

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at 2:30 p.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC
WORKS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at 10:30 a.m., in room 406 of the Dirksen Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. in room 325 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Identification Security: Reevaluating the REAL ID Act."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on July 15, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. in room SH-216 of the Hart Senate Office Building, to continue the hearing on the nomination of Sonia Sotomayor to be an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on July 15, 2009, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on National Parks, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 15, 2009, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. SPECTER. I ask unanimous consent that floor privileges be given to Linda Hoffa, a detailee in my office.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Bill Curlin, an Air Force fellow in my office, be granted the privilege of the floor during the debate on the Defense authorization bill of 2010.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator BINGAMAN, I make a unanimous consent request that Jonathan Epstein, a professional staff member with the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the debate on S. 1390, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS
AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 509, and the Senate then proceed to its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 509) to authorize a major medical facility project at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times, passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (S. 509) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 509

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

**SECTION 1. MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
MEDICAL CENTER, WALLA
WALLA, WASHINGTON.**

(a) AUTHORIZATION FOR MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY PROJECT.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out a major medical facility project for the construction of a new multiple specialty outpatient facility, campus renovation and upgrades, and additional parking at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Walla Walla, Washington, with the project to be carried out in an amount not to exceed \$71,400,000.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for fiscal year 2009 for the Construction, Major Projects account, \$71,400,000 for the project authorized in subsection (a).

NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE
AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 211, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 211) supporting the goals and ideals of "National Life Insurance Awareness Month."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 211) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 211

Whereas life insurance is an essential part of a sound financial plan;

Whereas life insurance provides financial security for families by helping surviving members meet immediate and long-term financial obligations and objectives in the event of a premature death in the family;

Whereas approximately 68,000,000 United States citizens lack the adequate level of life insurance coverage needed to ensure a secure financial future for their loved ones;

Whereas life insurance products protect against the uncertainties of life by enabling individuals and families to manage the financial risks of premature death, disability, and long-term care;

Whereas individuals, families, and businesses can benefit from professional insurance and financial planning advice, including an assessment of their life insurance needs; and

Whereas numerous groups supporting life insurance have designated September 2009 as "National Life Insurance Awareness Month" as a means to encourage consumers to become more aware of their life insurance needs, seek professional advice regarding life insurance, and take the actions necessary to achieve financial security for their loved ones: Now therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of "National Life Insurance Awareness Month"; and

(2) calls on the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and the people of the United States to observe the month with appropriate programs and activities.

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the majority leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, pursuant to Public Law 111-21, announces the joint appointment of Phil Angelides of California to serve as chairman of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission.

The Chair, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to Public Law 111-21, appoints the following to serve as members of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission: the Honorable Bob Graham of Florida, Heather Murren of Nevada, and Byron Georgiou of Nevada.

The Chair, on behalf of the minority leader, pursuant to Public Law 111-21, appoints the following individuals to serve as members of the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission: Keith Hennessey of Virginia, and Douglas Holtz-Eakin of Virginia.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2009

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, July 16; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and there be a period of morning business for 1 hour, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the second half, and with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each; further, I ask that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 89, S. 1390, the Department of Defense authorization bill; and, finally, I ask that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, earlier today, the majority leader filed cloture on the pending hate crimes amendment. We will continue to work on an agreement to vote in relation to the hate crimes amendment tomorrow. If we are unable to reach an agreement, the cloture vote would occur at 1 a.m. Friday morning.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that following the remarks of Senators CHAMBLISS, GRASSLEY, and WHITEHOUSE the Senate adjourn under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Georgia is recognized.

SUNSTEIN NOMINATION

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I want to speak on the nomination of Cass R. Sunstein to be the Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs within the Office of Management and Budget.

I placed a hold on the consideration of Professor Sunstein's confirmation after his hearing in the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. I chose to do this because Professor Sunstein has written, lectured, and made recommendations on animal rights issues that are very troubling to me and to folks who make their living in agriculture and those who enjoy our Nation's great hunting and fishing heritage.

Let me just say, Mr. President, it is extremely unusual for this Member of the Senate to place a hold on anybody. It is not something I normally do.

Professor Sunstein has theorized that animals—he has theorized in writing as well as in speeches—that animals should be permitted to bring suit against their owners and others with human beings being their representatives. Let me say that again. Professor Sunstein has theorized in writing and in speeches that animals should be permitted to bring lawsuits against their owners and others with human beings as their representatives.

That is a very radical and strange position, and it not only got my attention but it got the attention of any number of other folks around the country, both within and without the agricultural sector of our country. The devastating effect this would have on animal agriculture is incalculable. Mistreated livestock do not perform well. American farmers and ranchers work every day to make sure their stock is cared for in a humane manner, and yet they would still face a tremendous threat from frivolous lawsuits under this misguided theory. Even though claims would be baseless, they would

still bear the financial costs of reckless litigation. That is a cost that would put most family farming and ranching operations out of business.

Professor Sunstein also made offhand remarks during lectures that "perhaps hunting ought to be banned." While he offered assurances during his nomination hearing that his personal view supported hunting, I am not a member of that committee and thus was not able to question Professor Sunstein personally during his confirmation hearing.

I greatly enjoy the time I spend hunting with my friends and family, and I was also very disturbed by this statement.

The Administrator of OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs must have a firm foundation in common sense, and we owe it to the American public to ensure that regulators are properly vetted by the Senate. That is why I held up Professor Sunstein's nomination in order to provide him an opportunity to explain his views on animal rights as well as the second amendment.

Since his original hearing, Professor Sunstein has met with people involved in agriculture, including the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Farm Animal Welfare Coalition, the National Pork Producers Council, and the United Egg Producers. He has heard their point of view and exactly how devastating some of his theories would be to the reality of earning a living in rural America. He has satisfied some of them, and some are still decidedly wary of his ideas.

I have also had the opportunity to meet personally with Professor Sunstein to let him explain, and me explain to him how detrimental his theories would be to the folks working so hard to feed this country and to hopefully obtain from Professor Sunstein assurances that he does not oppose hunting or the right to bear arms. I tried to figure out what he meant by saying that animals ought to have the right to sue individuals.

Let me say, Professor Sunstein comes highly recommended by a number of folks from the conservative side of the philosophical divide in this country. His ability to look at regulatory measures and to provide cost-benefit analysis is very intriguing. He is obviously a very competent person when it comes to that side of the business community. I have a great appreciation for that.

I had a very good meeting with Professor Sunstein yesterday, and after our meeting I received a letter from Professor Sunstein wherein he explained some of his statements and inflammatory ideas. In that letter, he stated that he "would not take any steps to promote litigation on behalf of animals" and that Federal "law does not create an individual right to bring lawsuits on behalf of animals against agriculture." He also stated that he believes "the second amendment creates