

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 211

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 211, a bill to facilitate nationwide availability of 2-1-1 telephone service for information and referral on human services, volunteer services, and for other purposes.

S. 400

At the request of Mr. SUNUNU, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 400, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that dependent students who take a medically necessary leave of absence do not lose health insurance coverage, and for other purposes.

S. 1437

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) were added as cosponsors 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. 1906

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1906, a bill to understand and comprehensively address the oral health problems associated with methamphetamine use.

S. 1907

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1907, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to understand and comprehensively address the inmate oral health problems associated with methamphetamine use, and for other purposes.

S. 2040

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2040, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the alternative tax liability limitation for small property and casualty insurance companies.

S. 2059

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, her name and the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2059, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to clarify the eligibility requirements with respect to airline flight crews.

S. 2067

At the request of Mr. MARTINEZ, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2067, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act relating to recreational vessels.

S. 2209

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr.

WYDEN) 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. 2368

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) 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. 2504

At the request of Mr. THUNE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2504, a bill to amend title 36, United States Code, to grant a Federal charter to the Military Officers Association of America, and for other purposes.

S. 2523

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. OBAMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2523, a bill to establish the National Affordable Housing Trust Fund in the Treasury of the United States to provide for the construction, rehabilitation, and preservation of decent, safe, and affordable housing for low-income families.

S. 2533

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2533, a bill to enact a safe, fair, and responsible state secrets privilege Act.

S. 2585

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2585, a bill to provide for the enhancement of the suicide prevention programs of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes.

S. 2666

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2666, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to encourage investment in affordable housing, and for other purposes.

S. 2668

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2668, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to remove cell phones from listed property under section 280F.

S. 2705

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2705, a bill to authorize programs to increase the number of nurses within the Armed Forces through assistance for service as nurse faculty or education as nurses, and for other purposes.

S. 2708

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey

(Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2708, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to attract and retain trained health care professionals and direct care workers dedicated to providing quality care to the growing population of older Americans.

S. 2766

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) were added as cosponsors of S. 2766, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to address certain discharges incidental to the normal operation of a recreational vessel.

S. 2781

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2781, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase the per resident payment floor for direct graduate medical education payments under the Medicare program.

S. 2790

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2790, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage of comprehensive cancer care planning under the Medicare program and to improve the care furnished to individuals diagnosed with cancer by establishing a Medicare hospice care demonstration program and grants programs for cancer palliative care and symptom management programs, provider education, and related research.

S. 2795

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2795, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish a nationwide health insurance purchasing pool for small businesses and the self employed that would offer a choice of private health plans and make health coverage more affordable, predictable, and accessible.

S. 2862

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2862, a bill to provide for National Science Foundation and National Aeronautics and Space Administration utilization of the Arecibo Observatory.

S. 2874

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2874, a bill to amend titles 5, 10, 37, and 38, United States Code, to ensure the fair treatment of a member of the Armed Forces who is discharged from the Armed Forces, at the request of the member, pursuant to the Department of Defense policy permitting the early discharge of a member who is the only surviving child in a family in which the father or mother, or one or more siblings, served in the Armed Forces and, because of hazards incident to such

service, was killed, died as a result of wounds, accident, or disease, is in a captured or missing in action status, or is permanently disabled, and for other purposes.

S. 2931

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2931, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to exempt complex rehabilitation products and assistive technology products from the Medicare competitive acquisition program.

S. 2932

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2932, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the poison center national toll-free number, national media campaign, and grant program to provide assistance for poison prevention, sustain the funding of poison centers, and enhance the public health of people of the United States.

S. 2938

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) were added as cosponsors of S. 2938, a bill to amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve educational assistance for members of the Armed Forces and veterans in order to enhance recruitment and retention for the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

S. 2942

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2942, a bill to authorize funding for the National Advocacy Center.

S. 3007

At the request of Mr. SMITH, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3007, a bill to hold the surviving Nazi war criminals accountable for the war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity they committed during World War II, by encouraging foreign governments to more efficiently prosecute and extradite wanted criminals.

S. RES. 482

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 482, a resolution designating July 26, 2008, as "National Day of the American Cowboy".

S. RES. 541

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 541, a resolution supporting humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians, accountability for abuses in Somalia, and urging concrete progress in line with the Transi-

tional Federal Charter of Somalia toward the establishment of a viable government of national unity.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 3023. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to prescribe regulations relating to the notice to be provided claimants with the Department of Veteran's Affairs regarding the substantiation of claims; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I introduce the proposed Veterans' Notice Clarification Act of 2008. This bill would require VA to issue regulations specifying the content of notices provided to claimants who seek VA benefits and services. Following a number of court decisions, VA's notification letters to veterans have become increasingly long, complex, and difficult to understand.

These notification letters must be simplified, as veterans, VA, veterans' advocates and outside review bodies have all recommended. The letters should use simple ordinary language rather than bureaucratic legalese and they should be focused on the specific type of claim that the veteran is bringing.

My bill would require different notice contents depending upon whether the claim is an original claim, a claim to reopen, or a claim for an increase in benefits. VA would also have the discretion to provide additional or alternative contents for notice if appropriate to the benefits sought. For example, an original claim for service-connected compensation may require different content than a claim for a specially adapted housing grant.

The notice required for original claims by the Veterans Claims Assistance Act, Public Law 106-475, should provide useful information based on the documents submitted to VA and the benefit sought. The information and evidence requested by VA should be relevant to the claim filed. For example, the information and evidence requested by VA for a claim for disability compensation and financial information concerning claims for pension benefits are wholly different. A veteran should not be made to submit information that is unrelated to his or her claim.

I believe that this bill, if enacted, will assist VA in developing appropriate criteria to implement the requirements of the current law. In addition, courts which review appeals from VA decisions should find it easier to identify errors in notification by measuring the notice against clear regulatory criteria.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this measure, so that veterans, survivors and dependents seeking VA benefits may be provided with clearer and more understandable notices.

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 printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3023

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' Notice Clarification Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. REGULATIONS ON CONTENTS OF NOTICE TO BE PROVIDED CLAIMANTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS REGARDING THE SUBSTANTIATION OF CLAIMS.

Section 5103(a) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting "(1)" before "Upon receipt"; and

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

"(2)(A) The Secretary shall prescribe in regulations requirements relating to the contents of notice to be provided under this subsection.

"(B) The regulations required by this paragraph—

"(i) shall specify different contents for notice depending on whether the claim concerned is an original claim, a claim for reopening a prior decision on a claim, or a claim for increase in benefits;

"(ii) may provide additional or alternative contents for notice if appropriate to the benefit or services sought under the claim;

"(iii) shall specify for each type of claim for benefits the general information and evidence required to substantiate the basic elements of such type of claim; and

"(iv) shall specify the timing of the issuance of notice."

By Mr. REID (for Mrs. CLINTON):

S. 3027. A bill to amend the National and Community Service Act of 1990 to establish a program to provide college coaches to low- and middle-income high-achieving high school students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, in honor of AmeriCorps Week, I am pleased to introduce legislation that will place more of our Nation's low- and middle-income high school students on the road to higher education. My legislation will address the disparity that exists in college persistence between lower-income, high-achieving students and their more affluent peers.

According to the National Educational Longitudinal Survey, NELS, more than 1.5 million high school students with annual household incomes of less than \$85,000 do not earn college degrees despite having ranked in the top half of their high school classes. Further, a recent report from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation found that 59 percent of lower-income high-achieving students graduated from college compared to 77 percent of their higher income peers. America cannot remain competitive in the global economy if we continue to squander our college talent every year. That is why I am sponsoring the Coaching Our Adolescents for College Heights Act, or the COACH Act.