

create authority for multi-medical center NPCs to be shared among a number of medical centers. Condensing numerous NPCs into one would retain the local affiliations that make them valuable and effective, but would achieve greater efficiency and economy of scale by combining administrative resources.

The legislation would make additional adjustments in other areas. It would expand VA's oversight capability. It would clarify existing authority for NPCs to transfer funds among medical centers, and it would clarify reimbursement processes. It would also modify the required composition of NPC governance boards, to allow individuals with a wider range of expertise to serve.

I believe these proposed changes would facilitate better working relationships between NPCs and VA, thereby achieving better support of VA research and education. I am confident that these provisions will make an effective source of support for VA even stronger.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 534—DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF MAY 2008 AS "NATIONAL DRUG COURT MONTH"

Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. LEVIN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. KOHL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. JOHNSON) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 534

Whereas drug courts provide focus and leadership for community-wide partnerships, bringing together public safety and public health professionals in the fight against drug abuse and criminality;

Whereas 60 percent to 80 percent of drug offenders sentenced to prison and over 40 percent sentenced to probation recidivate, and whereas fewer than 17 percent of drug court graduates recidivate;

Whereas the results of more than 100 program evaluations and at least 3 experimental studies have yielded evidence that drug courts greatly improve substance abuse treatment outcomes, substantially reduce crime, and produce significant societal benefits;

Whereas drug courts transform over 120,000 addicts each year in the adult, juvenile, and family court systems into drug-free, productive citizens;

Whereas judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation professionals, law enforcement and community supervision personnel, researchers and educators, national and community leaders, and others dedicated to drug courts and similar types of treatment programs are healing families and communities across the country; and

Whereas the drug court movement has grown from the 12 original drug courts in 1994 to over 2,000 operational drug courts as of December 2007: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the month of May 2008 as "National Drug Court Month";

(2) encourages the people of the United States and interested groups to observe the month with appropriate ceremonies and activities;

(3) encourages leaders across the United States to increase the use of drug courts by instituting sustainable drug courts and other treatment-based alternatives to prison in all 3,143 counties in the United States, which serve the vast majority of the highest-need citizens in the justice system; and

(4) supports the goal of robustly funding the Drug Court Discretionary Grant Program and other treatment-based alternatives to prison in order to expand these critical criminal justice programs.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, today I rise to introduce a resolution marking May 2008 as National Drug Court Month. The more than 2,000 drug courts that currently operate across the country are critical to curbing drug use, reducing recidivism, and turning non-violent prisoners into law abiding and productive members of our society.

Drug courts closely supervise non-violent drug offenders as they address their addiction or substance abuse problem. When they graduate from the program they are clean, sober and better prepared to participate productively in society. In order to graduate from most drug court programs, participants are required to finish high school or obtain a GED, hold down a job, as well as maintain financial obligations including drug court fees and child support payments. A sponsor is also required to help ensure they stay on track.

In 1994, I wrote the law that created the drug courts program because we believed that the programs they oversee were cost-effective, innovative alternatives to prison that would reduce crime and deal with non-violent offenders who are in desperate need of treatment. It turns out we were right. A 2005 report from the Government Accountability Office found that drug court program participants were less likely to be rearrested or reconvicted than those who did not participate in drug court programs. The report also concluded that a conservative estimate of the net benefits to society of sending a non-violent offender through drug court program ranges from about \$1,000 per participant to about \$15,000. There is just no question that these alternative to prison programs not only work, but also make great financial sense.

Treating non-violent offenders through drug court-monitored programs and other alternatives to prison treatment programs provides them with an opportunity to turn away from drugs and to get on the path to be healthy, contributing members of society. It also helps to reduce America's exploding prison population: more than 2.3 million people are in prisons and jails across the U.S.; 1 in 100 adults in the United States are behind bars. It costs an average of nearly \$24,000 to imprison an individual. Drug courts can reduce the financial burden on State and local budgets.

I hope that National Drug Court Month raises awareness about the im-

portance of drug courts and other alternatives to prison treatment-based programs. I ask my colleagues to join me in commending these programs and urging state, local and Federal officials to help expand and robustly fund these treatment programs throughout the country.

SENATE RESOLUTION 535—RECOGNIZING APRIL 28, 2008, AS "NATIONAL HEALTHY SCHOOLS DAY"

Mr. REID (for Mrs. CLINTON (for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BAYH, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. CASEY)) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 535

Whereas over half of schools in the United States have problems linked to indoor air quality;

Whereas children are more vulnerable to environmental hazards as they breathe in more air per pound of body weight due to their developing systems;

Whereas children spend an average of 30 to 50 hours per week in school;

Whereas poor indoor environmental quality is associated with a wide range of problems that include poor concentration, respiratory illnesses, learning difficulties, and cancer;

Whereas research suggests that children attending schools in poor condition score 11 percent lower on standardized tests than students who attend schools in good condition;

Whereas an average of 1 out of every 13 school-age children has asthma, the leading cause of school absenteeism, accounting for approximately 14,700,000 missed school days each year;

Whereas 17 separate studies all found positive health impacts from improved indoor air-quality, ranging from 13.5 percent up to 87 percent improvement;

Whereas our Nation's schools spent approximately \$8,000,000,000 on energy costs in the last school year, causing officials to make very difficult decisions on cutting back much needed academic programs in efforts to maintain heat and electricity;

Whereas healthy and high performance schools designed to reduce energy and maintenance costs, provide cleaner air, improve lighting, and reduce exposures to toxic substances provide a healthier and safer learning environment for children and improved academic achievement and well-being;

Whereas green and healthy schools save on average \$100,000 per year on energy costs, enough to hire 2 teachers, buy 200 new computers, or purchase 5,000 new textbooks;

Whereas converting all the Nation's schools to green schools would reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 33,200,000 metric tons;

Whereas Congress has demonstrated its interest in this compelling issue by including the Healthy High-Performance Schools Program in the No Child Left Behind Act and the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007; and

Whereas our schools have the great responsibility of guiding the future of our children and our Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes April 28, 2008, as "National Healthy Schools Day".

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, today is National Healthy Schools Day—established to build awareness and promote healthy school environments for our children and school personnel.

Many organizations—including the Healthy Schools Network in New York—have worked together over the years to educate their communities as well as local, State, and Federal elected officials of the conditions that many of our children and teachers are subjected to on a daily basis. I strongly believe the work of these organizations is crucial in fostering the development and well being of our Nation's children. That is why I am proud to join them in this effort as the sponsor of resolution recognizing April 28, 2008 as National Healthy Schools Day. By recognizing this day, Congress can promote healthy school environments for all children, teachers, principals, and school staff.

Over half of our Nation's schools have environmental problems linked to poor indoor air quality AQ. Poor IAQ can cause a wide range of academic problems for the millions of children attending these schools, including lack of concentration, respiratory illnesses, learning difficulties, and even cancer. Furthermore, millions of school absences each year are attributed to health problems caused by poor IAQ or other unhealthy school environments.

It is imperative that we address these problems. From holding demonstrations on healthy cleaning practices to conducting workshops on how to design a healthy, high-performance school, the Healthy Schools Network along with other partner organizations will provide practical ways to make our schools healthier, safer learning environments for our children and teachers.

Congress has demonstrated its interest in this compelling issue by including the Healthy High-Performance Schools Program in the No Child Left Behind Act and the Energy Independence and Security Act. I encourage my colleagues to continue to fight on our children's behalf by adopting this resolution.

We must spread awareness of the environmental health of our Nation's schools. I commend those across the Nation who are using National Healthy Schools Day to do just that.

SENATE RESOLUTION 536—RECOGNIZING THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF SEEDS OF PEACE, AN ORGANIZATION PROMOTING UNDERSTANDING, RECONCILIATION, ACCEPTANCE, COEXISTENCE, AND PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, AND OTHER REGIONS OF CONFLICT

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. CARPER, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 536

Whereas Seeds of Peace, founded by John Wallach, organizes and operates a program that brings together young people and educators from regions of conflict to study and

learn about coexistence and conflict resolution;

Whereas Seeds of Peace operates a summer camp in Otisfield, Maine, as well as regional programs around the world, such as the Facilitation Training Course in the Middle East, the Homestay Programs in South Asia, or the International Regional Conferences;

Whereas the first International Conflict Resolution Camp welcomed Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, and Egyptian youth the summer of 1993, and the camp has since expanded to involve youths from other regions of conflict, including Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, the Balkans, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan;

Whereas Seeds of Peace utilizes the summer camp to initiate dialogue between the youth of the United States and youth from various conflict regions to dispel hatred and create religious and cultural understanding;

Whereas hundreds of educators receive training through the regional operations of Seeds of Peace to support and teach peaceful conflict resolution techniques in their classrooms, ensuring that thousands of students around the world are exposed to those techniques;

Whereas Seeds of Peace works to dispel fear, mistrust, and prejudice, which are root causes of violence and conflict, and to build a new generation of leaders who are committed to achieving peace;

Whereas Seeds of Peace reveals the human face of youth who are too often exposed to hatred, by engaging campers in both guided coexistence sessions and ordinary summer camp activities, such as sharing meals, canoeing, swimming, playing sports, and exploring creativity through the arts and computers;

Whereas the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as India-Pakistan and Afghanistan-Pakistan tensions, are currently at critical junctures, and progress toward peace will be enhanced by the emergence of a new generation of leaders who will choose dialogue, friendship, and openness over violence and hatred;

Whereas Seeds of Peace provides year-round opportunities, through regional programming and the innovative use of technology, to enable former participants to build on the relationships forged at camp, so that the learning processes begun at camp may continue in the participants' home countries, where they are most needed;

Whereas youth graduates of the camp, known as "Seeds," currently number more than 4,000, with an additional 567 adult delegation leaders also having completed the camp programming;

Whereas this graduate network receives continued support in promoting professional cooperation;

Whereas Seeds of Peace is strongly supported by participating governments and many world leaders;

Whereas Federal funding for Seeds of Peace demonstrates the recognized importance of Seeds of Peace in promoting the foreign policy goals of the United States; and

Whereas it is especially important to reaffirm that youth must be involved in long-term, visionary solutions to conflicts perpetuated by cycles of violence: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the 15th anniversary of the founding of Seeds of Peace;

(2) honors the accomplishments of Seeds of Peace in promoting understanding, reconciliation, acceptance, coexistence, and peace among youth from the Middle East and other regions of conflict around the world; and

(3) recognizes Seeds of Peace as a model of hope for living together in peace and security.

SENATE RESOLUTION 537—COMMEMORATING AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE DEDICATION AND SACRIFICE MADE BY THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE LOST THEIR LIVES WHILE SERVING AS LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. KOHL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 537

Whereas the well-being of all citizens of the United States is preserved and enhanced as a direct result of the vigilance and dedication of law enforcement personnel;

Whereas more than 900,000 men and women, at great risk to their personal safety, presently serve their fellow citizens as guardians of the peace;

Whereas peace officers are on the front lines in protecting the schools and schoolchildren of the United States;

Whereas 181 peace officers across the United States were killed in the line of duty during 2007, tragically the highest yearly total since 2001;

Whereas Congress should strongly support initiatives to reduce violent crime and to increase the factors that contribute to the safety of law enforcement officers, including—

(1) better equipment and increased use of bullet-resistant vests;

(2) improved training; and

(3) advanced emergency medical care;

Whereas, every 2 days on average, 1 out of every 16 peace officers is assaulted, 1 out of every 56 peace officers is injured, and 1 out of every 5,500 peace officers is killed in the line of duty somewhere in the United States; and

Whereas, on May 15, 2008, more than 20,000 peace officers are expected to gather in Washington, District of Columbia, to join with the families of their recently fallen comrades to honor those comrades and all others who went before them: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes May 15, 2008, as "Peace Officers Memorial Day", in honor of the Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers that have been killed or disabled in the line of duty; and

(2) calls on the people of the United States to observe that day with appropriate ceremonies, appreciation, and respect.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to submit today a bipartisan resolution to designate May 15, 2008, as National Peace Officers Memorial Day. Joining me in the submission of this resolution are Senators SPECTER, KENNEDY, DURBIN, and KOHL. We join in recognizing the sacrifices that law enforcement officers make each day for the American people.

This is now the twelfth year that I have been involved in offering this resolution to honor the sacrifice and commitment of those law enforcement officers who lost their lives serving their communities. For many years I submitted this resolution with my old friend and our former colleague Senator Campbell, a former deputy sheriff. Both Senator Campbell, and I, as a former prosecutor, know well the risks faced by law enforcement officers every day while they serve and protect the American people.