

S. 3245

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3245, a bill to increase public confidence in the justice system and address any unwarranted racial and ethnic disparities in the criminal process.

S. 3257

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3257, a bill to extend immigration programs to promote legal immigration and for other purposes.

S. 3337

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3337, a bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out conservation reserve program notice CRP-598, entitled the "Voluntary Modification of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Contract for Critical Feed Use".

S.J. RES. 45

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 45, a joint resolution expressing the consent and approval of Congress to an inter-state compact regarding water resources in the Great Lakes—St. Lawrence River Basin.

S. RES. 618

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 618, a resolution recognizing the tenth anniversary of the bombings of the United States embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and memorializing the citizens of the United States, Kenya, and Tanzania whose lives were claimed as a result of the al Qaeda led terrorist attacks.

S. RES. 624

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 624, a resolution designating August 2008 as "National Truncy Prevention Month".

S. RES. 625

At the request of Mr. HAGEL, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 625, a resolution designating August 16, 2008, as National Airborne Day.

S. RES. 627

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Sen-

ator from Nebraska (Mr. HAGEL), the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE), the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. DOLE), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 627, a resolution welcoming home Keith Stansell, Thomas Howes, and Marc Gonsalves, three citizens of the United States who were held hostage for over five years by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) after their plane crashed on February 13, 2003.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 3349. A bill to increase energy assistance for low-income persons, to extend energy tax incentives, and for other purpose; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Energy Assistance Act of 2008, legislation which would assist people who want to invest in energy conservation and alternative energy technologies and help set us on a path toward energy independence.

As I visit communities around the State of Maine, I hear time and again that the high cost of energy is causing a crisis for many of our citizens. Rapidly increasing prices for home heating oil, gasoline and diesel fuel are a huge burden for many families, truckers, and small businesses. High oil prices affect virtually every corner of the economy, in Maine and throughout the country, and are a significant cause of the current economic downturn.

Mr. President, I am concerned that in this difficult economy, investments in energy conservation and alternative energy improvements are simply too costly for many American families and small businesses. For example, under the present code, taxpayers who install energy efficient windows receive a 10 percent tax credit, up to \$200, and taxpayers who install solar water heating systems receive a credit of 30 percent, up to a total of \$2000. In both instances, the investment which must be made by the taxpayer far exceeds the credit amount.

With oil prices as high as they are, most families and small businesses are already scrimping and saving to make ends meet, and they do not have the money to finance the gap between the tax credit we provide and the cost of the investment. Ironically, the higher oil prices climb, the harder it will be for taxpayers to bridge this gap.

The legislation I am introducing today calls for additional loan authority to support current Federal programs that help families and small businesses finance energy efficiency improvements. It also would provide much-needed grants for low-income individuals who cannot benefit from either tax credits or low-interest loans. These proposals, taken together, would

go a long way toward achieving greater energy efficiency and reducing our Nation's dependence on foreign oil.

The loan authority I am proposing would expand existing Federal programs that make low-interest loans to individuals and small businesses for energy efficiency improvements. This new loan authority would be made available through a new energy assistance revolving loan fund within the Treasury Department. Individuals who make less than 115 percent of the median area income would be able to apply for low-interest loans to cover the difference between the tax credits available for energy efficiency improvements and up to 90 percent of the cost of those improvements. The Federal agencies can make these loans directly, or through their lender networks.

USDA, HUD, and other Federal agencies already have programs that can make loans of this kind to individuals. Small businesses can seek low-interest loans for energy efficiency improvements under existing loan programs such as the SBA's 7(a) program. The revolving loan fund called for by my bill will enable these agencies to offer more loans to the individuals and small businesses.

It is also important that we provide assistance to low-income individuals who do not have the income to benefit from tax credits, or who cannot afford to finance energy improvements even with low-interest loans. These individuals, especially, are still reeling from last winter's high energy prices, and it is critically important that they receive assistance before cold weather sets in again. To help those who are most in need, my bill would provide an additional \$500 million in funding this year for grants for energy efficiency, weatherization, and renewable energy technology, and would double funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program. These grants will finance investments that will decrease energy prices for these citizens for years to come and are a wise investment.

My legislation also includes several proposals I have long advocated. I have included these proposals so that this bill captures an overall picture of the energy challenges that our Nation faces. For example, this bill extends important tax incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency that have expired, or are about to expire. These provisions include the renewable energy production tax credit, Clean Renewable Energy Bonds, tax benefits for energy efficient buildings, products and power plants, the tax credit for Plug-In Hybrid vehicles, the exemption from the heavy vehicles excise tax for idling reduction units and advanced insulation, and energy efficiency tax credits for homes.

My bill would also provide a \$500 tax credit to help consumers purchase and install new clean burning stoves, as well as efficient, clean wood pellet stoves, similar to a bill I introduced

with Senator CRAPO earlier this year. This new tax credit reflects the reality that with oil prices soaring, wood is again the fuel of choice for many families throughout the country, just as it was during the height of the oil crisis in the 1970's.

I urge my colleagues to work together in a bipartisan way so that we can help Americans overcome the challenge of high oil prices and restore and strengthen our Nation's economy.

By Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr.

GRASSLEY, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 3351. A bill to enhance drug trafficking interdiction by creating a Federal felony for operating or embarking in a submersible or semi-submersible vessel without nationality and on an international voyage; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Drug Trafficking Interdiction Assistance Act of 2008. The operation of unregistered, unflagged, semi- and fully-submersible vessels to traffic narcotics and other contraband through international waters poses a serious threat to the safety of our communities and the security of our Nation.

Self-propelled semi-submersible water-craft, or SPSSs, can operate with a significant portion of their hull below the surface of the water, making detection very difficult. Recently we've seen an increase in the production and use of SPSSs originating in Colombia and embarking north in the Pacific Ocean with up to 12 tons of cocaine packed on board. SPSSs are typically less than 100 feet long, carry 4-5 crew, travel at speeds of up to 8 knots, and have a maximum range of 3,500 miles.

These submarines are often equipped with valves that allow the operators to quickly flood and sink the SPSS in the event of interception by law enforcement, sending the vessel and any drugs or other contraband on board to an unrecoverable depth. As the last part of the scuttling process, the operators eject from the SPSS, and law enforcement has no choice but to rescue them from the ocean in accordance with our obligations under international law. They avoid prosecution because no drugs are recovered. For the operators of these SPSSs, they are able to avoid prosecution—for now.

This bill turns the tables on the traffickers. It builds off of the good work by my colleagues Senators LAUTENBERG, SMITH, CANTWELL, and SNOWE, who have a bill that criminalizes the operation of an unregistered, stateless semi-submersible or submersible vessel. The legislation that I have drafted would clarify that the defendant's intent in operating the SPSS was to evade detection, add a robust affirmative defense to protect legitimate researchers and explorers who may happen to use a semi-submersible vessel, include a tough criminal penalty provision to prosecute SPSS operators, and

direct the United States Sentencing Commission to account for mitigating and aggravating factors in the Sentencing Guidelines.

As Chair of the Caucus International Narcotics Control and Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs, I have worked to not only curb drug demand and increase treatment options, but also to drug traffickers and disrupt supply. This bill is an important step in curbing this emerging threat and shutting down this new mode of trafficking.

Between 2001 and 2007, there were 23 identified SPSS drug smuggling events. At the time, these vessels were largely seen by drug traffickers as risky and impractical. But after increasingly successful interdiction of go-fast boats and other means, drug traffickers began seeing SPSSs as a viable option. Between October 1, 2007 and February 1, 2008, alone, there were a reported 27 SPSS events that successfully delivered an estimated 111 tons of cocaine. At between \$500,000 and \$2 million per SPSS, they cost only a fraction of the profits these traffickers reap.

These vessels have the capacity to deliver more than just illegal drugs—an SPSSs could easily accommodate other contraband, like terrorist operatives and weapons of mass destruction in its cargo-holds. Their operation poses a significant danger to the United States and this legislation criminalizes their use while allowing for the continuation of legitimate research and exploring activities.

I want to recognize my friend Senator LAUTENBERG for his leadership on this issue. I look forward to working with him to enact a tough and fair law that disrupts drug trafficking and other illegal smuggling activities. I also thank Senators GRASSLEY and FEINSTEIN for their support, and I urge our colleagues to join us in supporting this important legislation.

By Mr. REID (for Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 3352. A bill to temporarily extend the programs under the Higher Education Act of 1965; considered and passed.

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. 3352

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

SECTION 1. EXTENSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

(a) EXTENSION OF PROGRAMS.—Section 2(a) of the Higher Education Extension Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-81; 20 U.S.C. 1001 note) is amended by striking "July 31, 2008" and inserting "August 15, 2008".

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section, or in the Higher Education Extension Act of 2005 as amended by this Act, shall be construed to limit or otherwise alter the authorizations of appropriations for, or

the durations of, programs contained in the amendments made by the Higher Education Reconciliation Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-171), by the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (Public Law 110-84), or by the Ensuring Continued Access to Student Loans Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-227) to the provisions of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Taxpayer-Teacher Protection Act of 2004.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect as if enacted on July 31, 2008.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 95—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT A SITE TO BE SELECTED BY THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY SHOULD BE PROVIDED FOR A MEMORIAL MARKER TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF THE 40 MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN THE AIR CRASH AT BAKERS CREEK, AUSTRALIA, ON JUNE 14, 1943

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

Whereas during the Second World War, the United States Army Air Corps established rest and recreation facilities in Mackay, Queensland, Australia;

Whereas from the end of January 1943 until early 1944, thousands of United States servicemen were ferried from jungle battlefields in New Guinea to Mackay;

Whereas these servicemen traveled by air transport to spend an average of 10 days on a rest and relaxation furlough;

Whereas they usually were carried by two B-17C Flying Fortresses converted for transport duty;

Whereas on Monday, June 14, 1943, at about 6 a.m., a B-17C, Serial Number 40-2072, took off from Mackay Airport for Port Moresby;

Whereas there were 6 crew members and 35 passengers aboard;

Whereas the aircraft took off into fog and soon made two left turns at low altitude;

Whereas a few minutes after takeoff, when it was five miles south of Mackay, the plane crashed at Bakers Creek, killing everyone on board except Corporal Foye Kenneth Roberts of Wichita Falls, Texas, the sole survivor of the accident;

Whereas the cause of the crash remains a mystery, and the incident remains relatively unknown outside of Australia;

Whereas United States officials, who were under orders not to reveal the presence of Allied troops in Australia, kept the crash a military secret during the war;

Whereas due to wartime censorship, the news media did not report the crash;

Whereas relatives of the victims received telegrams from the United States War Department stating little more than that the serviceman had been killed somewhere in the South West Pacific;

Whereas the remains of the 40 crash victims were flown to Townsville, Queensland, where they were buried in the Belgian Gardens United States military cemetery on June 19, 1943;

Whereas in early 1946, they were disinterred and shipped to Hawaii, where 13 were reburied in the National Memorial