

transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-238, "Georgia Commons Real Property Tax Exemption and Abatement Act of 2007" received on January 14, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4793. A communication from the Chairman, Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 17-228, "District of Columbia Emancipation Day Parade Clarification Amendment Act of 2007" received on January 14, 2008; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4794. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Reexportation of Controlled Substances" (RIN1117-AB00) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-4795. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General for Administration, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report relative to the Department's competitive sourcing efforts during fiscal year 2007; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-4796. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Definition of 'Positional Isomer' as it Pertains to the Control of Controlled Substances" (RIN1117-AA94) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-4797. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the administration of the Foreign Agents Registration Act for the six months ending December 31, 2006; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-4798. A communication from the Deputy Associate General Counsel for Regulatory Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Minimum Standards for Drivers' Licenses and Identification Cards Acceptable by Federal Agencies for Official Purposes" (RIN1601-AA37) received on January 11, 2008; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-4799. A communication from the Acting Clerk of the Court, U.S. Court of Federal Claims, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Court's annual report for the year ended September 30, 2007; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-4800. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the Office of Privacy and Civil Liberties for calendar year 2007; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-4801. A communication from the Director of Regulations Management, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Education: Approval of Accredited Courses for VA Education Benefits" (RIN2900-AM80) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-4802. A communication from the Director of Regulations Management, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Dependents' Educational Assistance" (RIN2900-AM72) received on January 15, 2008; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC-4803. A communication from the National President, Women's Army Corps Veterans' Association, transmitting, pursuant

to law, an inquiry into their need to submit an annual report; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. REID:

S. 2557. A bill to extend the Protect America Act of 2007 until July 1, 2009; read the first time.

By Mr. THUNE:

S. 2558. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to modify a definition; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. DODD (for himself and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 2559. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to increase the level of earnings under which no individual who is blind is determined to have demonstrated an ability to engage in substantial gainful activity for purposes of determining disability; to the Committee on Finance.

## SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

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

S. Res. 426. A resolution congratulating the Stanford University women's cross country team on winning the 2007 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Championship; considered and agreed to.

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

S. Res. 427. A resolution congratulating the University of California at Berkeley men's water polo team for winning the 2007 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Championship; considered and agreed to.

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

S. Res. 428. A resolution congratulating the University of Southern California women's soccer team on winning the 2007 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Championship; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. DOLE (for herself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. BURR, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. SNOWE, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. Res. 429. A resolution honoring the brave men and women of the United States Coast Guard whose tireless work, dedication, and commitment to protecting the United States have led to the confiscation of over 350,000 pounds of cocaine at sea during 2007; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BURR, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DODD, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. OBAMA, and Mr. SPECTER):

S. Res. 430. A resolution designating January 2008 as "National Mentoring Month"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DODD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr.

MENENDEZ, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BIDEN, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. BROWNBACK, and Ms. SNOWE):

S. Res. 431. A resolution calling for a peaceful resolution to the current electoral crisis in Kenya; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

## ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 206

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

S. 269

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 269, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase and permanently extend the expensing of certain depreciable business assets for small businesses.

S. 937

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 937, a bill to improve support and services for individuals with autism and their families.

S. 1001

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1001, a bill to restore Second Amendment rights in the District of Columbia.

S. 1287

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1287, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow an offset against income tax refunds to pay for State judicial debts that are past-due.

S. 1437

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1437, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the semicentennial of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

S. 1464

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1464, a bill to establish a Global Service Fellowship Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2209

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2209, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives to improve America's research competitiveness, and for other purposes.

S. 2238

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr.

BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2238, a bill to amend the National Dam Safety Program Act to establish a program to provide grant assistance to States for the rehabilitation and repair of deficient dams.

S. 2368

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2368, a bill to provide immigration reform by securing America's borders, clarifying and enforcing existing laws, and enabling a practical employer verification program.

S. 2498

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2498, a bill to authorize the minting of a coin to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the founding of Santa Fe, New Mexico, to occur in 2010.

S. 2509

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2509, a bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to prevent the enforcement of certain national primary drinking water regulations unless sufficient funding is available or variance technology has been identified.

S. 2544

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) were added as cosponsors of S. 2544, a bill to provide for a program of temporary extended unemployment compensation.

S. 2553

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2553, a bill to modify certain fees applicable under the Small Business Act for 2008, to make an emergency appropriation for certain small business programs, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide increased expensing for 2008, to provide a 5-year carryback for certain net operating losses, and for other purposes.

S. 2555

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2555, a bill to permit California and other States to effectively control greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 241

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 241, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States should reaffirm the commitments of the United States to the 2001 Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health and to pursuing trade policies that promote access to affordable medicines.

AMENDMENT NO. 3907

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3907 intended to be proposed to S. 2248, an original bill to amend the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978, to modernize and streamline the provisions of that Act, and for other purposes.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REID:

S. 2557. A bill to extend the Protect America Act of 2007 until July 1, 2009; read the first time.

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

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

S. 2557

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

#### SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF THE PROTECT AMERICA ACT OF 2007 UNTIL JULY 1, 2009.

Section 6(c) of the Protect America Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-55; 121 Stat. 557) is amended by striking "180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act" and inserting "on July 1, 2009".

By Mr. DODD (for himself and Mr. McCain):

S. 2559. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to increase the level of earnings under which no individual who is blind is determined to have demonstrated an ability to engage in substantial gainful activity for purposes of determining disability; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague from Arizona, Senator JOHN MCCAIN, to reintroduce legislation that we've sponsored in the past, the Blind Persons' Earnings Fairness Act of 2008. This legislation would restore the 20-year link between the earnings limits under Social Security for blind people and senior citizens. Restoring this connection would have a tremendous impact on the lives of many blind people, helping them become more self-sufficient and productive members of society and giving them the chance to live fuller lives.

Today there are nearly 1.3 million Americans who are blind, with 75,000 more becoming blind each year. With today's technology, blind and visually-impaired individuals can do just about anything. Blind people today are employed as farmers, lawyers, secretaries, nurses, managers, childcare workers, social workers, teachers, librarians, stockbrokers, accountants, and journalists, among many other things. Unfortunately the unemployment rate among the blind is still at an unconscionable 74 percent. The Federal Government should do all within its power to facilitate and encourage the blind and visually-impaired to enter the workforce. A variety of public and pri-

vate initiatives have been launched over the years to provide the technologies and assistance necessary to educate and employ the blind at the same level as their sighted peers. For example, the National Federation of the Blind, NFB, has created an institute to utilize technological advancements for the blind in an effort to promote employment of the blind throughout the Nation. The NFB helps employers provide adaptive technology, consultation, and training so that they can better accommodate the needs of blind and visually-impaired employees. Now the challenge goes beyond giving the blind the tools to compete in the workforce, now we need to give them the freedom to do so without fear of losing their essential Social Security benefits.

In 1996, Congress passed the Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act, which broke the longstanding linkage between the treatment of blind people and seniors under Social Security. This allowed the earnings limit to be raised for seniors at a far faster rate than for the blind. As a result, the earnings limit for blind people has not kept up with modern day costs and earnings. So, blind people do not have the opportunity to increase their earnings without jeopardizing their Social Security benefits. In 2008, that limit was at \$18,840. If a blind individual earns more than that, his or her Social Security benefits are not protected.

The purpose of the Senior Citizens Freedom to Work Act was to allow seniors to continue contributing to society as productive workers while still receiving needed social security benefits. Historically, the earnings test treatment of seniors and blind people was identical under Title II of the Social Security Act. With this legislation, we seek to restore that connection and do the same for the blind population of America as we have done for the seniors. We must provide blind people the same opportunity to be productive and contribute to their own stability. We must not discourage these individuals from working within an unreasonably low earnings limit.

The current earnings test provides a disincentive for the blind population, many of whom are working age and capable of productive work. Work provides one of the fundamental ways individuals express their talents and allows them to make a contribution to society and to their loved ones. Blind individuals face constant hurdles when it comes to employment. Parents, teachers, or counselors may tell them they can't do it. Employers sometimes don't even give them the opportunity to try. But blind people and others with severe visual impairments take great pride in being able to work, just like the rest of us. They are likely to respond favorably to an increase in the earnings test because they want to work. We don't want to leave in place yet another hurdle to employment for blind individuals with the Social Security earnings test. By allowing those