

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. 736. A bill to provide for improvements in the Federal hiring process and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. UDALL of Colorado):

S. 737. A bill to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to authorize the Secretary of Energy to conduct research, development, and demonstration to make biofuels more compatible with small nonroad engines, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. BOND, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 738. A bill to amend the Consumer Credit Protection Act to assure meaningful disclosures of the terms of rental-purchase agreements, including disclosures of all costs to consumers under such agreements, to provide certain substantive rights to consumers under such agreements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 739. A bill to require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to study drywall imported from China in 2004 through 2007, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SPECTER:

S. 740. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the homebuyer tax credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SPECTER:

S. 741. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose a flat tax only on individual taxable earned income and business taxable income, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CHAMBLISS (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 742. A bill to expand the boundary of the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site in the State of Georgia, to redesignate the unit as a National Historical Park, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico:

S. 743. A bill to require air carriers to provide training for flight attendants and gate attendants regarding serving alcohol, recognizing intoxicated passengers, and dealing with disruptive passengers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. BURR (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. Res. 89. A resolution expressing support for designation of a "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. DODD, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. NELSON of Florida):

S. Res. 90. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the Fifth Summit of the Americas, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, April 17, 18, and 19, 2009; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. Res. 91. A resolution calling on the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Secretary of the Treasury, and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to take action on issues relating to drywall imported from China; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. Con. Res. 14. A concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 42

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 42, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to preserve and protect Social Security benefits of American workers and to help ensure greater congressional oversight of the Social Security system by requiring that both Houses of Congress approve a totalization agreement before the agreement, giving foreign workers Social Security benefits, can go into effect.

S. 146

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 146, a bill to amend the Federal antitrust laws to provide expanded coverage and to eliminate exemptions from such laws that are contrary to the public interest with respect to railroads.

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 146, *supra*.

S. 148

At the request of Mr. KOHL, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 148, a bill to restore the rule that agreements between manufacturers and retailers, distributors, or wholesalers to set the minimum price below which the manufacturer's product or service cannot be sold violates the Sherman Act.

S. 253

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 253, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the application of the homebuyer credit, and for other purposes.

S. 254

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 254, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of home infusion therapy under the Medicare Program.

S. 372

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 372, a bill to amend chapter 23 of title 5, United States Code, to clarify the disclosures of information pro-

tected from prohibited personnel practices, require a statement in nondisclosure policies, forms, and agreements that such policies, forms, and agreements conform with certain disclosure protections, provide certain authority for the Special Counsel, and for other purposes.

S. 388

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 388, a bill to extend the termination date for the exemption of returning workers from the numerical limitations for temporary workers.

S. 414

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 414, a bill to amend the Consumer Credit Protection Act, to ban abusive credit practices, enhance consumer disclosures, protect underage consumers, and for other purposes.

S. 423

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 423, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize advance appropriations for certain medical care accounts of the Department of Veterans Affairs by providing two-fiscal year budget authority, and for other purposes.

S. 428

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 428, a bill to allow travel between the United States and Cuba.

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 428, *supra*.

S. 448

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 448, a bill to maintain the free flow of information to the public by providing conditions for the federally compelled disclosure of information by certain persons connected with the news media.

S. 455

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 455, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of 5 United States Army Five-Star Generals, George Marshall, Douglas MacArthur, Dwight Eisenhower, Henry "Hap" Arnold, and Omar Bradley, alumni of the United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to coincide with the celebration of the 132nd Anniversary of the founding of the United States Army Command and General Staff College.

S. 469

At the request of Mr. VOINOVICH, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 469, a bill to amend chapter 83 of title 5, United States Code, to modify the computation for part-time service under the Civil Service Retirement System.

S. 473

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. BURRIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 473, a bill to establish the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation.

S. 475

At the request of Mr. BURR, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 475, a bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to guarantee the equity of spouses of military personnel with regard to matters of residency, and for other purposes.

S. 478

At the request of Mr. DEMINT, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 478, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to ensure the right of employees to a secret-ballot election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board.

S. 486

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 486, a bill to achieve access to comprehensive primary health care services for all Americans and to reform the organization of primary care delivery through an expansion of the Community Health Center and National Health Service Corps programs.

S. 496

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) were added as cosponsors of S. 496, a bill to provide duty-free treatment for certain goods from designated Reconstruction Opportunity Zones in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and for other purposes.

S. 503

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 503, a bill to authorize the exploration, leasing, development, and production of oil and gas in and from the western portion of the Coastal Plain of the State of Alaska without surface occupancy, and for other purposes.

S. 511

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 511, a bill to amend part B of title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for an exemption of pharmacies

and pharmacists from certain Medicare accreditation requirements in the same manner as such exemption applies to certain professionals.

S. 535

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WEBB) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. KAUFMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 535, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 599

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 599, a bill to amend chapter 81 of title 5, United States Code, to create a presumption that a disability or death of a Federal employee in fire protection activities caused by any certain diseases is the result of the performance of such employee's duty.

S. 614

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) were added as cosponsors of S. 614, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the Women Airforce Service Pilots ("WASP").

S. 632

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 632, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require that the payment of the manufacturers' excise tax on recreational equipment be paid quarterly.

S. 643

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 643, a bill to amend title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974, title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act, and the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit preexisting condition exclusions for children in group health plans and health insurance coverage in the group and individual markets.

S. 651

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 651, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose an excise tax on excessive bonuses paid by, and received from, companies receiving Federal emergency economic assistance, to limit the amount of non-qualified deferred compensation that employees of such companies may defer from taxation, and for other purposes.

S. 653

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr.

ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 653, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the bicentennial of the writing of the Star-Spangled Banner, and for other purposes.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. BUNNING, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 654, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to cover physician services delivered by podiatric physicians to ensure access by Medicaid beneficiaries to appropriate quality foot and ankle care.

S. 677

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 677, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require wealthy beneficiaries to pay a greater share of their premiums under the Medicare prescription drug program.

S. 708

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 708, a bill to express the policy of the United States regarding the United States relationship with Native Hawaiians, to provide a process for the reorganization of a Native Hawaiian government and the recognition by the United States of the Native Hawaiian government, and for other purposes.

S. 714

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 714, a bill to establish the National Criminal Justice Commission.

At the request of Mr. WEBB, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 714, supra.

S. 717

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 717, a bill to modernize cancer research, increase access to preventative cancer services, provide cancer treatment and survivorship initiatives, and for other purposes.

S. 718

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 718, a bill to amend the Legal Services Corporation Act to meet special needs of eligible clients, provide for technology grants, improve corporate practices of the Legal Services Corporation, and for other purposes.

S. 729

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. DODD), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from

Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 729, a bill to amend the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 to permit States to determine State residency for higher education purposes and to authorize the cancellation of removal and adjustment of status of certain alien students who are long-term United States residents and who entered the United States as children, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 11

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. KAUFMAN), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 11, a concurrent resolution condemning all forms of anti-Semitism and reaffirming the support of Congress for the mandate of the Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 9

At the request of Mr. KAUFMAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 9, a resolution commemorating 90 years of U.S.-Polish diplomatic relations, during which Poland has proven to be an exceptionally strong partner to the United States in advancing freedom around the world.

S. RES. 20

At the request of Mr. VOINOVICH, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. KAUFMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 20, a resolution celebrating the 60th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

S. RES. 56

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 56, a resolution urging the Government of Moldova to ensure a fair and democratic election process for the parliamentary elections on April 5, 2009.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. BAUCUS, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 734. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the capacity of the Department of Veterans Affairs to recruit and retain physicians in Health Professional Shortage Areas and to improve the provision of health care to veterans in rural areas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I am today introducing legislation to make various improvements to VA rural health care. I am pleased to be joined in this effort by Senators MAX BAUCUS and MARK BEGICH. The legislation is designed to bring more doctors into

small communities; promote the use of volunteer counselors to help with mental health issues; expand telemedicine services; and create incentives for VA's community partners to provide high quality services to veterans.

As the drawdown of forces in Iraq begins, VA must be prepared to meet the health care needs of veterans upon their return.

Many veterans live in small towns and communities. This includes a large number of Guard members and Reservists who have served in such an integral role in Iraq and Afghanistan. Members of the Guard and Reserve face challenges that are different than those faced by their active duty counterparts, who return to military bases with the support of their unit and programs geared toward re-acclimating them to life outside of the combat zone. When members of the Guard or Reserves return home, they often are isolated from their units, leaving them to reintegrate back into their communities without a strong VA or DoD presence or support system.

When health care is needed, a rural community may not have providers who offer mental health services, such as group counseling, and may not be familiar with treating combat-related disorders.

I believe strongly that there is an obligation to care for all veterans in need, regardless of where they live. We must ensure that adequate resources are available to serve those who live in rural communities, and that VA works closely with local health care providers to help meet the need for care. It is critical that VA reach out to veterans living in rural communities so that they receive the care they need. Every resource must be united in the effort to care for wounded warriors, whether in a community hospital or VA clinic. When there is no VA presence in a community, VA may need to pay community providers for the reasonable costs of care.

Last month, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing on health care for veterans in rural areas. We heard from the chief executive officer of a community hospital, from a former director of a rural health clinic, and from outreach organizations who work to bridge the gap between VA and community health care systems. These witnesses testified about how hard it is for veterans who live in rural areas to find health care in the communities where they live, and about how difficult it is for community hospitals and clinics to provide quality services with the limited resources available to them.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs staff also conducted an oversight visit to Hawaii and saw firsthand the needs of veterans living in rural communities on the neighbor islands. Many of those veterans find it hard to access VA health care because of travel restrictions and a shortage of services in their communities. Committee staff found

that technology was not being used to bridge this gap; indeed, the use of telemedicine is actually declining in Hawaii.

The legislation we are introducing today would help address the needs of veterans living in rural communities in a number of ways.

First, the bill would bring more doctors to targeted communities by repaying their student loans while they work for VA. Currently, VA's loan repayment program is capped at an amount that is less than 1/3 the average cost of medical school. This bill would remove the cap, allowing VA to offer full loan repayment so as to provide a much more effective recruitment tool.

In addition, this bill would encourage VA and HHS to use the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program to recruit physicians for VA facilities located in underserved areas. The National Health Service Corps pays for medical school up front in exchange for a doctor's agreement to work in an underserved area after graduation.

To address the shortage of mental health providers in many communities, this legislation would also allow VA to shorten the credentialing and privileging process for licensed volunteer counselors who could provide mental health services to our veterans.

The legislation would also create a pilot program to place VA doctors in community hospitals so as to enable them to provide more continuous care for veterans. Under this pilot, VA doctors working in communities without a VA hospital would be able to follow their patients when admitted to the local hospital. Participating VA doctors would earn additional compensation for assuming these responsibilities, thereby creating financial incentives for doctors to stay within VA. Since many non-VA hospitals do not have mental health providers or other providers experienced in the treatment of conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder that disproportionately affect veterans, this would also bring needed expertise into other care communities.

This bill would also allow VA to monitor the quality of care provided in non-VA facilities. Currently, there is no way for VA to do such quality assurance in a systematic way. This bill would encourage VA's community partners to participate in quality programs like peer review, or to seek accreditation by an outside organization.

This bill also would bring new technologies to rural communities. By modifying VA's internal mechanism for distributing funds, the legislation would provide incentives for VA hospitals and clinics to use telehealth technologies. VA currently bases the distribution of funds to its facilities on workload and does not currently count all telehealth visits in a facility's workload. By requiring VA to give hospitals and clinics credit for telehealth