

for multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, and other neurological diseases and disorders.

S. 1295

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1295, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to cover transitional care services to improve the quality and cost effectiveness of care under the Medicare program.

S. 1320

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1320, a bill to provide assistance to owners of manufactured homes constructed before January 1, 1976, to purchase Energy Star-qualified manufactured homes.

S. 1362

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1362, a bill to provide grants to States to ensure that all students in the middle grades are taught an academically rigorous curriculum with effective supports so that students complete the middle grades prepared for success in high school and postsecondary endeavors, to improve State and district policies and programs relating to the academic achievement of students in the middle grades, to develop and implement effective middle grades models for struggling students, and for other purposes.

S. 1382

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1382, a bill to improve and expand the Peace Corps for the 21st century, and for other purposes.

S. 1402

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1402, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the amount allowed as a deduction for start-up expenditures.

S. 1422

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) were added as cosponsors of S. 1422, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to clarify the eligibility requirements with respect to airline flight crews.

S. 1452

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. BURRIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1452, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the meaning of "combat with the enemy" for purposes of service-connection of disabilities.

S. 1518

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1518, a bill to amend title 38, United

States Code, to furnish hospital care, medical services, and nursing home care to veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, while the water was contaminated at Camp Lejeune.

S. 1542

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1542, a bill to impose tariff-rate quotas on certain casein and milk protein concentrates.

S. 1543

At the request of Mr. DODD, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1543, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and title 5, United States Code, to provide leave for family members of members of regular components of the Armed Forces, and leave to care for covered veterans, and for other purposes.

S. 1545

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1545, a bill to expand the research and awareness activities of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention with respect to scleroderma, and for other purposes.

S. 1554

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1554, a bill to amend the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to prevent later delinquency and improve the health and well-being of maltreated infants and toddlers through the development of local Court Teams for Maltreated Infants and Toddlers and the creation of a National Court Teams Resource Center to assist such Court Teams, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 36

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 36, a concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of "National Purple Heart Recognition Day."

S. CON. RES. 37

At the request of Mr. JOHANNIS, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 37, a concurrent resolution supporting the goals and ideals of senior caregiving and affordability.

S. RES. 210

At the request of Mrs. LINCOLN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) were added as

cosponsors of S. Res. 210, a resolution designating the week beginning on November 9, 2009, as National School Psychology Week.

S. RES. 233

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 233, a resolution commending Russ Meyer on his induction into the National Aviation Hall of Fame.

AMENDMENT NO. 2225

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2225 proposed to H.R. 2997, a bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2229

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2229 proposed to H.R. 2997, a bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2236

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2236 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2997, a bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2010, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. KERRY, Mr. DODD, Mr. LEAHY, and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 1556. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to permit facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs to be designated as voter registration agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Veteran Voting Support Act of 2009 with Senator KERRY, and our cosponsors: Senators DODD and LEAHY.

This is a straightforward bill that shows our veterans the respect that they deserve. Veterans have supported and served our Nation—many at great risk and sacrifice. It is unacceptable for us to allow barriers to exist that make it more difficult for them to exercise their right to vote.

The bill that Senator KERRY and I are introducing today would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to take steps to assist veterans with voter registration and to make it easier for them to obtain ballots and cast their votes.

The most recent Census data we have—from a 2005 report—indicates that more than 20 percent of our veterans are not registered to vote. That means that almost 5 million veterans do not have an opportunity to cast their ballots.

Yet, we have massive VA programs in place that provide veterans with healing and medical care, and ensure that they thrive on their return from military service.

In total, there are 1,261 total VA facilities. The Veterans Health Administration operates 155 medical centers, 135 nursing homes, 717 ambulatory care and clinic facilities; 45 residential rehabilitation treatment programs, and 209 vet centers.

In those facilities there are as many as 5 million veterans who are not registered to vote. That strikes me as a critical need unmet.

Even more disturbing, in certain cases, the VA has been hostile to calls for it to facilitate voter registration and voting.

More than 2 years ago, I learned that a Department of Veterans Affairs facility in California had been opposing voter registration services since 2004. I began inquiring and received conflicting answers, but what was clear was that there was no cooperation or work to help veterans that used the facility to vote.

In Connecticut, Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz defied the VA's directive and tried to gain entry to a West Haven VA facility.

She intended to provide nonpartisan voter registration services, as well as to show veterans how to use the new disabled-access voting systems.

Guess what. She was turned away at the door.

As she was standing outside the door, she met a 91-year-old gentleman, a veteran of World War II. Secretary Bysiewicz asked him if he would like to be registered to vote, and he said that he would.

After registering, he made the comment that "I wanted to do this last year—but there was no-one there to help me." That is wholly unacceptable.

Last year, throughout the year, Senator KERRY and I exchanged multiple letters with the VA on this issue. We were told that VA officials believed providing voting support or allowing groups to do so would violate the Hatch Act.

The Hatch Act, however, prohibits partisan political activities from being conducted by Federal employees, on official time. It has not been interpreted to include nonpartisan voter registration by the Office of Special Counsel, which interprets the Hatch Act. Furthermore, the veterans served by VA facilities are generally not Federal employees.

The VA then argued that nonpartisan voter registration services would cause "disruptions to facility operations."

That claim is even more dubious. Unless "Rock the Vote" comes to VA fa-

ilities, voter registration drives are about as tame an activity as you can get.

The law allows the Federal Government to choose to assist people with voter registration if the State requests that a federal agency be designated as a registration facility under the National Voter Registration Act and the agency accepts. Several States, including my home State of California, under the leadership of Secretary Bowen, asked the VA designate facilities within their States under the National Voter Registration Act. But they were refused.

Finally, after much negotiation, the VA settled on a new and substantially improved policy that allows state and local election officials, as well as nonpartisan groups, access to VA facilities for voter registration as long as they coordinate with the facility. This is a significant improvement, no doubt.

I believe, however, that Federal law is still necessary to ensure that these voluntary policies are never rolled back, and that enforcement mechanisms are in place.

This is why we are introducing the Veteran Voting Support Act of 2009. The bill would require the VA to provide voter registration forms whenever veterans enroll in the VA health care system, or change their status or address in that system.

It would say that VA facilities must assist veterans who have trouble with their voter registration forms in the same way that they help veterans fill out other forms, and it would say that veterans must be able to access and receive assistance with absentee ballots at VA facilities.

It would allow nonpartisan groups and election officials to provide nonpartisan voter information and registration services to veterans.

And it would allow Attorney General enforcement through civil suits and injunctions and require an annual report to Congress from the Department of Veterans Affairs on progress related to this legislation.

It is a cornerstone of our democracy that every eligible citizen should be registered and able to cast their vote.

This bill recognizes that nonpartisan and civil rights groups have long played a critical role in helping people with the voter registration process.

I believe it is time that we ensure that the Department of Veterans Affairs will provide veterans with the support they deserve to register, cast their vote, and have that vote counted.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting the Veteran Voting Support Act of 2009.

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. 1556

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 "Veteran Voting Support Act of 2009".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Veterans have performed a great service to, and risked the greatest sacrifice in the name of, our country, and should be supported by the people and the Government of the United States.

(2) Veterans are especially qualified to understand issues of war, foreign policy, and government support for veterans, and they should have the opportunity to voice that understanding through voting.

(3) The Department of Veterans Affairs should assist veterans to register to vote and to vote.

SEC. 3. VOTER REGISTRATION AND ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (in this section referred to as the "Secretary") shall provide a mail voter registration application form to each veteran—

(1) who seeks to enroll in the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system (including enrollment in a medical center, a community living center, a community-based outpatient center, or a domiciliary of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system), at the time of such enrollment; and

(2) who is enrolled in such health care system—

(A) at any time when there is a change in the enrollment status of the veteran; and

(B) at any time when there is a change in the address of the veteran.

(b) PROVIDING VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall provide to each veteran described in subsection (a) the same degree of information and assistance with voter registration as is provided by the Veterans Administration with regard to the completion of its own forms, unless the applicant refuses such assistance.

(c) TRANSMITTAL OF VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATION FORMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall accept completed voter registration application forms for transmittal to the appropriate State election official.

(2) TRANSMITTAL DEADLINE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), a completed voter registration application form accepted at a medical center, community living center, community-based outpatient center, or domiciliary of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall be transmitted to the appropriate State election official not later than 10 days after the date of acceptance.

(B) EXCEPTION.—If a completed voter registration application form is accepted within 5 days before the last day for registration to vote in an election, the application shall be transmitted to the appropriate State election official not later than 5 days after the date of acceptance.

(d) REQUIREMENTS OF VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall ensure that the information and assistance with voter registration that is provided under subsection (b) will not—

(1) seek to influence an applicant's political preference or party registration;

(2) display any such political preference or party allegiance;

(3) make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to discourage the applicant from registering to vote; or

(4) make any statement to an applicant or take any action the purpose or effect of which is to lead the applicant to believe that a decision to register or not register has any

bearing on the availability of services or benefits.

(e) **LIMITATION ON USE OF INFORMATION.**—No information relating to registering to vote, or a declination to register to vote, under this section may be used for any purpose other than voter registration.

(f) **ENFORCEMENT.**—

(1) **NOTICE.**—

(A) **NOTICE TO THE FACILITY DIRECTOR OR THE SECRETARY.**—A person who is aggrieved by a violation of this section or section 4 may provide written notice of the violation to the Director of the facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system involved or to the Secretary. The Director or the Secretary shall respond to a written notice provided under the preceding sentence within 20 days of receipt of such written notice.

(B) **NOTICE TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION.**—If the violation is not corrected within 90 days after receipt of a notice under subparagraph (A), the aggrieved person may provide written notice of the violation to the Attorney General and the Election Assistance Commission.

(2) **ATTORNEY GENERAL.**—The Attorney General may bring a civil action in an appropriate district court for such declaratory or injunctive relief as is necessary to carry out this section or section 4.

SEC. 4. ASSISTANCE WITH ABSENTEE BALLOTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Consistent with State and local laws, each director of a community living center, a domiciliary, or a medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system shall provide assistance in voting by absentee ballot to veterans residing in the community living center or domiciliary or who are inpatients of the medical center, as the case may be.

(b) **ASSISTANCE PROVIDED.**—The assistance provided under subsection (a) shall include—

(1) providing information relating to the opportunity to request an absentee ballot;

(2) making available absentee ballot applications upon request, as well as assisting in completing such applications and ballots; and

(3) working with local election administration officials to ensure proper transmission of absentee ballot applications and absentee ballots.

SEC. 5. INFORMATION PROVIDED BY NON-PARTISAN ORGANIZATIONS.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall permit nonpartisan organizations to provide voter registration information and assistance at facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system, subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions, including limiting activities to regular business hours and requiring advance notice.

SEC. 6. ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY ELECTION OFFICIALS AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES.

(a) **DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall not prohibit any election administration official, whether State or local, party-affiliated or non-party affiliated, or elected or appointed, from providing voting information to veterans at any facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) **VOTING INFORMATION.**—In this subsection, the term “voting information” means nonpartisan information intended for the public about voting, including information about voter registration, voting systems, absentee balloting, polling locations, and other important resources for voters.

(b) **VOTER REGISTRATION SERVICES.**—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall provide

reasonable access to facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system to State and local election officials for the purpose of providing nonpartisan voter registration services to individuals, subject to reasonable time, place, and manner restrictions, including limiting activities to regular business hours and requiring advance notice.

SEC. 7. ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLIANCE.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) shall submit to Congress an annual report on how the Secretary has complied with the requirements of this Act. Such report shall include the following information with respect to the preceding year:

(1) The number of veterans who were served by facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system.

(2) The number of such veterans who requested information on or assistance with voter registration.

(3) The number of such veterans who received information on or assistance with voter registration.

(4) Information with respect to written notices submitted under section 3(f), including information with respect to the resolution of the violations alleged in such written notices.

SEC. 8. RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.

(a) **NO INDIVIDUAL BENEFIT.**—Nothing in this Act may be construed to convey a benefit to an individual veteran.

(b) **NO EFFECT ON OTHER LAWS.**—Nothing in this Act may be construed to authorize or require conduct prohibited under any of the following laws, or to supersede, restrict, or limit the application of such laws:

(1) The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1973 et seq.).

(2) The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ee et seq.).

(3) The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. 1973ff et seq.).

(4) The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. 1973gg et seq.).

(5) The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.).

(6) The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 701 et seq.).

By Mr. BEGICH:

S. 1560. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to provide for the sharing of certain outer Continental Shelf revenues from areas in the Alaska Adjacent Zone; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I rise today for the first time on this floor to mark the 50th anniversary of Alaska's statehood and to draw the attention of my colleagues to an urgent issue that affects not only my State but all of our States—the issue of global climate change.

This year, thanks to actions taken in this very Chamber, Alaska is celebrating its golden anniversary of statehood. Acquiring the rights and responsibilities of full citizenship was the culmination of a dream for citizens of the 49th State. Statehood granted us the ability to exercise control over our vast natural resources and gave us a full voice in our national government. In the half century since, Alaska has grown from the Nation's largest supplier of salmon to become the Nation's storehouse of both seafood and energy.

Because of its strategic location near the top of the globe, Alaska plays a critical role in our Nation's defense. During the Cold War, the superpowers stared down each other across the frozen polar ice cap. Thanks to a thaw in the geopolitical climate, the “ice curtain” separating Alaska and Russia melted some 20 years ago. Today, it is a change in the climate itself that present serious new challenges—and great opportunities—to my State and our Nation.

Alaska is now at Ground Zero for the effects of global climate change. I take this opportunity today to detail how that is affecting the lives of Alaskans. I will describe a package of legislation I am introducing to prepare my State and the Nation for the next 50 years. During that time, the Arctic will play an even larger role in the Nation's commerce, foreign policy, and energy independence.

Mr. President, to me there is no more dramatic illustration of global warming in Alaska than these two pictures taken at Portage Glacier, just about 50 miles south of Anchorage. The top photo, taken by my dad in 1970, shows me and two of my brothers and a sister. The glacier is clearly in view. The bottom photo was taken 35 years later, in 2005. It is of my son, Jacob, standing in the exact same spot at the same time of year. The glacier is nowhere to be seen because it has dramatically receded due to global warming.

Today in the Arctic, the sea is melting so fast that most of it could be gone in 30 years. You can clearly see it in this polar projection of the Arctic. The implications of the loss are enormous. Devastating for species such as the polar bear, walrus, and seals, which depend on ice for their very survival; life-altering for Arctic residents who have depended on marine mammals for their nutritional and cultural needs for thousands of years; literally earth-shattering for entire Alaskan Arctic communities, which are being wiped away by erosion and thawing permafrost.

When this global air-conditioner is knocked off kilter, it accelerates climatic changes we are already witnessing around the globe that neither science nor our political systems can stop.

Consider these examples.

Storms raging over waters that once were frozen solid but which are now ice-free for much of the year are eroding sections of the Alaska shoreline at rates of 45 feet per year or more. This undermines entire coastal villages like Shishmaref and Kivalina.

Thawing permafrost is causing roads and the foundations of homes to buckle.

A recent study by the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research estimated that the impacts of climate change will increase the cost of maintaining or replacing just today's public infrastructure in my State by \$6 billion.

The potential release of massive amounts of methane now sealed in the permafrost threaten to accelerate the pace of climate change. That is known to scientists as “Arctic Feedback.”

Warming water temperatures are pushing cold water species north and attracting warm water species from the south. Fishermen in Sitka are encountering the giant Humboldt squid from Mexico.

Tuna—whose usual habitat favors the tropics—have been caught near Homer. And invasive species such as green crab are moving steadily northward.

Ocean acidification—the result of absorption of carbon into our marine waters—weakens shellfish, coral, and even plankton, the very first link of the marine food chain.

At the G-8 Summit last month in Italy, developing nations agreed to the principle of limiting the average increase in the Earth’s temperature to no more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

In the American Arctic, we exceeded that long ago. The diminishing ice creates opportunities in the Arctic, but even these pose new challenges. For example, the Beaufort and Chukchi seas are believed to contain almost twice as much oil as already has been produced from the North Slope.

Arctic oil and gas development has been conducted safely on-shore in Alaska. Alaskans also have the technology to safely produce it off-shore.

But subsistence users who rely on marine mammals for their way of life are legitimately concerned about the special challenges of how to prevent and respond to an oil spill in broken sea ice.

The diminishing Arctic ice pack could open new grounds to commercial fishing, which can create new jobs. This also presents challenges to manage fish stocks in this region as we learn more about the impact of fishing in these previously inaccessible waters.

Opening the Northwest Passage, the Northern Sea Route and eventually the polar sea, will bring an increase in shipping and even tourism to the Arctic. This means new economic development and additional jobs to the northern part of our state.

Our neighbors have taken notice of the warming Arctic, too. This picture of a Russian submersible planting that country’s flag on the North Pole’s ocean floor was shocking to Americans and other Arctic nations.

The Swedish Foreign Minister, whose nation is president of the European Union this year, demonstrates that Europe understands these changes when he recently said the melting polar sea ice is creating revolutionary new transportation possibilities between the Atlantic and Pacific.

Although Alaskans are well aware of the impacts of climate change in our State, national decisionmakers are just starting to come to grips with its challenges and opportunities.

A proposed American Arctic policy was adopted in the final days of the

Bush administration. While not perfect, it highlights many areas that need further focus.

Here in the Congress, climate change has risen to a high priority in these Halls and in the Obama administration.

I commend these many initiatives and pledge my cooperation with other Members of this body and the national administration.

To advance that effort, today I am introducing a package of seven bills to address these challenges, almost all of which have been caused by, or made worse by, climate change.

I call this package—Inuvikput. It is a word from the Inupiaq Eskimos of the Alaska North Slope which means “the place where we live.”

I can think of no more appropriate term coming from the very people who are being affected every day by climatic changes in America’s Arctic, the place they have called home for thousands of years.

Mr. President, my package starts with improving our fundamental understanding of the region. We need to invest in basic science to better understand Arctic oceanography, meteorology, biology of its fish and marine mammals, as well as natural resources and oil and gas potential.

We need a coordinated research plan. It should start with baseline observations and include better science supporting Arctic-specific oil spill prevention and response.

This plan also must include local and traditional knowledge. After all, some of the first and most accurate predictions of Arctic climate change were from Native elders.

My bill calls on the Secretary of Commerce to undertake a comprehensive strategy to coordinate Arctic research, to make recommendations to Congress on a long-term Arctic Ocean research plan and to provide the resources for this vital mission.

We also need to promote Pan-Arctic research, especially with our Russian and Canadian neighbors, to address scientific issues that span international borders.

My second bill would provide the United States equal standing with other Arctic nations when it comes to our participation in the international Arctic Council and other forums.

Other leading Arctic nations—Russia, Canada, Norway—are represented by ambassador-level diplomats on the Council.

I appreciate the dedication of those who have represented us before the Arctic Council and other forums. I also thank Secretary Clinton and other high level diplomats for their interest in the Arctic. But the United States needs a permanent representative on an equal footing with the representatives of other nations in these important forums. Our Ambassador should advocate American interests in science, sustainable development, transportation and our defense posture.

The third piece of legislation deals with preparedness for the coming expanded use of the Arctic. We must increase our investment in basic infrastructure to maintain a permanent presence in the Arctic, for scientific, economic development and national security missions.

Critical to that is the need to replace our fleet of icebreakers. The *Polar Sea* and the currently idled *Polar Star* have both served beyond their 30-year life. The *Healy* is newer, but designed primarily for scientific research.

That scientific mission is important. But we need an icebreaking fleet to assert our national interests by patrolling our Arctic waters, monitor increased traffic, and respond to search and rescues, oil spills and other incidents.

In addition to their life-saving mission, the Coast Guard is a vital partner with Alaska’s commercial fishing industry. This \$4 billion industry is one of our Nation’s truly American industries, providing 58,000 jobs. Our Coast Guard needs facilities to serve as a base for aerial surveillance, spill prevention and emergency response capabilities in the Arctic.

Currently, our closest Coast Guard air base is located in Kodiak, a 900-mile commute just to reach the Arctic Coast. That’s like patrolling the Gulf of Mexico from air bases in New York.

I applaud the stamina of our Coast Guard crews who have kept our C-130s in the Arctic skies by performing maintenance work on the ramp in sub-freezing conditions. The least we could do is provide them with a heated hangar. My legislation would address that need and other critical infrastructure needs.

Fourth, we must achieve a balance in environmentally responsible resource development in the Arctic. A diminished ice cap may clear the way for more affordable development of the enormous energy reserves the U.S. Geological Service says lie beneath Arctic waters. This region contains an estimated 30 billion barrels of oil and 220 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

These resources can create thousands of American jobs and help assure our national energy security.

We must get the science right and provide the infrastructure necessary to protect human and animal life and the environment.

To help achieve that, my measure calls on the Coast Guard to assess Arctic development and develop the necessary infrastructure.

It also requires the Secretary of Commerce to direct research to prevent and improve oil spill recovery in Arctic waters.

My fifth bill deals with the benefits of energy development in the Arctic. Most Alaskans support oil and gas exploration in the Outer Continental Shelf. We can do development there in the right way, as shown here.

Another example is BP’s Liberty field, located off Alaska’s northern

coast. To minimize impacts, directional drilling from this island pad can tap oil reserves 8 miles away in the water.

As a part of this package, my bill extends to Alaskans the same share of Federal revenues that residents of the Gulf coast States currently receive. It would direct a portion of those revenues to those most affected—the residents of Alaska's North Slope—where communities have depended on marine mammals from these same waters for thousands of years. I believe the Arctic's resources belong to the people of the Arctic and should be shared among them.

My sixth bill deals with a critical omission from the new Presidential directive on the Arctic—addressing the health problems of Arctic people.

Alaskans and others who live in Northern latitudes experience numerous health problems, including higher rates of alcohol abuse, diabetes, high blood pressure and, tragically death from injury and suicide.

In many cases, it is unclear what causes these problems. More research is necessary into prevention and treatment.

This bill proposes a study of mental and behavioral health issues in the Arctic. It would create an "Arctic desk" at the National Institutes of Health that was called for in Federal legislation in 1984 but has never been established.

Finally, it would institute a health assessment program at the Centers for Disease Control focused on the Arctic. This vital research will not only benefit residents of my State but citizens across the country.

The seventh bill in this package addresses the huge losses of coastal Alaskan territory, as a result of dramatic climate change. A June 2009 Government Accountability Study on this issue says: "most of Alaska's more than 200 Native villages are affected to some degree by flooding and erosion." In some cases, entire Arctic villages in my State are at risk of serious erosion or of being washed into the sea.

To make matters worse, some of the most severe flooding in recent history occurred this spring. Millions of dollars in damage was done to Alaska communities, prompting State and Federal disaster declarations.

To address these issues, I propose creation of an Arctic adaptation fund. This fund would help the State of Alaska, Alaska Native organizations, affected Arctic communities, and the private sector deal with the impacts of climate change. This includes flooding, erosion, permafrost melting, and damage to public transportation systems and buildings. The fund also would assist in dealing with habitat restoration, clean energy development, and other economic development activities.

Mr. President, I am considering introducing an additional piece of legislation in this package. It focuses on providing the people of Alaska's Arctic

with a greater voice in development decisions affecting their lives.

This bill would establish an Arctic Regional Citizens Advisory Council. It would be modeled after similar councils operating successfully in the Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet regions of Alaska.

At the request of North Slope Borough Mayor Edward Itta and our constituents there, I agreed to hold off on this bill for now so we can continue the conversation with the people of the region, along with industry and regulatory stakeholders.

In addition to the legislation I am introducing today, Senate ratification of two treaties would dramatically improve our Nation's ability to address Arctic climate change.

The first is the Convention on the Law of the Sea. Negotiated in 1982, this treaty is designed to settle long-standing disputes over national rights to offshore waters and resources. The Senate's ratification of this treaty would put the United States at the table at a time of great change in the Arctic.

I note support for the Law of the Sea Treaty comes from a broad spectrum of organizations, from environmental groups and oil companies to the U.S. military.

I strongly support ratification of the Law of the Sea Treaty and will be proud to cosponsor this measure.

The second key international agreement the Senate should ratify to address Arctic health issues is the Treaty on Persistent Organic Pollutants, or POPs.

These pollutants—PCBs, DDT, dioxin, and even fire retardants—are carried by wind and sea currents to the Arctic. They are then trapped by the ice and are stored in the fatty tissue of fish and marine mammals that are a main component of the local subsistence diet.

The POPs treaty was adopted in 2001. But like the Law of the Sea, it has never been ratified. It is time that changed. I am honored to be a cosponsor of Senator HARKIN's bill, S. 519, to implement provisions of this treaty.

I look forward to working with the chairman and ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee and the Obama Administration to bring these treaties forward to the Senate for consideration as soon as possible.

Mr. President, because of Alaska, America is an Arctic nation. My State has over 700 miles of shoreline along the Arctic Ocean, and over 100 million acres above the Arctic Circle. If you define Arctic by temperature, it encompasses an even broader area that includes the Bering Sea and the Aleutian Islands.

Through the diligent work of many scientists, we have learned much over the past century. But there is much we still do not understand.

This century, and the next 50 years of Alaska statehood, brings great challenges and even greater opportunities. To succeed, we must address the broad

policy implications of an ice-diminishing Arctic on the diplomatic, scientific, and national security fronts.

We must make the needed investments to ensure the United States maintains its leadership at the top of our globe. We must listen to and address the needs of the residents of the Arctic.

With this Inuvikput package of legislation, we will take a major step toward achieving these important goals.

As they say in America's Arctic, Quyanappak. Thank you.

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

S. 1568. A bill to assist in the establishment of an interpretive center and museum in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, to protect and interpret the history of the industrialization of the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to introduce legislation that will honor and preserve the industrial legacy of our Nation for the benefit of current and future generations. The bill, which I am introducing along with my Pennsylvania colleague Senator BOB CASEY, would establish a partnership between the Department of Interior and the National Museum of Industrial History: a museum and interpretive center to be located at the site of the former Bethlehem Steel Plant in Bethlehem, PA.

The industrial revolution was a critical period in American history, during which our country and the foundation of our national economy experienced an unprecedented transition. It is important that people, especially children and future generations, have an opportunity to learn about the history of American industrialization and how it shaped our world and our lives. For this opportunity to be realized, the timeless stories and treasured relics of our industrial history must be preserved, interpreted and made available for all to see, study and enjoy. The National Museum of Industrial History will exist for just this purpose.

The Museum will be located at an ideal site to tell the story of America's industrial history because the former tenant of the site was a lead character in the story. The Bethlehem Steel Company was a world-leader in steel production for nearly 150 years and truly epitomized the industrial revolution and expansion throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Steel produced in Bethlehem was used to build some of our country's most treasured structures and landmarks, including the Chrysler Building in New York City and the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. Bethlehem Steel was a major contributor to the war effort during the first and second World Wars, building many ships and supplying much of the armored plating and large-caliber guns for our armed forces. Bethlehem Steel began to cease much of its operation in the 1990s and was bought by another

steel company in 2001. The closing of Bethlehem Steel marked the end of an era and also created one of the largest brownfield sites in the country. It is on this site, rich in history and industrial heritage, where the National Museum of Industrial History will stand as a monument to industry and as an educational resource to the public.

The legislation I have introduced will establish an agreement between the Department of Interior and the National Museum of Industrial History, wherein the Department will assist in the creation and program development of the Museum. Every dollar provided by the Federal Government would have to be matched by a non-Federal source. The Museum has a long history of working with the Federal Government. The National Museum of Industrial History was the first museum to become affiliated with the Smithsonian Institute. This partnership spawned the Smithsonian Institute's "Affiliates Program," which now has over 150 members around the country.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

By Ms. STABENOW:

S. 1569. A bill to expand our Nation's Advanced Practice Registered Nurse workforce; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation to address our growing workforce shortage. I am pleased to be joining my good friend, Congresswoman LOIS CAPPS, a nurse herself, in introducing this legislation. Our legislation is supported by AARP, the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, the American College of Nurse Practitioners, the American College of Nurse-Midwives, the American Nurses Association, the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, and the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

Since its creation in 1965, Medicare has provided some support for the costs of nursing education. While relatively small as compared to support for graduate medical education for physicians, \$150 million vs. \$9 billion per year, Medicare has for many years been the largest federal source of funding for nurse training. While nursing education and patient care needs have changed tremendously since 1965, Medicare's policy in this area has not kept up to date.

My bill amends Medicare to provide incentives to expand the number of advanced practice registered nurses, APRN, trained and to prepare them to undertake the essential cost-saving reforms to our health care delivery system: an increased focus on primary and preventive care, improved coordination of care, access to primary care and anesthesia services in rural and medically underserved areas, and enhanced efforts to reduce costly medical errors

that will lower health care costs and improve patient care. This legislation also focuses on training nurses in community-based settings, such as community health centers, rural clinics and individual health professional offices, arming them with the practical clinical experience they need.

The respected economic analysis firm The Lewin Group has conducted a thorough analysis of this proposal. They found that it would increase the number of APRNs graduating by 25 percent. This is a very significant increase and one that is greatly needed. Additionally, training more APRNs will help us develop more faculty, which are desperately needed to train the next generation of nurses. Every nursing school dean in Michigan has told me that this is a huge issue to them.

This relatively modest investment in APRNs will provide Americans, especially those in rural and other areas of health care shortages, with the primary and preventive care, care coordination, and chronic care management they too often lack today.

At a time when our country faces a shortage of healthcare professionals, funding for the clinical education of APRNs, including nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and clinical nurse specialists is vitally important to meet the demand for expanded health care, which is expected under a newly reformed delivery system.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

JULY 29, 2009.

Hon. DEBBIE STABENOW,
U.S. Senate,

133 Senate Hart Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR STABENOW: On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we would like to express our support for your legislation that will amend Title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide payment to hospitals for the costs of expanded advanced practice nurse training programs. At a time when our country faces a shortage of healthcare professionals, funding for the clinical education of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), including nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, certified registered nurse anesthetists, and clinical nurse specialists is vitally important to meet the demand for expanded health care, which is expected under a newly reformed delivery system.

APRNs are ideally suited to help implement delivery system reforms such as an increased focus on primary, transitional, and preventive care, enhancing access for rural and medically underserved populations, improving care coordination, chronic care management, and reducing costly medical errors. Yet in 2008, U.S. nursing schools turned away 6,904 qualified applicants from graduate nursing programs due to insufficient numbers of faculty, clinical sites, classroom space, clinical preceptors, and budget constraints. This Medicare funding would expand the current focus to nursing education at the graduate level. It would also expand clinical education provided through Medicare funding to include home and commu-

nity-based settings as well as hospitals, using affiliations between accredited schools of nursing and community-based health care settings. The outcome would be a much more robust APRN workforce to meet growing demand especially among the Medicare population and those in underserved areas. In fact, according to a Lewin report commissioned by AARP to investigate this type of proposal, your bill would increase the number of APRNs by 25%.

We applaud your efforts and those of your staff for introducing Graduate Nursing Education legislation, which will benefit future APRNs so they can provide high quality, cost effective care to the most vulnerable populations in all areas across the country. Thank you for your recognition of the role APRNs will play in a reformed healthcare system.

Sincerely,

AARP, American Academy of Nurse Practitioners, American Association of Colleges of Nursing, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, American College of Nurse Practitioners, American College of Nurse-Midwives, American Nurses Association, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 234—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL SAVE FOR RETIREMENT WEEK 2009

Mr. CONRAD (for himself, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 234

Whereas people in the United States are living longer and the cost of retirement continues to rise, in part because the number of employers providing retiree health coverage continues to decline and retiree health care costs continue to increase at a rapid pace;

Whereas Social Security remains the bedrock of retirement income for the great majority of the people of the United States, but was never intended by Congress to be the sole source of retirement income for families;

Whereas recent data from the Employee Benefit Research Institute indicates that, in the United States, less than ⅓ of workers or their spouses save for retirement, and that the actual amount of retirement savings of workers lags far behind the amount that will be needed to adequately fund their retirement years;

Whereas saving for retirement is a key component to overall financial health and security during retirement years;

Whereas many workers may not be aware of retirement savings options, or may not have focused on the importance of, and need for, saving for retirement;

Whereas many employees have access to defined benefit and defined contribution plans to help prepare for retirement, yet many may not take advantage of employer-sponsored defined contribution plans at all or to the full extent allowed by the plans under Federal law;

Whereas many workers saving for retirement through tax-preferred savings plans have experienced declines in account values due to the recent economic downturn and market decline, making continued contributions all the more important;