

Uncertain and untimely funding can limit VA health care's effectiveness, while they strive to meet the needs of veterans on a daily basis, as costs grow rapidly.

What I am proposing today is not new. Congress already uses advance appropriations for programs that require funding in a timely manner, such as HUD Section 8 housing vouchers and the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program.

To this extent, I submit that veterans' health care is just as deserving of secured and predictable funding.

To increase transparency in this process, the bill I am introducing would require an annual GAO audit and public report to Congress on VA's funding forecasts.

This process of continuous open review of VA appropriations would help VA funds go even further for veterans and taxpayers.

Advance funding for veterans' health care has the strong support of the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform, a coalition which includes the following veteran service organizations: AMVETS, Blinded Veterans Association, Disabled American Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, The American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Vietnam Veterans of America.

My friend and counterpart in the House of Representatives, House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman ROBERT FILNER, is introducing a companion bill for advance funding as well.

We are united in our determination to set down a marker for future action on veterans' health care through this bill, and place advance appropriations for veterans' health care on the National agenda.

I urge all of our colleagues to join as supporters of more secure, timely funding for veterans' health care.

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. 3527

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 Health Care Budget Reform Act of 2008".

SEC. 2. TWO-FISCAL YEAR BUDGET AUTHORITY FOR CERTAIN MEDICAL CARE ACCOUNTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) TWO-FISCAL YEAR BUDGET AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 113 the following new section:

"§ 113A. Two-fiscal year budget authority for certain medical care accounts

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with fiscal year 2010, new discretionary budget authority provided in an appropriations Act for the appropriations accounts of the Department specified in subsection (b) shall be made available for the fiscal year involved and shall include new discretionary budget au-

thority first available after the end of such fiscal year for the subsequent fiscal year.

"(b) MEDICAL CARE ACCOUNTS.—The medical care accounts of the Department specified in this subsection are the medical care accounts of the Veterans Health Administration as follows:

"(1) Medical Services.

"(2) Medical Administration.

"(3) Medical Facilities."

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 1 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 113 the following new item:

"113A. Two-fiscal year budget authority for certain medical care accounts."

SEC. 3. COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES STUDY ON ADEQUACY AND ACCURACY OF BASELINE MODEL PROJECTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES.

(a) STUDY OF ADEQUACY AND ACCURACY OF BASELINE MODEL PROJECTIONS.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study of the adequacy and accuracy of the budget projections made by the Enrollee Health Care Projection Model, or its equivalent, as utilized for the purpose of estimating and projecting health care expenditures of the Department of Veterans Affairs (in this section referred to as the "Model") with respect to the fiscal year involved and the subsequent four fiscal years.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the date of each year in 2010, 2011, and 2012, on which the President submits the budget request for the next fiscal year under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, the Comptroller General shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress and to the Secretary a report.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report under this paragraph shall include, for the fiscal year beginning in the year in which such report is submitted, the following:

(A) A statement whether the amount requested in the budget of the President for expenditures of the Department for health care in such fiscal year is consistent with anticipated expenditures of the Department for health care in such fiscal year as determined utilizing the Model.

(B) The basis for such statement.

(C) Such additional information as the Comptroller General determines appropriate.

(3) AVAILABILITY TO THE PUBLIC.—Each report submitted under this subsection shall also be made available to the public.

(4) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term "appropriate committees of Congress" means—

(A) the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, Appropriations, and the Budget of the Senate; and

(B) the Committees on Veterans' Affairs, Appropriations, and the Budget of the House of Representatives.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 665—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 3, 2008, AS "NATURAL ALTERNATIVE FUEL VEHICLE DAY"

Mr. BYRD (for himself, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. DODD, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. NELSON, of Nebraska, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REID, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. STABENOW,

Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BURR, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. HAGEL, and Mr. LUGAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 665

Whereas the United States should reduce the dependence of the Nation on foreign oil and enhance the energy security of the Nation by creating a transportation sector that is less dependent on oil;

Whereas the United States should improve the air quality of the Nation by reducing emissions from the millions of motor vehicles that operate in the United States;

Whereas the United States should foster national expertise and technological advancement in cleaner, more energy-efficient alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles;

Whereas a robust domestic industry for alternative fuels and alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles will create jobs and increase the competitiveness of the United States in the international community;

Whereas the people of the United States need more options for clean and energy-efficient transportation;

Whereas the mainstream adoption of alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles will produce benefits at the local, national, and international levels;

Whereas consumers and businesses require a better understanding of the benefits of alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles;

Whereas first responders require proper and comprehensive training to become fully prepared for any precautionary measures that they may need to take during incidents and extrications that involve alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles;

Whereas the Federal Government can lead the way toward a cleaner and more efficient transportation sector by choosing alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles for the fleets of the Federal Government; and

Whereas Federal support for the adoption of alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles can accelerate greater energy independence for the United States, improve the environmental security of the Nation, and address global climate change: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 3, 2008, as "National Alternative Fuel Vehicle Day";

(2) proclaims National Alternative Fuel Vehicle Day as a day to promote programs and activities that will lead to the greater use of cleaner, more efficient transportation that uses new sources of energy; and

(3) urges Americans—

(A) to increase the personal and commercial use of cleaner and energy-efficient alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles;

(B) to promote public sector adoption of cleaner and energy-efficient alternative fuel and advanced technology vehicles; and

(C) to encourage the enactment of Federal policies to reduce the dependence of the United States on foreign oil through the advancement and adoption of alternative, advanced, and emerging vehicle and fuel technologies.

SENATE RESOLUTION 666—RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF AARP

Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Mr. SALAZAR, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LUGAR, Mrs.

DOLE, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. SMITH, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BYRD, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. NELSON, of Nebraska, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BAYH, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. KERRY, Mr. HARKIN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. NELSON of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 666

Whereas AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with more than 40,000,000 members that is dedicated to improving the quality of life of people who are 50 years of age or older;

Whereas Ethel Percy Andrus, a retired educator from California, founded AARP in 1958 to promote independence, dignity, and purpose for older people in the United States and to encourage current and future generations "to serve, not to be served";

Whereas the vision of AARP is "a society in which everyone ages with dignity and purpose and in which AARP helps people fulfill their goals and dreams";

Whereas the mission of AARP is to enhance the quality of life of all people as they age, to promote positive social change, and to deliver value to its members through information, advocacy, and service;

Whereas the nonpartisan advocacy activities of AARP help millions of people participate in the legislative, judicial, and administrative processes of the United States;

Whereas AARP is a trusted source of reliable information on health, financial security, and other issues important to people 50 years of age and older;

Whereas AARP provides an opportunity for volunteerism and service so that its millions of members can better their families, communities, and the Nation;

Whereas AARP Services has become a leader in the marketplace by influencing companies to offer new and better services for the members of AARP;

Whereas AARP Foundation, the philanthropic arm of AARP, delivers information, education, and direct service programs to the most vulnerable people in the United States aged 50 and over;

Whereas the job placement program of AARP Foundation has helped more than 400,000 low-income older people in the United States find jobs, contributing to their sense of purpose and dignity;

Whereas the Driver Safety Program of AARP has helped more than 10,000,000 older drivers sharpen their driving skills;

Whereas 2008 is the 50th anniversary of the founding of AARP; and

Whereas, in honor of its 50th anniversary, AARP renewed its commitment to improving the quality of life for all older people in the United States and helping people of all generations fulfill their goals and dreams: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commends AARP for 50 years of outstanding service to people aged 50 and older; and

(2) recognizes AARP's commitment to serving future generations.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to join with so many of my colleagues in supporting a resolution commemorating the 50th anniversary of the AARP.

The 49 million members of the AARP take Government and public policy very seriously, and their association is

a model of effective advocacy here in Washington. For instance, in the successful fight against the administration's attempt to privatize Social Security—a truly terrible idea that would have put Americans' retirement security at risk in the stock market casino—AARP was extraordinarily effective in marshalling facts, mobilizing experts, and educating members of Congress.

Likewise, AARP does a great job of informing and educating its own members about critical issues being debated here in Washington. I don't believe in top-down politics; I believe in bottom-up politics. And so does the AARP. The organization has members in virtually every neighborhood in the United States. It mobilizes old-fashioned people power in order to hold Government accountable. It takes on the powerful, entrenched interests when those interests attempt to trample on the rights of ordinary people.

AARP as an institution is an invaluable resource to us here in Congress. Just as AARP keeps its members informed about what is happening in Washington, it also closely monitors the concerns and wishes of its members so it can better represent them in Washington. Just this week, I chaired a hearing about the things that 401(k) participants and beneficiaries need to know about the fees they are paying. AARP was right there with the results of a timely survey of its members about what disclosure is most useful and understandable to them.

The staff at AARP pay close attention to every regulatory move, every newspaper article, every important hearing or meeting that could have some impact on older Americans. They are truly a wealth of information.

I am grateful for their active engagement on Capitol Hill, because, as our population ages, it is critical that we be attuned to the impact of our policies on older people and retirees. When we make policy and pass laws on everything from health care, to the economy, to improving workplace options for the millions of seniors who want or need to continue working, we have a tremendous resource in the AARP.

I would particularly like to thank the AARP for its assistance to me and my staff on some of our key legislative priorities, including improving retirement security; moving our health care system toward a greater emphasis on wellness and prevention; combating age discrimination in the workplace; preserving and strengthening Social Security; and ending the institutional bias in Medicare and Medicaid so that elderly people and people with disabilities can live in their own homes rather than nursing homes.

I look forward to continuing this rich collaboration with the outstanding professionals who staff and lead the AARP. I salute the people at AARP for the great job they do representing the interests of older Americans and retirees. It has been a remarkable first 50 years. In the years ahead, I wish them

even greater success in increasing economic opportunities and retirement security for older Americans.

SENATE RESOLUTION 667—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2008 AS "NATIONAL PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH"

Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. INOUE, Mr. VITTER, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. SNOWE, Mrs. DOLE, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. INHOFE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. KERRY, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. DODD, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. WARNER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BAUCUS, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. CASEY, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. ISAKSON and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 667

Whereas countless families in the United States live with prostate cancer;

Whereas 1 in 6 men in the United States will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in his lifetime;

Whereas prostate cancer is the most commonly diagnosed non-skin cancer and the second most common cause of cancer-related deaths among men in the United States;

Whereas, in 2008, over 186,320 men in the United States will be diagnosed with prostate cancer and 28,660 men in the United States will die of prostate cancer;

Whereas 30 percent of new diagnoses of prostate cancer occur in men under the age of 65;

Whereas a man in the United States turns 50 years old about every 14 seconds, increasing his odds of developing cancer, including prostate cancer;

Whereas African-American males suffer a prostate cancer incidence rate up to 65 percent higher than White males and double the mortality rates;

Whereas obesity is a significant predictor of the severity of prostate cancer and the probability that the disease will lead to death, and high cholesterol levels are strongly associated with advanced prostate cancer;

Whereas, if a man in the United States has 1 family member diagnosed with prostate cancer, he has a 1 in 3 chance of being diagnosed with prostate cancer, if he has 2 family members with such diagnoses, he has an 83 percent risk, and if he has 3 family members with such diagnoses, he then has a 97 percent risk of prostate cancer;

Whereas screening by both a digital rectal examination (DRE) and a prostate specific antigen blood test (PSA) can diagnose the disease in its early stages, increasing the chances of surviving more than 5 years to nearly 100 percent, while only 33 percent of men survive more than 5 years if diagnosed during the late stages of the disease;

Whereas there are no noticeable symptoms of prostate cancer while it is still in the early stages, making screening critical;

Whereas ongoing research promises further improvements in prostate cancer prevention, early detection, and treatments; and

Whereas educating people in the United States, including health care providers, about prostate cancer and early detection