

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

with visual impairments to work more without penalty, we would increase both their tax contribution and their purchasing power. By doing so we would also bring additional funds into the Social Security trust fund and the Federal Treasury.

I urge my colleagues to join me in sponsoring this important legislation to restore the fair and equal treatment for the blind citizens of America. The Blind Persons' Earnings Act of 2008 will provide the blind population with the same freedom and opportunities as our Nation's seniors and the rest of the citizens of this Nation.

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. 2559

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 "Blind Persons Earnings Fairness Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN AMOUNT DEMONSTRATING SUBSTANTIAL GAINFUL ACTIVITY IN THE CASE OF BLIND INDIVIDUALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 223(d)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 423(d)(4)) is amended—

(1) by striking the second sentence of subparagraph (A); and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) No individual who is blind shall be regarded as having demonstrated an ability to engage in substantial gainful activity on the basis of monthly earnings in any taxable year that do not exceed an amount equal to—

“(i) in the case of earnings in the taxable year beginning after December 31, 2007, and before January 1, 2009, \$1,800 per month;

“(ii) in the case of earnings in the taxable year beginning after December 31, 2008, and before January 1, 2010, \$2,200 per month;

“(iii) in the case of earnings in the taxable year beginning after December 31, 2009, and before January 1, 2011, \$2,500 per month;

“(iv) in the case of earnings in the taxable year beginning after December 31, 2010, and before January 1, 2012, \$2,850 per month; and

“(v) in the case of earnings in a taxable year beginning after December 31, 2011, the exempt amount applicable under section 203(f)(8) to an individual who has attained retirement age (as defined in section 216(1)) before the close of the taxable year involved.”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2007.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 426—CONGRATULATING THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY TEAM ON WINNING THE 2007 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 426

Whereas the Stanford University Cardinal won the 2007 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Women's Cross Country Championship on November 19, 2007, in Terre Haute, Indiana;

Whereas the Cardinal won every postseason race and maintained a top ranking throughout the 2007 season;

Whereas in 2007 the Cardinal won a Division I women's cross country title for the 3rd year in a row and the 5th time in school history;

Whereas Arianna Lambie, Lauren Centrowitz, and Katie Harrington were honored as All-Americans for their exceptional contributions during the 2007 season; and

Whereas the 2007 Stanford women's cross country team members are players Arianna Lambie, Lauren Centrowitz, Katie Harrington, Alexandra Gits, Teresa McWalters, Lindsay Allen, Kate Niehaus, Alicia Follmar, Maddie Omeara, and Lindsay Flacks, and coaches Peter Tegen and David Vidal: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate congratulates the Stanford University women's cross country team for winning the 2007 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Championship.

SENATE RESOLUTION 427—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT BERKELEY MEN'S WATER POLO TEAM FOR WINNING THE 2007 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 427

Whereas the University of California at Berkeley (California) Golden Bears won the 2007 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's Water Polo Championship, 8-6, over the University of Southern California Trojans on December 2, 2007, at the Avery Aquatics Center at Stanford University;

Whereas the California Golden Bears had a 28-4 overall record during the 2007 season;

Whereas in 2007 the California Golden Bears won a Division I men's water polo title for the 2nd year in a row and the 13th time in school history;

Whereas Michael Sharf was named the 2007 NCAA Tournament Most Valuable Player, Zac Monsees, and Jeff Tyrrell were named to the NCAA Tournament 1st team, and Spencer Warden was named to the NCAA Tournament 2nd team; and

Whereas Michael Sharf, Zac Monsees, and Mark Sheredy were named as first-team All-Americans, Adam Haley was named a second-team All-American, and Jeff Tyrrell and Spencer Warden were selected as third-team All-Americans for their exceptional contributions during the 2007 season: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate congratulates the University of California at Berkeley men's water polo team for winning the 2007 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Championship.

SENATE RESOLUTION 428—CONGRATULATING THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WOMEN'S SOCCER TEAM ON WINNING THE 2007 NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION DIVISION I CHAMPIONSHIP

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 428

Whereas the University of Southern California (USC) Trojans won the 2007 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Women's Soccer Championship by a 2-0 victory over the Florida State University Seminoles on December 9, 2007, at the Aggie Soccer Complex in College Station, Texas;

Whereas the USC Trojans, in the 2007 season, had a 20-3-2 overall record, with 13 goals allowed, 15 shutouts, and a perfect 6-0 mark in the NCAA Women's Soccer Tournament, including 5 shutouts;

Whereas the USC Trojans won a Division I women's soccer title for the first time in school history in 2007;

Whereas Marihelen Tomer and Janessa Currier each scored a goal in the championship game;

Whereas Amy Rodriguez was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Offensive Player, Kristin Olsen was named the tournament's Most Outstanding Defensive Player, and Marihelen Tomer, Kasey Johnson, and Janessa Currier were named to the All-Tournament Team;

Whereas Ashley Nick and Kristin Olsen earned All-American Honors for their exceptional contributions during the 2007 season; and

Whereas the 2007 USC women's soccer team members are players Kristin Olsen, Brittany Massro, Nini Loucks, Alyssa Davila, Laura McKee, Kat Stolpa, Lauren Brown, Shannon Lacy, Ashli Sandoval, Jamie Petrossi, Stacey Strong, Karter Haug, Amy Rodriguez, Kasey Johnson, Jacquelyn Johnston, Janessa Currier, Ashley Nick, Marihelen Tomer, Meagan Holmes, Megan Ohai, Kelley Finch, Briana Ovbude, Amy Massey, Kate Gong, and Monique Gaxiola, and coaches Ali Khosroshahin, Harold Warren, Laura Janke, Alicia Lloyd, and Rosa Anna Tantillo: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate congratulates the University of Southern California women's soccer team for winning the 2007 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Championship.

SENATE RESOLUTION 429—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

Mrs. DOLE (for herself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. BURR, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. SNOWE, and Ms. CANTWELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 429

Whereas the estimated import value of the 350,000 pounds of cocaine confiscated by the United States Coast Guard in 2007 is more