

In light of the importance of our fisheries relationship with the Russian Federation, I urge that the Congress give favorable consideration to this Agreement at an early date.

GEORGE W. BUSH.
THE WHITE HOUSE, January 15, 2009.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mrs. HUTCHISON (for herself and Mr. DEMINT):

S. 251. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to permit targeted interference with mobile radio services within prison facilities; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 252. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance the capacity of the Department of Veterans Affairs to recruit and retain nurses and other critical healthcare professionals, to improve the provision of health care veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

S. 253. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the application of the homebuyer credit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. LINCOLN (for herself, Ms. SNOWE, and Mr. ISAKSON):

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; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 255. A bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to empower the States to set the maximum annual percentage rates applicable to consumer credit transactions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. KYL, Mr. REID, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. McCONNELL, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. McCASKILL, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BAYH, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. JOHNSON, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 256. A bill to enhance the ability to combat methamphetamine; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 257. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to disallow certain claims resulting from high cost credit debts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. BAYH):

S. 258. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to provide enhanced penalties for marketing controlled substances to minors; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOND (for himself, Mr. DODD, Mr. CASEY, Mr. INOUE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. AKAKA, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. McCASKILL, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 259. A bill to establish a grant program to provide vision care to children, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Ms. KULSKI, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. BROWN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. KOHL, Ms. STABENOW, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 260. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the taxation of income of controlled foreign corporations attributable to imported property; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. ENSIGN, and Mr. MARTINEZ):

S. 261. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restore the deduction for the travel expenses of a taxpayer's spouse who accompanies the taxpayer on business travel; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. 262. A bill to improve and enhance the operations of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, to improve mobilization and demobilization processes for members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY):

S. 263. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the enforcement of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. 264. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to encourage the use of certified health information technology by providers in the Medicaid program and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. McCASKILL (for herself and Mr. CORKER):

S. 265. A bill to prohibit the awarding of a contract or grant in excess of the simplified acquisition threshold unless the prospective contractor or grantee certifies in writing to the agency awarding the contract or grant that the contractor or grantee has no seriously delinquent tax debts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON of Florida (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. KOHL, Mr. KERRY, Mr. JOHNSON, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 266. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the coverage gap in prescription drug coverage under part D of such title based on savings to the Medicare program resulting from the negotiation of prescription drug prices; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 267. A bill to provide funding for summer and year-round youth jobs and training programs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 268. A bill to provide funding for a Green Job Corps program, YouthBuild Build Green Grants, and Green-Collar Youth Opportunity Grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BROWN, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 269. A bill to provide funding for unemployment and training activities for dislocated workers and adults, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. NELSON of Nebraska):

S. 270. A bill to provide for programs that reduce the need for abortion, help women

bear healthy children, and support new parents; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. KERRY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. NELSON of Florida):

S. 271. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide incentives to accelerate the production and adoption of plug-in electric vehicles and related component parts; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HARKIN:

S. 272. A bill to amend the Commodity Exchange Act to ensure that all agreements, contracts, and transactions with respect to commodities are carried out on a regulated exchange, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. REID (for Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. VOINOVICH)):

S. 273. A bill to require the designation of the federally occupied building located at McKinley Avenue and Third Street, S.W., Canton, Ohio, as the "Ralph Regula Federal Office Building and Courthouse"; considered and passed.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. McCONNELL (for himself and Mr. REID):

S. Res. 14. A resolution to provide funding for Senate staff transitions; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 84

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) were added as cosponsors of S. 84, a bill to close the loophole that allowed the 9/11 hijackers to obtain credit cards from United States banks that financed their terrorist activities, to ensure that illegal immigrants cannot obtain credit cards to evade United States immigration laws, and for other purposes.

S. 85

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 85, a bill to amend title X of the Public Health Service Act to prohibit family planning grants from being awarded to any entity that performs abortions.

S. 95

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. DEMINT) were added as cosponsors of S. 95, a bill to prohibit appropriated funds from being used in contravention of section 642(a) of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

S. 96

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 96, a bill to prohibit certain abortion-related discrimination in governmental activities.

S. 98

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 98, a bill to impose admitting privilege requirements with respect to physicians who perform abortions.

S. 154

At the request of Mr. ENSIGN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 154, a bill to require the Congressional Budget Office and the Joint Committee on Taxation to use dynamic economic modeling in addition to static economic modeling in the preparation of budgetary estimates of proposed changes in Federal revenue law.

S. 162

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 162, a bill to provide greater accountability of taxpayers' dollars by curtailing congressional earmarking, and for other purposes.

S. 166

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 166, a bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to clarify the filing period applicable to charges of discrimination, and for other purposes.

S. 211

At the request of Mrs. CLINTON, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) 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 and volunteer services, and for other purposes.

S. 225

At the request of Mr. BAYH, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 225, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to establish programs to improve the quality, performance, and delivery of pediatric care.

S. 238

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 238, a bill to provide \$50,000,000,000 in new transportation infrastructure funding through bonding to empower States and local governments to complete significant infrastructure projects across all modes of transportation, including roads, bridges, rail and transit systems, ports, and inland waterways, and for other purposes.

S. 247

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 247, a bill to accelerate motor fuel savings nationwide and provide incentives to registered owners of high fuel consumption automobiles to replace such automobiles with fuel effi-

cient automobiles or public transportation.

S. 250

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 250, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a higher education opportunity credit in place of existing education tax incentives.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 252, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to enhance the capacity of the Department of Veterans Affairs to recruit and retain nurses and other critical health-care professionals, to improve the provision of health care veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation which is drawn in large measure from S. 2969, the proposed Veterans' Health Care Authorization Act, as reported by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs last Congress.

VA faces a looming shortage of health care personnel. Without concerted and timely action, this situation will only worsen in the years ahead. This is especially true as more Iraq and Afghanistan veterans return home injured and in need of new and specialized care. In order to avert this problem, VA must be able to offer competitive salaries, work schedules, and benefits. The provisions in the bill I am introducing will allow VA to recruit and retain nurses, home health aides, and specialty care providers.

This bill also contains measures that would improve the efficiency of health care delivery to veterans, including a number of pilot programs designed to help VA find new and innovative ways to deliver better, faster, and more comprehensive treatment.

Women make up an ever growing percentage of the Armed Forces. As such, they are also making up an ever growing percentage of the veteran population. While there have been efforts over the years to address the unique needs of women veterans, there is much more that VA might do. To that end, there are provisions in this bill to address current shortcomings and help VA better respond to the increased demand for care from women veterans. I particularly thank Senator MURRAY for her leadership on this issue.

One of the most troubling and difficult challenges of warfare, which can be seen particularly in the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, is diagnosing and treating those who suffer from the invisible wounds of war. The lack of understanding of these injuries, the stigma associated with them, and many other factors make effective

treatment difficult. Last Congress, legislation I authored, the Veterans Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act, was enacted as Public Law 110-387. This Congress, I seek to improve upon those advances, and to continue to provide accessible, cutting-edge care for those afflicted with invisible wounds. This bill would expand eligibility and authority for the Vet Centers to provide needed services, and would commission a comprehensive study on suicides among veterans so that we can improve efforts to prevent such tragedies.

This bill will also provide support for homeless veterans through a proposed series of innovative pilot programs. These programs are designed to significantly improve VA outreach to these veterans, in order to help them access the benefits and services provided by VA.

I look forward to working with all of our colleagues to bring this legislation to the full Senate for consideration early in this Session. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of this 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. 252

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Health Care Authorization Act of 2009".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. References to title 38, United States Code.

TITLE I—DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL MATTERS

Sec. 101. Enhancement of authorities for retention of medical professionals.
Sec. 102. Limitations on overtime duty, weekend duty, and alternative work schedules for nurses.
Sec. 103. Improvements to certain educational assistance programs.
Sec. 104. Standards for appointment and practice of physicians in Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities.

TITLE II—HEALTH CARE MATTERS

Sec. 201. Repeal of certain annual reporting requirements.
Sec. 202. Modifications to annual Gulf War research report.
Sec. 203. Payment for care furnished to CHAMPVA beneficiaries.
Sec. 204. Payor provisions for care furnished to certain children of Vietnam veterans.
Sec. 205. Disclosures from certain medical records.
Sec. 206. Disclosure to Secretary of health-plan contract information and social security number of certain veterans receiving care.
Sec. 207. Enhancement of quality management.
Sec. 208. Reports on improvements to Department health care quality management.