

practice, a service-specific Physical Evaluation Board, PEB, makes a "fitness" for duty determination. If a servicemember is found to be unfit for continued service, the PEB then makes a disability decision. Instead of seeking ways to ensure that the system functions as intended, some have suggested that the military continue to make "fitness" determinations, but that the Department of Veterans Affairs would be responsible for making disability decisions for servicemembers found to be unfit.

While this may appear to be a reasonable recommendation, I am concerned that if this recommendation is implemented without careful consideration, we might be creating more problems than we can solve.

The VA disability rating system is already stressed with its existing caseload. In this time of armed conflict when there are more injured servicemembers each day, it makes no sense to add more pressure to an already overburdened VA system, especially when there is no indication that VA would do a better job than DoD in making disability ratings. As long as there is consistency in how we determine what percentage of disability a servicemember receives, it should not matter who makes the rating.

Rather than shifting the focus to VA, I believe our focus should be on solving the problems of fairness and consistency for assigning disability ratings within and across the Services. To that end, the bill I am introducing addresses consistency of disability ratings within DoD, uniform use of the Veterans Affairs rating schedule across the military services, uniform training of Medical Evaluation Board/Physical Evaluation Board personnel, and accountability by DoD to ensure compliance with disability rating regulations and policies.

This legislation is a good first step towards changing the DoD Disability Evaluation System that needs to be reformed for the benefit of our wounded and seriously injured servicemembers. It will improve DoD-wide disability rating regulations and policies, and ensure consistency as these regulations and policies are applied across the Services.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to join me in making these positive changes to the DoD Disability Evaluation System. We owe our injured and disabled servicemembers no less.

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. 1252

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

SECTION 1. UNIFORMITY IN DISABILITY RATINGS FOR MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) UNIFORMITY IN DISABILITY RATINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 61 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 1216 the following new section:

"§ 1216a. Ratings of disability: uniformity; schedule of ratings to be utilized"

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall prescribe in regulations uniform standards for determinations of ratings of disability under this chapter in order to assure that the ratings of disability issued by the military departments for members of the armed forces with a wound or injury of a particular degree of disablement are consistent across the military departments.

"(b) CONSIDERATION OF APPLICABLE MEDICAL CONDITIONS.—The Secretary of Defense shall prescribe in regulations requirements that, in making the determination of a rating of disability of a member of the armed forces for purposes of this chapter, the Secretary concerned shall take into account all medical conditions incurred by the member while entitled to basic pay or while absent as described in section 1201(c)(3) of this title that render the member unfit to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank, or rating, as determined utilizing the standard schedule for rating disabilities referred to in subsection (c).

"(c) UTILIZATION OF SCHEDULE FOR RATING DISABILITIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—In order to ensure uniformity in determinations of disability for purposes of this chapter and under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, each Secretary concerned shall utilize the standard schedule for rating disabilities in use by the Department of Veterans Affairs, including any applicable interpretation of the schedule by the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims or the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, in making any determination of disability for purposes of this chapter. Such Secretary may not modify the schedule, or any interpretation of the schedule, whether by regulation, administrative action, or otherwise, in making any such determination for purposes of this chapter.

"(d) TRAINING OF CERTAIN PERSONNEL.—In order to ensure the compliance of such personnel with the provisions of this section in the making of determinations of ratings of disability of members of the armed forces under this chapter, the Secretary of Defense shall prescribe in regulations uniform requirements for training in the making of such determinations for personnel as follows:

"(1) Physical evaluation board personnel.

"(2) Physicians who serve on medical examination boards."

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 61 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 1216 the following new item:

"1216a. Ratings of disability: uniformity; schedule of ratings to be utilized."

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1216(a) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new sentence: "Such regulations shall be consistent with the provisions of section 1216a of this title and the regulations prescribed under that section."

(b) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Defense shall prescribe the regulations required by section 1216a of title 10, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)), not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report setting forth the actions to be taken by the Secretary to implement the requirements to be prescribed under section

1216a of title 10, United States Code (as so added), and to otherwise ensure that determinations of the ratings of disability of members of the Armed Forces for purposes of chapter 61 of title 10, United States Code, are made in a fair, uniform, and timely manner.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Except as provided in subsection (b), section 1216a of title 10, United States Code (as so added), shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. AKAKA) (by request):

S. 1253. A bill to establish a fund for the National Park Centennial Challenge, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, on March 9, 2007, the Administration transmitted draft legislation entitled the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act," which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. On behalf of Senator AKAKA, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks, and myself, I am pleased today to introduce the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act, by request, as a courtesy to the Administration.

Both Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne and National Park Service Director Mary Bomar have made clear that the National Park Centennial Initiative is one of the highest priorities of the Department of the Interior. The initiative proposes up to \$3 billion in new funds over the next decade, with three components.

The first component of the initiative is the "President's Centennial Commitment," under which the Administration is proposing an additional \$100 million per year in new discretionary funds for the National Park Service. The second and third components, which the Administration collectively describes as the "President's Centennial Challenge," would seek to raise up to \$100 million each year over a ten-year period from private donations. All donations would be matched with new Federal funding, up to \$100 million annually.

The new funding would be used for "signature projects and programs," which the draft legislation defines as "a project or program identified by the Director of the National Park Service as one that will help prepare the national parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment."

Mr. President, while I commend the Administration for this effort to secure increased funding for our national parks, I still need to better understand many of the specifics of the proposal, and until then, am reserving judgment on it.

For example, we need to understand whether the initiative will result in significant new funding for our national parks, or whether increases in funding from the initiative will simply be offset by funding reductions in other important areas. I also have questions

about whether the philanthropic goals proposed by this legislation are realistic, given the historic levels of private contributions for national parks. In addition, we need to learn more about the type of projects and programs that would be funded under the initiative, and what role Congress should have in establishing funding priorities. Finally, any legislative initiative that proposes \$1 billion in new direct spending without an offset will certainly be carefully reviewed.

Secretary Kempthorne and Director Bomar have indicated that they intend to make recommendations to the President later this month on appropriate signature projects and programs as well as goals for the initiative. I look forward to working with both Secretary Kempthorne and Director Bomar on this proposal once those recommendations are complete.

I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD, along with the transmittal letter from Director Bomar and a section-by-section analysis of the bill prepared by the Department of the Interior.

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

S. 1253

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) our national parks are icons of America;

(2) the one hundredth anniversary of the National Park System will be in 2016;

(3) it is appropriate for all Americans to help in the efforts to enhance our parks as the country gets ready for this centennial celebration;

(4) the President has proposed a National Park Centennial Initiative that, over ten years, will provide up to \$3,000,000,000 to prepare parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment; and

(5) a part of that Initiative is the establishment of a Centennial Challenge to encourage individuals, foundations, and the private sector to donate money each year by providing up to \$100,000,000 in dedicated Federal funding to match donations for signature projects and programs.

(b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act to establish a fund in the Treasury that will be used to finance signature projects and programs to enhance the National Park System as it approaches its centennial in 2016 and to prepare the parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CHALLENGE FUND.—The term "Challenge Fund" means the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund.

(2) DIRECTOR.—The term "Director" means the Director of the National Park Service.

(3) QUALIFIED DONATION.—The term "qualified donation" means a cash non-Federal donation to the National Park Service that the Director certifies is for a listed signature project or program.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means Secretary of the Interior.

(5) SIGNATURE PROJECT OR PROGRAM.—The term "signature project or program" means any project or program identified by the Director as one that will help prepare the national parks for another century of conservation, preservation and enjoyment.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE FUND.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Treasury a fund to be known as the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund. The Challenge Fund shall consist of:

(1) Qualified donations transferred from the Donations to the National Park Service account, in accordance with section 6(a).

(2) Amounts appropriated from the general fund of the Treasury, in accordance with section 6(b).

(b) AVAILABILITY.—All amounts deposited in the Challenge Fund shall be available, subject to restrictions in section 6(c), to the Secretary for signature projects and programs under this Act without further appropriation and without fiscal year limitation. No monies shall be available for indirect administrative costs. The expenditure of amounts in the Challenge Fund shall follow Federal procurement and financial laws and standards.

SEC. 5. SIGNATURE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS.

(a) LIST.—The Secretary, acting through the Director, shall develop a list of signature projects and programs eligible for funding from the Challenge Fund. The list shall be submitted to the President and to the Committees on Appropriations and Energy and Natural Resources in the United States Senate, and to the Committees on Appropriations and Natural Resources in the House of Representatives.

(b) SIGNATURE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS.—For purposes of this Act, a signature project or program shall be a project or program identified by the Director as one that will help prepare the national parks for another century of conservation, preservation and enjoyment.

(c) UPDATES.—The Secretary, acting through the Director, may, from time to time as the Secretary or Director finds necessary, add any project or program to the list developed pursuant to subsection (a) that the Director believes is a signature project or program. If the Director adds any project or program to the list, the Secretary shall notify the Committees referred to in subsection (a) at the time the project or program is added.

SEC. 6. DONATIONS AND MATCHING FEDERAL FUNDS.

(a) QUALIFIED DONATIONS.—Beginning on October 1, 2007, and ending on September 30, 2017, the Secretary may transfer to the Challenge Fund qualified donations of cash, including cash to liquidate a letter of credit, received by the National Park Service.

(b) MATCHING AMOUNT.—There is hereby appropriated in each fiscal year beginning on October 1, 2007 and ending on September 30, 2017, an amount equal to the qualified donations received and the pledge of donations through letters of credit in the same fiscal year, not to exceed \$100,000,000 in any one year. In no case may the matching amount exceed the amount of donations received or pledged in any year. For the purpose of this subsection, the Secretary may consider a donation for any fiscal year to be received when a pledge of a donation for that fiscal year is guaranteed and a valid irrevocable letter of credit is issued for such purposes.

(c) OBLIGATIONS.—The Secretary may not obligate any amounts based on a letter of credit, or amounts to match a letter of credit pursuant to subsection (b), until amounts

from that letter of credit are deposited in the Challenge Fund.

(d) SOLICITATION.—Nothing in this Act shall be construed as expanding any authority that exists on the date of its enactment with respect to the ability of the National Park Service and its employees to receive or solicit for donations.

SEC. 7. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

The Secretary shall provide with the submission of the President's budget a list of the signature projects and programs and the status of their funding.

SEC. 8. REGULATIONS.

The Secretary may promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT

OF THE INTERIOR,

Washington, DC.

Hon. DICK CHENEY,
President of the Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: There is enclosed a draft bill, the proposed "National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act." We recommend that the draft bill be introduced, referred to the appropriate Committee for consideration, and enacted.

August 25, 2016, will be the one hundredth birthday of the National Park Service (NPS). In 1872, President Grant signed a law to protect Yellowstone, making it America's first national park. By 1916, 40 national parks and monuments existed, but they had no clear or consistent management. On August 25, 1916, President Woodrow Wilson established the NPS to protect and manage these magnificent parks. The challenge facing the NPS as it readies itself for its centennial celebration is to conserve what is timeless while keeping pace with the modern needs and expectations of the American people. During the last five years, the NPS has built a strong foundation of improving parks, with 6,600 park improvements completed or underway. This past August, on the 90th birthday of the NPS, President Bush issued a challenge to prepare national parks for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment.

President Bush stated: "I call on all Americans to help in these efforts and to enhance our parks as we get ready for the National Park Service's centennial celebration. Through continuing cooperation and partnership, our national parks can endure for the next 100 years and beyond."

The President also directed the Secretary of the Interior to develop a formal written directive about the future of national parks. He directed us to establish specific performance goals that, when achieved, will make sure our parks continue to be places where children and families can learn about our nation's great history, enjoy quality time together and have fun outdoors. He asked that we identify signature projects and programs that reflect and highlight these goals that would be undertaken by leveraging philanthropic, partnership, and government investments for the benefit of national parks and their visitors.

The President's FY 2008 budget includes the National Park Centennial Initiative, one of the highest priorities of the Department of the Interior. This Initiative proposes up to \$3 billion in new funds for the National Park System over the next ten years. The President's FY 2008 parks budget totals nearly \$2.4 billion, the largest budget ever for programs that support parks. It includes the highest increase in parks operation funding ever proposed. It provides for further improvement of our national parks during the next decade leading up to the 2016 centennial celebration. It funds:

The President's Centennial Commitment: This is \$100 million a year—one billion dollars over 10 years—for activities to achieve new levels of excellence in our parks. These discretionary funds will be used to hire more seasonal rangers, interpreters, and maintenance workers, repair buildings, improve natural landscapes, and enhance the Junior Ranger Program.

The President's Centennial Challenge: We are challenging individuals, foundations, businesses, and the private sector to contribute at least \$100 million annually to support signature programs and projects in our national parks. The enclosed draft bill would allow us to match those contributions with up to \$100 million of mandatory funding annually for the next ten years.

The proposed National Park Service Centennial Challenge Fund Act would establish the National Park Service Centennial Challenge Fund (Challenge Fund), which would encourage private donations for signature projects and programs in national parks by matching those donations with Federal funds of up to \$100 million a year for a ten year period ending on September 30, 2017. The Fund would be available to the Secretary without further appropriation and with no fiscal year limitations.

A list of signature projects and programs eligible for funding under the Challenge will be included in the Centennial report that the Secretary plans to send to the President in late May 2007. The list will be prepared by the Director of the National Park Service, drawing on ideas generated through listening sessions, public engagement, and the input of Park Service professionals. Additional projects may be added to the list from time to time, as necessary.

The President's Centennial Challenge Fund will not be used to hire NPS permanent staff or for projects outside of park boundaries. Its focus will be on those signature projects and programs that will help prepare the National Park System for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment.

Soliciting for Centennial Challenge donations will be done primarily through the National Park Foundation and local friends' groups. National Park Service employees will be subject to the current fundraising guidelines. The draft bill clearly states its intent is not to expand existing authority in this area. For large donations, the National Park Service will enter into a written agreement with a donor that lays out the terms and conditions for how the funds will be used.

The President has called on all Americans to help in conserving natural resources and improving the condition of our park facilities. It is his hope and the hope of the Department of the Interior that through leveraging philanthropic, partnership, and government investments for the benefit of national parks and their visitors the national parks can endure for the next 100 years and beyond.

The President's budget includes appropriate proposed offsets within the budget of the Department of the Interior that, if enacted, are sufficient to ensure that this proposal complies with Rule XXI, new clause 10, of the House of Representatives.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that presentation of this proposal to the Congress is in accord with the President's program.

Sincerely,

MARY A. BOMAR,
Director, National Park Service.

THE PROPOSED NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE FUND ACT SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short Title. The first section provides for the title of the Act, the National Park Centennial Fund Act.

Section 2. Findings and Purpose. The second section includes findings explaining the need for the National Park Centennial Challenge and the Challenge Fund established under this Act. Subsection (b) sets forth the purpose of the Act, which is to establish a fund in the Treasury that will include private donations, and provide Federal funds to match those donations, for signature projects and programs to enhance the National Park System as it approaches its Centennial celebration in 2016.

Section 3. Definitions. Section 3 defines the terms used in the Act.

Section 4. National Park Centennial Challenge Fund. This section establishes the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund, the Challenge Fund for short. The Challenge Fund shall consist of amounts for signature projects and programs transferred from the Donations to the National Park Service account and amounts appropriated from the general fund of the Treasury as matching funds.

Subsection (b) provides that all amounts in the Fund are to be available to the Secretary of the Interior without further appropriation and without any fiscal year limitation. This allows the National Park Service (NPS) to receive and match donations for signature projects and programs that may take more than one fiscal year to complete or that may need a certain level of funding before they commence. No funds from this account are to be used for indirect administrative costs. The expenditure of amounts in the Challenge Fund shall follow Federal procurement and financial laws and standards.

Section 5. Signature Projects and Programs. Subsection (a) requires the Secretary, acting through the Director of the NPS, to develop a list of signature projects and programs eligible for funding from the Challenge Fund. That list is to be submitted to the President and to the Senate Committees on Appropriations and Energy and Natural Resources, and the House Committees on Appropriations and Natural Resources. Subsection (b) provides that a signature project or program is a project or program identified by the Director of the NPS as one that will help prepare the NPS for another century of conservation, preservation, and enjoyment. Signature projects and programs will be chosen after listening sessions, public engagement, and the input of NPS employees.

Subsection (c) authorizes the Secretary, acting through the Director, to add projects to the list from time-to-time as they find necessary. It requires notification like that required in subsection (a) for the original list of signature projects and programs.

Section 6. Donations and Matching Funds. Subsection (a) authorizes the Secretary to transfer, to the Challenge Fund qualified donations of cash received by the National Park Service. This includes cash payments to liquidate commitments made under a valid letter of credit.

Subsection (b) appropriates up to \$100 million a year in matching funds. The amount of matching funds made available each year would equal the qualified cash donations received in that year, plus the amount of donations pledged in that year under a valid irrevocable letter of credit. For donations pledged under a letter of credit, a match would be provided when the commitment is made and not a second time when the donation is paid. If a letter of credit is withdrawn, then the associated matching funds

would be returned to the Treasury. Up to \$100 million in matching funds would be available in each year beginning in fiscal year 2008 and going through fiscal year 2017. If all of the \$100 million in matching funds is not used in a given year, the remaining balance cannot be used to increase the amount of matching funds in subsequent years. For example, if only \$60 million in donations or commitments under a letter of credit are received and are thus eligible for the same amount of matching funds in a fiscal year, that does not mean that matching funds available for the next fiscal year would increase to \$140 million.

Subsection (c) specifies that the Secretary may not obligate any amounts based on a letter of credit, or amounts to match a letter of credit pursuant to subsection (b), until the donation promised under a letter of credit is deposited in the Challenge Fund.

Subsection (d) makes it clear that nothing in this Act expands the existing authority of the NPS and its employees with regard to fundraising. NPS employees will still be subject to Director's Order 21, which specifically sets out the guidelines with regard to this matter.

Section 7. Report to Congress. This section requires the Secretary to submit an annual report with the President's budget on the administration of the Centennial Challenge. The report is to include the current list of signature projects and programs and a description of any funding they have received from the Challenge Fund.

Section 8. Regulations. This section authorizes the Secretary to promulgate such regulations as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 176—RECOGNIZING APRIL 30, 2007, AS "NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS DAY"

Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. BAYH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 176

Whereas over half of schools have problems linked to indoor air quality;

Whereas children are more vulnerable to environmental hazards as they breathe in more air per pound of body weight due to their developing systems;

Whereas children spend an average of 30 to 50 hours per week in school;

Whereas poor indoor environmental quality is associated with a wide range of problems that include poor concentration, respiratory illnesses, learning difficulties, and cancer;

Whereas research suggests that children attending schools in poor condition score 11 percent lower on standardized tests than students who attend schools in good condition;

Whereas an average of 1 out of every 13 school-age children has asthma, the leading cause of school absenteeism, accounting for approximately 14,700,000 missed school days each year;

Whereas 17 separate studies all found positive health impacts from improved indoor air-quality, ranging from 13.5 percent up to 87 percent improvement;

Whereas our Nation's schools spent approximately \$8,000,000,000 on energy costs in the last school year, causing officials to

make very difficult decisions on cutting back much needed academic programs in efforts to keep the heat and lights on;

Whereas healthy and high performance schools designed to reduce energy and maintenance costs, provide cleaner air, improve lighting, and reduce exposures to toxic substances provide a healthier and safer learning environment for children and improved academic achievement and well-being;

Whereas Congress has demonstrated its interest in this compelling issue by including the Healthy High-Performance Schools Program in the No Child Left Behind Act; and

Whereas our schools have the great responsibility of guiding the future of our children and Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes April 30, 2007, as "National Healthy Schools Day".

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, today is National Healthy Schools Day. This day was established to build awareness and promote healthy school environments for our children and school personnel.

National Healthy Schools Day has been recognized for the past 5 years thanks to the work of the Healthy Schools Network in New York. Many organizations have worked together over the years to raise awareness to the conditions that many of our children and teachers are subjected to on a daily basis. The ongoing work of these organizations is crucial in fostering the development and wellbeing of our Nation's children.

Each day, parents send their children to school with the assumption that their children will spend the day in a safe environment. Many parents do not realize that their children's classrooms could be the very thing that harms them. Alarming, over half of our Nation's schools reported that they had at least one environmental hazard. These pollutants can have serious effects on health, such as respiratory problems, and can even interfere with cognitive functioning. Furthermore, children are more vulnerable to environmental hazards as they proportionally breathe in more air than adults.

It is not surprising then that approximately 1 out of 13 school-age children has asthma, which is responsible for more than 14 million missed school days each year as the poor indoor air quality in these schools exacerbates the effects of asthma. However, a recent study sponsored by the American Lung Association and the American Federation of Teachers estimates that a shift from an unhealthy to a healthy school would result in a 25 percent reduction in cases of asthma among students.

It is imperative that we address these problems. That is why I was the proud sponsor of the Healthy, High-Performance Schools Program in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). By incorporating this legislation into NCLB, Congress acknowledged that environmental factors can be a barrier to academic success.

We must spread awareness of the health and learning effects that result from unhealthy schools and continue to fight on our children's behalf. I com-

mend those across the nation who are using National Healthy Schools Day to do just that.

SENATE RESOLUTION 177—DESIGNATING APRIL 30, 2007, AS "DÍA DE LOS NIÑOS: CELEBRATING YOUNG AMERICANS", AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mrs. BOXER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

S. RES. 177

Whereas many nations throughout the world, and especially within the Western hemisphere, celebrate "Día de los Niños", or "Day of the Children" on the 30th of April, in recognition and celebration of their country's future—their children;

Whereas children represent the hopes and dreams of the people of the United States;

Whereas children are the center of American families;

Whereas children should be nurtured and invested in to preserve and enhance economic prosperity, democracy, and the American spirit;

Whereas Hispanics in the United States, the youngest and fastest growing ethnic community in the Nation, continue the tradition of honoring their children on this day, and wish to share this custom with the rest of the Nation;

Whereas it is projected that by the year 2050, 1 in 4 Americans will be of Hispanic descent, and currently approximately 12,300,000 Hispanic children live in the United States;

Whereas traditional Hispanic family life centers largely on children;

Whereas the primary teachers of family values, morality, and culture are parents and family members, and we rely on children to pass on these family values, morals, and culture to future generations;

Whereas more than 500,000 children drop out of school each year, 138,000 of whom are Hispanic, and these dropout rates are unacceptably high;

Whereas the importance of literacy and education are most often communicated to children through family members;

Whereas families should be encouraged to engage in family and community activities that include extended and elderly family members and encourage children to explore, develop confidence, and pursue their dreams;

Whereas the designation of a day to honor the children of the United States will help affirm for the people of the United States the significance of family, education, and community;

Whereas the designation of a day of special recognition for the children of the United States will provide an opportunity for children to reflect on their future, to articulate their dreams and aspirations, and to find comfort and security in the support of their family members and communities;

Whereas the National Latino Children's Institute, serving as a voice for children, has worked with cities throughout the country to declare April 30 as "Día de los Niños: Celebrating Young Americans"—a day to bring together Hispanics and other communities nationwide to celebrate and uplift children; and

Whereas the children of a nation are the responsibility of all its people, and people should be encouraged to celebrate the gifts of children to society—their curiosity, laughter, faith, energy, spirit, hopes, and dreams: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 30, 2007, as "Día de los Niños: Celebrating Young Americans"; and

(2) calls on the people of the United States to join with all children, families, organizations, communities, churches, cities, and States across the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies, including activities that—

(A) center around children, and are free or minimal in cost so as to encourage and facilitate the participation of all our people;

(B) are positive and uplifting and that help children express their hopes and dreams;

(C) provide opportunities for children of all backgrounds to learn about one another's cultures and to share ideas;

(D) include all members of the family, especially extended and elderly family members, so as to promote greater communication among the generations within a family, enabling children to appreciate and benefit from the experiences and wisdom of their elderly family members;

(E) provide opportunities for families within a community to get acquainted; and

(F) provide children with the support they need to develop skills and confidence, and to find the inner strength—the will and fire of the human spirit—to make their dreams come true.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce an important resolution designating the 30th day of April 2007 as "Día de los Niños: Celebrating Young Americans."

Nations throughout the world, and especially within Latin America, celebrate Día de los Niños on the 30th of April, in recognition and celebration of their countries' future—their children. Many American Hispanic families continue the tradition of honoring their children on this day by celebrating Día de los Niños in their homes.

The designation of a day to honor the children of the Nation will help us affirm the significance of family, education, and community. This special recognition of children will provide us with an opportunity to reflect on their futures, articulate their dreams and aspirations, and find comfort and security in the support of their family members and communities. This resolution calls on the American people to join with all children, families, organizations, communities, churches, cities, and states across the Nation to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. In the past years in my state of Utah, there have been a number of events and special programs for Día de los Niños in schools, libraries, cultural centers, and even hospitals.

Joining me as original cosponsors to this Resolution are MEL MARTINEZ, JEFF BINGAMAN, KEN SALAZAR, ROBERT MENENDEZ, and BARBARA BOXER.

I urge my colleagues to join us in passing this resolution.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 982. Mr. ALLARD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1082, to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to reauthorize and amend the prescription drug user fee provisions, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.