

the Capitol power plant; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. 1524. A bill to waive time limitations specified by law in order to allow the Medal of Honor to be awarded to Gary Lee McKiddy, of Miamisburg, Ohio, for acts of valor while a helicopter crew chief and door gunner with the 1st Cavalry Division during the Vietnam War; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. SMITH (for himself, Mrs. LINCOLN, Ms. CANTWELL, and Ms. SNOWE):

S. 1525. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the energy efficient appliance credit for appliances produced after 2007; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. STEVENS (for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. CARPER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 1526. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to develop standards for general service lamps that will operate more efficiently and assist in reducing costs to consumers, business concerns, government entities, and other users, to require that general service lamps and related products manufactured or sold in interstate commerce after 2013 meet those standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. STEVENS (for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. CARPER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 1527. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit for renovation and construction of manufacturing facilities for incandescent lamps; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CORNYN:

S. 1528. A bill to amend chapter 87 of title 18, United States Code, to end the terrorizing effects of the sale of murderabilia on crime victims and their families; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself and Mr. LUGAR):

S. 1529. A bill to amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977 to end benefit erosion, support working families with child care expenses, encourage retirement and education savings, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. DODD, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BYRD, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. INOUE, Mr. KERRY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. REID, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. WEBB):

S.J. Res. 14. A joint resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that Attorney General Alberto Gonzales no longer holds the confidence of the Senate and of the American people; read the first time.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. SMITH, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. DODD, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. COLEMAN):

S. Res. 214. A resolution calling upon the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran

to immediately release Dr. Haleh Esfandiari; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ALLARD (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. CRAIG, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. Res. 215. A resolution designating September 25, 2007, as "National First Responder Appreciation Day"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. STEVENS):

S. Res. 216. A resolution recognizing the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the American Association for Cancer Research and declaring the month of May National Cancer Research Month; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. Res. 217. A resolution designating the week beginning May 20, 2007, as "National Hurricane Preparedness Week"; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. Res. 218. A resolution to authorize the printing of a collection of the rules of the committees of the Senate; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. PRYOR, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. Res. 219. A resolution recognizing the year 2007 as the official 50th anniversary celebration of the beginnings of marinas, power production, recreation, and boating on Lake Sidney Lanier, Georgia; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 37

At the request of Mr. DOMENICI, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 48

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 48, a bill to return meaning to the Fifth Amendment by limiting the power of eminent domain.

S. 185

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 185, a bill to restore habeas corpus for those detained by the United States.

S. 274

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 274, a bill to amend chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, to clarify the disclosures of information protected from prohibited personnel practices, require a statement in non-disclosure policies, forms, and agreements that such policies, forms, and agreements conform with certain dis-

closure protections, provide certain authority for the Special Counsel, and for other purposes.

S. 329

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 329, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide coverage for cardiac rehabilitation and pulmonary rehabilitation services.

S. 357

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 357, a bill to improve passenger automobile fuel economy and safety, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce dependence on foreign oil, and for other purposes.

S. 399

At the request of Mr. BUNNING, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) were added as cosponsors of S. 399, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to include podiatrists as physicians for purposes of covering physicians services under the Medicaid program.

S. 430

At the request of Mr. BOND, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. ENSIGN) were added as cosponsors of S. 430, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to enhance the national defense through empowerment of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and the enhancement of the functions of the National Guard Bureau, and for other purposes.

S. 450

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. BENNETT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 450, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 467

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 467, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to expand the clinical trials drug data bank.

S. 506

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 506, a bill to improve efficiency in the Federal Government through the use of high-performance green buildings, and for other purposes.

S. 569

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to accelerate efforts to develop vaccines for diseases primarily affecting developing countries and for other purposes.

S. 582

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 582, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to classify automatic fire sprinkler systems as 5-year property for purposes of depreciation.

S. 597

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 597, a bill to extend the special postage stamp for breast cancer research for 2 years.

S. 609

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 609, a bill to amend section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 to provide that funds received as universal service contributions and the universal service support programs established pursuant to that section are not subject to certain provisions of title 31, United States Code, commonly known as the Antideficiency Act.

S. 634

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 634, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish grant programs to provide for education and outreach on newborn screening and coordinated followup care once newborn screening has been conducted, to reauthorize programs under part A of title XI of such Act, and for other purposes.

S. 672

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 672, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax-exempt financing for qualified renewable energy facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 764

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 764, a bill to amend title XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to permit States the option of coverage of legal immigrants under the Medicaid Program and the State children's health insurance program (SCHIP).

S. 804

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 804, a bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to improve the administration of elections for Federal office, and for other purposes.

S. 823

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 823, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with respect to facilitating the development of

microbicides for preventing transmission of HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and for other purposes.

S. 829

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of S. 829, a bill to reauthorize the HOPE VI program for revitalization of severely distressed public housing, and for other purposes.

S. 860

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 860, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to permit States the option to provide Medicaid coverage for low-income individuals infected with HIV.

S. 871

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 871, a bill to establish and provide for the treatment of Individual Development Accounts, and for other purposes.

S. 879

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 879, a bill to amend the Sherman Act to make oil-producing and exporting cartels illegal.

S. 881

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAIG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 881, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 881, supra.

S. 901

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 901, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide additional authorizations of appropriations for the health centers program under section 330 of such Act.

S. 929

At the request of Mr. MARTINEZ, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 929, a bill to streamline the regulation of nonadmitted insurance and reinsurance, and for other purposes.

S. 961

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 961, a bill to amend title 46, United States Code, to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army

Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 970

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) were added as cosponsors of S. 970, a bill to impose sanctions on Iran and on other countries for assisting Iran in developing a nuclear program, and for other purposes.

S. 1042

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1042, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to make the provision of technical services for medical imaging examinations and radiation therapy treatments safer, more accurate, and less costly.

S. 1064

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1064, a bill to provide for the improvement of the physical evaluation processes applicable to members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

S. 1107

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1107, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce cost-sharing under part D of such title for certain non-institutionalized full-benefit dual eligible individuals.

S. 1172

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1172, a bill to reduce hunger in the United States.

S. 1226

At the request of Mr. BAYH, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1226, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to establish programs to improve the quality, performance, and delivery of pediatric care.

S. 1263

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1263, a bill to protect the welfare of consumers by prohibiting price gouging with respect to gasoline and petroleum distillates during natural disasters and abnormal market disruptions, and for other purposes.

S. 1334

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1334, a bill to amend section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, to make permanent authority to furnish government headstones and markers for graves of veterans at private cemeteries, and for other purposes.

S. 1337

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1337, a bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to provide for equal coverage of mental health services under the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

S. 1373

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1373, a bill to provide grants and loan guarantees for the development and construction of science parks to promote the clustering of innovation through high technology activities.

S. 1379

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1379, a bill to amend chapter 35 of title 28, United States Code, to strike the exception to the residency requirements for United States attorneys.

S. 1382

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1382, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide the establishment of an Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Registry.

S. 1398

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1398, a bill to expand the research and prevention activities of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with respect to inflammatory bowel disease.

S. 1418

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1418, a bill to provide assistance to improve the health of newborns, children, and mothers in developing countries, and for other purposes.

S. 1430

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1430, a bill to authorize State and local governments to direct divestiture from, and prevent investment in, companies with investments of \$20,000,000 or more in Iran's energy sector, and for other purposes.

S. 1439

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr.

CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1439, a bill to reauthorize the broadband loan and loan guarantee program under title VI of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936.

S. 1448

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1448, a bill to extend the same Federal benefits to law enforcement officers serving private institutions of higher education and rail carriers that apply to law enforcement officers serving units of State and local government.

S. 1457

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1457, a bill to provide for the protection of mail delivery on certain postal routes, and for other purposes.

S. 1466

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1466, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude property tax rebates and other benefits provided to volunteer firefighters, search and rescue personnel, and emergency medical responders from income and employment taxes and wage withholding.

S.J. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 10, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to equal rights for men and women.

S. CON. RES. 25

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 25, a concurrent resolution condemning the recent violent actions of the Government of Zimbabwe against peaceful opposition party activists and members of civil society.

S. RES. 82

At the request of Mr. HAGEL, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 82, a resolution designating August 16, 2007 as "National Airborne Day".

S. RES. 211

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SUNUNU), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN),

the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 211, a resolution expressing the profound concerns of the Senate regarding the transgression against freedom of thought and expression that is being carried out in Venezuela, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1157

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1157 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 names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE) were added as cosponsors 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 Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) 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. 1167

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1167 intended to be proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1170

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1170 proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1179

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1179 intended to be proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1181

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1181 proposed to S. 1348, a bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. CORKER, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1181 proposed to S. 1348, supra.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. SUNUNU (for himself and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. 40. A bill to authorize the issuance of Federal charters and licenses for carrying on the sale, solicitation, negotiation, and underwriting of insurance or any other insurance operations, to provide a comprehensive system for the Federal regulation and supervision of national insurers and national agencies, to provide for policyholder protections in the event of an insolvency or the impairment of a national insurer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. SUNUNU. Mr. President, I rise today to reintroduce legislation that will bring our Nation's insurance regulatory system into the 21st century by providing uniformity, predictability, and greater efficiency to the way insurance is regulated in this country.

The National Insurance Act of 2007, which builds upon legislation Senator JOHNSON and I first introduced last year, provides for an optional Federal charter that would offer insurers the choice of being regulated under a new Commissioner of National Insurance or under the continued jurisdiction of the States.

I am pleased that Senator JOHNSON once again joins me as an original cosponsor of this bill. Since we introduced the initial National Insurance Act just over a year ago, momentum has been building for the reforms called for under our legislation and the question has become not whether an optional Federal charter should be implemented, but when.

In an increasingly global financial services industry, numerous studies have called for changes to the manner in which insurance is regulated in the United States as one of the ways to make our financial services sector more competitive in the worldwide economy.

The bipartisan Bloomberg-Schumer report on financial services industry competitiveness, for example, states, "One priority, in the context of enhancing competitiveness for the entire financial services sector and improving responsiveness and customer service, should be an optional federal charter for insurance, based on market principles for serving customers."

Furthermore, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Mega-Catastrophes states, "It (an optional federal charter for insurance) would lead to . . . consistent regulation of insurer safety and soundness, and the elimination of duplicative regulation and supervision . . . In addition, an OFC should promote greater competition that would benefit policyholders."

In addition to the study recommendations, a number of other indicators suggest that the time is right for reform. The coalition in support of the bill continues to grow and the general acceptance of the concept of reform we have proposed is also growing.

The arguments against the bill are increasingly seen for what they are: parochial in nature, rather than forward-looking and in the best interests of consumers, our financial services sector, and the strength of our overall economy.

In 1999, Congress passed the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act—broad legislation that modernized the rules that regulate banks and securities firms and provided a foundation for the financial services industry to become more integrated, market-oriented, technologically advanced, and global in nature. Since then, consumers have benefited from improved industry competition and innovation, greater choice of financial products, and more efficient delivery of services.

The insurance industry, however, has not enjoyed the same dynamic marketplace within the global economy. Long subject to a patchwork of State regulations, the sector's menu of available services is not as robust as it could be. An inefficient regulatory system spread across more than 50 different jurisdictions imposes direct and indirect costs on insurers in the form of higher compliance fees associated with non-uniform regulations and delayed market entry for new products from onerous approval barriers.

With advances in technology, insurance is increasingly a global product that cries out for a more consistent and efficient regulatory environment that allows new products to be brought to market in a much quicker fashion than the current system often allows. Under the State regulatory regime new product launches are consistently delayed up to 2 years while they await the approval of an individual State regulator.

A more uniform regulatory environment, mirroring the highly successful dual banking system, should substantially improve the climate in several critical ways for those who buy, sell and underwrite insurance, while also providing superior consumer protection.

As the Bloomberg-Schumer report puts it, our bill would allow best-in-breed regulations to "rise to the top" and become national standards. A division of consumer protection, as created by the regulator, would oversee strict regulations and guard against unfair and deceptive practices by insurers and agents for the advertising, sale and administration of products. A division of insurance fraud, also created under the bill, would make insurance fraud a Federal crime.

While taking these cautionary steps to protect consumers, the bill does not, however, permit the Federal regulator to set rates or price controls for insur-

ance. Instead, the National Insurance Act appropriately relies on competitive pricing within the marketplace.

Finally, the Office of National Insurance would be able to fill a vacuum and provide true national regulatory expertise and guidance on a number of issues Congress is legislating on that affect policyholders, the health of the insurance industry, and the overall economy.

The only real substantive change to this year's bill in comparison with the one introduced last year is that our updated legislation includes language that would add surplus lines of insurance as a type of insurance that a person with a Federal producer's license would be authorized to sell under the Federal charter program.

Other technical and clarifying changes were made, but by and large this is last year's bill, with its spirit and purpose intact.

Former New York Insurance Commissioner, George Miller, who founded the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, NAIC made the following statement in 1871: "The Commissioners are now fully prepared to go before their various legislative committees with recommendations for a system of insurance law which shall be the same in all States, not reciprocal but identical, not retaliatory, but uniform."

It's now been over 135 years since that statement was made, and unfortunately we are not much closer to Mr. Miller's goal.

In the months ahead, however, we look forward to making substantial progress on this legislation as we build on the momentum to modernize this country's insurance regulatory system and do what the State system has failed to do for over 135 years.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 1472. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to create a Bureau of Reclamation partnership with the North Bay Water Reuse Authority and other regional partners to achieve objectives relating to water supply, water quality, and environmental restoration; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce the North Bay Water Reuse Program Act of 2007, together with my colleague Senator BOXER. This legislation authorizes Federal participation in a regional water reuse project that is the first of its kind in Northern California, and model for the West.

The program will allow urban water agencies to take treated wastewater now discharged into the sensitive bay-delta ecosystem and put it to productive use on water-short agricultural lands and environmentally valuable wetlands. It is an innovative "win-win" solution that will protect the environment as well as meet the future water needs of urban and agricultural