

Special Report entitled "Report on the Activities of the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs during the 111th Congress" (Rept. No. 112-7).

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 659. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect Medicare beneficiaries' access to home health services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KYL (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. COBURN, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 660. A bill to protect all patients by prohibiting the use of data obtained from comparative effectiveness research to deny or delay coverage of items or services under Federal health care programs and to ensure that comparative effectiveness research accounts for advancements in personalized medicine and differences in patient treatment response; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LAUTENBERG:

S. 661. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to ensure the safe and proper use of dispersants in the event of an oil spill or release of hazardous substances, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 662. A bill to provide for payments to certain natural resource trustees to assist in restoring natural resources damaged as a result of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. LEVIN:

S. 663. A bill for the relief of Al-Housseynou Ba; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 664. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the capital gain or loss treatment of the sale or exchange of mitigation credits earned by restoring wetlands, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BROWN of Ohio (for himself and Ms. SNOWE):

S. 665. A bill to promote industry growth and competitiveness and to improve worker training, retention, and advancement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. CONRAD, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 666. A bill to require a report on the establishment of a Polytrauma Rehabilitation Center or Polytrauma Network Site of the Department of Veterans Affairs in the northern Rockies or Dakotas, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico):

S. 667. A bill to establish the Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. KYL, Mr. THUNE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BURR, Mr. COBURN, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 668. A bill to remove unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats from seniors' personal health decisions by repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ISAKSON:

S. 669. A bill to amend the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act to improve the compensation system, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 670. A bill to authorize States and their political subdivisions to regulate fuel economy and emissions standards for taxicabs; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HATCH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. KYL, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. LEE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. THUNE, Mr. COBURN, Mr. BURR, and Mr. CHAMBLISS):

S. 671. A bill to authorize the United States Marshals Service to issue administrative subpoenas in investigations relating to unregistered sex offenders; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. REID (for Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. MORAN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. THUNE, and Ms. SNOWE)):

S. 672. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BEGICH (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 673. A bill to require the conveyance of the decommissioned Coast Guard Cutter STORIS; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. VITTER:

S. Res. 111. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that Congress should reject any proposal for the creation of a system of global taxation and regulation; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. Res. 112. A resolution congratulating the Pennsylvania State University IFC/Panhellenic Dance Marathon ("THON") on its continued success in support of the Four Diamonds Fund at Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LUGAR (for himself and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. Res. 113. A resolution commemorating the 2011 International Year of Forests; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. AYOTTE, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. COLLINS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. HAGAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. McCASKILL, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SNOWE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. REID, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr.

CONRAD, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. INOUE, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. KERRY, Mr. KOHL, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WEBB, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. CHAMBLISS):

S. Res. 114. A resolution honoring Congresswoman Geraldine A. Ferraro, the first woman selected by a major political party as its candidate for Vice President of the United States, and extending the condolences of the Senate on her death; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 17

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 17, a bill to repeal the job-killing tax on medical devices to ensure continued access to life-saving medical devices for patients and maintain the standing of United States as the world leader in medical device innovation.

S. 33

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 33, a bill to designate a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.

S. 146

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 146, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the work opportunity credit to certain recently discharged veterans.

S. 216

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 216, a bill to increase criminal penalties for certain knowing and international violations relating to food that is misbranded or adulterated.

S. 242

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 242, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to enhance the roles and responsibilities of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau.

S. 248

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 248, a bill to allow an earlier start for State health care coverage innovation waivers under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 282

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 282, a bill to rescind unused earmarks.

S. 398

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 398, a bill to amend the Energy Policy and Conservation Act to improve energy efficiency of certain appliances and equipment, and for other purposes.

S. 409

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 409, a bill to ban the sale of certain synthetic drugs.

S. 424

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 424, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to preserve access to ambulance services under the Medicare program.

S. 453

At the request of Mr. BROWN of Ohio, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 453, a bill to improve the safety of motorcoaches, and for other purposes.

S. 520

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) were added as cosponsors of S. 520, a bill to repeal the Volumetric Ethanol Excise Tax Credit.

S. 534

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 534, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a reduced rate of excise tax on beer produced domestically by certain small producers.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 540, a bill to prevent harassment at institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

S. 570

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 570, a bill to prohibit the Department of Justice from tracking and cataloguing the purchases of multiple rifles and shotguns.

S. 575

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 575, a bill to study the market and appropriate regulatory structure for electronic debit card transactions, and for other purposes.

S. 584

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from South Da-

kota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 584, a bill to establish the Social Work Reinvestment Commission to provide independent counsel to Congress and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on policy issues associated with recruitment, retention, research, and reinvestment in the profession of social work, and for other purposes.

S. 593

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 593, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the tax rate for excise tax on investment income of private foundations.

S. 595

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 595, a bill to amend title VIII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to require the Secretary of Education to complete payments under such title to local educational agencies eligible for such payments within 3 fiscal years.

S. 633

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 633, a bill to prevent fraud in small business contracting, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 183

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 183 proposed to S. 493, a bill to reauthorize and improve the SBIR and STTR programs, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 197

At the request of Mrs. HUTCHISON, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 197 proposed to S. 493, a bill to reauthorize and improve the SBIR and STTR programs, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 241

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 241 intended to be 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. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 659. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect Medicare beneficiaries' access to home health services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to join with my colleague from

Washington in introducing legislation, the Home Health Care Access Protection Act of 2011, to prevent future unfair administrative cuts in Medicare home health payment rates.

Home health has become an increasingly important part of our health care system. The kinds of highly skilled and often technically complex services that our Nation's home health agencies provide have helped to keep families together and enabled millions of our most frail and vulnerable older and disabled persons to avoid hospitals and nursing homes and stay just where they want to be—in the comfort and security of their own homes. Moreover, by helping these individuals to avoid more costly institutional care, they are saving Medicare billions of dollars each year.

That is why I find it so ironic—and troubling—that the Medicare home health benefit continually comes under attack.

The health care reform bill signed into law by the President last year includes \$40 billion in cuts to home care over 10 years. Moreover, these cuts are a “double-whammy” because they come on top of \$25 billion in additional cuts to home health imposed by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services through regulation in the last several years.

These cuts are particularly disproportionate for a program that costs Medicare less than \$20 billion a year. This simply is not right, and it certainly is not in the best interest of our nation's seniors who rely on home care to keep them out of hospitals, nursing homes, and other institutions.

The payment rate cuts implemented and proposed by CMS are based on the assertion that home health agencies have intentionally “gamed the system” by claiming that their patients have conditions of higher clinical severity than they actually have in order to receive higher Medicare payments. This unfounded allegation of “case mix creep” is based on what CMS contends to be an increase in the average clinical assessment “score” of home health patients over the last few years.

In fact, there are very real clinical and policy explanations for why the average clinical severity of home care patients' health conditions may have increased over the years. For example, the incentives built into the hospital diagnosis-related group—or DRG—reimbursement system have led to the faster discharge of sicker patients. Advances in technology and changes in medical practice have also enabled home health agencies to treat more complicated medical conditions that previously could only be treated in hospitals, nursing homes, or inpatient rehabilitation facilities.

Moreover, this unfair payment rate cut is being assessed across the board, even for home health agencies that showed a decrease in their clinical assessment scores. If an individual home