

Committee on Rules and Administration, and the House Committee on Appropriations, the House Committee on Armed Services, and the House Administration Committees.

The first provision is a requirement for the Presidential designee to submit a report to these committees not later than 180 days after the enactment of the MOVE Act. The report is to include (a) the status of the implementation of the procedures on collection and delivery of absentee ballots from overseas military personnel, including specific steps taken in preparation for the November 2010 general election; and (b) an assessment of the Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) Program of the Department of Defense, including an evaluation of effectiveness, an inventory and full explanation of any programmatic failures, and a description of any new programs to replace or supplement existing efforts.

The Voting Assistance Officer (VAO) program is administered by the Department of Defense to provide military personnel with person-to-person guidance in understanding absentee voting procedures and helping overseas military personnel with the absentee voting process. However, the Rules Committee gathered evidence during the drafting of this legislation indicating the need for improvements in the VAO program. Tom Tarantino, Legislative Associate with Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, submitted written testimony that he had been poorly trained when he served as a VAO. A report from the Department of Defense Inspector General revealed that in 2004, voting assistance officers made contact with only 40%-50% of military voters. Also, it was made known to the Rules Committee that serving as a VAO is often seen as a low-level military assignment, so it is not given much priority in practice. The reporting requirements established under this section will provide the new FVAP chief with the time to assess existing programs and suggest improvements, all with the goal of providing more overseas and military voters with the information and support necessary for them to exercise their right to vote.

The second reporting requirement is an annual report to Congress, due no later than March 31 of each year. In this report, the Presidential designee must include the following: (a) an assessment of the effectiveness of the FVAP program, including an examination on the effectiveness of the new responsibilities established by the MOVE Act; (b) an assessment of voter registration and participation by overseas military voters; (c) an assessment of registration and participation by non-military overseas absentee voters; and (d) a description of cooperative efforts between State and Federal officials. The report should also include a description of the voter registration assistance provided by offices designated on military installations utilized by servicemembers and a description of the specific programs implemented by each military department of the Armed Forces to designate offices and provide assistance. Finally, the report should include the number of uniformed services members utilizing voter registration assistance at the designated offices.

When the annual report is issued in years following a general election for Federal office, it should include a description of the procedures utilized for collecting and delivering marked absentee ballots, noting how many such ballots were collected and delivered, how many were not delivered in time before the closing of polls on Election Day, and the reasons for non-delivery.

These reporting requirements are a direct consequence of the interest of Congress in initial compliance with the MOVE Act and with its routine implementation over time.

These reports will provide a key indicator of how effective absentee voting procedures are for overseas Americans in case additional reform is needed in the future.

Section 587. Annual report on enforcement.

This section amends the UOCAVA statute to require the Attorney General to send a report to Congress no later than December 31 of each year regarding what actions the Department of Justice has taken to enforce UOCAVA and the MOVE Act amendments to UOCAVA.

Since UOCAVA's passage in 1987, the Justice Department has filed 35 compliance suits against the States. Congress should be updated on a regular basis on efforts made to comply with federal military and overseas voting statutes. These reports will provide the Rules Committee and other Congressional committees with a key tool for oversight, in anticipation of the Justice Department playing a key role in overseeing the implementation and enforcement of the MOVE Act.

Section 588. Requirements payments.

This section amends the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 to establish a new funding authorization, in addition to the funding authorizations already in place under HAVA, intended to be used only to meet the new requirements under UOCAVA imposed as a result of the provisions of and amendments made by MOVE. The language of the MOVE Act indicates that separate from a HAVA requirements payment; Congress has authorized, and can specifically appropriate funds for requirements payments "appropriated pursuant to the authorization under section 257(a)(4) only to meet the requirements under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act imposed as a result of the provisions of and amendments made by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act." The appropriation would specifically reference a MOVE requirements payment. That MOVE requirements payment can be used only to meet the requirements of the MOVE Act. Nothing in this section impacts the ability of States to receive and spend funds on the traditional HAVA requirements payment program.

States must describe in their State plan how they will comply with the provisions and requirements of and amendments made by MOVE. Under amendments made in conference committee, chief State election officials may access MOVE requirements payments without providing the 5% match upfront. This section was amended in contemplation of providing funding for those States whose legislatures do not meet on an annual basis.

Further, States may choose to use the original funding authorizations under HAVA, those adopted as part of the original HAVA statute, to fund MOVE related compliance efforts so long as the State meets all of its other obligations under HAVA. The provisions of the MOVE Act can certainly be considered an activity "to improve the administration of elections for Federal office" under the HAVA requirements payments language.

Section 589. Technology pilot program.

This section gives the Presidential designee the authority to establish one or more pilot programs under which new election technologies can be tested for the benefit of military and overseas voters under the UOCAVA statute. The conduct of the program will be at the discretion of the Presidential designee and shall not conflict with any existing laws, regulations, or procedures.

Mindful of security concerns, the Rules Committee included several items for the Presidential designee to consider in crafting

this pilot program. These include transmitting electronic information across military networks, cryptographic voting systems, the transmission of ballot representations and scanned pictures of ballots in a secure manner, the utilization of voting stations at military bases, and document delivery and upload systems. There may be many positive developments made by DOD pilot programs that can assist in expedited voting procedures for military and overseas voters. Security and privacy, of course, are essential components to any pilot program.

Under this section, the Presidential designee is required to submit to Congress reports on the progress of any such pilot programs, including recommendations for additional programs and any legislative or administrative action deemed appropriate.

This section directs the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) at the Department of Commerce to work with the Presidential designee in the creation and support of such pilot programs. The bill requires the EAC and NIST to provide the Presidential designee with "best practices or standards" regarding electronic absentee voting guidelines. In particular, the MOVE Act directs the EAC and the NIST to work to develop best practices which conform with the electronic absentee voting guidelines established under the first sentence of section 1604(a)(2) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (P.L. 107-107), as amended by § 507 of the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (P.L. 108-375). The Committee staff contemplates that NIST will be helpful in addressing the election integrity and security concerns involved in developing electronic voting systems, as illustrated by NIST report entitled "Threat Analysis on UOCAVA Voting Systems" of December 2008 (NISTIR 7551).

This section also directs that, if the EAC has not established electronic absentee voting guidelines by not later than 180 days after enactment of the MOVE Act, then the EAC is to submit to Congress a report detailing why it has not done so, a timeline for the establishment of such guidelines, and a detailed accounting of its actions in developing such guidelines. This should provide to Congress and the public a roadmap on progress made, as well as the next steps the EAC plans to take.

RECOGNIZING THE ARKANSAS AIR NATIONAL GUARD

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to our Arkansas Air National Guard and their efforts to keep our Nation safe. In particular, I recognize the members of the 188th Fighter Wing, who are returning home throughout May after a 2 month deployment overseas.

The airmen spent 2 months at Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan, flying 12 to 16 flights a day. Their day-and-night operations supported the ground troops who were fighting enemy insurgents. The work in Afghanistan was the unit's first combat deployment using A-10s. The unit flew F-16s until April 2007, including during their 4 month deployment in 2005 to Balad Air Base in Iraq.

Along with all Arkansans, I honor these servicemen and women for their bravery, and I am grateful for their service and sacrifice.

More than 11,000 Arkansans on active duty and more than 10,000 Arkansas reservists have served in Iraq or Afghanistan since September 11, 2001. It is the responsibility of our Nation to provide the tools necessary to care for our country's returning servicemembers and honor the commitment our Nation made when we sent them into harm's way. Our grateful Nation will not forget them when their military service is complete. It is the least we can do for those whom we owe so much.

REMEMBERING SENATOR CRAIG THOMAS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to remember the life of Senator Craig Thomas.

Senator Thomas passed away on June 4, 2007. On that day, the people of Wyoming lost a native son. His presence back home is still missed.

One week from tomorrow will be the third anniversary of Craig's death. A column recognizing Craig's life and the Craig and Susan Thomas Foundation will be circulated across Wyoming next week. It reminds us of Craig's toughness, his love for Wyoming, and his commitment to challenging young people to succeed.

It is an appropriate tribute to Senator Thomas. I ask unanimous consent that the column be printed in the RECORD.

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

CRAIG THOMAS—A LIFE'S WORK GOES ON (By Gale Geringer)

It's hard to believe that June 4th marks the third anniversary of Senator Craig Thomas' death in 2007.

Craig's wisdom and dedication to Wyoming people is dearly missed.

The passion he had for making Wyoming an even better place lives on strong when we need it most. In these economic times, when some young people have an especially tough time with financial or family issues, Craig Thomas' dedication to our future is an example we need to remember.

Craig was compassionate but it came with toughness. He respected young people and so expected a lot of them. He encouraged our youth to succeed and he approached that from the standpoint of a Captain in the United States Marine Corps. He taught personal responsibility and self reliance. He believed in being on time and ready to learn or work.

Craig motivated thousands of young people, urging them to be the best they can be, whatever their circumstances. He didn't come from money and didn't place a lot of value on pedigrees. He believed each individual had it within him/herself to rise above hardships and become productive, contributing members of society but he also recognized that everyone learns at a different level.

So for kids who might have fallen through the cracks, or were in the middle or bottom of their class, what a welcome inspiration they could find in Craig Thomas.

The Craig and Susan Thomas Foundation is born directly from that ethic and from the life-long experience and caring counsel of his wife, Susan.

The Foundation, now in its third year, continues to fulfill a promise and helps young

people try for that second, third, even fourth chance at education and life fulfillment.

With scholarships to Wyoming's community colleges, the University, vocational and technical schools or online education, the Craig and Susan Foundation is changing lives. The Foundation believes that it doesn't matter where students are from, what their grade point average was, or whether they had excelled in something before. It matters that today they want to try and know that someone cares.

In addition to its other programs, the Foundation also gives annual leadership awards to adults who work to support at-risk youth in Wyoming, mentoring, educating or counseling children to achieve their goals.

One scholarship recipient, who is finishing his second year in college, tells this story, "My early years were spent in various stages of poverty, abuse and neglect. I spent my teen years in foster/legal guardian care situations. I am and will remain drug free. I choose my circle of friends wisely. Now I'm majoring in Business Management at LCCC where I am getting good grades. It is very expensive and I need help. I ask for your assistance in helping me to make the very best of my life. College expenses are the greatest obstacle between me, my education and my success as a self-reliant, valuable member of my community."

To date, 53 scholarships have already been awarded, including five to students who are older and have been able to improve their job prospects because they've obtained degrees or certificates.

The idea is simple. Our children deserve an opportunity to build happy and successful lives for themselves regardless of power or place. And when and if they fail, we have a responsibility to show them another way and offer them another chance.

Craig Thomas never thought he would grow up to be a United States Senator. He was a humble kid from outside of Cody who liked people and was willing to work hard at whatever he did. He would have also told you that there were special people in his life that pushed, prodded and, at times, literally willed him to succeed.

Not all of the students who are awarded a scholarship from the Craig and Susan Thomas Foundation and receive mentoring from Susan Thomas will become elected leaders some day. But one thing is sure, they WILL build Wyoming's workforce and they are inspiring assets to a better state—because they pulled themselves up by their bootstraps . . . with a little help.

NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH

Mrs. LINCOLN. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of National Foster Care Month, a time to recognize and shine a light on the needs of our foster children in Arkansas and across the U.S. and to highlight the countless men, women, and families who work tirelessly on their behalf.

Arkansas has more than 3,500 children in foster care. It is imperative that we ensure their safety and well-being and work to find them a permanent family to provide the love and support they need and desire. That is why I have introduced my Child Welfare Workforce Study Act, which will help identify the barriers that prevent children and families from accessing the essential services they need. It will also better ensure that necessary steps are taken to recruit and retain a qual-

ity and experienced workforce that can effectively address the needs and risks of our Nation's most vulnerable children and the families that provide them care.

With thousands of children in Arkansas seeking nothing but a safe and stable family to provide them comfort and security, we have a responsibility to ensure that families are adequately prepared to provide them with the care and supervision they deserve. These families should be appropriately supported and equipped with the resources they need.

Our current system is burdened by the ongoing challenges of recruiting and retaining enough families to care for and welcome these children into their homes, and experienced caseworkers to effectively manage their cases. We have children slipping through the cracks, and that is simply unacceptable. We need to create an environment that best provides for the well-being of these children and that most effectively helps them find a loving and permanent home.

I have also introduced the Resource Family Recruitment and Retention Act, which establishes much-needed standards of consistency in agency and state policies for foster and adoptive care. It also calls on agencies to follow best practices proven to increase and retain the number of foster, adoptive and kinship parents. These practices include efforts to allow foster parents to actively participate and have input in the case-planning and decision-making process regarding the child; to receive complete and timely responses from the agency; and to receive support services and appropriate training that will enhance the skills and ability of resource parents to meet their children's needs. Finally, the bill establishes a grant program to better allow states to develop innovative methods of education and support for families.

As lawmakers, it is our role to honor the critical role that foster families play in the lives of foster youth and provide them with the services and the support they need. Foster children seek nothing more than a safe, loving and permanent home, and resource families often help address this need. By strengthening efforts to recruit and retain these families, we also enhance our best recruitment tool, and retain prospective adoptive resources.

As members of this body, we have an obligation to do right by those whom we represent each and every day. We also have a moral obligation to do everything we can on behalf of the most vulnerable in our society. For the over 500,000 children in foster care and the many thousands of families who have provided them with the love and support they desperately need, it is the least we can do.

EARMARKS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, with all of the recent talk of earmarks,