the support of my colleagues. On that day, I said that there are moments when we have the chance to take a new course that will leave our children a better world. However, in the interim, Congress has chosen not to act. In the interim, our Nation, and others around the world, continued to release greenhouse gases into the atmosphere at increasing rates.

With each passing year, as we choose not to act, the air we breathe contains ever more carbon dioxide, resulting from our use of fossil fuels. If we continue on our present course, human endeavors could cause a rise in temperature equivalent to the change between the last ice age and today. The decisions we make now on greenhouse gas emissions will have effects in the second half of this century, and into the next. The consequences of our inaction will be devastating for our children and grandchildren, and will be even worse for the poorest global populations.

Climate change is not reflected just in the fact that last year was the warmest year on record in the United States, or in the recent proposal that polar bears be listed as an endangered species because Arctic ice is melting. Those are just symptoms. The bigger problem is that global climate change will, in this century and the next, have effects on human health, on access to water, and on production of food.

Our inaction may reflect a misunderstanding of scientific evidence, even though such evidence accumulates, year by year, showing that climate change is a global threat resulting from human activity. Perhaps our inaction betrays an uncertainty about our ability to address this problem. Or perhaps our inaction is simply a result of inertia, a lack of political will in facing a difficult problem.

Whatever the basis of our inaction, I am convinced that we must now act. Every delay makes a solution more distant, and more difficult. I am also convinced that the best solution takes the form of the Climate Stewardship Act, which addresses the real costs and consequences of our current patterns of energy use, establishing a framework for a market-based solution which relies on American will, ingenuity, and technological expertise to mitigate climate change.

This bill establishes limits for greenhouse gas emissions well into the 21st century. To remain below these limits, the bill encourages the market to determine how best to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, rewarding cost-effective approaches using a system of tradeable allowances.

Revenues generated from this program will be used to help the industries and individuals most affected by the limits. These revenues will also fund research and development of efficient energy technologies, such as green buildings, high-power batteries for hybrid cars, safer nuclear plants to generate electricity, large scale biofuels facilities, renewable sources, and advanced coal power plants that capture the carbon dioxide they generate. This program will spur American innovation, creating business opportunities as new markets are created in low-carbon technologies and services.

I am proud to join Senators LIEBERMAN and MCCAIN in introducing this legislation, and I urge others to join this effort. I also look forward to the support of the American people as we move together to confront the very real threat to future generations of global climate change.

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

S. 282. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to reduce over a 5-year period the interest rate on certain undergraduate student loans; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support

the “College Student Relief Act.” In 1958, spurred on by the launch of the Russian satellite, Sputnik, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act in order to ensure that through education, the United States would stay ahead of the Soviet Union in the space race. Because of the low interest loans offered through the National Defense Education Act, countless students were able to obtain a college education and help move America forward. I could never have attended Georgetown University and law school were it not for the government loans.

It is unquestionable that higher education plays a critical role in the future of our children. Over the course of a lifetime, a college graduate will earn over \$1 million more than those without college degrees. In addition to the individual benefits of a college education, investing in and producing more college-educated Americans is vital to our Nation’s growth. Economists estimate that the increase in the education level of the United States labor force between 1915 and 1999 directly resulted in at least 23 percent of the overall growth in U.S. productivity. To keep America at the economic forefront in the 21st Century, we must recognize the value of investing in higher education and provide students with the assistance they need so that they can compete in the global economy.

As college costs continue to skyrocket, attaining a college education is becoming an even bigger hurdle for many American students. Millions of eligible students never even make it to college because of financial barriers. Over the last five years, tuition, fees, room and board at four-year public colleges and universities increased by 42 percent. More than two-thirds of four-year college students now borrow to pay for school, and their average debt more than doubled between 1993 and 2004. According to the Congressional Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, financial barriers will prevent 4.4 million high school graduates from attending a four-year public college over the next decade, and prevent another two million eligible students from attending college at all.

Last year, Republicans missed an opportunity to prevent higher student loan interest rates from going into effect. On July 1, 2006, student loan interest rates went from a 5.3 percent variable rate to a 6.8 percent fixed rate for student borrowers. We can address this situation and take the first step towards helping millions of college students across the Nation realize the American dream—achieving a college education.

That’s why I’m introducing the College Student Relief Act of 2007. The bill cuts interest rates on subsidized student loans in half and will help lower the interest rates for 5.5 million college students. The bill phases in interest rate cuts over five years, from a 6.8 percent fixed rate to a 3.4 percent fixed

rate for undergraduate borrowers of new subsidized student loans. Once fully implemented, these cuts will save the typical borrower—with \$13,800 in need-based loan debt—approximately \$4,400 in interest costs over the life of his or her loan.

Smart, hard-working kids deserve a chance to go as far as their talents will take them; however, large education debt changes the future in ways that cannot be quantified. Career plans are changed. Lifestyles are restricted. Home and auto purchases are put on hold. Family plans may be delayed to accommodate debt payments.

Let me share a few stories with you that illustrate the effects of carrying large education debt. When Stacie Odhner-Sibley and her husband made the decision ten years ago that she would go back to school and obtain her Bachelor's degree in order to provide a better future for their family, she was the first in her family to go to college. Fast forward to today. Stacie now has her Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in School Guidance and Counseling. While this is the happy part of Stacie's story, the sad part is that Stacie and her husband are considering uprooting their three children and selling their home because they can't afford both student loans and a mortgage. The saddest part of Stacie's story is that the money her family would realize from the sale of their home won't even pay off the student loans. It will only be enough to take off some of the financial pressure they otherwise would be feeling.

Katie Miller is a student at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Katie's story is not uncommon. She works part-time and her parents are unable to provide her with any financial assistance. She is extremely grateful for the financial aid she receives and recognizes that without it, she would not be able to go to school even though she is struggling to pay for food, insurance and other basic necessities.

Summer Boyd is an elementary teacher in Decatur, IL. She graduated from Millikin University in 2003 with \$65,000 in student loans. As with Katie, Summer's parents could not afford to help pay for her college education. So, for the next 25 years, Summer will be paying over \$500 each month toward her student loans. She doesn't mind paying for her education; however, the heavy burden of her student loan debt is already affecting her future plans. She and her husband want to have children, but for the time being, they must continue to scrape by each month and can only hope to someday be able to afford children.

Young people like Stacie, Katie and Summer should not face such high penalties because they had the desire and determination to pursue higher education.

An investment in our children's education is an investment in our Nation's future. We must do what we can today

to ensure that America remains a global leader in the future. Our Nation will be richer—not just economically, but also culturally and socially—for having given a higher priority to making college affordable.

I 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. 282

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 "College Student Relief Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. APPLICABLE INTEREST RATES.

Section 427A(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1077a(1)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting "and subject to paragraph (4)" after "Notwithstanding subsection (h)"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(4) SPECIAL RULE FOR SUBSIDIZED UNDERGRADUATE LOANS.—Notwithstanding subsection (h), with respect to any loan made, insured, or guaranteed under this part (other than a loan made pursuant to section 428B, 428C, or 428H) to or for an undergraduate student for which the first disbursement is made on or after—

"(A) July 1, 2007, the applicable rate of interest shall be 6.12 percent on the unpaid principal balance of the loan;

"(B) July 1, 2008, the applicable rate of interest shall be 5.44 percent on such balance;

"(C) July 1, 2009, the applicable rate of interest shall be 4.76 percent on such balance;

"(D) July 1, 2010, the applicable rate of interest shall be 4.08 percent on such balance; and

"(E) July 1, 2011, the applicable rate of interest shall be 3.40 percent on such balance."

By Mr. KERRY:

S. 288. A bill to amend titles 10 and 14, United States Code, to provide for the use of gold in the metal content of the Medal of Honor; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, this week Cpl Jason Dunham was posthumously recognized for his bravery in Iraq with the Congressional Medal of Honor. Corporal Dunham exemplified the valor and selflessness of an American service member. As a leader of his Marine Corps rifle squad Corporal Dunham encountered an Iraqi insurgent along the Iraq/Syria border. Corporal Dunham wrestled the insurgent to the ground when he become aware that he was about to throw a grenade he had been hiding. Without a moment's hesitation, Corporal Dunham sacrificed himself and threw himself on the grenade, using his body as a shield for the rest of his unit. He died from the wounds he sustained from the blast—but his act of heroism saved two Marine lives.

Today I reintroduce a bill that would ensure that this Nation more appropriately honors our veterans and soldiers like Corporal Dunham. This bill requires the use of 90 percent gold in the Congressional Medal of Honor in-

stead of gold-plated brass, as is currently used.

The Medal of Honor is the highest award our country bestows for valor in action against an enemy force. These are ordinary soldiers who performed extraordinary deeds in battle, often giving what President Lincoln termed "the final full measure" in doing so.

Corporal Dunham in receiving this honor joins many other noble service members. This is the medal won by Marine Corps pilot, CPT Joe Foss, who in less than 30 days of combat over Guadalcanal, shot down 23 enemy planes, three in one engagement, and is credited with turning-back an entire Japanese bombing mission before it could drop a single bomb.

This is the medal won by Army PVT Edward Moskala who set aside his personal safety one night on the island of Okinawa to assault two machine gun nests, provide cover for his unit as it withdrew, and rescue fallen comrades amidst a hail of enemy fire before finally suffering a mortal wound.

This is the medal won by PMFC Francis Pierce, Jr., who on the island of Iwo Jima exposed himself repeatedly to enemy fire to save the lives of Marines he accompanied, traversing open terrain to rescue comrades and assaulting enemy positions that endangered his wounded comrades.

This is the medal won by Air Force CPT Hilliard A. Wilbanks who made repeated strafing runs over an advancing enemy element near Dalat, Republic of Vietnam on February 24, 1967. Captain Wilbanks' aircraft, it should be noted, was neither armed nor armored. He made the assaults by sticking his rifle out the window and flying low over the enemy. His action saved the lives of friendly forces, but it cost him his own.

Corporal Dunham has now been added to this esteemed group of heroes. Their brave acts are more than just inspirational stories, they are sacrifices made by real men and women that serve their country with pride.

This is a time in history when we are asking more and more from our men and women in uniform. They answer this call every time with honor and sacrifice. We should make the medals we award them for these acts commensurate with their dedication.

Regrettably, the medal itself, though gold in color, is actually brass plated with gold. It costs only about \$30 to craft the award itself. As a veteran I recognize the value of the Medal does not lie in its composition but the sacrifices and service that merited it. However, this is a small way that we can express our gratitude to these heroes by giving them a medal that shows the depth of our appreciation.

Compared with other medals, the Congressional Medal of Honor, which is meant to be one of the country's highest honors, falls woefully short. Congress awards foreign dignitaries, famous singers, and other civilians, with medals that cost up to \$30,000. For our

veterans that give so much of themselves to this country you will agree that we can do better.

Put simply, this legislation will forge a medal more worthy of the esteem with which the nation holds those few who have earned the Congressional Medal of Honor through valor and heroism beyond compare.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. WEBB, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 289. A bill to establish the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area Act, S. 289, a piece of legislation that seeks to designate some of Virginia's, indeed America's, most historic and beautiful lands as a national heritage area.

As I am sure my colleagues are aware, national heritage areas are intended to encourage residents, government agencies, nonprofit groups, and private partners to collaboratively plan and implement programs and projects to recognize, preserve, and celebrate many of America's defining landscapes. Today, there are 37 national heritage areas spread out across the United States.

In Virginia, we are lucky enough to have a landscape that is worthy of the recognition and celebration that a national heritage area designation would afford it. Stretching through four states, and generally following the path of the Old Carolina Road, today's Route 15, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground is home to some of our Nation's greatest historic, cultural, and natural treasures. The region's riches read like a star-studded list of American History: Monticello, Montpelier, Manassas, Gettysburg. The list goes on. In all, there are eight presidential homes, 15 National Historic Landmarks, 47 historic districts, and the largest collection of Revolutionary and Civil War battlefields in the country. It is an area, literally, where America happened.

With the help and tutelage of the National Park Service, this proposed heritage area would be managed by the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership, a nonprofit entity whose sole purpose is to trumpet the magnificence of the hallowed ground's offerings. I am confident that the Partnership will be tremendous promoters and wonderful stewards of the resources within the Route 15 corridor. Already, the partnership has spent years heralding the Region's spectacular natural and historical resources, and they have worked hard to get this area the designation and recognition it deserves.

Mr. President, no area in America could possibly be more deserving of the national heritage area designation

than the region affectionately known as the Journey Through Hallowed Ground. Therefore, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation, and I thank you for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area Act.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, I am proud to support the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area Act. Today, that bill is being introduced by my esteemed colleague, Senator WARNER, along with myself and other Members of the Senate. A bipartisan group also has introduced this bill in the House of Representatives.

This bill will designate the corridor that runs between Gettysburg, PA, and Charlottesville, VA, as a National Heritage Area. Within this proposed area, there are numerous sites of historic importance, including eight Presidential homes. This hallowed ground is a geographic area of immense beauty, history, and cultural significance, which will be protected under the terms of this bill.

For me, this hallowed ground has special personal significance, drawing me back to thoughts of my ancestors who settled and worked much of this land centuries before. I cannot visit this part of the country without harkening back to the tough, resilient women on buckboard wagons, hard men with rifles walking alongside, and kids tending cattle as they made their way down the mud trail called the Wilderness Road.

As I wrote in my book "Born Fighting," my ancestors—the Scots-Irish—were a proud, adventurous people who left their native lands for the early American colonies in the 18th century. The majority of these courageous pioneers settled along the Appalachian Mountains from Pennsylvania southward into Virginia and beyond. Ultimately, they migrated westward, in the process helping to shape America's independent, individualistic, unbridled culture.

This bill will help preserve the legacy of these early settlers for future generations. Moreover, this bill is a truly patriotic piece of legislation—one that will help us capture the rich diversity and historic experiences of our American forefathers and mothers.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. STEVENS):

S. 290. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit to rural primary health providers; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I rise to introduce the "Rural Physicians' Relief Act of 2007." This important legislation will bring needed assistance to physicians who provide primary health services to rural America.

Physicians who provide health care in the most rural locations in America face challenges unlike their more urban counterparts. Often great dis-

tances, remote locations, limited transportation, and harsh climate—combine to make health care delivery extremely difficult to say the very least. Patient populations are small and spread out across extremely remote areas. As a result, many of these areas tend to be the most medically underserved areas in the Nation.

In my State of Alaska, a State that is larger than the States of California, Texas and Montana combined, nearly one-quarter of the State's population live in communities and villages that are only reachable by boat or aircraft. In fact, Alaska has fewer roads than any other State—even fewer roads than Rhode Island. And, unlike Rhode Island where over 90 percent of the roads are paved, less than 20 percent of the roads are paved in Alaska.

This means that approximately 75 percent of Alaskan communities are not connected by road to another community with a hospital. This means that all medical supplies, patients and providers must travel by air.

These remote populations tend to be among the poorest in the State. Air travel equates to excessively high health care costs—generally 70 percent higher than costs in the Lower 48 States. In short, "rural" takes on a new definition in Alaska.

In Alaska, patient access to health care is exacerbated because our State also faces a chilling crisis—we have 25 percent to 30 percent fewer physicians than our population needs. In fact, Alaska has one of the smallest numbers of physicians per capita in the country. We need a minimum of 500 more doctors just to be at the national average of physicians per capita. An American Medical News article recently declared Alaska's precarious situation: "Alaska has long ranked among the worst states in terms of physician supply."

Our physician shortage crisis will only worsen. There is an expected retirement of at least 118 physicians in Anchorage alone in the next 10 years. In the 1990s, there were 130 new doctors each year. Now that figure has dropped to only 31 new physicians since 2001. Outside of Anchorage, one in every eight physician positions is vacant.

Additionally, many physicians are forced out of the Medicare and Medicaid programs because reimbursement rates simply do not cover the cost to treat those patients. With Alaska's growing population, especially of our elderly, this shortage will lead to the severe health care access crisis for all Alaskans.

On top of harsh physical challenges, Alaska's rural population also faces significant human challenges. These rural patient populations are often in the greatest need for primary health care services. Heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases are the leading causes of death in Alaska. Women in our state have higher death rates from stroke than do women nationally; and mortality among Native

Alaskan women is dramatically on the rise, whereas, it is actually declining among Caucasian women in the Lower 48. The prevalence of chronic disease such as diabetes and even tuberculosis is increasing faster in Alaska than any other state. Each of these health concerns is magnified because access to health care—especially in rural Alaska—remains our greatest challenge.

The legislation that I introduce today with Senator STEVENS seeks to lessen this problem. It will both assist physicians who currently practice in rural America and will provide an incentive to encourage physicians to practice in these remote and underserved areas. Specifically, it would give a physician who is a primary health services provider a \$1,000 tax credit for each month that he/she provides services in a designated “frontier” area. Furthermore, physicians who treat a high percentage of patients from frontier areas would also be eligible for the tax credit.

My hope is to encourage physicians to practice medicine in rural Alaska and throughout rural America. Creating incentives that offset the high cost of providing care in the most remote areas of nation will go far in recruiting physicians to the areas that are most in need of their services.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LOTT, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 292. A bill to establish a bipartisan commission on insurance reform; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues and cosponsors Senators MARY LANDRIEU, TRENT LOTT, DAVID VITTER, and THAD COCHRAN as we introduce the Commission on Catastrophic Disaster Risk and Insurance Act of 2007.

As we know all too well, the last few years have brought a devastating cycle of natural catastrophes in the United States. In 2004 and 2005, we witnessed a series of powerful hurricanes that caused unthinkable human tragedy and property loss. In my own home State of Florida, eight catastrophic storms in 15 months caused more than \$31 billion in insured damages. Now Florida is witnessing skyrocketing insurance rates, insurance companies are canceling hundreds of thousands of policies, and the State’s catastrophe fund is depleted.

The inability of the private insurance markets to fully handle the fallout from these natural disasters has made our Nation’s property and casualty insurance marketplace unstable. This instability has forced the Federal Government to absorb billions of dollars in uninsured losses, at a huge cost to all American taxpayers.

Let me be clear—these issues will not just affect Florida or the coastal States. Natural catastrophes can strike

anywhere in our country. In the few decades, major disasters have been declared in almost every State. Congress has struggled with these issues time and time again, but nothing much has gotten accomplished. It’s time for a comprehensive approach to solving our Nation’s property and casualty insurance issues.

This bill would create a Federal commission—made up of a group of the best experts in the Nation—to quickly recommend to Congress the best approach to addressing catastrophic risk insurance. In the 1990s, when I was Insurance Commissioner for the State of Florida, I created a similar commission, and within months, the commission acted, and many of its key recommendations became State law.

We need a comprehensive approach that will make sure the United States is truly prepared for the financial fallout from natural disasters. I know this complicated process won’t be easy for us—but let’s roll up our shirtsleeves and get it done.

Mr. President, I 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. 292

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 “Commission on Catastrophic Disaster Risk and Insurance Act of 2007”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, which struck the United States in 2005, caused over \$200 billion in total economic losses, including insured and uninsured losses.

(2) Although private sector insurance is currently available to spread some catastrophe-related losses throughout the Nation and internationally, most experts believe there will be significant insurance and reinsurance shortages, resulting in dramatic rate increases for consumers and businesses, and the unavailability of catastrophe insurance.

(3) The Federal Government has provided and will continue to provide billions of dollars and resources to pay for losses from catastrophes, including hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, tornados, and other disasters, at huge costs to American taxpayers.

(4) The Federal Government has a critical interest in ensuring appropriate and fiscally responsible risk management of catastrophes. Mortgages require reliable property insurance, and the unavailability of reliable property insurance would make most real estate transactions impossible. In addition, the public health, safety, and welfare demand that structures damaged or destroyed in a catastrophe be reconstructed as soon as possible. Therefore, the inability of the private sector insurance and reinsurance markets to maintain sufficient capacity to enable Americans to obtain property insurance coverage in the private sector endangers the national economy and the public health, safety, and welfare.

(5) Multiple proposals have been introduced in the United States Congress over the past decade to address catastrophic risk insurance, including the creation of a national

catastrophic reinsurance fund and the revision of the Federal tax code to allow insurers to use tax-deferred catastrophe funds, yet Congress has failed to act on any of these proposals.

(6) To the extent the United States faces high risks from catastrophe exposure, essential technical information on financial structures and innovations in the catastrophe insurance market is needed.

(7) The most efficient and effective approach to assessing the catastrophe insurance problem in the public policy context is to establish a bipartisan commission of experts to study the management of catastrophic disaster risk, and to require such commission to timely report its recommendations to Congress so that Congress can quickly craft a solution to protect the American people.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT.

There is established a bipartisan Commission on Catastrophic Disaster Risk and Insurance (in this Act referred to as the “Commission”).

SEC. 4. MEMBERSHIP.

(a) MEMBERS.—The Commission shall be composed of the following:

(1) The Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency or a designee of the Director.

(2) The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or a designee of the Administrator.

(3) 12 additional members or their designees of whom one shall be—

(A) a representative of a consumer group;

(B) a representative of a primary insurance company;

(C) a representative of a reinsurance company;

(D) an independent insurance agent with experience in writing property and casualty insurance policies;

(E) a State insurance regulator;

(F) a State emergency operations official;

(G) a scientist;

(H) a faculty member of an accredited university with experience in risk management;

(I) a member of nationally recognized think tank with experience in risk management;

(J) a homebuilder with experience in structural engineering;

(K) a mortgage lender; and

(L) a nationally recognized expert in anti-trust law.

(b) MANNER OF APPOINTMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any member of the Commission described under subsection (a)(3) shall be appointed only upon unanimous agreement of—

(A) the majority leader of the Senate;

(B) the minority leader of the Senate;

(C) the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

(D) the minority leader of the House of Representatives.

(2) CONSULTATION.—In making any appointment under paragraph (1), each individual described in paragraph (1) shall consult with the President.

(c) ELIGIBILITY LIMITATION.—Except as provided in subsection (a), no member or officer of the Congress, or other member or officer of the Executive Branch of the United States Government or any State government may be appointed to be a member of the Commission.

(d) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each member of the Commission shall be appointed for the life of the Commission.

(2) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Commission shall not affect its powers, but shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment was made.

(e) QUORUM.—

(1) MAJORITY.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number may hold hearings.

(2) APPROVAL ACTIONS.—All recommendations and reports of the Commission required by this Act shall be approved only by a majority vote of a quorum of the Commission.

(f) CHAIRPERSON.—The majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the minority leader of the House of Representatives shall jointly select 1 member appointed pursuant to subsection (a) to serve as the Chairperson of the Commission.

(g) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet at the call of its Chairperson or a majority of its members at any time.

SEC. 5. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.

The Commission shall—

(1) assess—

(A) the condition of the property and casualty insurance and reinsurance markets in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma in 2005, and the 4 major hurricanes that struck the United States in 2004; and

(B) the ongoing exposure of the United States to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and floods; and

(2) recommend and report, as required under section 6, any necessary legislative and regulatory changes that will—

(A) improve the domestic and international financial health and competitiveness of such markets; and

(B) assure consumers of the—

(i) availability of adequate insurance coverage when an insured event occurs; and

(ii) best possible range of insurance products at competitive prices.

SEC. 6. REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the appointment of Commission members under section 4, the Commission shall submit to the President and the Congress a final report containing a detailed statement of its findings, together with any recommendations for legislation or administrative action that the Commission considers appropriate, in accordance with the requirements of section 5.

(b) CONSIDERATIONS.—In developing any recommendations under subsection (a), the Commission shall consider—

(1) the catastrophic insurance and reinsurance market structures and the relevant commercial practices in such insurance industries in providing insurance protection to different sectors of the American population;

(2) the constraints and opportunities in implementing a catastrophic insurance system that can resolve key obstacles currently impeding broader implementation of catastrophe risk management and financing with insurance;

(3) methods to improve risk underwriting practices, including—

(A) analysis of modalities of risk transfer for potential financial losses;

(B) assessment of private securitization of insurance risks;

(C) private-public partnerships to increase insurance capacity in constrained markets; and

(D) the financial feasibility and sustainability of a national catastrophe pool or regional catastrophe pools designed to provide adequate insurance coverage and increased underwriting capacity to insurers and reinsurers;

(4) approaches for implementing a public insurance scheme for low-income communities, in order to promote risk reduction and explicit insurance coverage in such communities;

(5) methods to strengthen insurance regulatory requirements and supervision of such requirements, including solvency for catastrophic risk reserves;

(6) methods to promote public insurance policies linked to programs for loss reduction in the uninsured sectors of the American population;

(7) methods to strengthen the risk assessment and enforcement of structural mitigation and vulnerability reduction measures, such as zoning and building code compliance;

(8) the appropriate role for the Federal Government in stabilizing the property and casualty insurance and reinsurance markets, with an analysis—

(A) of options such as—

(i) a reinsurance mechanism;

(ii) the modernization of Federal taxation policies; and

(iii) an “insurance of last resort” mechanism; and

(B) how to fund such options; and

(9) the merits of 3 principle legislative proposals introduced in the 109th Congress, namely:

(A) The creation of a Federal catastrophe fund to act as a backup to State catastrophe funds (S. 3117);

(B) Tax-deferred catastrophe accounts for insurers (S. 3115); and

(C) Tax-free catastrophe accounts for policyholders (S. 3116).

SEC. 7. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) HEARINGS.—The Commission or, at the direction of the Commission, any subcommittee or member of the Commission, may, for the purpose of carrying out this Act—

(1) hold such public hearings in such cities and countries, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, receive such evidence, and administer such oaths or affirmations as the Commission or such subcommittee or member considers advisable; and

(2) require, by subpoena or otherwise, the attendance and testimony of such witnesses and the production of such books, records, correspondence, memoranda, papers, documents, tapes, and materials as the Commission or such subcommittee or member considers advisable.

(b) ISSUANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OF SUBPOENAS.—

(1) ISSUANCE.—Subpoenas issued under subsection (a) shall bear the signature of the Chairperson of the Commission and shall be served by any person or class of persons designated by the Chairperson for that purpose.

(2) ENFORCEMENT.—In the case of contumacy or failure to obey a subpoena issued under subsection (a), the United States district court for the judicial district in which the subpoenaed person resides, is served, or may be found may issue an order requiring such person to appear at any designated place to testify or to produce documentary or other evidence. Any failure to obey the order of the court may be punished by the court as a contempt of that court.

(3) CONFIDENTIALITY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Information obtained under a subpoena issued under subsection (a) which is deemed confidential, or with reference to which a request for confidential treatment is made by the person furnishing such information—

(i) shall be exempt from disclosure under section 552 of title 5, United States Code; and

(ii) shall not be published or disclosed unless the Commission determines that the withholding of such information is contrary to the interest of the United States.

(B) EXCEPTION.—The requirements of subparagraph (A) shall not apply to the publication or disclosure of any data aggregated in

a manner that ensures protection of the identity of the person furnishing such data.

(c) AUTHORITY OF MEMBERS OR AGENTS OF THE COMMISSION.—Any member or agent of the Commission may, if authorized by the Commission, take any action which the Commission is authorized to take by this Act.

(d) OBTAINING OFFICIAL DATA.—

(1) AUTHORITY.—Notwithstanding any provision of section 552a of title 5, United States Code, the Commission may secure directly from any department or agency of the United States any information necessary to enable the Commission to carry out the purposes of this Act.

(2) PROCEDURE.—Upon request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of that department or agency shall furnish the information requested to the Commission.

(e) POSTAL SERVICES.—The Commission may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as other departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

(f) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES.—Upon the request of the Commission, the Administrator of General Services shall provide to the Commission, on a reimbursable basis, any administrative support services necessary for the Commission to carry out its responsibilities under this Act.

(g) GIFTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

(2) REGULATIONS.—The Commission shall adopt internal regulations governing the receipt of gifts or donations of services or property similar to those described in part 2601 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations.

SEC. 8. COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.

(a) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Each member of the Commission who is not an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for GS-18 of the General Schedule under section 5332 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which such member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Commission. All members of the Commission who are officers or employees of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for their services as officers or employees of the United States.

(b) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Commission.

(c) SUBCOMMITTEES.—The Commission may establish subcommittees and appoint persons to such subcommittees as the Commission considers appropriate.

(d) STAFF.—Subject to such policies as the Commission may prescribe, the Chairperson of the Commission may appoint and fix the pay of such additional personnel as the Chairperson considers appropriate to carry out the duties of the Commission.

(e) APPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN CIVIL SERVICE LAWS.—Subcommittee members and staff of the Commission may be—

(1) appointed without regard to the provisions of title 5, United States Code, governing appointments in the competitive service; and

(2) paid without regard to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of that title relating to classification and General Schedule pay rates, except that an individual so appointed may not receive pay in

excess of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for GS-18 of the General Schedule under section 5332 of that title.

(f) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—In carrying out its objectives, the Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services of consultants and experts under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals which do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for GS-18 of the General Schedule under section 5332 of that title.

(g) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Upon request of the Chairperson of the Commission, any Federal Government employee may be detailed to the Commission to assist in carrying out the duties of the Commission—

- (1) on a reimbursable basis; and
- (2) such detail shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

SEC. 9. TERMINATION.

The Commission shall terminate 60 days after the date on which the Commission submits its report under section 6.

SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated \$5,000,000 to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 27—TO CONSTITUTE THE MAJORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS, OR UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS ARE CHOSEN

Mr. REID submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 27

Resolved, That the following shall constitute the majority party's membership on the following committees for the One Hundred Tenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Mr. Harkin (Chairman), Mr. Leahy, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Baucus, Mrs. Lincoln, Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Nelson (Nebraska), Mr. Salazar, Mr. Brown, Mr. Casey, and Ms. Klobuchar.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Byrd (Chairman), Mr. Inouye, Mr. Leahy, Mr. Harkin, Ms. Mikulski, Mr. Kohl, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Dorgan, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Landrieu, Mr. Reed, Mr. Lautenberg, and Mr. Nelson (Nebraska).

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. Levin (Chairman), Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Lieberman, Mr. Reed, Mr. Akaka, Mr. Nelson (Florida), Mr. Nelson (Nebraska), Mr. Bayh, Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Pryor, Mr. Webb, and Mrs. McCaskill.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Dodd (Chairman), Mr. Johnson, Mr. Reed, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Bayh, Mr. Carper, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Akaka, Mr. Brown, Mr. Casey, and Mr. Tester.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION: Mr. Inouye (Chairman), Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Kerry, Mr. Dorgan, Mrs. Boxer, Mr. Nelson (Florida), Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Lautenberg, Mr. Pryor, Mr. Carper, Mrs. McCaskill, and Ms. Klobuchar.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES: Mr. Bingaman (Chairman), Mr. Akaka, Mr. Dorgan, Mr. Wyden,

Mr. Johnson, Ms. Landrieu, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Salazar, Mr. Menendez, Mrs. Lincoln, Mr. Sanders, and Mr. Tester.

COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mrs. Boxer (Chairman), Mr. Baucus, Mr. Lieberman, Mr. Carper, Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Lautenberg, Mr. Cardin, Mr. Sanders, Ms. Klobuchar, and Mr. Whitehouse.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Mr. Baucus (Chairman), Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Bingaman, Mr. Kerry, Mrs. Lincoln, Mr. Wyden, Mr. Schumer, Ms. Stabenow, Ms. Cantwell, and Mr. Salazar.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: Mr. Biden (Chairman), Mr. Dodd, Mr. Kerry, Mr. Feingold, Mrs. Boxer, Mr. Nelson (Florida), Mr. Obama, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Cardin, Mr. Casey, and Mr. Webb.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mr. Kennedy (Chairman), Mr. Dodd, Mr. Harkin, Ms. Mikulski, Mr. Bingaman, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Reed, Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Obama, Mr. Sanders and Mr. Brown.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Mr. Lieberman (Chairman), Mr. Levin, Mr. Akaka, Mr. Carper, Mr. Pryor, Ms. Landrieu, Mr. Obama, Mrs. McCaskill, and Mr. Tester.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Leahy (Chairman), Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Biden, Mr. Kohl, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Feingold, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Cardin, and Mr. Whitehouse.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Mr. Rockefeller, Mrs. Feinstein, Mr. Wyden, Mr. Bayh, Ms. Mikulski, Mr. Feingold, Mr. Nelson (Florida), Mr. Whitehouse, and Mr. Levin (ex officio).

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Conrad (Chairman), Mrs. Murray, Mr. Wyden, Mr. Feingold, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Nelson (Florida), Ms. Stabenow, Mr. Menendez, Mr. Cardin, Mr. Lautenberg, Mr. Sanders, and Mr. Whitehouse.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION: Mrs. Feinstein (Chairman), Mr. Dodd, Mr. Byrd, Mr. Inouye, Mr. Schumer, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Nelson (Nebraska), Mr. Reid, Mrs. Murray, and Mr. Pryor.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP: Mr. Kerry (Chairman), Mr. Levin, Mr. Harkin, Mr. Lieberman, Ms. Landrieu, Ms. Cantwell, Mr. Bayh, Mr. Pryor, Mr. Cardin, and Mr. Tester.

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS: Mr. Akaka (Chairman), Mr. Rockefeller, Mrs. Murray, Mr. Obama, Mr. Sanders, Mr. Brown, Mr. Webb, and Mr. Tester.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING: Mr. Kohl (Chairman), Mr. Wyden, Mrs. Lincoln, Mr. Bayh, Mr. Carper, Mr. Nelson (Florida), Mrs. Clinton, Mr. Salazar, Mr. Casey, Mrs. McCaskill, and Mr. Whitehouse.

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE: Mr. Schumer (Chairman), Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Bingaman, Ms. Klobuchar, Mr. Casey, and Mr. Webb.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS: Mr. Johnson (Chairman), Mrs. Boxer (Chairman in Johnson's absence), Mr. Pryor, and Mr. Salazar.

Senator JOHNSON is Chair of the Select Committee on Ethics, and during his absence for all purposes under Senate Rules, Committee Rules, and relevant statutes, Senator BOXER shall act as Chair of the Select Committee on Ethics, except for purposes of the designation under 2 U.S.C. §72a-1f.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Dorgan (Chairman), Mr. Inouye, Mr. Conrad, Mr. Akaka, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Cantwell, Mrs. McCaskill, and Mr. Tester.

SENATE RESOLUTION 28—TO CONSTITUTE THE MINORITY PARTY'S MEMBERSHIP ON CERTAIN COMMITTEES FOR THE ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS, OR UNTIL THEIR SUCCESSORS ARE CHOSEN

Mr. McCONNELL submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 28

Resolved, That the following shall constitute the minority party's membership on the following committees for the One Hundred Tenth Congress, or until their successors are chosen:

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY: Mr. Chambliss, Mr. Lugar, Mr. Cochran, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Graham, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Thune, and Mr. Grassley.

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Cochran, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Specter, Mr. Domenici, Mr. Bond, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Shelby, Mr. Gregg, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Craig, Mrs. Hutchison, Mr. Brownback, Mr. Allard, and Mr. Alexander.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES: Mr. McCain, Mr. Warner, Mr. Inhofe, Mr. Sessions, Ms. Collins, Mr. Ensign, Mr. Chambliss, Mr. Graham, Mrs. Dole, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Thune, and Mr. Martinez.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS: Mr. Shelby, Mr. Bennett, Mr. Allard, Mr. Enzi, Mr. Hagel, Mr. Bunning, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Sununu, Mrs. Dole, and Mr. Martinez.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION: Mr. Stevens, Mr. McCain, Mr. Lott, Mrs. Hutchison, Ms. Snowe, Mr. Smith, Mr. Ensign, Mr. Sununu, Mr. DeMint, Mr. Vitter, and Mr. Thune.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES: Mr. Domenici, Mr. Craig, Mr. Thomas, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Burr, Mr. DeMint, Mr. Corker, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Smith, Mr. Bunning, and Mr. Martinez.

COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS: Mr. Inhofe, Mr. Warner, Mr. Voinovich, Mr. Isakson, Mr. Vitter, Mr. Craig, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Thomas, and Mr. Bond.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE: Mr. Grassley, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Lott, Ms. Snowe, Mr. Kyl, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Smith, Mr. Bunning, Mr. Crapo, and Mr. Roberts.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS: Mr. Lugar, Mr. Hagel, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Corker, Mr. Sununu, Mr. Voinovich, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. DeMint, Mr. Isakson, and Mr. Vitter.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS: Mr. Enzi, Mr. Gregg, Mr. Alexander, Mr. Burr, Mr. Isakson, Ms. Murkowski, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Allard, and Mr. Coburn.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS: Ms. Collins, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Voinovich, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Coburn, Mr. Domenici, Mr. Warner, and Mr. Sununu.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY: Mr. Specter, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Kyl, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Graham, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Brownback, and Mr. Coburn.

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET: Mr. Gregg, Mr. Domenici, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Allard, Mr. Enzi, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Bunning, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Ensign, Mr. Cornyn, and Mr. Graham.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Bennett, Mr. Stevens, Mr. McConnell, Mr. Cochran, Mr. Lott, Mr. Chambliss, Mrs. Hutchison, Mr. Hagel, and Mr. Alexander.

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