BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 994, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to eliminate the deductible and change the method of determining the mileage reimbursement rate under the beneficiary travel program administered by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1003

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1003, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to emergency medical services and the quality and efficiency of care furnished in emergency departments of hospitals and critical access hospitals by establishing a bipartisan commission to examine factors that affect the effective delivery of such services, by providing for additional payments for certain physician services furnished in such emergency departments, and by establishing a Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Working Group, and for other purposes.

S. 1019

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1019, a bill to provide comprehensive reform of the health care system of the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1117

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1117, a bill to establish a grant program to provide vision care to children, and for other purposes.

S. 1155

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1155, a bill to treat payments under the Conservation Reserve Program as rentals from real estate.

S. 1172

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1172, a bill to reduce hunger in the United States.

S. 1183

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1183, a bill to enhance and further research into paralysis and to improve rehabilitation and the quality of life for persons living with paralysis and other physical disabilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1224

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1224, a bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes.

S. 1338

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1338, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a two-year moratorium on certain Medicare physician payment reductions for imaging services.

S. 1339

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1339, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve recruitment, preparation, distribution, and retention of public elementary and secondary school teachers and principals, and for other purposes.

S. 1370

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1370, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure more investment and innovation in clean energy technologies.

S. 1389

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1389, a bill to authorize the National Science Foundation to establish a Climate Change Education Program.

S. 1410

At the request of Mr. COLEMAN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1410, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for the purchase of hearing aids.

S. RES. 203

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 203, a resolution calling on the Government of the People's Republic of China to use its unique influence and economic leverage to stop genocide and violence in Darfur, Sudan.

AMENDMENT NO. 1146

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1146 proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1151

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. GREGG), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1151 intended to be proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1157

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1157 intended to be proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1158

At the request of Mr. COLEMAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1158 proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1159

At the request of Mr. COLEMAN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1159 intended to be proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1161

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1161 intended to be proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1165

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1165 proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DOMENICI (for himself, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. BURR, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. THOMAS, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BUNNING, and Mr. MARTINEZ):

S. 37. A bill to enhance the management and disposal of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste, to assure protection of public health safety, to ensure the territorial integrity and security of the repository at Yucca Mountain, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation that I believe will place the Department of Energy's nuclear waste program back on

track. I am joined by Senator CRAIG and others to introduce the Nuclear Waste Access to Yucca Bill, or Nu-Way Bill, which I believe will help to resolve the issue of nuclear waste once and for all.

As we all know, the history of the Yucca Mountain project has been rocky at best. The Yucca Mountain project has a very long pedigree, starting back to the late 1950s when the National Academy of Sciences, NAS, reported to the Atomic Energy Commission that burying radioactive high-level waste in geologic formations should receive consideration. NAS stated that ''radioactive waste can be disposed of safely in a variety of ways and at a large number of sites in the United States.''

In 1982, Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act after a solid consensus had been reached around the major elements of the approach broadly outlined by President Carter. When President Reagan signed it into law the following January, he called the Act ''a milestone for progress and the ability of our democratic system to resolve a sophisticated and divisive issue.''

The Congress was quite optimistic then, so optimistic that we told the Department of Energy, DOE, to enter into contracts with utilities to begin taking nuclear waste off their hands by 1998 in return for the payment of fees. Well, obviously that didn't happen, but the United States government continues to collect the fee at 1mil/KWH electricity generated by nuclear plants. What did happen was that the utilities began to sue DOE for failing to meet its contractual obligation to remove spent nuclear fuel from storage at commercial reactor sites. DOE has been negotiating with various reactor owners since 1999 over the missed deadline for settlement agreements. The first agreement was reached in July 2000 which allowed DOE to pay PECO Energy Co. up to $80 million in nuclear waste fee revenues during the subsequent 10 years. However, other utilities sued DOE to block the settlement, contending that nuclear waste fees may be used only for the DOE Waste Program and not as compensation for missing the disposal deadline. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit agreed that any compensation would have to come from general revenue or other sources than the waste fund.

Today, commercial spent nuclear fuel continues to be stored at plant sites, and DOE is facing more than $6 billion in judgments for failure to dispose the spent nuclear fuel. As for the nuclear waste fund, we now have more than $19 billion of the ratepayer's money in principal and interest.

In addition to civilian spent nuclear fuel, the Department of Energy stores about 2,500 metric tons of defense waste, which includes unreprocessed spent nuclear fuel from its plutonium production reactors, naval propulsion reactors, and research reactors at Hanford, Savannah River, and the Idaho National Laboratory.

While moving more slowly than planned, DOE's nuclear waste program has made progress toward making the goal of a permanent geologic repository for nuclear waste a reality. Originally, the Nuclear Waste Policy Act required DOE to characterize more than one site for two repositories. As the most promising site considered, the Yucca Mountain site was selected by DOE to be the first site to be characterized. In 1987, the act was amended and the Congress directed DOE to focus its siting effort on Yucca Mountain alone and terminated the second repository program.

On February 14, 2002, after carrying out the required ''appropriate site characterization activities'' at Yucca Mountain to determine its suitability, the President recommended Yucca Mountain to Congress as being ''qualified for application for a construction authorization for a repository.''

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act provided the Governor of Nevada the opportunity to object to the site selection and to submit to Congress the reasons. On April 8, 2002, the Governor of Nevada exercised this authority and submitted his notice of disapproval and statement of reasons. Under the terms of the Act, the Governor's notice had the effect of terminating further consideration of the Yucca Mountain site until both Houses of Congress passed and the President signed into law a joint resolution approving the site.

The State veto provisions of the act accomplished their intent, which was to afford Congress another opportunity to review and determine if the objection was sufficient to terminate the program. Based on expert opinion, both Houses concluded that the objection was not sufficient, and that the Yucca Mountain site is geologically suitable for development of the repository. In the national interest, Congress approved the Yucca Mountain site, and instructed DOE to file a license application for the repository with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, NRC. The decision has been made. All the scientific work performed to date supports the decision.

With the siting decision made, it will now be up to the EPA to issue general standards and for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to license the facility by evaluating the scientific data and determining whether the repository will permanently, and safely, isolate nuclear waste.

Yucca Mountain is the cornerstone of our national comprehensive spent nuclear fuel management strategy for this country. Let me be clear: We need Yucca Mountain. We must make this program work. I believe the bill introduced today will do that.

This bill will remove unintended legal barriers that will allow DOE to meet its obligation to accept and store spent nuclear fuel as soon as possible, without prejudging the outcome of the NRC's repository licensing decision.

The bill I am introducing today authorizes DOE to permanently withdraw 147,000 acres of Federal land from public use currently controlled by the Bureau of Land Management, the Air Force, and the Nevada Test Site, to satisfy a license condition of the NRC.

This legislation will repeal the arbitrary 70,000 metric ton statutory limit on emplacement of radioactive material at Yucca Mountain. The cap was imposed when Congress was considering two rounds of repositories. I believe that the capacity of the mountain should be determined by scientific and technical analysis, and not by political compromises.

Today, the major facility at the Yucca Mountain site is an ''exploratory studies facility'' with a 25-foot-diameter, 5-mile long, tunnel with ramps leading to the surface. This legislation will allow the DOE to begin construction of needed infrastructure for the repository and surface storage facilities as soon as they complete an environmental impact statement that evaluates these activities.

The ''Nu-Way'' bill also begins to consolidate the defense nuclear waste and spent nuclear fuel from defense activities at the Yucca Mountain site. The bill requires DOE to file for a permit to build a surface receipt and storage facility at the Nevada Test Site at the same time it files its license application for a repository at Yucca Mountain.

As soon as the department receives the permit for the surface receipt and storage facility from the NRC, it may begin moving defense fuel and waste to the Nevada Test Site. We are not giving DOE any new authority to move spent fuel. DOE currently has authority to transport and consolidate defense waste at DOE facilities, with the sole exception of Yucca Mountain site. The spent nuclear fuel from our Navy and defense activities that kept us safe during the Cold War should be consolidated and stored securely at the Nevada Test Site. The defense waste is currently stored temporarily in Hanford, Idaho and Savannah River sites.

This legislation further provides that only after the NRC issues a construction permit for Yucca Mountain, may the Department of Energy begin moving civilian spent fuel to the Nevada Test Site. This legislation also lays the foundation to integrate Yucca Mountain Repository Program and Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, GNEP, by providing that before civilian spent nuclear fuel is shipped to Yucca Mountain, the Secretary of Energy must determine if it can be recycled within a reasonable time. I might add that the current plans for GNEP do not include recycling all 55,000 metric tons of civilian spent fuel that has already been generated. This proposal will would avoid moving waste to Yucca Mountain Site that should be shipped instead to a GNEP facility.

In the long run, this measure provides DOE with the authorities needed to execute the Yucca Mountain project for long term emplacement and for the

GNEP program to reduce the volume and toxicity of the material to be placed in the repository, thereby eliminating the need for a second waste repository.

This bill will also withdraw land for a rail route Yucca, a vital transportation component. There is also a provision that provides that appropriations from the nuclear waste fund will not count against the allocations for discretionary spending. DOE will have access to the full funds in the nuclear waste fund, moneys collected from electricity rate payers, our constituents, specifically for developing and constructing the waste repository.

To address the liability problem created by Congress when DOE could not remove spent nuclear fuel from the reactor sites, this legislation will authorize DOE to revise the standard contract to accept waste from new nuclear reactors at a more reasonable schedule. By doing all of these things, this bill will establish a comprehensive program that will provide confidence that our Nation's nuclear waste will be managed safely both for current and future reactors.

The issue of Yucca Mountain has been addressed repeatedly by Congress and Presidents. The legislation I am introducing today will not circumvent any environmental standards or regulations, nor will it preempt any State or local government rights.

Despite the great advances that we have made in this Nation on nuclear energy, we are still faced with challenges. EIA estimates that even with a projected increase in nuclear capacity and generation in large, the nuclear share of total electricity is estimated to fall from 19 percent in 2005 to 15 percent in 2030. This is because our energy needs will be great over the next 25 years. For energy security reasons, economic reasons and environmental reasons, we must make nuclear energy a larger part of our mix. To meet the challenge of reducing carbon emissions in order to address climate change, we need nuclear energy. And, if we need nuclear energy, we need Yucca Mountain.

Solving nuclear waste is in the national interest. We can solve this problem and I hope we can move forward together in a new way.

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

S. 38. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a program for the provision of readjustment and mental health services to veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. DOMENICI. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague Senator OBAMA to introduce the Veterans' Mental Health Outreach and Access Act. This bill will require the Secretary of Veteran's Affairs to establish a program for the provision of readjustment and mental health services to veterans who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, with a particular emphasis on those soldiers who served in the National Guard and Reserves.

Operation Enduring Freedom, OEF, and Operation Iraqi Freedom, OIF, are unique in their extensive use of National Guard and Reserve troops and their reliance on repetitive deployments. More than 1,500 National Guard and Reservists from New Mexico have been deployed in support of OIF and OEF. Several hundred of these soldiers have been deployed multiple times. This is a new era for our National Guard and for the Reserve. The role of these organizations in defending our national security has significantly increased. Guard and Reserve members are seeing significant combat action and we know that a number of these soldiers will return with mental and physical wounds suffered in these wars, including post traumatic stress disorder, depression, brain injuries and other traumatic illnesses.

Virtually all returning veterans and their families will face readjustment problems. These soldiers and their families deserve the best care and treatment possible, but where do our National Guard and Reserve soldiers fit into the military and veterans' systems of care? These ''citizen-soldiers'' are not returning to military bases, but rather to communities that are frequently remote from VA medical centers and clinics.

We're quick to urge that VA provide veterans needed treatment for service-related mental health problems, but we also need to do more to remove the barriers such as travel and distance that oftentimes will prevent a veteran from seeking and continuing treatment. The Domenici-Obama bill calls on the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to develop a national program to reach vets who can't or won't seek VA care. It requires the Secretary to mount a national program to train a cadre of returning servicemembers for positions as peer outreach workers and peer-support specialists. In any remote area of the country in which the VA determines there is inadequate access to a VA medical center, the bill directs the Secretary of the VA to contract with community mental health centers and other qualified entities to provide peer outreach and support services, readjustment counseling and mental health services. However, any resulting contracts would require centers to first train and adhere to the VA's expertise and standards of care in mental health. It also will require any contract-provider to hire a trained peer specialist as well as have its clinicians participate in a training program to be certain they'll provide ''culturally competent'' services.

This bill also gives needed attention to the toll these military operations have on the mental health needs of our veterans' families. These deployments are causing great stress for the spouses and children of these soldiers. Yet despite the recognition of the mental health needs of the family members of the returning veterans, current law limits the ability of the VA to work with these family members. This bill will expand access to mental health services for the immediate family of the veteran so that they may help the veteran recover in the case of injury or illness incurred during deployment. It will also help expand access to services so that the family can better help the veteran adjust back to civilian life, and also help the readjustment of the family to the return of the veteran.

Lastly, this bill will extend the eligibility for health care services from the Department of Veterans Affairs for veterans who served in combat from 2 years to 5 years. Two years is often insufficient time for symptoms related to PTSD and other mental illness to manifest. In many cases, it takes years for symptoms to present themselves, and the difficulty is often compounded by the fact that many servicemembers do not immediately seek the care that they need. Five years provides a more adequate window to address these risks.

Outreach and access to treatment are essential to prevent readjustment problems for our returning veterans and their families. Left untreated, mental disorders like PTSD and depression can become chronic and debilitating. We need systems in place to ensure that OEF/OIF veterans who are returning to their homes have access to the services they need. It is my hope that this legislation will help close the gaps we currently have in our service delivery systems and provide help to those who have experienced mental health problems as a result of their service to their country.

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. 38

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 ''Veterans' Mental Health Outreach and Access Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. PROGRAM ON PROVISION OF READJUSTMENT AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO VETERANS WHO SERVED IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM AND OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM.

(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish a program to provide—

(1) to veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, particularly veterans who served in such operations while in the National Guard and the Reserves—

(A) peer outreach services;

(B) peer support services;

(C) readjustment counseling and services described in section 1712A of title 38, United States Code; and

(D) mental health services; and

(2) to members of the immediate family of such a veteran, during the three-year period beginning on the date of the return of such veteran from deployment in Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, education, support, counseling, and mental health services to assist in—

(A) the readjustment of such veteran to civilian life;

(B) in the case such veteran has an injury or illness incurred during such deployment, the recovery of such veteran; and

(C) the readjustment of the family following the return of such veteran.

(b) CONTRACTS WITH COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTERS AND QUALIFIED ENTITIES FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES.—In carrying out the program required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall contract with community mental health centers and other qualified entities to provide the services required by such subsection in areas the Secretary determines are not adequately served by other health care facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Such contracts shall require each contracting community health center or entity—

(1) to the extent practicable, to employ veterans trained under subsection (c);

(2) to the extent practicable, to use telehealth services for the delivery of services required by subsection (a);

(3) to participate in the training program conducted in accordance with subsection (d);

(4) to comply with applicable protocols of the Department of Veterans Affairs before incurring any liability on behalf of the Department for the provision of the services required by subsection (a);

(5) to submit annual reports to the Secretary containing, with respect to the program required by subsection (a) and for the last full calendar year ending before the submission of such report—

(A) the number of the veterans served, veterans diagnosed, and courses of treatment provided to veterans as part of the program required by subsection (a); and

(B) demographic information for such services, diagnoses, and courses of treatment;

(6) for each veteran for whom a community mental health center or other qualified entity provides mental health services under such contract, to provide the Department of Veterans Affairs with such clinical summary information as the Secretary shall require; and

(7) to meet such other requirements as the Secretary shall require.

(c) TRAINING OF VETERANS FOR THE PROVISION OF PEER-OUTREACH AND PEER-SUPPORT SERVICES.—In carrying out the program required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall contract with a national not-for-profit mental health organization to carry out a national program of training for veterans described in subsection (a) to provide the services described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (1) of such subsection.

(d) TRAINING OF CLINICIANS FOR PROVISION OF SERVICES.—The Secretary shall conduct a training program for clinicians of community mental health centers or entities that have contracts with the Secretary under subsection (b) to ensure that such clinicians can provide the services required by subsection (a) in a manner that—

(1) recognizes factors that are unique to the experience of veterans who served on active duty in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom (including their combat and military training experiences); and

(2) utilizes best practices and technologies.

(e) REPORTS REQUIRED.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT ON PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 45 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report containing the plans of the Secretary to implement the program required by subsection (a).

(2) STATUS REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the implementation of the program. Such report shall include the following:

(A) Information on the number of veterans who received services as part of the program and the type of services received during the last full calendar year completed before the submission of such report.

(B) An evaluation of the provision of services under paragraph (2) of subsection (a) and a recommendation as to whether the period described in such paragraph should be extended to a five-year period.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES FROM DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR VETERANS OF SERVICE IN COMBAT THEATER.

Section 1710(e)(3)(C) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''2 years'' and inserting ''5 years''.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 1457. A bill to provide for the protection of mail delivery on certain postal routes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, since it was created the U.S. Postal Service has provided trusted, reliable delivery to tens of millions of households throughout the country. Today, the USPS stands as the second largest employer in the country with over 700,000 employees and is the most efficient postal service in the world. Last year, the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act was passed and signed into law, ensuring the sustainability of the USPS for years to come.

However, recent decisions by the Postal Service have put the success and reliability of mail delivery in jeopardy. Postal delivery managers are now being encouraged to contract out delivery services for all new deliveries, of which there are approximately 1.8 million per year.

Outsourcing the mailman bypasses the process that ensures that only qualified people handle America's mail, leaving open the possibility that convicted felons, identity thieves, or other undesirable workers could have access to the mail stream.

Furthermore, it limits the ability of the Postal Service to prevent, investigate, and prosecute mail theft, mail fraud, and other illegal uses of the mail.

The USPS employs dedicated postal employees who earn solid middle-class wages and have health benefits and pension plans. The quality of service and reliability that the USPS has been known for is threatened if our mail carriers are replaced by low-paid, short-term workers.

This is why I am introducing the Mail Delivery Protection Act of 2007. This bill would prevent the USPS from contracting out the delivery of mail to postal patrons to private individuals and firms.

Each day millions of sensitive materials, including financial statements, credit cards, Social Security checks, passports, and ballots, pass through the mail stream. We cannot afford to allow the safe delivery of these personal, private documents to be granted to the lowest bidder.

In 2006, 379 Members of the House of Representatives voted against a pilot program testing the feasibility of contracted delivery.

However, postal management has increasingly chosen to contract out the delivery of mail, therefore outsourcing their core service function. A fancy restaurant would not contract out its chefs to a cheap fast-food chain to save money. Why should the Post Office outsource its delivery?

We must remember that this is the U.S. Postal Service. This bill will ensure that the safety and reliability we have all come to know from our local mail carriers will continue.

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. 1457

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

SECTION 1. MAIL DELIVERY PROTECTION.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Mail Delivery Protection Act of 2007''.

(b) MAIL DELIVERY PROTECTION.—Section 5212 of title 39, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(a)'' before ''The Postal Service may''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b)(1) Except as provided under paragraph (2), the Postal Service may not enter into any contract under this section with any motor carrier or other person for the delivery of mail on any route with 1 or more families per mile.

''(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (1)—

''(A) any contract described under that paragraph in effect on the date of enactment of the Mail Delivery Protection Act of 2007—

''(i) shall remain in effect until terminated under the terms of such contract or as otherwise provided by law; and

''(ii) may be renewed 1 or more times; and

''(B) service on a rural route may be converted to contract delivery service when such route no longer serves a minimum of 1 family per mile.''.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. LAUTENBERG):

S. 1459. A bill to strengthen the Nation's research efforts to identify the causes and cure of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, expand psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis data collection, study

access to and quality of care for people with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Research, Cure, and Care Act of 2007. According to the National Institutes of Health, as many as 7.5 million Americans are affected by psoriasis, a chronic, inflammatory, painful, disfiguring and disabling disease for which there are limited treatments and no cure. In my State of New Jersey, the National Psoriasis Foundation estimates that 219,000 people have psoriasis.

Ten to thirty percent of people with psoriasis also develop psoriatic arthritis, which causes pain, stiffness, and swelling in and around the joints. Moreover, of further concern is that people with psoriasis are at elevated risk for a myriad other comorbidities, including but not limited to heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and mental health conditions. Despite the serious adverse effects that psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis have on individuals, families and society, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are underrecognized and underfunded by our Nation's research institutions and public health agencies. At the historical and current rate of psoriasis funding, NIH funding is not keeping pace with research needs. For that reason, I am introducing legislation to boost psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis research, improve and expand psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis data collection, increase access to care and treatment for these diseases, and help debunk the myths associated with psoriasis.

I know that this legislation will go a long way in achieving these important public policy goals. The bill calls on the Secretary of Health and Human Services, HHS, to convene a summit of researchers, public health professionals, representatives of patient advocacy organizations and policymakers to review current efforts in psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis research, treatment, and quality-of-life being conducted by Federal agencies whose work involves psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis related comorbidities. The legislation also calls on the Secretary of HHS to commission a study from the Institutes of Medicine, IOM, to evaluate and make recommendations to address health insurance and prescription drug coverage as they relate to medications and treatments for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Lastly, the bill directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop a patient registry to collect much-needed longitudinal data on psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis so we can begin to understand the long-term impact of these conditions and evaluate the effects of various therapies.

I would like to thank the National Psoriasis Foundation for all of its efforts and leadership over the last four decades and am grateful to the Foundation and its members and staff for their ongoing commitment to improving quality of life for people with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Again, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Research Cure, and Care Act.

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. 1459

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 ''Psoriasis and Psoriatic Arthritis Research, Cure, and Care Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds as follows:

(1) Psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis are autoimmune-mediated, chronic, inflammatory, painful, disfiguring, and life-altering diseases that require life-long sophisticated medical intervention and care and have no cure.

(2) Psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis affect as many as 7.5 million men, women, and children of all ages and have an adverse impact on the quality of life for virtually all affected.

(3) Psoriasis often is overlooked or dismissed because it does not cause death. Psoriasis is commonly and incorrectly considered by insurers, employers, policymakers, and the public as a mere annoyance, a superficial problem, mistakenly thought to be contagious and due to poor hygiene. Treatment for psoriasis often is categorized, wrongly, as ''life-style'' and not ''medically necessary''.

(4) Psoriasis goes hand-in-hand with a myriad of co-morbidities such as Crohn's disease, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, obesity, hypertension, heart attack, cardiovascular disease, liver disease, and psoriatic arthritis, which occurs in 10 to 30 percent of people with psoriasis.

(5) The National Institute of Mental Health funded a study that found that psoriasis may cause as much physical and mental disability as other major diseases, including cancer, arthritis, hypertension, heart disease, diabetes, and depression.

(6) Psoriasis is associated with elevated rates of depression and suicidal ideation.

(7) Each year the people of the United States lose approximately 56 million hours of work and spend $2 billion to $3 billion to treat psoriasis.

(8) Early diagnosis and treatment of psoriatic arthritis may help prevent irreversible joint damage.

(9) Treating psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis presents a challenge for patients and their health care providers because no one treatment works for everyone, some treatments lose effectiveness over time, many treatments are used in combination with other treatments, and all treatments may cause a unique set of side effects.

(10) Although new and more effective treatments finally are becoming available, too many people do not yet have access to the types of therapies that may make a significant difference in the quality of their lives.

(11) Psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis constitute a significant national health issue that deserves a comprehensive and coordinated response by State and Federal governments with involvement of the health care provider, patient, and public health communities.

SEC. 4. EXPANSION OF BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this Act referred to as the ''Secretary''), acting through the Director of the National Institutes of Health, shall expand and intensify research and related activities of the Institutes with respect to psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

(b) RESEARCH BY NIAMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases shall conduct or support research to expand understanding of the causes of, and to find a cure for, psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis. Such research shall include the following:

(A) Basic research to discover the pathogenesis and pathophysiology of the disease.

(B) Expansion of molecular genetics and immunology studies, including additional animal models.

(C) Global association mapping with single nucleotide polymorphisms.

(D) Identification of environmental triggers and autoantigens in psoriasis.

(E) Elucidation of specific immune receptor cells and their products involved.

(F) Pharmcogenetic studies to understand the molecular basis for varying patient response to treatment.

(G) Identification of genetic markers of psoriatic arthritis susceptibility.

(H) Research to increase understanding of joint inflammation and destruction in psoriatic arthritis.

(I) Clinical research for the development and evaluation of new treatments, including new biological agents.

(J) Research to develop improved diagnostic tests.

(K) Research to increase understanding of co-morbidities and psoriasis, including shared molecular pathways.

(2) COORDINATION WITH OTHER INSTITUTES.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Director of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases shall coordinate the activities of the Institute with the activities of other national research institutes and other agencies and offices of the National Institutes of Health relating to psoriasis or psoriatic arthritis.

SEC. 5. NATIONAL PATIENT REGISTRY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and in collaboration with an eligible national organization, shall establish a national psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis patient registry.

(b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall enter into cooperative agreements with an eligible national organization and appropriate academic health institutions to develop, implement, and manage a system for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis patient data collection and analysis, including the creation and use of a common data entry and management system.

(c) LONGITUDINAL DATA.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall ensure the collection and analysis of longitudinal data

related to individuals of all ages with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, including infants, young children, adolescents, and adults of all ages including older Americans.

(d) ELIGIBLE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION.—In this section, the term ''eligible national organization'' means a national organization that—

(1) has expertise in the epidemiology of psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis; and

(2) maintains an established patient registry or biobank.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry out this section, there are authorized to be appropriated $1,000,000 for fiscal year 2008 and $500,000 for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2012.

SEC. 6. NATIONAL SUMMIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall convene a summit on the current activities of the Federal Government to conduct or support research, treatment, education, and quality-of-life activities with respect to psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, including psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis related co-morbidities. The summit shall include researchers, public health professionals, representatives of voluntary health agencies and patient advocacy organizations, representatives of academic institutions, and Federal and State policymakers.

(b) FOCUS.—The summit convened under this section shall focus on—

(1) a broad range of research activities relating to biomedical, epidemiological, psychosocial, and rehabilitative issues;

(2) clinical research for the development and evaluation of new treatments, including new biological agents;

(3) translational research;

(4) information and education programs for health care professionals and the public;

(5) priorities among the programs and activities of the various Federal agencies involved in psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis and psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis related co-morbidities; and

(6) challenges and opportunities for scientists, clinicians, patients, and voluntary organizations.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 180 days after the first day of the summit convened under this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress and make publicly available a report that includes a description of—

(1) the proceedings at the summit; and

(2) the research, treatment, education, and quality-of-life activities conducted or supported by the Federal Government with respect to psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis, including psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis related co-morbidities.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—To carry out this section, there are authorized such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2008 through 2010.

SEC. 7. STUDY AND REPORT BY THE INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall enter into an agreement with the Institute of Medicine to conduct a study on the following:

(1) The extent to which public and private insurers cover prescription medications and other treatments for psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

(2) The payment structures, such as deductibles and co-payments, and the amounts and duration of coverage under health plans and their adequacy to cover the costs of providing ongoing care to patients with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis.

(3) Health plan and insurer coverage policies and practices and their impact on the access of such patients to the best regimen and most appropriate care for their particular disease state.

(b) REPORT.—The agreement entered into under subsection (a) shall provide for the Institute of Medicine to submit to the Secretary and Congress, not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, a report containing a description of the results of the study conducted under this section and the conclusions and recommendations of the Institutes of Medicine regarding each of the issues described in paragraphs (1) through (3) of subsection (a).

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER:

S. 1461. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Health and Human Services from imposing penalties against a State under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program for failure to satisfy minimum work participation rates or comply with work participation verification procedures with respect to months beginning after September 2006 and before the end of the 12-month period that begins on the date the Secretary approves the State's work verification plan; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, today I am introducing a simple bill to try and provide some fairness to States as they struggle to try and implement the new, stringent standards of the welfare reform reauthorization imposed as part of the Deficit Reduction Act on 2007. As a former member of the West Virginia State Legislature and as a Governor, I know that implementation of such mandates can take time.

Let me share the timeline that States face in coping with the new rules on welfare reform, or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, TANF. Most of the pending legislation on TANF, including President Bush's plan had a multiyear phase in proposals for tougher work requirements.

But the legislation that passed was a stark change with no time for States to develop new policy and no time for State legislature to react to new policy. Additionally States could be penalized for their policy even before they get guidance from officials at the Department of Health and Human Services, HHS, that their work verification plan is approved. This is just not fair.

Here is the history. In October of 2005, the House Workforce Committee passed legislation to phase-in higher work standards.

In November of 2005, the Senate approved a budget reconciliation bill without new work requirements. Later that month, the House approved a reconciliation bill that phased-in higher work requirements.

On December 19, 2005, the conference agreement on the Deficit Reduction Act imposed tougher work standard that will take effect on October 1, 2007. States will also face penalties if they do not meet new, unpublished work verification requirements.

The President signed the bill into law in February 2006.

The Department of Health and Human Services did not issue regulations to define work activities and outlining the requirements for work verification plans until June 29, 2006.

States had just 3 months to develop their work verification plans based on the new regulations, and the plans are due on September 30, 2006.

On October 1, 2006, the tougher work standards as measured by work verification took effect.

Today, May 22, 2006, no State has received approval of their work verification plans submitted over 7 months ago. But States could be penalized for failing participation standards today before they have gotten guidance from HHS that their work verification plans are approved, and they know what is expected of them.

This is just not fair. States need to know what the rules are for work, and what they can count for work before any penalties should be assessed, even if they are not due until a future date. Some of the potential penalties are harsh, including a 5 percent cut in the State's block grant in the first year, and a requirement to increase State matching funds. Such cuts could be imposed when the value of TANF block grant has shrunk by more than 20 percent since 1996.

My bill is simple fairness. It states that no financial penalties can be imposed on a State until 12 months after a State gets official approval by HHS of its work verification plans. This allows each State a year to come into compliance. States are trying, but they do not yet know what officially counts as work so they should not face any penalties until after the rules are clear.

Welfare reform is not supposed to be about penalties and pushing families off the caseload. Welfare reform is supposed to be about promoting responsibility and self-sufficiency. States, and the families, on the program deserve to know with certainty what it takes to ''play by the rules.''

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER:

S. 1462. A bill to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to promote the adoption of children with special needs; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Adoption Equality Act of 2007. This legislation is an issue of fairness. It clearly states that every special needs child who needs adoption assistance in order to gain a safe, permanent home deserves it.

Throughout my career in the Senate, I have sought to strengthen and improve policies for the most vulnerable children, children who are at-risk of abuse and neglect in their own homes. While foster care is able to provide for the basic needs of these children, we must ultimately be able to provide them with a safe permanent home.

Congress demonstrated their dedication to this when they passed the 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act, which led to the number of nationwide adoptions nearly doubling. But even with

these significant gains we cannot forget over 100,000 children in foster care are waiting for adoption. In West Virginia, there are 94 children waiting for adoption. For some of these children, described as having ''special needs,'' placement in a safe permanent home is especially difficult. Special needs children face increased obstacles in adoption due to factors such as their age, disability, or status as part of a group of siblings needing to be placed together.

In an effort to offer additional support to those in foster care who have the most difficulty finding a safe and permanent home, adoption subsidies are provided to encourage the adoption of ''special needs'' children. These subsidy payments provide essential income support to help families finance the daily basic costs of raising these children, as well as support for special services like therapy, tutoring, or special equipment for disabled children.

Yet, the current law does not make these Federal subsidies available to all families adopting ''special needs'' children. Under this law, only a fraction of the children waiting to be adopted would qualify for support. Federal subsidies are only given to families who adopt special needs children whose biological family would have qualified for welfare benefits. This is, simply, wrong. A child's eligibility for these important benefits should not be dependent on the income of his or her biological parents, these are the parents whose legal rights to the child have been terminated, the parents who have abused or neglected the child.

It is time to create a Federal policy that levels the playing field and gives all children with special needs an equal and fair chance at being adopted. The Adoption Equality Act of 2007 will do this by removing the requirement that an income eligibility determination be made in regard to the child's biological parents, thereby making all children who meet the definition of ''special needs'' eligible for Federal adoption subsidies. The bill would also give States an incentive to make additional improvements to their welfare systems by requiring that States reinvest the moneys they save as a result of this bill back into their State child abuse and neglect programs.

The lack of modest financial resources to support these adoptions is often the only barrier that stands between an abused child and a safe, loving home. This bill is a wise investment if we want to truly help our most vulnerable children find a permanent home.

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 1464. A bill to establish a Global Service Fellowship Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce the Global Service Fellowship Program Act. This important bill would provide more Americans the opportunity to volunteer overseas and strengthen our existing Federal international education and exchange system. I believe the U.S. government needs to be taking a greater leadership role in providing opportunities for U.S. citizens to volunteer overseas and my bill will enhance U.S. efforts to be a global leader in people-to-people engagement.

People-to-people engagement is one of the United States' most effective public diplomacy tools and, today more than ever, we need to be investing in every opportunity to improve the perception of the U.S. overseas. Bad policy decisions by this administration have led to an alarming increase in negative opinions of the United States and we have not done enough to reverse this trend.

Studies have shown that, in areas where U.S. citizens have volunteered their time, money, and services, opinions of the United States have improved. A 2006 Terror Free Tomorrow poll found that, ''In Indonesia, almost two years after the tsunami, American aid to tsunami victims continues to be the single biggest factor resulting in favorable opinion towards the United States. Almost 60 percent of Indonesians surveyed nationwide in August 2006 said that American assistance made them favorable to the United States. This number has remained solid following tsunami relief, despite a growing number of Indonesians who oppose American-led efforts to fight terrorism.''

Greater investment in volunteer opportunities has significant potential to improve the image of the U.S. overseas and while we have important programs already in place, the Peace Corps and programs administered through the Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, we can and should be doing more.

My bill would not only provide more opportunities for people-to-people engagement, but it reduces barriers that the average citizen faces when trying to volunteer internationally. First of all, my bill would reduce financial barriers by awarding fellowship awards designed to defray some of the costs associated with volunteering. The fellowship awards can be applied towards airfare, housing, or program costs, to name a few examples. By providing financial assistance, the Global Service Fellowship program opens the door for every American to be a participant, not just those with the resources to pay for it.

Secondly, my bill reduces volunteering barriers by offering flexibility in the length of the volunteer opportunity. I often hear from constituents that they do not seek opportunities to participate in Federal volunteer programs because they cannot leave their jobs or family for years at a time. The Global Service Fellowship Programs offers volunteers the opportunity to volunteer on a schedule that works for them, a month up to a year. My bill provides a commonsense approach to the time limitations of the average American.

Not only does this bill open the door for any U.S. citizen to apply for fellowship consideration, it calls on Congress to be part of the decision-making process. The Global Service Fellowship Program integrates members of Congress by calling on them to nominate volunteer applicants to the Department of State for consideration. Through this process, Congress will see firsthand the benefit international volunteering brings to their communities and the nation.

My bill would cost $150 million, which is more than offset by a provision that would require the IRS to deposit all of its fee receipts in the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts. CBO has estimated that this offset will save $559 million over 5 years for net deficit reduction of approximately $409 million.

I am pleased that my colleagues, Senators COLEMAN, VOINOVICH, CASEY, MENENDEZ, and LAUTENBERG have joined me in introducing this bill. This program would be a valuable addition to our public diplomacy and humanitarian efforts overseas and I encourage my colleagues to support the bill.

By Mr. BIDEN:

S. 1467. A bill to establish an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Demonstration Program; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Demonstration Program Act of 2007.

This legislation addresses some of the disparities in our current system with an innovative way to clear the hurdles that lack of information and high costs often form to prevent low-income students from planning for a college education. A recent report by the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center concluded that grant programs ''that are well targeted and have more predictable and larger awards tend to have larger impacts on college-going rates.'' This bill, I am pleased to say, establishes such a program.

Right now, students do not find out if they are eligible for Federal aid until their senior year, much less how much they will receive. If you have ever put kids through college, like I have, you know that this time frame doesn't allow much leeway for planning ahead. An earlier promise of Federal aid will begin the conversation about college early and continue it through high school. That way, students and their families can visualize college in their future, and this goal can sustain them through the moment they open their letter of acceptance. This promise can be especially important in changing the expectations of low-income students whose future plans often don't include college.

My bill would provide funding for a demonstration in four states, each of which would work with two cohorts of up to 10,000 eighth grade students; one in school year 2007–2008, and one in school year 2008–2009. By using the same eligibility criteria as the National School Lunch Program, students would be identified based on need in the eighth grade. Eligible students would qualify for the Automatic Zero Expected Family Contribution on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, FAFSA, guaranteeing them a maximum Pell Grant. Local educational agencies with a National School Lunch Program participation rate above 50 percent would be eligible for the program.

The Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Demonstration Program would also provide funding for states, in conjunction with the participating local educational agencies, to conduct targeted information campaigns beginning in the eighth grade and continuing through students' senior year. These campaigns would inform students and their families of the program and provide information about the cost of a college education, State and Federal financial assistance, and the average amount of aid awards. A targeted information campaign, along with a guarantee of a maximum Pell grant, would allow families and students to plan ahead for college and develop an expectation that the future includes higher education.

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. 1467

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

SECTION 1. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

Subpart 1 of part A of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 401B. EARLY FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

''(a) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM AUTHORITY.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to carry out an Early Federal Pell Grant Commitment Demonstration Program under which—

''(A) the Secretary awards grants to 4 State educational agencies, in accordance with paragraph (2), to pay the administrative expenses incurred in participating in the demonstration program under this section; and

''(B) the Secretary awards Federal Pell Grants to participating students in accordance with this section.

''(2) GRANTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appropriated under subsection (g) for a fiscal year, the Secretary is authorized to award grants to 4 State educational agencies to enable the State educational agencies to pay the administrative expenses incurred in participating in a demonstration program under which students in 8th grade who are eligible for a free or reduced price meal receive a commitment to receive a Federal Pell Grant early in their academic careers.

''(B) EQUAL AMOUNTS.—The Secretary shall award grants under this section in equal amounts to each of the 4 participating State educational agencies.

''(b) DEMONSTRATION PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.—Each of the 4 demonstration projects assisted under this section shall meet the following requirements:

''(1) PARTICIPANTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The State educational agency shall make participation in the demonstration project available to 2 cohorts of students, which shall consist of—

''(i) 1 cohort of 8th grade students who begin the participation in academic year 2007–2008; and

''(ii) 1 cohort of 8th grade students who begin the participation in academic year 2008–2009.

''(B) STUDENTS IN EACH COHORT.—Each cohort of students shall consist of not more than 10,000 8th grade students who qualify for a free or reduced price meal under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966.

''(2) STUDENT DATA.—The State educational agency shall ensure that student data from local educational agencies serving students who participate in the demonstration project, as well as student data from local educational agencies serving a comparable group of students who do not participate in the demonstration project, are available for evaluation of the demonstration project.

''(3) FEDERAL PELL GRANT COMMITMENT.—Each student who participates in the demonstration project receives a commitment from the Secretary to receive a Federal Pell Grant during the first academic year that student is in attendance at an institution of higher education as an undergraduate, if the student applies for Federal financial aid (via the FAFSA) during the student's senior year of secondary school and during succeeding years.

''(4) APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL PELL GRANT REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements of section 401 shall apply to Federal Pell Grants awarded pursuant to this section, except that the amount of each participating student's Federal Pell Grant only shall be calculated by deeming such student to have an expected family contribution equal to zero.

''(5) APPLICATION PROCESS.—The Secretary shall establish an application process to select State educational agencies to participate in the demonstration program and State educational agencies shall establish an application process to select local educational agencies within the State to participate in the demonstration project.

''(6) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY PARTICIPATION.—Subject to the 10,000 statewide student limitation described in paragraph (1), a local educational agency serving students, not less than 50 percent of whom are eligible for a free or reduced price meal under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutritional Act of 1966, shall be eligible to participate in the demonstration project.

''(c) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY APPLICATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State educational agency desiring to participate in the demonstration program under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may require.

''(2) CONTENTS.—Each application shall include—

''(A) a description of the proposed targeted information campaign for the demonstration project and a copy of the plan described in subsection (f)(2);

''(B) a description of the student population that will receive an early commitment to receive a Federal Pell Grant under this section;

''(C) an assurance that the State educational agency will fully cooperate with the ongoing evaluation of the demonstration project; and

''(D) such other information as the Secretary may require.

''(d) SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS.—

''(1) SELECTION OF STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES.—In selecting State educational agencies to participate in the demonstration program, the Secretary shall consider—

''(A) the number and quality of State educational agency applications received;

''(B) the Department's capacity to oversee and monitor each State educational agency's participation in the demonstration program;

''(C) a State educational agency's—

''(i) financial responsibility;

''(ii) administrative capability;

''(iii) commitment to focusing State resources, in addition to any resources provided under part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, on students who receive assistance under such part A;

''(iv) the ability and plans of a State educational agency to run an effective and thorough targeted information campaign for students served by local educational agencies eligible to participate in the demonstration project; and

''(v) ensuring the participation in the demonstration program of a diverse group of students with respect to ethnicity and gender.

''(2) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY.—In selecting local educational agencies to participate in a demonstration project under this section, the State educational agency shall consider—

''(A) the number and quality of local educational agency applications received;

''(B) the State educational agency's capacity to oversee and monitor each local educational agency's participation in the demonstration project;

''(C) a local educational agency's—

''(i) financial responsibility;

''(ii) administrative capability;

''(iii) commitment to focusing local resources, in addition to any resources provided under part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, on students who receive assistance under such part A;

''(iv) the ability and plans of a local educational agency to run an effective and thorough targeted information campaign for students served by the local educational agency; and

''(v) ensuring the participation in the demonstration project of a diverse group of students with respect to ethnicity and gender.

''(e) EVALUATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appropriated under section (g) for a fiscal year, the Secretary shall reserve not more than $1,000,000 to award a grant or contract to an organization outside the Department for an independent evaluation of the impact of the demonstration program assisted under this section.

''(2) COMPETITIVE BASIS.—The grant or contract shall be awarded on a competitive basis.

''(3) MATTERS EVALUATED.—The evaluation described in this subsection shall—

''(A) determine the number of individuals who were encouraged by the demonstration program to pursue higher education;

''(B) identify the barriers to the effectiveness of the demonstration program;

''(C) assess the cost-effectiveness of the demonstration program in improving access to higher education;

''(D) identify the reasons why participants in the demonstration program either received or did not receive a Federal Pell Grant;

''(E) identify intermediate outcomes (relative to postsecondary education attendance), such as whether participants—

''(i) were more likely to take a college-prep curriculum while in secondary school;

''(ii) submitted any college applications; and

''(iii) took the PSAT, SAT, or ACT;

''(F) identify the number of individuals participating in the demonstration program who pursued an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree, as well as other forms of postsecondary education;

''(G) compare the findings of the demonstration program with respect to participants to comparison groups (of similar size and demographics) that did not participate in the demonstration program; and

''(H) identify the impact on the parents of students eligible to participate in the demonstration program.

''(4) DISSEMINATION.—The findings of the evaluation shall be widely disseminated to the public by the organization conducting the evaluation as well as by the Secretary.

''(f) TARGETED INFORMATION CAMPAIGN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State educational agency receiving a grant under this section shall, in cooperation with the participating local educational agencies within the State and the Secretary, develop a targeted information campaign for the demonstration program assisted under this section.

''(2) PLAN.—Each State educational agency receiving a grant under this section shall include in the application submitted under subsection (c) a written plan for their proposed targeted information campaign. The plan shall include the following:

''(A) OUTREACH.—Outreach to students and their families, at a minimum, at the beginning and end of each academic year of the demonstration project.

''(B) DISTRIBUTION.—How the State educational agency plans to provide the outreach described in subparagraph (A) and to provide the information described in subparagraph (C).

''(C) INFORMATION.—The annual provision by the State educational agency to all students and families participating in the demonstration program of information regarding—

''(i) the estimated statewide average higher education institution cost data for each academic year, which cost data shall be disaggregated by—

''(I) type of institution, including—

''(aa) 2-year public colleges;

''(bb) 4-year public colleges; and

''(cc) 4-year private colleges;

''(II) by component, including—

''(aa) tuition and fees; and

''(bb) room and board;

''(ii) Federal Pell Grants, including—

''(I) the maximum Federal Pell Grant for each academic year;

''(II) when and how to apply for a Federal Pell Grant; and

''(III) what the application process for a Federal Pell Grant requires;

''(iii) State-specific college savings programs;

''(iv) State-based merit aid;

''(v) State-based financial aid; and

''(vi) Federal financial aid available to students, including eligibility criteria for the Federal financial aid and an explanation of the Federal financial aid programs.

''(3) COHORTS.—The information described in paragraph (2)(C) shall be provided to 2 cohorts of students annually for the duration of the students' participation in the demonstration program. The 2 cohorts shall consist of—

''(A) 1 cohort of 8th grade students who begin the participation in academic year 2007–2008; and

''(B) 1 cohort of 8th grade students who begin the participation in academic year 2008–2009.

''(4) RESERVATION.—Each State educational agency receiving a grant under this section shall reserve $200,000 of the grant funds received each fiscal year for each of the 2 cohorts of students (for a total reservation of $400,000 each fiscal year) served by the State to carry out their targeted information campaign described in this subsection.

''(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

''(1) $1,300,000 for fiscal year 2008, of which—

''(A) $500,000 shall be available to carry out subsection (e); and

''(B) $800,000 shall be available to carry out subsection (f)(2)(C);

''(2) $1,600,000 for fiscal year 2009, of which $1,600,000 shall be available to carry out subsection (f)(2)(C);

''(3) $1,600,000 for fiscal year 2010, of which $1,600,000 shall be available to carry out subsection (f)(2)(C);

''(4) $2,100,000 for fiscal year 2011, of which—

''(A) $500,000 shall be available to carry out subsection (e); and

''(B) $1,600,000 shall be available to carry out subsection (f)(2)(C);

''(5) $1,600,000 for fiscal year 2012, of which $1,600,000 shall be available to carry out subsection (f)(2)(C);

''(6) $14,600,000 for fiscal year 2013, of which—

''(A) $800,000 shall be available to carry out subsection (f)(2)(C); and

''(B) $13,800,000 shall be available for Federal Pell Grants provided in accordance with this section; and

''(7) $13,800,000 for fiscal year 2014, of which $13,800,000 shall be available for Federal Pell Grants provided in accordance with this section.''.

By Ms. MIKULSKI:

S. 1468. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase burial benefits for veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Veterans Burial Benefits Improvement Act.

We must honor our U.S. soldiers who died in the name of their country. These service men and women are America's true heroes and on this day we pay tribute to their courage and sacrifice. Some have given their lives for our country. All have given their time and dedication to ensure our country remains the land of the free and the home of the brave. We owe a special debt of gratitude to each and every one of them.

Our Nation has a sacred commitment to honor the promises made to soldiers when they signed up to serve our country. As a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I fight hard each year to make sure promises made to our service men and women are promises kept. These promises include access to quality, affordable health care and a proper burial for our veterans.

I am deeply concerned that burial benefits for the families of our wounded or disabled veterans have not kept up with inflation and rising funeral costs. We are losing over 1,000 World War II veterans each day, but Congress has failed to increase veterans' burial benefits to keep up with rising costs and inflation. While these benefits were never intended to cover the full costs of burial, they now pay for only a fraction of what they covered in 1973, when the federal government first started paying burial benefits for our veterans.

I want to thank my colleagues on the Veterans' Affairs Committee for working with me in the 107 Congress. Together, we were able to increase modestly the service-connected benefit from $1,500 to $2,000, and the plot allowance from $150 to $300. While I believe these increases are a step in the right direction, they are not a substitute for the amounts included in my bill.

That is why I am again introducing the Veterans Burial Benefits Improvement Act. This bill will increase burial benefits to cover the same percentage of funeral costs as they did in 1973. It will also provide for these benefits to be increased annually to keep up with inflation.

In 1973, the service-connected benefit paid for 72 percent of veterans' funeral costs. Today, this benefit covers just 39 percent of funeral costs. My bill will increase the service-connected benefit from $2,000 to $4,100, bringing it back up to the original 72 percent level.

In 1973, the nonservice connected benefit paid for 22 percent of funeral costs. It has not been increased since 1978, and today it covers just 6 percent of funeral costs. My bill will increase the nonservice connected benefit from $300 to $1,270, bringing it back up to the original 22 percent level.

In 1973, the plot allowance paid for 13 percent of veterans' funeral costs. Yet it now covers just 6 percent of funeral costs. My bill will increase the plot allowance from $300 to $745, bringing it back up to the original 13 percent level.

Finally, the Veterans Burial Benefits Improvement Act will also ensure that these burial benefits are adjusted for inflation annually, so veterans won't have to fight this fight again.

This legislation is just one way to honor our Nation's service men and women. I want to thank the millions of veterans, Marylanders, and people across the Nation for their patriotism, devotion, and commitment to honoring the true meaning of Memorial Day. U.S. soldiers from every generation have shared in the duty of defending America and protecting our freedom. For these sacrifices, America is eternally grateful.

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. 1468

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 ''Veterans Burial Benefits Improvement Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN BURIAL AND FUNERAL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS.

(a) INCREASE IN BURIAL AND FUNERAL EXPENSES AND PROVISION FOR ANNUAL COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT.—

(1) EXPENSES GENERALLY.—Section 2302(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''$300'' and inserting ''$1,270 (as increased from time to time under section 2309 of this title)''.

(2) EXPENSES FOR DEATHS IN DEPARTMENT FACILITIES.—Section 2303(a)(1)(A) of such title is amended by striking ''$300'' and inserting ''$1,270 (as increased from time to time under section 2309 of this title)''.

(3) EXPENSES FOR DEATHS FROM SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES.—Section 2307 of such title is amended by striking ''$2,000,'' and inserting ''$4,100 (as increased from time to time under section 2309 of this title),''.

(b) PLOT ALLOWANCE.—Section 2303(b) of such title is amended—

(1) by striking ''$300'' the first place it appears and inserting ''$745 (as increased from time to time under section 2309 of this title)''; and

(2) by striking ''$300'' the second place it appears and inserting ''$745 (as so increased)''.

(c) ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 23 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 2309. Annual adjustment of amounts of burial benefits

''With respect to any fiscal year, the Secretary shall provide a percentage increase (rounded to the nearest dollar) in the burial and funeral expenses under sections 2302(a), 2303(a), and 2307 of this title, and in the plot allowance under section 2303(b) of this title, equal to the percentage by which—

''(1) the Consumer Price Index (all items, United States city average) for the 12-month period ending on the June 30 preceding the beginning of the fiscal year for which the increase is made, exceeds

''(2) the Consumer Price Index for the 12-month period preceding the 12-month period described in paragraph (1).''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''2309. Annual adjustment of amounts of burial benefits.''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section shall apply to deaths occurring on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) PROHIBITION ON COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008.—No adjustments shall be made under section 2309 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (c), for fiscal year 2008.

By Mr. HARKIN:

S. 1469. A bill to require the closure of the Department of Defense detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today I am offering legislation to close the U.S. military presence at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. There is remarkable agreement on the need to find a way to close this prison. Our closest allies have all urged that Guantanamo be closed, as have many leaders from across the political spectrum in the United States.

Last June, after three detainees committed suicide in a single day, President Bush acknowledged that the prison has damaged America's reputation abroad. The President said:

No question, Guantanamo sends a signal to some of our friends—provides an excuse, for example, to say that the United States is not upholding the values that they're trying to encourage other countries to adhere to.

The President said:

I'd like to close Guantanamo.

More recently, Secretary of Defense Gates and Secretary of State Rice have urged that the prison be shut down. On March 23, the Washington Post, citing ''senior administration officials,'' reported Secretary Gates had ''repeatedly argued that the detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, had become so tainted abroad that legal proceedings at Guantanamo would be viewed as illegitimate.'' According to the Post, Secretary Gates ''told President Bush and others that it should be shut down as quickly as possible.''

Make no mistake, current detainees at Guantanamo include a number of extremely dangerous terrorists with the determination and the ability—if they are given the opportunity—to inflict grave harm on the United States and its citizens. Among the detainees are 14 senior leaders of al-Qaida, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who has confessed to being one of the masterminds of the September 11 attacks, plus others. We must, and we can, hold these enemy combatants in maximum security confinement elsewhere.

But the critics are right. The 5-year-old prison at Guantanamo is a stain on the honor of this country. By holding people at Guantanamo without charge, without judicial review, without appropriate legal counsel, and—in the past—subjecting many of them to torture, we have forfeited the moral high ground and we stand as hypocrites in the eyes of the world.

Perhaps most seriously, from a pragmatic standpoint, maintaining the prison at Guantanamo is simply counterproductive. It has become a propaganda bonanza and recruitment tool for terrorists. It alienates our friends and allies. It detracts from our ability to regain the moral high ground, and rally the world against the terrorists who threaten us.

The administration has repeatedly described detainees at Guantanamo as ''the worst of the worst'' or, as former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld once described them, the ''most dangerous, best-trained, vicious killers on the face of the earth.'' Unquestionably, some of the detainees fit these descriptions. However, an exhaustive study of Guantanamo detainees conducted by the nonpartisan, highly respected National Journal last year came to the following conclusions: A large percentage, perhaps the majority, of the detainees were not captured on any battlefield, let alone on ''the battlefield in Afghanistan,'' as the President once asserted. Fewer than 20 percent of the detainees have ever been al-Qaida members. Many scores, and perhaps hundreds, of the detainees were not even Taliban foot soldiers, let alone al-Qaida members. The majority were not captured by U.S. forces but, rather, handed over by reward-seeking Pakistanis, Afghan warlords, and by villagers of highly dubious reliability. For example, one of the detainees is a man who was conscripted by the Taliban to work as an assistant cook. The U.S. Government's ''evidence'' against this detainee consists in its entirety of the following:

One, the detainee admits he was a cook's assistant for Taliban forces in Narim, Afghanistan, under the command of Haji Mullah Baki.

Two, the detainee fled from Narim to Kabul during the Northern Alliance attack and surrendered to the Northern Alliance.

This person is still sitting in Guantanamo.

The situation at Guantanamo, I must add, reminds me of an earlier episode in this Senator's life. In July of 1970, I was a staff assistant to a House committee in the House of Representatives. I was working with a congressional delegation on a factfinding trip to Vietnam. I brought back photographs of the so-called tiger cages at Con Son Island, off the coast of Vietnam, where Viet Cong and some North Vietnamese prisoners, as well as civilian opponents of the war, were all being held together, held incommunicado, tortured and killed, with the full knowledge, support, and sanction of the United States Government. We had heard reports about the possible existence of these tiger cages. But our State Department vehemently denied their existence. They dismissed all of these claims as communist propaganda.

Well, I looked into this and believed the reports were credible. I was determined to investigate further to see if they did exist. Thanks to the courage of Congressman William Anderson of Tennessee, Congressman Augustus Hawkins of California, Don Luce, an American working for a nongovernmental organization, and a brave, young Vietnamese man who risked his life and his brother's life, who was still held on Con Son in the tiger cages, who drew us the maps and showed us how to find the tiger cages at these prisons—Nguyen Caoli was the young man's name. He risked it all by trusting us. Thanks to his maps and telling us how to find them, we were able to expose the tiger cages on Con Son Island in July of 1970.

Supporters of the war claimed the tiger cages were not all that bad. But then Life Magazine and other magazines around the world published the pictures I had surreptitiously taken on Con Son, and the world saw the horrific conditions, as I said, with Vietnamese guerrillas, as well as civilian opponents

of the war, all crowded together in these cages, in clear violation of the Geneva Conventions, and in violation of the most fundamental principles of human rights.

At the time, the United States Government had been insisting the North Vietnamese abide by the Geneva Conventions in their treatment of United States prisoners in North Vietnam. Yet, here we were condoning, funding, and even supervising the torture of Vietnamese prisoners and civilians, whose only crime was protesting the war, all in clear violation of the Geneva Conventions.

There are disturbing parallels between what transpired on Con Son Island nearly four decades ago and what happened at Guantanamo in recent years. In both cases, prisons were deliberately set up on remote islands, clearly with the intention of limiting scrutiny and restricting access. In both cases, detainees were not classified as prisoners of war, expressly to deny them the protections of the Geneva Conventions. In both cases, detainees were deprived of any right of due process, judicial review, or a fair trial.

They were simply held indefinitely in isolation, in limbo. In both cases, when the mistreatment of detainees was exposed, the United States stood accused of hypocrisy, of betraying its most sacred values, and of violating international law.

So you can see why I have watched what has transpired at Guantanamo, and I have thought back to that episode in my life when all of this came out about the tiger cages and the inhumane treatment of these several hundred prisoners who were there at the time. There was a happy ending to that event. Because of the international outcry, the tiger cages were closed down, the prisoners were released, and people went back to their homes.

Many of them who were in the tiger cages I met later on in life. One became the mayor of Saigon, several became successful businesspeople, and others went on with their lives. But watching what happened at Guantanamo and seeing that many of these people were swept up in a war which some of them—many of them—well, the National Journal says a majority of them were not even engaged.

So it is time to close it down. We need to reverse the damage Guantanamo has done to America's reputation and to our ability to wage an effective fight against the terrorists who attacked us on September 11, and the essential first step must be to close the prison at Guantanamo as expeditiously as possible. The bill I am introducing today offers a practical approach to accomplishing this within 120 days of enactment of the law.

As I said, there are known hardcore terrorists at Guantanamo, such as Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who must continue to be held in maximum-security conditions. Under my bill, these prisoners will be transferred to the U.S. detention base at Fort Leavenworth, KS. This is a state-of-the-art maximum-security facility just opened in 2002. It has adequate capacity to receive these prisoners from Guantanamo. Under my bill, the remaining prisoners, some 365 in number, would have their legal status resolved. In each case, the administration will determine whether the prisoner planned or committed hostile acts against the United States. Those who did plan or commit hostile acts would be charged and transferred to Fort Leavenworth. Those who did not would be released to the custody of their home country or, where necessary, to a country where they would not face torture.

There is a pending bill, S. 1249, to close the prison at Guantanamo. However, that bill gives the administration too much leeway to maintain the status quo in terms of the detainees' legal status. It allows an enemy combatant to be detained indefinitely without charge—that is what is getting us into trouble in the first place—and it does not require that the administration abide by the Convention Against Torture, nor does it give detainees a forum in which to lodge credible claims of torture or abuse. The bill I am introducing does all of that.

The United States has lost its way, both in Iraq and at Guantanamo. We need to wage a smarter, more focused, and more effective fight against the terrorists who threaten us, and we must do so in ways that do not give credence to their anti-American propaganda and do not rally more recruits to their cause. To that end, we must close the prison at Guantanamo as soon as possible. The legislation I am offering today will accomplish this.

This legislation has the enthusiastic endorsement of Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First, Amnesty International, and the American Civil Liberties Union. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. President, I ask unamimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1469

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 ''Guantanamo Bay Detention Facility Closure Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. CLOSURE OF GUANTANAMO BAY DETENTION FACILITY AND DISPOSITION OF DETAINEES.

(a) CLOSURE OF FACILITY.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall close the Department of Defense detention facility at Guantanamo Bay Cuba.

(b) RESTRICTION ON USE OF FUNDS.—

(1) RESTRICTION.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), no amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2007 or fiscal year 2008 may be used for the Guantanamo Bay detention facility or for detention at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility of any foreign national who was detained at such facility on or after Marach 31, 2007.

(2) EXCEPTIONS.—Amounts appropriated or otherwise made available for fiscal year 2007 or fiscal year 2008 may be used for the following purposes related to the detention of foreign nationals who were detained at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility on any date between March 31, 2007 and the date of enactment:

(A) Transfer to the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for purposes of pretrial detention or detention during a trial or while serving a sentence, of any such person who, not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, is charged with an offense under chapter 47A of title 10, United States Code, as added by section 3 of the Military Commissions Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–366), or with a felony offense under title 18, United States Code, or chapter 47 of title 10, United States Code (the Uniform Code of Military Justice); or

(B) Continued detention at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility for an additional 120 day period, not to continue more than 240 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, upon written certification by the Secretary of Defense to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives that additional time is needed to complete the investigation and preparation of charges, including a detailed factual explanation of the specific reasons why the additional time is needed.

(C) Transfer of any such person to another country, provided that—

(i) the transfer complies with the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, done at Geneva July 28, 1951, the United Nations Convention Against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, done at New York December 10, 1984, and Federal law; and

(ii) an individual being so transferred who is asserting a well founded fear of torture, abuse, or persecution has an opportunity to have the claim heard by the Executive Office for Immigration Review, subject to the same judicial review provided for in section 242(a)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1252(a)(4)).

(c) IMMIGRATION STATUS.—The transfer of an individual under subsection (b)(2)(A) shall not be considered an entry into the United States for purposes of immigration status.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out activities under this Act related to the investigation, prosecution, and defense of cases and claims relating to foreign nationals who were detained at the Guantanamo Bay detention facility on or after March 31, 2007, and the transfer of such persons, including for the reimbursement of costs incurred by local communities.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1470. A bill to provide States with the resources needed to rid our schools of performance-enhancing drug use; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Drug Free Varsity Sports Act of 2007. This bill would provide States with the resources they need to rid our schools of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs.

I believe steroid use doesn't begin at the professional level. I am very concerned about performance-enhancing

drug use among young athletes, specifically high school athletes. Steroid use among high school students is on the rise. It more than doubled among high school students from 1991 to 2003, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Furthermore, a study by the University of Michigan shows that the percentage of 12 graders who said they had used steroids some time in their lives rose from 1.9 percent in 1996 to 3.4 percent in 2004. This is unacceptable and a health risk to our children.

In 2004, the Polk County School District became the first in Florida to establish random testing for high school athletes, and the Florida House passed a bill that would have made Florida the first State to require steroid testing for high school athletes. That bill stalled in the Senate, but now Florida and other States are considering a similar law. Currently, less than 4 percent of U.S. high schools test athletes for steroids, and no State requires high schools to test athletes. Schools and States say that cost is usually the reason they don't test.

In response, I am introducing this legislation to help States with the resources they need to curb the use of steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs. My legislation would provide federal grants directly to States so that they can develop and implement performance-enhancing drug testing programs.

The Drug Free Varsity Sports Act of 2007 would authorize $20 million in grants to States to create statewide pilot drug testing programs for performance-enhancing drugs. States that receive the grants would be required to incorporate recovery, counseling, and treatment programs for those students who test positive for performance-enhancing drugs.

Stopping the use of performance-enhancing drugs goes beyond testing. That is why my legislation also would require States that receive grants to allocate no less than 10 percent of the funding to establish statewide policies to discourage steroid use, through educational or other related means.

There is no simple solution to the issue of steroids in sports. Congress can do its part by enacting the Drug Free Varsity Sports Act of 2007. But the sports leagues, their players, coaches, and parents all must play an active role.

Mr. President, I request 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. 1470

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 ''Drug Free Varsity Sports Act of 2007''.

SEC. 2. PILOT DRUG-TESTING PROGRAMS FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS.

(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to supplement the other student drug-testing programs assisted by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools of the Department of Education by establishing, through the Office, a grant program that will allow State educational agencies to test secondary school students for performance-enhancing drug use.

(b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of Education, acting through the Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, shall award, on a competitive basis, grants to State educational agencies to enable the State educational agencies to develop and carry out statewide pilot programs that test secondary school students for performance-enhancing drug use.

(c) APPLICATION.—A State educational agency that desires to receive a grant under this section shall submit an application to the Secretary of Education at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(d) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary of Education shall give priority to State educational agencies that incorporate community organizations in carrying out the recovery, counseling, and treatment programs described in subsection (e)(1)(B).

(e) USE OF FUNDS.—

(1) DRUG-TESTING PROGRAM FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS.—A State educational agency that receives a grant under this section shall use not more than 90 percent of the grant funds to carry out the following:

(A) Implement a drug-testing program for performance-enhancing drugs that is limited to testing secondary school students who meet 1 or more of the following criteria:

(i) The student participates in the school's athletic program.

(ii) The student is engaged in a competitive, extracurricular, school-sponsored activity.

(iii) The student and the student's parent or guardian provides written consent for the student to participate in a voluntary random drug-testing program for performance-enhancing drugs.

(B) Provide recovery, counseling, and treatment programs for secondary school students tested in the program who test positive for performance-enhancing drugs.

(2) PREVENTION.—A State educational agency that receives a grant under this section shall use not less than 10 percent of the grant funds to establish statewide policies that discourage the use of performance-enhancing drugs, through educational or other related means.

(f) REPORT.—For each year of the grant period, a State educational agency that receives a grant under this section shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Assistant Deputy Secretary of the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools on the impact of the pilot program, which report shall include—

(1) the number and percentage of students who test positive for performance-enhancing drugs;

(2) the cost of the pilot program; and

(3) a description of any barriers to the pilot program, as well as aspects of the pilot program that were successful.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ''State educational agency'' and ''secondary school'' have the meanings given the terms in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $20,000,000 for fiscal year 2008.

(2) SEPARATION OF FUNDS.—The Secretary of Education shall keep any funds authorized for this section under paragraph (1) separate from any funds available to the Secretary for other student drug-testing programs.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1166. Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. DEMINT, and Mrs. DOLE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1150 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. SPECTER)) to the bill S. 1348, to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

SA 1167. Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. LEVIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. BAUCUS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1168. Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. KYL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. CORNYN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1150 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. SPECTER)) to the bill S. 1348, supra.

SA 1169. Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. DODD, and Mr. DURBIN) proposed an amendment to amendment SA 1150 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. SPECTER)) to the bill S. 1348, supra.

SA 1170. Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. BOND) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1171. Mrs. HUTCHISON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1172. Mr. GREGG (for himself, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. CORNYN, and Mrs. DOLE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1150 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. SPECTER)) to the bill S. 1348, supra.

SA 1173. Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. KYL, and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1150 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. KENNEDY (for himself and Mr. SPECTER)) to the bill S. 1348, supra.

SA 1174. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1175. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1176. Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and Mr. INOUYE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1177. Mr. BINGAMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1178. Mr. KERRY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1179. Mr. LAUTENBERG (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. DODD, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and Mr. SCHUMER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1180. Mr. HAGEL (for himself and Mr. DURBIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1348, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.