

opportunity to take advantage of their earned education benefits.

That is why I'm reintroducing the Montgomery GI Bill for Life Act of 2007, which would allow Montgomery GI Bill participants an unlimited amount of time to use their earned benefits.

I am pleased that my colleague, Senator TOM HARKIN, is again joining me in sponsoring this legislation and that Senator SHERROD BROWN has also signed on to further extend MGIB benefits.

The MGIB is a program that provides up to 36 months of education benefits for educational opportunities ranging from college to apprenticeship and job training, and even flight training. Upon enlistment, the GI Bill also requires service members to contribute \$100 per month for their first 12 months of services.

Basically, the MGIB is divided into two programs. One program targets active duty and veteran members, paying over \$1,000 per month to qualified students. That's more than \$36,000 for school. The other is directed at the Selected Reserve. This program provides educational benefits of \$288 per month, for a total of \$10,368.

If recruits are overwhelmingly declaring that education opportunity under the GI Bill is the key incentive for them to join the military, then it makes sense that most—if not all—of our troops, who signed up for the program, would also be cashing in on their benefits. But reports show that the majority, 40 to 60 percent, do not actually use the benefits they have earned.

Currently, MGIB participants have up to 10 years from their release date from the military to use their earned education benefits. Members of the Selected Reserve are able to use their MGIB benefit for 14 years. However, that means your earned education benefits expire if you don't use the within the required timeframe, closing your window of opportunity to go to school or finish your college education. Plus, you lose the \$1,200 dedicated for your GI Bill during your first year of enlistment.

Originally, the intent of 1944 GI Bill of Rights was to help veterans successfully transition back into civilian life as education is the key to employment opportunities. Looking back now, we know that the GI Bill opened the door to higher education, helping millions of service members and veterans who wouldn't otherwise have had the chance to pay for college. That is, servicemembers benefited from the GI Bill because they used the payments within the 10 and 14 year limitation.

But there are many others who did not use their earned education benefits within that timeframe. For example, after leaving the military, some servicemembers postponed going to school because they had to go straight to work in order to support their family. Others unfortunately, were either homeless or incarcerated for long peri-

ods of time due to disability associated with military service, but are now ready to move forward in their lives, and going back to school is their first step. In some cases, due to random life circumstances, some people just lost track of time. Additionally, because of misinformation and bureaucratic language, the GI Bill is known as a complicated program to navigate.

A constituent of mine, Ruben Ruelas—who is a Local Veterans Employment Representative, LVER, for the WorkSource in Wenatchee, Washington, wrote to me saying, "It's been my experience that most people don't know what they want to do in life or are placed in situations where, due to changing economic times, they are displaced and need further education and training to compete for jobs. But most don't have access to training resources to do so."

In terms of Vietnam Era veterans, Mr. Ruelas goes on to say, "many 50 year olds are unemployed, untrained and uneducated and could use their educational benefits to improve their skills to compete for better jobs. Many have come to realize, too late, that they need college or retraining and don't have the resources to do so."

While times have changed remarkably, one thing remains constant: education is critical to employment opportunity. In the 21st Century global labor market, enhancing skills through education and job training is now more important than ever. The need for retraining is even more underscored for our military service members and veterans.

My legislation, the Montgomery GI Bill for Life, would ensure that educational opportunities are lifelong, allowing service members and veterans the flexibility to seek education and job training opportunities when it is the right time for them to do so.

Higher education not only serves as an individual benefit, but positive externalities have transpired: the GI Bill was instrumental in building our country's middle class and continues to help close the college education gap.

Today, employers are requiring higher qualifications from the workforce. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that six of the ten fastest-growing occupations require an associate's degree or bachelor's degree. By 2010, 40 percent of all job growth will require some form of postsecondary education. While a highly skilled workforce is one characteristic of the new economy, working for one employer throughout a lifetime is no longer routine, but rather an evanescent feature. According to findings by Brigham Young University, the average person changes jobs or careers eight times in his or her lifetime. To keep up with these trends, expanding access to education and training is a must do in the 21st Century global marketplace.

A 1999 report by the Congressional Commission on Service members and Veterans Transition Assistance stated

that the GI Bill of the future must include the following: Provide veterans with access to post-secondary education that they use; assist the Armed forces in recruiting the high quality high school graduates needed; enhance the Nation's competitiveness by further educating American veterans, a population that is already self-disciplined, goal oriented, and steadfast; and attract the kind of service members who will go on to occupy leadership positions in government and the private sector.

Eliminating the GI Bill 10 and 14 year limitation for service members, veterans, and Selected Reserve moves one step toward improving the MGIB. The Montgomery GI Bill for Life would allow MGIB members, including qualified Vietnam Era Veterans, the flexibility to access their earned education benefits at any time.

As the nation's economy continues to recover and grow stronger, the GI Bill will continue to be the primary vehicle keeping our active duty service members and veterans of military service on track, helping to ensure our country's prosperity.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 178—EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE SENATE TO THE FAMILIES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS MURDERED IN GUATEMALA, AND ENCOURAGING THE UNITED STATES TO WORK WITH GUATEMALA TO BRING AN END TO THESE CRIMES

Mr. BINGAMAN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 178

Whereas, since 2001, more than 2,000 women and girls have been murdered in Guatemala;

Whereas most of the victims are women ranging in age from 18 to 30, with many of the cases involving abduction, sexual violence, or brutal mutilation;

Whereas, from 2001 to 2006, the rate at which women have been murdered in Guatemala has almost doubled, increasing at a higher rate than the murder rate of men in Guatemala during the same period;

Whereas, according to data from Guatemala's Public Prosecutors Office, few arrests and fewer convictions have occurred, and prosecutors, forensics experts, and other state justice officials have not brought the perpetrators to justice;

Whereas, from 2001 to 2006, there were only 20 convictions for the murders of women and girls;

Whereas the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Government of Guatemala has reported that in 1 year alone police officers were implicated on 10 separate occasions in the murder of women in Guatemala, and recommended that such officers and other officials be held accountable for their acts;

Whereas an effective, transparent, and impartial judicial system is key to the administration of justice, and the failure to ensure proper investigations and prosecutions hampers the ability to solve crimes and punish perpetrators;

Whereas inadequate financial, human, and technical resources, as well as a lack of forensic and technical expertise, have impeded the arrest and prosecution of suspects;

Whereas the Special Prosecutor for Crimes Against Women of the Government of Guatemala has reported that her office has reviewed approximately 800 incidents of domestic violence per month, with some of those cases ending in murder, and that deaths could have been prevented if the legal system of Guatemala provided for prison sentences in cases of domestic violence;

Whereas the murders of women and girls in Guatemala have brought pain to the families and friends of the victims as they struggle to cope with the loss of their loved ones and the fact that the perpetrators of these heinous acts remain unknown to the proper authorities;

Whereas many countries in Latin America face significant challenges in combating violence against women, and international cooperation is essential in addressing this serious issue;

Whereas the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided assistance to the Government of Guatemala to implement judicial reform and rule of law programs, and in fiscal year 2006, Congress provided \$1,500,000 for programs to combat impunity, corruption, and crimes of violence, of which \$500,000 is to be allocated to strengthen the special prosecutorial units charged with investigating the murders of women in Guatemala;

Whereas the Government of Guatemala has undertaken efforts to prevent violence against women, as evidenced by its ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, done at New York December 10, 1984, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, done at New York December 18, 1979, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence Against Women, done at Belem do Para, Brazil June 9, 1994, and other international human rights treaties, and the enactment of laws and the creation of state institutions to promote and protect the rights of women;

Whereas the Government of Guatemala has created special police and prosecutorial units to address the brutal murders of women in Guatemala;

Whereas, in June 2006, the Government of Guatemala successfully abolished the "Rape Law" which had absolved perpetrators of criminal responsibility for rape and certain other crimes of violence upon the perpetrator's marriage with the victim;

Whereas legislators from various parties in Guatemala have joined lawmakers from Mexico and Spain to form the "Inter-parliamentary Network against 'Femicide'";

Whereas the Government of Guatemala and the United Nations recently entered into an agreement to establish the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), which has a mandate to investigate and promote the prosecution of illegal security groups and clandestine security organizations that function with impunity and are suspected of attacking human rights defenders, justice officials, and other civil society actors; and

Whereas continuing impunity for crimes against women is a threat to the rule of law, democracy, and stability in Guatemala: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses its sincerest condolences and deepest sympathy to the families of women and girls murdered in Guatemala, and recog-

nizes their courageous struggle in seeking justice for the victims;

(2) expresses the solidarity of the people of the United States with the people of Guatemala in the face of these tragic and senseless acts;

(3) condemns the ongoing murders of women and girls in Guatemala, and encourages the Government of Guatemala to act with due diligence in order to promptly investigate these killings, prosecute those responsible, and continue to work toward eliminating violence against women;

(4) urges the Government of Guatemala to recognize domestic violence and sexual harassment as criminal acts and to provide the resources and commitment necessary to strengthen the integrity of the prosecutorial and judicial systems;

(5) urges the President and the Secretary of State to incorporate the investigative and preventative efforts of the Government of Guatemala regarding the murder of women and girls into the bilateral agenda between the Governments of Guatemala and the United States;

(6) encourages the Secretary of State to support efforts by the Government of Guatemala to train and equip the special police and prosecutorial units of the Government of Guatemala to conduct thorough and proper investigations of crimes of violence against women, and to implement judicial reform and rule of law programs;

(7) encourages the Secretary of State and the Attorney General to provide assistance in establishing a comprehensive missing persons system and an effective state protection program for witnesses, victims' relatives, and human rights defenders;

(8) urges the Government of Guatemala to hold accountable those law enforcement and judicial officials whose failure to investigate and prosecute the murders adequately, whether through negligence, omission, or abuse, has led to impunity for these crimes;

(9) encourages the Secretary of State to support efforts to identify perpetrators and unknown victims through forensic analysis, including assisting the Government of Guatemala in adequately funding the National Institute for Forensic Science (INACIF) and training lab personnel in investigatory and evidence gathering protocols;

(10) urges the Secretary of State—

(A) to express support for the efforts of the victims' families and loved ones to seek justice for the victims,

(B) to express concern relating to any harassment of these families and the human rights defenders with whom they work, and

(C) to express concern with respect to impediments in the ability of the families to receive prompt and accurate information in their cases;

(11) encourages the Secretary of State to continue to include in the Department of State's annual Country Reports on Human Rights Practices all instances of improper investigatory methods, threats against human rights activists, and the use of torture with respect to cases involving the murder and abduction of women and girls in Guatemala;

(12) recommends that the United States Ambassador to Guatemala continue to meet with the families of the victims, women's rights organizations, and the officials of the Government of Guatemala who are responsible for investigating these crimes; and

(13) recommends that the Secretary of State develop a comprehensive plan to address and combat the growing problem of violence against women in Latin America.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the tragic deaths of women and girls in Guatemala, and

to submit a resolution urging increased U.S. involvement in addressing this serious issue.

Since 2001, more than 2,000 women and girls have been murdered in Guatemala. The murder rate of these women almost doubled from 2001 to 2006, increasing at a higher rate than the murder rate of men. While these killings may be due to a variety of factors, what clearly unifies these cases is the fact that very few of the perpetrators have been brought to justice. Indeed, it is my understanding that as of 2006 there have been only 20 convictions for these killings. In some of the cases police have been implicated in the crimes.

The lack of respect for the rule of law, inadequate legal protections for women, ongoing violence in the country, corruption, insufficient resources, substandard investigations, and the lack of independent and effective judicial and prosecutorial systems, all contribute to the inability of the Government of Guatemala to hold those responsible for these killings accountable for their crimes. The result is a general sense of impunity for crimes against women in the country.

The Government of Guatemala has taken some steps to address these killings. Guatemala has created special police and prosecutorial units to investigate these murders, and repealed the so called "Rape Law" which had absolved perpetrators of criminal responsibility for rape upon the perpetrator's marriage with the victim. The Government also recently entered into an agreement with the United Nations to establish the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, CICIG, which has a mandate to investigate and prosecute illegal security groups operating with impunity. And Guatemala established the National Institute for Forensic Sciences to improve investigatory and evidence gathering efforts.

The resolution I am submitting today is aimed at raising awareness of this issue and encouraging the governments of Guatemala and the United States to work together to stop these killings. Among other things, the resolution: condemns these murders and expresses the sympathy of the Senate to the families of women and girls murdered in Guatemala; encourages the Government of Guatemala to act with due diligence in investigating and prosecuting those responsible for these crimes; urges the Government of Guatemala to recognize domestic violence as a criminal act and to provide adequate resources necessary to strengthen the integrity of the prosecutorial and judicial systems; urges the President and the Secretary of State to incorporate this issue into the bilateral agenda between the governments of Guatemala and the United States; and encourages the Secretary of State to provide assistance in training and

equipping special police units to investigate these crimes, implementing judicial reforms and rule of law programs, establishing a missing persons system, creating an effective witness protection program, and supporting efforts to enhance forensic capabilities.

Mr. President, I urge my colleagues to support this important resolution and give this issue the attention it deserves.

SENATE RESOLUTION 179—WELCOMING THE PRIME MINISTER OF SINGAPORE ON THE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES AND THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN), EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE FOR ITS STRONG COOPERATION WITH THE UNITED STATES IN THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST TERRORISM, AND REAFFIRMING THE COMMITMENT OF THE UNITED STATES TO THE CONTINUED EXPANSION OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SINGAPORE

Mr. BOND submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 179

Whereas Singapore is a great friend of the United States;

Whereas the United States and Singapore share a common vision of promoting peace, stability, security, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region;

Whereas Singapore was a founding member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN);

Whereas Singapore is a member of the Proliferation Security Initiative, an initiative launched by the United States in 2003 to respond to the challenges posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and a committed partner of the United States in preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction;

Whereas Singapore is a leader in the Radiation Detection Initiative, an effort by the United States to develop technology to safeguard maritime security by detecting trafficking of nuclear and radioactive material;

Whereas, in July 2005, Singapore became a partner of the United States in the Strategic Framework Agreement for Closer Cooperation in Defense and Security, an agreement which will build upon the already strong military relations between the United States and Singapore and expand the scope of defense and security cooperation between the 2 countries;

Whereas Singapore selected the F-15SG Fighter, built in the United States, for use by the Air Force of Singapore, which will greatly enhance the interoperability of the Air Forces of Singapore and the United States;

Whereas Singapore responded quickly to provide generous humanitarian relief and financial assistance to the people affected by the tragic tsunami that struck Southeast Asia in December 2004;

Whereas Singapore responded quickly to provide logistical support and assistance to the relief efforts in the United States after Hurricane Katrina;

Whereas Singapore has joined the United States in the global struggle against terrorism, providing intelligence and offering political and diplomatic support;

Whereas Singapore is the 15th largest trading partner of the United States and the first free trade partner of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region, and the United States is the second largest trading partner of Singapore;

Whereas the relationship between the United States and Singapore extends beyond the current campaign against terrorism and is reinforced by strong ties of culture, commerce, and scientific and technical cooperation; and

Whereas the relationship between the United States and Singapore encompasses almost every field of international cooperation, including a common commitment to fostering a stronger and more open international trading system; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the Prime Minister of Singapore, His Excellency Lee Hsien Loong, to the United States;

(2) congratulates the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Singapore as one of its founding members, on the 40th anniversary of ASEAN;

(3) expresses profound gratitude to the Government of Singapore for promoting security and prosperity in Southeast Asia and cooperating with the United States in the global campaign against terrorism; and

(4) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to continue strengthening the friendship and cooperation between the United States, Singapore, and the other countries of the ASEAN region.

SENATE RESOLUTION 180—RECOGNIZING THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IDAHO POTATO COMMISSION AND DESIGNATING MAY 2007 AS “IDAHO POTATO MONTH”

Mr. CRAPO (for himself and Mr. CRAIG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 180

Whereas the State of Idaho produces roughly one-third of all the potatoes grown in the United States, harvesting an average of 12,000,000,000 to 14,000,000,000 pounds annually;

Whereas the State of Idaho’s unique climate of warm days, cool nights, mountain-fed irrigation, and rich volcanic soil is conducive to growing world-renowned potatoes;

Whereas Idaho potatoes are top-selling and highly recognized potatoes in the United States due to their consistently great taste, versatility, and nutritional content;

Whereas the Idaho potato “brand” is recognized throughout the world for its high quality and is an identifying characteristic of the great State of Idaho;

Whereas May 2007 marks the 70th consecutive year that Idaho potatoes have been promoted by the Idaho Potato Commission, an Idaho potato industry group responsible for generating attention for the numerous attributes of Idaho potatoes;

Whereas the Idaho Potato Commission is recognized nationally and internationally as a top promotional authority for Idaho’s potatoes and potato products;

Whereas the Idaho Potato Commission’s requirement, since 1959, that only potatoes grown in the State of Idaho are allowed to wear the “Grown in Idaho” Federal certification mark contributed toward the creation of a distinctive, enduringly successful, and

popular brand for the Russet Burbank potato variety; and

Whereas Idaho’s potato industry contributes approximately \$2,700,000,000 to the State economy and employs 39,000 residents; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 70th anniversary of the Idaho Potato Commission; and

(2) designates May 2007 as “Idaho Potato Month”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 181—HONORING AND RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE ACADEMY FOOTBALL PROGRAM OVER THE LAST 27 YEARS

Mr. ALLARD (for himself, Mr. PRYOR, and Mr. CRAIG) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 181

Whereas, Fisher DeBerry, originally of Cheraw, South Carolina, coached football at the United States Air Force Academy for 27 years, 23 of which as head coach;

Whereas, Fisher DeBerry is the winningest head coach of any United States service academy with a record of 169–109–1;

Whereas, Fisher DeBerry has amassed a 35–11 record against the United States Military Academy and the United States Naval Academy, and led the U.S. Air Force Academy to 14 of its 16 Commander-in-Chief Trophy titles;

Whereas, Fisher DeBerry led his Air Force teams to 3 conference championships and 12 bowl games;

Whereas, Fisher DeBerry has been recognized numerous times for his coaching success, including selection as National Coach of the Year for 1985; selection 3 times as Western Athletic Conference Coach of the Year; induction into the South Carolina Sports Hall of Fame; induction into the Colorado Springs Sports Hall of Fame; induction into the Independence Bowl Hall of Fame; the 2001 State Farm Coach of Distinction honor; an honorary doctorate of humanities from Wofford College; service as president of the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA); and service as Chairman of the AFCA ethics committee;

Whereas, Fisher DeBerry has acted as a pillar of the Colorado Springs, Colorado, community during the past 27 years through his active involvement and volunteerism with local church, charity, and community organizations;

Whereas, in 2004 Fisher DeBerry founded the Fisher DeBerry Foundation, which is dedicated to the support and education of single mothers and their children, as well as other charitable causes;

Whereas, Fisher DeBerry has served as a positive influence and role model to numerous future Air Force officers, including coaching 3,375 players; having a graduation success rate of 91.6 percent among his players; and producing 19 All-American players, 124 All-Conference players, 11 Academic All-Americans, and 9 Postgraduate Scholarship winners;

Whereas, Fisher DeBerry imparted to his players the core values of the United States Air Force: Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence In All We Do; and

Whereas, the United States Air Force Academy football program under the leadership of Fisher DeBerry has served as an example of these values for its community and the entire Nation; Now, therefore, be it