

of the United States Government to fully implement the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005.

S. CON. RES. 4

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 4, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that an appropriate site on Chaplains Hill in Arlington National Cemetery should be provided for a memorial marker to honor the memory of the Jewish chaplains who died while on active duty in the Armed Forces of the United States.

S. RES. 87

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 87, a resolution designating the year of 2012 as the "International Year of Cooperatives".

S. RES. 99

At the request of Mr. DEMINT, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 99, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the primary safeguard for the well-being and protection of children is the family, and that the primary safeguards for the legal rights of children in the United States are the Constitutions of the United States and the several States, and that, because the use of international treaties to govern policy in the United States on families and children is contrary to principles of self-government and federalism, and that, because the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child undermines traditional principles of law in the United States regarding parents and children, the President should not transmit the Convention to the Senate for its advice and consent.

AMENDMENT NO. 161

At the request of Mr. JOHANNIS, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 161 proposed to S. 493, a bill to reauthorize and improve the SBIR and STTR programs, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 183

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 183 proposed to S. 493, a bill to reauthorize and improve the SBIR and STTR programs, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 653. A bill to allow the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to create or save jobs by providing interest relief on certain outstanding disaster loans relating to damage caused by the 2005 Gulf Coast

hurricanes or the 2008 Gulf Coast hurricanes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak on an issue that is of great importance to my home State of Louisiana: disaster recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita of 2005; Hurricanes Gustav and Ike of 2008; and the Deepwater Horizon disaster of 2010. Almost 6 years after these first two devastating storms, our eyes are still fixed on our shores during hurricane season as our communities and businesses in the hardest-hit areas continue to rebuild. The region is also still reeling from the oil spill and subsequent Federal deepwater drilling moratorium. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I remain focused on their ongoing recovery efforts and am here today to introduce a bill that I believe will help these struggling small businesses become successful once again and hire new workers.

Charles R. "Ray" Bergeron and his wife's Fleur de Lis Car Care Center in New Orleans, Louisiana, is one of the businesses that needs this type of assistance. Small Business Administrator Karen Mills and I toured the Bergerons' business back in June 2009. Pre-Katrina, Fleur de Lis, which opened in 1988, had nine employees. After Hurricane Katrina hit, Mr. and Mrs. Bergeron found themselves having to take out two loans, one for their house and another for their small business. As of our visit that June, the Bergerons were down to 2 employees, not including themselves, and their business was back at about 40 percent of pre-Katrina sales, due in large measure to the population not returning. Their neighborhood is mostly empty homes, which Mr. Bergeron attributes in part to high flood insurance premiums, high property taxes and high homeowner's insurance.

When I met with them, the Bergerons had a \$225,000 SBA disaster loan with a standard 30-year term, which Mr. Bergeron says he will not pay off until he is 101 years old. And two years ago now, Mrs. Bergeron contacted my office requesting SBA assistance with their loan repayment after work to repair the flood-damaged roads surrounding their gas station had cut access to their business for even their most loyal customers. Since the project began, Fleur de Lis' sales have been cut almost in half. This latest challenge comes on the heels of the economic downturn, which caused the station to lay off two employees in 2009.

The Bergerons' story is one I have heard from countless businesses. Coupled with their recovery from the 2005 and 2008 hurricanes, and more recently, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and Federal deepwater drilling moratorium, these businesses—the ones that took the initiative to quickly reopen after the storms—are today struggling with one challenge after another. Yet

these "pioneer" businesses are the ones rebuilding communities, they are the businesses communities need the most because they serve as anchors. If residents see the Bergerons' gas station or their favorite restaurant open, they are more likely to come back to rebuild their homes.

To help ongoing recovery efforts in the Gulf Coast, and to give these struggling businesses immediate assistance, I am introducing today the Southeast Hurricanes Small Business Disaster Relief Act of 2011. This legislation would provide targeted assistance to as many as 11,000 businesses in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas. What these particular businesses have in common is that they received SBA disaster loans following the 2005 or 2008 hurricanes. While they have made payments on these loans, I have heard from countless businesses in my State that they could expand operations if they had additional cash flow. This legislation would inject immediate capital into these hardest-hit businesses by giving SBA the authority to waive up to \$15,000 of interest payments over three years, helping to create or save up to 40,000 jobs.

Under this program, SBA is required to give priority to applications from businesses with 50 employees or less and businesses that re-opened between September 2005 and October 2006 for the 2005 storms or September and December 2008 for the 2008 hurricanes. This ensures that SBA first helps true small businesses and those "pioneer" businesses that were the first to re-open after the disaster. The bill also includes a priority for applications from businesses suffering substantial economic harm from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill last year. The program would end on March 31, 2012.

The Southeast Hurricanes Small Business Disaster Relief Act also includes provisions to help reduce the program's impact on the Federal deficit. First, the bill eliminates a duplicative program at the SBA. This program, the Gulf Coast Disaster Loan Refinancing Program, was created as part of the 2008 Farm Bill. Although it was created almost three years ago, the program has not received any appropriations nor has the SBA utilized the authority to refinance any disaster loans. It is my understanding this is because the program just re-amortizes the same debt of borrowers. Furthermore, any refinancing must not exceed the original loan amount and differ from the original terms of the loan. As a result, this program is not attractive to borrowers, lenders or the SBA. Our bill eliminates this program and creates one that will work better for all stakeholders. Next, the bill allows SBA the authority to get reimbursed by the party responsible for the Deepwater Horizon oil spill for any interest relief provided to businesses impacted by that disaster. This ensures that the taxpayers will be reimbursed for interest relief related to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. I also note that this is

consistent with the claims process provided for in the Oil Pollution Act of 1990.

This program makes a difference because for some businesses, depending on the loan term and loan amount, their total principal/interest payments could run as high as \$1,000 per month. For example, for a \$114,000 disaster loan with a 4 percent interest rate and a 25-year term, a business could be paying as much as \$400 in monthly interest. In one year, this adds up to \$4,800 and almost \$14,500 in three years. While this is not a lot of money for Wall Street banks or Fortune 500 companies, \$15,000 makes a major impact for a gas station with two employees, like Fleur de Lis, or a neighborhood restaurant with 10 employees. These businesses have seen their bottom lines shrink as others on Wall Street received extravagant bonuses. I, for one, believe it is time to help these Main Street businesses as they are the backbone of our communities.

My legislation also follows legislation approved by a previous Congress. The prior bill came after Hurricane Betsy devastated Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi in September 1965. According to Red Cross reports at the time, between 800,000 and 1 million people were adversely impacted by the hurricane. Before this storm, the only previous disaster of that magnitude was the 1937 Ohio-Mississippi River floods which forced more than a million people from their homes. In total, Betsy destroyed more than 1,500 homes, damaged more than 150,000, and damaged more than 2,000 trailers. Hurricane Betsy also destroyed 1,400 farm buildings and 2,600 small businesses. At the time, the Senate Committee on Public Works noted in Committee Report 89-917 that, “The overwhelming magnitude of the vicious storm, surprising even to experienced disaster workers, was more apparent every day as storm victims continued to register for long-term recovery help in rebuilding their lives and homes.”

As part of the review to provide Hurricane Betsy victims appropriate assistance, including a field hearing in Louisiana, Congress determined that the massive scale of this disaster required targeted, disaster-specific programs. In particular, Congress approved the Southeast Hurricane Disaster Relief Act of 1965, Public Law 89-339. This bill authorized various business, homeowner, and agricultural disaster assistance, including loans and temporary rental assistance. In its committee report on the legislation, which is referenced above, the Senate Committee on Public Works wrote, “This bill contains what the committee believes is needed and necessary to give further aid to the disaster-stricken areas . . . including special measures to help these States in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of devastated areas.” Among other provisions, Section 3 of the bill authorized SBA to waive interest—for loans above

\$500—due on the loan over a period of three years, but not to exceed \$1,800 in interest. The bill was signed into law in November 1965 and Congress later approved \$35 million to implement provisions in the Act.

Just as with Hurricane Betsy in 1965, in 2005, Mississippi and Louisiana again saw a catastrophic disaster hit their businesses, farms, and homes. Everyone now knows the impact Hurricanes Katrina and Rita had on the New Orleans area and the southeast part of our state. Images from the devastation following these storms, and the subsequent Federal levee breaks, were transmitted across the country and around the world. Katrina ended up being the deadliest natural disaster in United States history, with 1,800 people killed—1,500 alone in Louisiana. Katrina was also the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history, with more than \$81.2 billion reported in damage.

In Louisiana, we had 18,000 businesses catastrophically destroyed and 81,000 businesses economically impacted. I believe that, across the entire Gulf Coast, some estimates ran as high as 125,000 businesses impacted by Katrina and Rita. Many of these businesses, for various reasons, have not returned or re-opened. By mid-2007, Orleans Parish was still down 2,000 employers, or 23 percent of its pre-Katrina business level. Nearby St. Bernard Parish—which had up to 80 percent of its homes damaged—had the largest percentage decline of 48 percent fewer businesses open, according to Louisiana State University and the Louisiana Recovery Authority. These disasters were followed by the 2008 hurricanes that hit the same areas in Texas and Louisiana. With this in mind, on September 25, 2009, I chaired a committee field hearing in Galveston, Texas. At this hearing, we received a progress report from Federal, State and local officials on the recovery from Hurricane Ike in 2008. We also heard from individual business owners in Galveston who were still struggling a year on from the hurricane.

These Galveston business owners, the Bergeron's Fleur de Lis gas station, and many other “pioneer” businesses did choose to re-open and are now struggling to stay alive. As is clear from the Bergeron's story, these businesses have suffered from not one disaster, but three: Hurricane Katrina/Rita in 2005, Hurricane Gustav/Ike in 2008, and the Deepwater Horizon disaster. I believe the special program implemented following Hurricane Betsy in 1965 would today greatly benefit businesses in these four states hardest hit by Katrina, Rita, Gustav, Ike, and the Deepwater Horizon. While I recognize that these are the hardest hit states, I am also interested to hear from my other Gulf Coast colleagues on whether this program would benefit their impacted businesses as well.

In closing, I would like to note that Congress has been generous in providing essential recovery funds fol-

lowing the 2005 and 2008 storms. However, as we approach the sixth anniversary of the 2005 disasters, we must now ensure that impacted businesses can make it past this anniversary—preventing thousands more workers from being unemployed or additional defaults on SBA disaster loans. One important way that this Congress can ensure that these workers remain employed and that these businesses survive, and even grow, would be to relieve some of the interest on these SBA disaster loans. For this reason, I urge my Senate colleagues to support this commonsense legislation which would make a difference for up to 11,000 Main Street business owners and their estimated 40,000 employees in the Gulf Coast.

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. 653

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 “Southeast Hurricanes Small Business Disaster Relief Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. SOUTHEAST HURRICANES SMALL BUSINESS DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 12086 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-234; 122 Stat. 1422) is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 12086. SOUTHEAST HURRICANES SMALL BUSINESS DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

“(1) the term ‘covered area’ means an area in the State of Louisiana, the State of Mississippi, the State of Alabama, or the State of Texas for which the President declared a major disaster relating to Hurricane Katrina of 2005, Hurricane Rita of 2005, Hurricane Gustav of 2008, or Hurricane Ike of 2008;

“(2) the term ‘covered disaster loan’ means a loan—

“(A) made under section 7(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b));

“(B) for damage or injury caused by Hurricane Katrina of 2005, Hurricane Rita of 2005, Hurricane Gustav of 2008, or Hurricane Ike of 2008; and

“(C) made to a business located in a covered area;

“(3) the term ‘Deepwater Horizon oil spill’ means the blowout and explosion of the mobile offshore drilling unit *Deepwater Horizon* that occurred on April 20, 2010, and resulting hydrocarbon releases into the environment; and

“(4) the term ‘program’ means the Southeast Hurricanes Small Business Disaster Relief Program established under subsection (b).

“(b) PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Administrator shall establish a Southeast Hurricanes Small Business Disaster Relief Program, under which the Administrator may waive payment of interest by a business on a covered disaster loan—

“(1) for not more than 3 years; and

“(2) in a total amount of not more than \$15,000.

“(c) PRIORITY OF APPLICATIONS.—The Administrator shall, to the extent practicable, give priority to an application for a waiver

of payment of interest under the program by a small business concern—

“(1) with not more than 50 employees;

“(2) that demonstrates substantial economic injury as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill; or

“(3) that resumed business operations—

“(A) during the period beginning on September 1, 2005 and ending on October 1, 2006 in a covered area relating to Hurricane Katrina of 2005 or Hurricane Rita of 2005; or

“(B) during the period beginning on September 1, 2008 and ending on January 1, 2009 in a covered area relating to Hurricane Gustav of 2008 or Hurricane Ike of 2008.

“(d) REIMBURSEMENT BY RESPONSIBLE PARTY.—The Administrator may present a claim to the responsible party (as defined in section 1001 of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2701)) for costs and expenses described in section 1012(a)(5) of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2712(a)(5)) relating to a waiver of interest under this section for a business suffering a substantial economic injury as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in accordance with section 1013 of the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2713).

“(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator such sums as may be necessary to carry out the program.

“(f) TERMINATION OF PROGRAM.—The Administrator may not approve an application under the program after March 31, 2012.”

(b) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—A loan refinanced under section 12086 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-234; 122 Stat. 1422) before the date of enactment of this Act shall remain in full force and effect under the terms, and for the duration, of the loan (including any option to defer repayment).

(c) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110-234; 122 Stat. 933) is amended by striking the item relating to section 12086 and inserting the following:

“Sec. 12086. Southeast Hurricanes Small Business Disaster Relief Program.”

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. KERRY, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 656. A bill to provide for the adjustment of status of certain nationals of Liberia to that of lawful permanent residents; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. REED. 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. 656

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 “Liberian Refugee Immigration Fairness Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS.

(a) ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) ELIGIBILITY.—Except as provided under subparagraph (B), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall adjust the status of an alien described in subsection (b) to that of an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence if the alien—

(i) applies for adjustment not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(ii) is otherwise eligible to receive an immigrant visa and admissible to the United States for permanent residence, except that, in determining such admissibility, the grounds for inadmissibility specified in paragraphs (4), (5), (6)(A), and (7)(A) of section 212(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1182(a)) shall not apply.

(B) INELIGIBLE ALIENS.—An alien shall not be eligible for adjustment of status under this section if the Secretary of Homeland Security determines that the alien—

(i) has been convicted of any aggravated felony (as defined in section 101(a)(43) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(43));

(ii) has been convicted of 2 or more crimes involving moral turpitude; or

(iii) has ordered, incited, assisted, or otherwise participated in the persecution of any person on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.

(2) RELATIONSHIP OF APPLICATION TO CERTAIN ORDERS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An alien present in the United States who has been subject to an order of exclusion, deportation, or removal, or has been ordered to depart voluntarily from the United States under any provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act may, notwithstanding such order, apply for adjustment of status under paragraph (1) if otherwise qualified under such paragraph.

(B) SEPARATE MOTION NOT REQUIRED.—An alien described in subparagraph (A) may not be required, as a condition of submitting or granting such application, to file a separate motion to reopen, reconsider, or vacate the order described in subparagraph (A).

(C) EFFECT OF DECISION BY SECRETARY.—If the Secretary of Homeland Security adjusts the status of an alien pursuant to an application under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall cancel the order described in subparagraph (A). If the Secretary of Homeland Security makes a final decision to deny such adjustment of status, the order shall be effective and enforceable to the same extent as if the application had not been made.

(b) ALIENS ELIGIBLE FOR ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The benefits provided under subsection (a) shall apply to any alien—

(A) who is—

(i) a national of Liberia; and

(ii) has been continuously present in the United States between January 1, 2011 and the date on which the alien submits an application under subsection (a); or

(B) who is the spouse, child, or unmarried son or daughter of an alien described in subparagraph (A).

(2) DETERMINATION OF CONTINUOUS PHYSICAL PRESENCE.—For purposes of establishing the period of continuous physical presence referred to in paragraph (1)(A)(ii), an alien shall not be considered to have failed to maintain continuous physical presence by reasons of an absence, or absences, from the United States for any period or periods amounting in the aggregate to not more than 180 days.

(c) STAY OF REMOVAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall establish procedures, by regulation, through which an alien, who is subject to a final order of deportation, removal, or exclusion, may seek a stay of such order based upon the filing of an application under subsection (a).

(2) DURING CERTAIN PROCEEDINGS.—Notwithstanding any provision in the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.), the Secretary of Homeland Security may not order an alien to be removed from the United States if the alien is in exclusion,

deportation, or removal proceedings under any provision of such Act and has applied for adjustment of status under subsection (a) unless the Secretary of Homeland Security has made a final determination to deny the application.

(3) WORK AUTHORIZATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security may—

(i) authorize an alien who has applied for adjustment of status under subsection (a) to engage in employment in the United States while a determination regarding such application is pending; and

(ii) provide the alien with an “employment authorized” endorsement or other appropriate document signifying authorization of employment.

(B) PENDING APPLICATIONS.—If an application for adjustment of status under subsection (a) is pending for a period exceeding 180 days and has not been denied, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall authorize such employment.

(d) RECORD OF PERMANENT RESIDENCE.—Upon the approval of an alien's application for adjustment of status under subsection (a), the Secretary of Homeland Security shall establish a record of the alien's admission for permanent record as of the date of the alien's arrival in the United States.

(e) AVAILABILITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall provide to applicants for adjustment of status under subsection (a) the same right to, and procedures for, administrative review as are provided to—

(1) applicants for adjustment of status under section 245 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1255); and

(2) aliens subject to removal proceedings under section 240 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1229a).

(f) LIMITATION ON JUDICIAL REVIEW.—A determination by the Secretary of Homeland Security regarding the adjustment of status of any alien under this section is final and shall not be subject to review by any court.

(g) NO OFFSET IN NUMBER OF VISAS AVAILABLE.—If an alien is granted the status of having been lawfully admitted for permanent residence pursuant to this section, the Secretary of State shall not be required to reduce the number of immigrant visas authorized to be issued under any provision of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.).

(h) APPLICATION OF IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT PROVISIONS.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—Except as otherwise specifically provided in this Act, the definitions contained in the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.) shall apply in this section.

(2) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this Act may be construed to repeal, amend, alter, modify, effect, or restrict the powers, duties, function, or authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security in the administration and enforcement of the Immigration and Nationality Act or any other law relating to immigration, nationality, or naturalization.

(3) EFFECT OF ELIGIBILITY FOR ADJUSTMENT OF STATUS.—Eligibility to be granted the status of having been lawfully admitted for permanent residence under this section shall not preclude an alien from seeking any status under any other provision of law for which the alien may otherwise be eligible.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. COONS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 657. A bill to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order

to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I take this time to inform my colleagues of legislation I have introduced today to establish a national Blue Alert Act. This would establish a nationwide program for blue alert. It would be similar to what we do for AMBER alert today. With AMBER alert, when children are abducted, we use that communication system nationwide to get information out about the abductor so we can get the public assisting law enforcement in apprehending the individuals responsible for the abduction of a child. My legislation would establish a similar system of disseminating information when a police officer has been murdered or severely injured as a result of a violent attack. This bill would help in keeping law enforcement safer by removing these individuals who have committed these horrible crimes from the streets sooner and holding them accountable for their acts.

Every day 900,000 law enforcement officers go out in our communities to keep us safe. They are the frontline for public safety. They put their lives on the line. Our communities are much safer as a result of their actions, so we want to do everything we can to help our law enforcement officers. In recent years, too many have lost their lives in the line of duty. We need to do something about that.

In Prince George's County, MD, today I joined with law enforcement officers at the FOP Lodge 89 to talk about this legislation. There is a fallen heroes memorial located at that FOP lodge to honor law enforcement officers in Prince George's County who gave their lives in the line of duty. Unfortunately, there are 26 individuals honored at that memorial. They have lost their lives since 1937. The Superintendent of State Police was also there, and we recalled State trooper Wesley Brown who died in June of last year in Forestville at the age of 24 serving his community. I mention Trooper Brown specifically because as a result of Trooper Brown's death, Governor O'Malley took executive action to establish a blue alert system in the State. We now have nine other States that have joined Maryland—10 States altogether—in establishing their own blue alert programs so we can assist in the capture of those who murder or seriously injure law enforcement officers.

We need to use technology the best we can to help those who are serving our communities. My legislation would make that program nationwide. I am proud we have bipartisan cosponsors in Senators GRAHAM, LEAHY, KLOBUCHAR, and COONS. It complements the work being done by Attorney General Holder in his Law Enforcement Officer Safety Initiative. The purpose here is try to keep our law enforcement officers safer and keep the community safer. We think both will be achieved by using a blue alert system nationwide.

I am also pleased to say it has the endorsement of the Fraternal Order of Police and the Concern of Police Survivors, COPS. I urge all colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation. I hope we can get it enacted shortly. This can help in living up to our commitment to those who serve us.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 109—HONORING AND SUPPORTING WOMEN IN NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST WHOSE BRAVERY, COMPASSION, AND COMMITMENT TO PUTTING THE WELLBEING OF OTHERS BEFORE THEIR OWN HAVE PROVEN THAT COURAGE CAN BE CONTAGIOUS

Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. BOXER, Mrs. HAGAN, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 109

Whereas, in the course of peaceful protests in countries throughout North Africa and the Middle East, women have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with men to advance their rights;

Whereas Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has said, "The rights of women and girls is the unfinished business of the 21st Century.";

Whereas, in late December 2010 and January 2011, Tunisia underwent a political upheaval, dubbed the "Jasmine Revolution," resulting in the fleeing of President of Tunisia Zine El Abidine Ben Ali from the country on January 14, 2011;

Whereas one of the first voices of the "Jasmine Revolution" was the sister of Mohammad Bouazizi, the young man whose death led to many of the peaceful protests in Tunisia;

Whereas, on January 25, 2011, demonstrations began across Egypt with thousands of protesters peacefully calling for a new government, free and fair elections, significant constitutional and political reforms, greater economic opportunity, and an end to government corruption;

Whereas women in Egypt have utilized social media to galvanize support among men and women for peaceful protest;

Whereas huge crowds came out to protest peacefully in Egypt, and women were among those that faced tear gas and who pitched their tents and slept in the cold in Tahrir Square;

Whereas hundreds of women took part in a rally in Cairo on March 8, 2011, the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day, to remind women in Egypt that they must have a voice in their nation's future;

Whereas, on February 25, 2011, the United Nations Security Council and the international community condemned the violence and use of force against civilians in Libya;

Whereas, according to press reports, women in Libya have been working behind the scenes making a profound difference to promote reform and keep the momentum of the uprising alive, listening to worried fathers whose sons are fighting on the

frontlines, keeping up with the day-to-day clashes and casualty numbers, and holding meetings about health and education issues, as well as participating in the demonstrations themselves;

Whereas, according to press reports, women are among the leaders of demonstrations calling for reform in Yemen;

Whereas women's groups in countries such as Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iran have attempted to harness critical support regarding legislation affecting their rights;

Whereas women around the world continue to face significant obstacles in all aspects of their lives, including denial of basic human rights, discrimination, and gender-based violence;

Whereas women, young and old, have marched in the streets of countries from Tunisia to Iran demanding freedom from oppression; and

Whereas women across North Africa and the Middle East aspire for freedom, democracy, and rule of law: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the women in North Africa and the Middle East who have worked to ensure that women are guaranteed equality and basic human rights;

(2) recognizes that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of nations to generate economic growth and sustainable democracy;

(3) acknowledges that women in North Africa and the Middle East are demanding to be included in making choices that will affect their own lives and their families;

(4) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to the universal rights of freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, and freedom of association, including via the Internet, and supports the calls for representative and responsive democratic governments that respect these rights;

(5) celebrates this year's centennial anniversary of International Women's Day, a global day to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future, and a day to recognize the obstacles that women still face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities;

(6) condemns any efforts to provoke or instigate violence against women, and calls upon all parties to refrain from all violent and criminal acts; and

(7) underscores the vital importance of women's rights and political participation as leaders in North Africa and the Middle East consider constitutional reforms and shape new governments.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to submit a resolution calling for women's rights in North Africa and the Middle East. Following weeks of tumult and protests in this area of the world, I could not be more honored to lead my 16 female colleagues in the United States Senate in emphasizing the importance of women's rights and political participation. As one unified voice, the 17 of us have introduced a resolution calling for a renewed focus on women's rights as leaders in North Africa and the Middle East consider constitutional reforms and shape new governments. The resolution we introduced reaffirms our commitment to representative and responsive democratic governments that respect women's rights and calls on leaders to include women when it comes to making decisions that will affect their lives.

In the course of peaceful protests in countries throughout North Africa and