

Nebraska (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 13, a concurrent resolution honoring the service and sacrifice of members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving in, or have served in, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn.

S. RES. 185

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. KYL) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 185, a resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, reaffirming opposition to the inclusion of Hamas in a unity government unless it is willing to accept peace with Israel and renounce violence, and declaring that Palestinian efforts to gain recognition of a state outside direct negotiations demonstrates absence of a good faith commitment to peace negotiations, and will have implications for continued United States aid.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL:

S. 1060. A bill to improve education, employment, independent living services, and health care for veterans, to improve assistance for homeless veterans, and to improve the administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, we all have a shared commitment to our Nation's veterans. That shared commitment is reflected in many of the programs that are supported by yourself and my other colleagues in this body every year. I deeply respect

the knowledge and dedication that my fellow Senators have brought to this critical issue. Each of my colleagues, almost without exception, has supported measures that have helped our veterans over the years.

I rise to introduce my first piece of legislation, a bill to help our Nation's veterans.

Our Nation must keep faith with the men and women who have served and sacrificed for our freedom. Unfortunately, and unconscionably, America is still failing them and their families by tolerating unemployment, homelessness, and inadequate health care. We must renew our commitment to the more than 250,000 veterans in Connecticut and 22 million across the country to ensure that no veteran is left behind.

Our commitment to veterans must be unwavering. Despite our best intentions, we fail all too often to accord our veterans the support they have earned. Unfortunately, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs, more than 76,000 veterans are homeless on any given night and nearly twice that number will be homeless at some point during the year. The unemployment rate among veterans has doubled over the past 3 years. Twenty-seven percent of veterans in their early twenties are unemployed. That number is almost twice the unemployment rate of their peers who have not served in the military. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently reported that unemployment for veterans who served their country after September 2001 to be 11.5 percent, again, a figure far higher than the national unemployment rate.

Twenty percent of Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans are estimated to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. When veterans return home, they must wait at least half a year, on average, for a claims decision by the Department of Veterans Affairs before they can receive benefits. Those numbers are simply unacceptable. As I speak today, America's longest war continues, with less than 1 percent of the Nation in uniform. Never in the history of the country have so few fought for so long, at such great personal cost and sacrifice.

Under the leadership of Secretary Shinseki, the Department of Veterans Affairs has taken strong steps toward the goal of building a 21st century system that supports caregivers of seriously injured Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, improving services to women veterans, expanding the availability of health care, and preventing veteran homelessness.

Gaps in the system remain, and they are debilitating, destructive, and devastating for many veterans. We can do better and we must do more. The legislation I introduce today is entitled Honoring All Veterans Act of 2011. Its 16 comprehensive provisions are only the first phase of my efforts.

This legislative proposal is a comprehensive package but only an open-

ing salvo in a sustained, unceasing campaign to ensure that no veteran is left behind. It is a downpayment on a larger debt. The goal is to give all veterans the homecoming and the services they need and deserve. Our military men and women have kept their promise to serve and sacrifice for this country, and we must now keep faith with them. Our commitment to veterans should reflect the depth of their sacrifice. This measure is entitled Honoring All Veterans Act because all veterans are brave service men and women, serving today in places we can barely pronounce the names of. They are deployed around the globe, and they deserve to be honored for defending our freedom and democracy. We must honor that service not only in words but in deed.

This legislation comes from veterans and their families—seeing and hearing their struggles and dreams, their achievements and defeats as I have worked for them during my 20 years as attorney general and 4-plus months as a Senator.

In the VFW and American Legion halls, in living rooms, in school auditoriums, and in countless gatherings across the State of Connecticut, I have been privileged to listen and learn from veterans and their families who have shared their personal stories and insights.

This legislation simply continues the work I have done as attorney general. I worked to make the Department of Defense release information on those who may have been improperly separated from military service, and urged the Department of Veterans Affairs to update its obsolete database systems that were preventing tens of thousands of disabled veterans from obtaining deserved tax benefits. In 2007, I worked with the Connecticut congressional delegation to make the Department of Defense provide accurate information about educational benefits to veterans. I have fought for them individually when they encountered bureaucratic resistance and red tape from an unresponsive system. I am proud of that work and proud, most important, of my partnership with veterans in Connecticut in proposing this legislation. My goal then, and it has been continuously, is to keep faith with our veterans, to honor our promises to them.

This Honoring All Veterans Act of 2011 will address four key areas: first, expanding job opportunities for veterans; second, assisting homeless veterans; third, improving veterans health care, with a special emphasis on mental health services; fourth, modernizing the Department of Veterans Affairs.

On expanding job opportunities to honor all veterans and give them the welcome home they deserve, we need to focus first on jobs. Like all Americans, veterans are striving to provide for their families and participate in the economic recovery to find jobs in our slowly recovering economy. Good jobs require education and training, as well

as independent living services for veterans. Our Nation has done much to address this issue, such as the expanded post-9/11 GI bill, but gaps in the system remain. They are all too glaring. My legislation will expand job opportunities in five significant ways.

First, the legislation raises the statutory cap for the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Independent Living Program to welcome hundreds of additional veterans. This vital program helps veterans with severe service-connected disabilities, enabling them to live independently. It helps veterans with those kinds of disabilities to participate in family and community life and increases their potential to return to work. There is a strong case for removing the cap on participation in the program. I would like to recognize the distinguished junior Senator from Hawaii for the work that he has done in this regard. I hope that my legislation will ensure the program can continue to assist veterans coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, while Congress works to find funding to remove the cap completely.

Second, the legislation authorizes veterans to reuse the Department of Defense Transition Assistance Program, known as TAP, and meet with counselors at any military installation for up to 1 year after their separation. This program was developed to assist military personnel leaving the service with information about jobs, education, and career development. Veterans returning to Connecticut wishing to participate again in the Transition Assistance Program should have that opportunity to participate for a second time, maybe even a third time. Coming back from deployment, servicemembers are often focused on other important aspects of the transition process, rather than how to find a job. They may have never written a resume before or attended a job interview. Having started the job search they have specific areas where they realize they need help. I discussed this idea at a recent Senate Armed Services Committee hearing with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. He testified that the military is right now in the process of redesigning the TAP program. I am going to work toward having this provision included in the redesign of the TAP program so that TAP continues to be an opportunity once a servicemember returns home.

Third, the legislation authorizes a study of how best to ensure that civilian employers and educational institutions recognize veterans' military training. The military recruits the most talented men and women in America to serve, and then it invests heavily in their professional development. Yet when they trade their uniforms in for civilian clothes, employers and others such as professional accrediting organizations often refuse to recognize or understand how to make use of their military experience and the expertise they have gained.

The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America reported that 61 percent of employers do not believe they have "a complete understanding of the qualifications ex-servicemembers offer," and recently separated servicemembers with college degrees earn on average almost \$10,000 less per year than their nonveteran counterparts.

One way to close this gap is to have the Department of Defense review the list of military occupations specialties, such as the 22 MOS's in Army engineering or 16 MOS's in Army communications, and ensure that completing MOS qualifications will provide those servicemembers with credentials recognized by civilian employers.

The study authorized in this legislation will start that process. I am committed to working in the Senate to see this problem resolved.

Fourth, the legislation reauthorizes the Veterans Education Outreach Program to provide money for campus-based outreach services to veterans. This program was first established in 1972 to provide colleges with a significant number of veterans on campus with additional resources to make sure those students get the most out of their educational experience and use VA benefits available to assist them. I believe that the return of veterans from deployments during the Global War on Terror requires the same kind of on-campus support. While there are other programs helping veterans pay the cost of tuition and many colleges have great veterans services on-campus, the Veterans Education Outreach Program is the missing link to ensuring veterans are informed about their VA benefits and maximizing the opportunity to study and obtain employment.

Fifth, the legislation authorizes a comprehensive program at the Department of Labor to assist veterans with TBI or PTSD in the workplace. It provides technical assistance to employers of veterans living with those conditions and provides best practices relating to helping those employees develop successful strategies for on-the-job success. The legislation requires the Office of Disability Employment Policy to coordinate an inter-agency working group which will produce a federal homecoming plan for reintegration of these veterans. These tasks have been conducted to a limited degree by the Department of Labor through the America's Heroes at Work program and the Veterans Employment & Training Services and they are to be commended for their efforts to date. However, by defining these requirements in statute, it is my hope that these programs will expand to reach all veterans that need help.

This legislation also reaches veterans in a variety of other key areas. Recently, a female veteran visited my office. She and her two children were homeless and needed help. In their case, we could find temporary shelter. But on the issue of homelessness, many

veterans do not know where to turn or are hesitant to do so. The current per diem given to homeless veterans does not address rising costs and regional variations in helping homeless veterans. Women are particularly underserved now, and my hope is that new housing projects take care of female veterans. For example, the Newington Mission Homeless Project in my state will help forgotten heroes find shelter. The Honoring All Veterans Act reforms the per diem program and helps military families avoid homelessness by permanently extending their foreclosure protection for servicemembers.

On improving veteran health care and mental health services, as I have traveled Connecticut meeting with veterans, I have seen firsthand how veterans with traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder face unique challenges in accessing the Department of Veterans Affairs for benefits and medical assistance. Veterans deserve the best possible medical care, particularly when it comes to treating TBI or post-traumatic stress. These are the signature wounds of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. More than a quarter of these injuries are undiagnosed, according to the military itself. Then too often, even if they are diagnosed, servicemembers are screened but do not receive a full course of treatment.

To address this issue, my legislation requires the Department of Defense to identify and then close the gap between screenings and treatment. Simply diagnosing a soldier or a marine with symptoms of PTSD or TBI does not heal them.

This legislation also addresses the problem of finding qualified psychiatrists, psychologists, and nursing professionals to work in VA medical hospitals and outpatient clinics by accessing graduates from the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. This university trains outstanding medical professionals for military service. Under existing law the Secretary may exempt graduates from working in a military hospital after graduation, based upon forecast demand. The Honoring All Veterans Act allows those graduates identified by the Secretary as excess to military requirements to serve out their commitment in the VA medical systems, rather than releasing them to private hospitals. This provision is just one example of how the legislation is crafted to better utilize the existing resources of the DOD and VA medical systems.

Modernizing the Department of Veterans Affairs is the final section of this legislation. It addresses the DOD and VA transition process through improved monitoring and oversight. It increases pension benefits and gives veterans grounds for appeal at the Board of Veterans Appeals if the VA has misplaced or misfiled their documents.

I hear about this problem, as my colleagues do, again and again as I listen to veterans. Recently, a veteran visited

my office. He has been waiting on a hearing date with the Board of Veterans Appeals for over a year.

His story is typical.

This legislation provides much needed improvement to the Board of Veterans Appeals. I look forward to working with my colleagues to address other much needed improvements.

We can honor our veterans whose claims are stuck in the Board of Veterans Appeals by confirming judges to the court that reviews them. Three of those nine seats are now vacant, and each judge must preside over 600 cases per year, far more than any other Federal appellate court.

Finally, in closing, let me recognize the many veterans throughout the State of Connecticut who helped me craft this measure.

I thank CDR Richard DiFederico of the VFW and CDR Daniel Thurston of the American Legion for their very dedicated work, not only in assisting me but day in and day out on behalf of veterans.

I thank Bob Janicki, who has spent recent years after serving this country in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam era, for providing help to homeless veterans and veterans seeking jobs.

Paul "Bud" Bucha is a veteran and friend with the most distinguished service record possible in winning the Medal of Honor. His life after military service, giving back to other veterans and managing several successful companies, has been an example of how veterans continue to provide leadership with courage and vision.

MSG Frank Alvarado has made a number of very helpful suggestions, including, for example, reauthorizing the Veterans Education Outreach Program.

I would also like to acknowledge my deep respect to Dr. Linda Schwartz, who has been a tireless advocate for all veterans.

Connecticut is blessed to have the leadership of veterans who help each other, care for each other, look out for each other. I look forward to working with them in ensuring that this legislation is passed. I have no illusions that accomplishing passage of these kinds of measures will be easy, but I hope for support across the aisle. This kind of goal certainly ought to unite us, not divide us. We have so much more in common on this issue than in conflict. I am hoping we can work together to ensure that we keep faith with our veterans, that we honor their service, ensure that we welcome them home with the kind of services they need and deserve so that no veteran will be left behind.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a summary of this legislation.

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

THE HONORING ALL VETERANS ACT OF 2011
SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

TITLE 1—EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT, AND
INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES FOR VETERANS

1. Raises the statutory cap for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Independent Living program participants from 2,700 new, per annum, to 3,000.

2. Authorizes veterans to retake the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) and meet with counselors at any military installation again up to 1 year after separation.

3. Authorizes a study of how best to ensure the recognition of military training and qualifications that veterans have by civilian employers and education institutions.

4. Reauthorizes the Veterans Education Outreach Program to provide \$6 million for campus-based outreach services to veterans.

5. Directs the Secretary of Labor to provide technical assistance to employers of veterans living with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and/or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as they transition to the civilian workplace. Directs the Secretary of Labor to provide best practices related to helping employees with TBI and/or PTSD find and develop successful strategies for on-the-job success. Directs the Office of Disability Employment Policy to coordinate inter-agency working group "federal roundtables" on TBI and PTSD to produce a national homecoming plan that identifies the role of each federal agency in the reintegration of these veterans.

TITLE 2—ASSISTANCE FOR HOMELESS VETERANS

1. Permanently extends foreclosure protection for service members under the Service Members Civil Relief Act.

2. Reforms the daily Homeless Housing per diem voucher program to take account of service costs and geographic disparities. Allows use of other funds (such as those authorized under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Grant) without offset.

TITLE 3—HEALTH CARE AND MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES FOR VETERANS

1. Directs DOD and VA to monitor referrals for mental health care to ensure that individuals receive care.

2. Directs to VA to ensure that all TBI and PTSD patients leave VA medical treatment with a plan for their long-term care needs that utilizes a "one-VA" approach to capture and employment and vocational services that can assist in long-term care and rehabilitation.

3. Authorizes VA medical facilities to provide counseling to family members of deployed service members.

4. Authorizes the VA medical system to receive graduates of the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USU) to serve veterans in Community-Based Outpatient Clinics and readjustment counseling Vet Centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

5. Authorizes the VA to Access State Prescription Monitoring Programs to address substance abuse.

TITLE 4—ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

1. Directs the DOD and VA to establish a monitoring mechanism to identify and address challenges as they arise in all DOD and VA facilities and offices involved in the single separation physical process.

2. Authorizes an independent review board on the DOD to VA transition process that includes the Inspector General from each Agency and the GAO.

3. Reforms the Board of Veterans Appeals process to help veterans with misfiled documents.

4. Increases the pension for disabled veterans married to one another who require aid and attendance.

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

S. 1063. A bill to allow for the harvest of gull eggs by the Huna Tlingit people within Glacier Bay National Park in the State of Alaska; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation, the Huna Tlingit Traditional Gull Egg Use Act of 2011, cosponsored by my colleague MARK BEGICH from Alaska, which represents an important step forward in allowing the Huna Tlingit people access to enjoy their traditional subsistence activity of gull egg collection.

The collection and consumption of gull eggs is an integral part of the culture of the Tlingit people of Southeast Alaska, and eggs were gathered at rookeries long before Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve's establishment in 1925. A Legislative Environmental Impact Statement was completed in 2010 regarding this proposal to allow limited harvests of gull eggs in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, and the preferred alternative authorized the implementation of a cooperative management program for gull egg collection and emphasized a traditional harvest strategy for the collections.

My bill will authorize this harvest of gull eggs at five nesting areas on two separate days each calendar year within the Park. This would allow a large number of tribal members to interact with their traditional homeland and provide an opportunity for as many as 12 young people to participate annually and spend time with elders learning about traditional egg harvest practices in addition to other aspects Tlingit culture.

This bill is widely supported throughout the environmental and conservation communities, as well as the Alaska Native community. The harvesting of gull eggs would only have minor effects on the gulls, but the cultural benefits that would be realized by the Native community would be great.

I would like to thank Senator BEGICH, an original co-sponsor of this bill, for his and his staff's hard work in moving this bill forward. It is our hope that this bill will receive quick but careful consideration as the local tribe members have been eagerly awaiting passage of this measure for quite a long time.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KERRY, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 1064. A bill to make effective the proposed rule of the Food and Drug Administration relating to sunscreen drug products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, as families prepare for Memorial Day festivities, and plan outings this summer, most will be outdoors without adequate sun protection, even if they use sunscreen.

This is because there are currently no rules that sunscreen makers must follow when making claims about the level of protection their products provide.

Currently, sunscreen products are only required to protect against UVB rays, the rays that cause tans and sunburns and the level of protection is documented with a Sun Protection Factor, SPF. Unfortunately, even these numbers can be misleading or worse, inaccurate. Researchers have found that a sunscreen product with a SPF of 30 protects against 98 percent of the sun's UVB rays, while a sunscreen labeled with a SPF of 100 protects against 99 percent of the sun's UVB rays. The larger the SPF number doesn't always result in significantly better protection.

Moreover, sunscreen products are not required to protect against cancer-causing UVA rays. UVA rays actually penetrate deeper into the skin and can cause more damage. Some sunscreens and products containing sun protection claim to protect against these rays, but there are no scientific standards by which to measure their validity.

We have seen the effects that a lack of reliable sun protection can have in the rising rates of melanoma in this country, which has doubled in the past 30 years. This year alone, over 2 million people will be informed that they have a preventable form of skin cancer. My state of Rhode Island is among the top ten for reported melanoma diagnoses.

After years of working with my colleagues to press the Food and Drug Administration to act, in August of 2007, the FDA finally proposed a rule that would require sunscreen labels to disclose the level of UVA protection in a standard format that appears near the sun protection factor rating, and ensure that the SPF rating actually corresponds to a product's protection against UVB rays. This was a step in the right direction. The downside is that nearly 4 years later this proposal has still not been finalized.

For this reason, today I am introducing the Sunscreen Labeling Protection Act, the SUN Act, along with my colleagues, Senators SCHUMER, KERRY, LEAHY, and FRANKEN. This legislation would require the FDA to finalize the sunscreen labeling monograph. If the FDA fails to finalize its proposed monograph of August 27, 2007 within 180 days of enactment of the SUN Act, the monograph, as proposed, would become effective. I look forward to a summer when Americans can finally feel protected from the sun's harmful rays.

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. 1064

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 "Sunscreen Labeling Protection Act of 2011" or the "SUN Act".

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE FOR RULE RELATING TO SUNSCREEN DRUG PRODUCTS FOR OVER-THE-COUNTER HUMAN USE.

Notwithstanding subchapter II of chapter 5, and chapter 7, of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the "Administrative Procedure Act") and any other provision of law, the proposed rule issued by the Commissioner of Food and Drugs entitled "Sunscreen Drug Products for Over-the-Counter Human Use; Proposed Amendment of Final Monograph", 72 Fed. Reg. 49070 (August 27, 2007), shall take effect on the date that is 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, unless such Commissioner issues the final rule, which includes formulation, labeling, and testing requirements for both ultraviolet B (UVB) and ultraviolet A (UVA) radiation protection, before such effective date.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 1067. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to require the Secretary of Energy to carry out a research and development and demonstration program to reduce manufacturing and construction costs relating to nuclear reactors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the role safe nuclear energy can play in moving our country toward a more secure energy future.

Given the economic, national security, and environmental threats that we face, we need a comprehensive energy policy. In this regard, safe nuclear energy clearly has emerged as an important player in our search for stable and domestic energy sources with fewer greenhouse gas emissions.

A cleaner energy economy will spur innovation in, and accelerate the shift to, clean and domestic energy sources. It will create a new industrial sector employing millions of Americans in the research, development, and commercialization of new energy technologies. And it will help reduce our dependence on foreign oil from unstable regions of the world and cleaner energy technologies will help us get there.

Finally, as we try to emerge from perhaps our greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression, we need an "all of the above" solution to jumpstart our economy and create new jobs. Beyond renewables and natural gas, this also means next generation nuclear energy.

That is why I am introducing the bipartisan Nuclear Energy Research Initiative Improvement Act today. This bill would authorize the Department of Energy to carry out a research, development, and demonstration program to reduce manufacturing and construction costs of safe nuclear reactors. It would support research in areas critical for us to achieve these goals, while also protecting national security. For example,

it would support research into: modular and small-scale reactors, balance-of-plant issues, cost-efficient manufacturing, licensing issues, and enhanced proliferation controls.

In light of the disaster at the Daiichi nuclear facility in Japan, it is evident a new era of safe nuclear energy development is needed: one with enhanced safeguards and more agile manufacturing and operating capabilities. My bill seeks to achieve those objectives.

Nuclear power's energy security and environmental benefits have earned this industry an important place at the table. It is my hope that we can build new, safe nuclear plants over the next decade to create jobs and build a cleaner, more secure tomorrow. My bill would help us accomplish these goals.

I would like to thank Senator BINGAMAN and Senator MURKOWSKI for joining me in introducing this bill.

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. 1067

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 "Nuclear Energy Research Initiative Improvement Act of 2011".

SEC. 2. NUCLEAR ENERGY RESEARCH INITIATIVE.

Section 952(a) of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 16272(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking "The Secretary" and inserting the following:

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) AUTHORIZED RESEARCH INITIATIVES.—In carrying out the program under this subsection, the Secretary shall conduct research to lower the cost of nuclear reactor systems, including research regarding—

"(A) modular and small-scale reactors;

"(B) balance-of-plant issues;

"(C) cost-efficient manufacturing and construction;

"(D) licensing issues; and

"(E) enhanced proliferation controls.

"(3) CONSULTATION REQUIREMENT.—In carrying out initiatives under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall consult with—

"(A) the Secretary of Commerce;

"(B) the Secretary of the Treasury;

"(C) the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; and

"(D) any other individual who the Secretary determines to be necessary.

"(4) SCHEDULE.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary shall develop and publish on the website of the Department of Energy a schedule that contains an outline of a 5-year strategy to lower effectively the costs of nuclear reactors.

"(B) PUBLIC WORKSHOPS.—In developing the schedule under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall conduct public workshops to provide an opportunity for public comment.

"(C) REVIEW.—Before the date on which the Secretary publishes the schedule under subparagraph (A), the Nuclear Energy Advisory Committee shall conduct a review of the schedule.

"(D) ANNUAL UPDATES.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date on which the Secretary publishes the schedule under subparagraph (A) and annually thereafter, the Secretary shall update the schedule.

“(ii) PUBLIC WORKSHOPS.—In updating the schedule under clause (i), the Secretary shall conduct public workshops in accordance with subparagraph (B).

“(5) COST SHARING.—Section 988 shall apply to initiatives carried out under this section.

“(6) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2016.”.

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

S. 1068. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for temporary student loan debt conversion authority; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, this month marks commencement season at our great colleges and universities across Ohio and the Nation. I have had the honor of speaking at a few this year—Owens Community College, Ashland University, Cleveland Marshall College of Law, and Ohio Northern University.

It is a day of achievement and accomplishment, a reaffirmation of why education is a key to our economic prosperity. But it is also a day of anxiety. Graduates are leaving campuses to enter a difficult job market saddled with student debt.

Approximately 2/3 of Ohioans who attend a private or public 4-year college or university graduate with an average of nearly \$26,000 in student loan debt. Unfortunately, as student loan debt levels continue to grow, the Nation's hiring climate remains sluggish. This has led to limited employment opportunities for recent graduates; nearly half of the 2009 graduating class is currently unemployed or employed in a position that does not require a college degree.

Such circumstances are leading to undue personal stress and potentially, a lifetime of financial challenges. Far too often, individuals and families are becoming part of the “sandwich generation” where families are paying for the cost of their children's education while also taking care of their aging parents.

That is why last year I supported—and the President signed into law, the Health and Education Reconciliation Act, the single largest federal investment in student aid in generations. The law ends wasteful subsidies to private lenders through the Federal Family Education Loan, FFEL, Program. In doing so, we cut out the middleman and loans are now not only originated, but also serviced, by the U.S. Department of Education.

By ending subsidies to private banks, we saved billions of dollars, and used the savings to allow the maximum Pell Grant award to reach a historic level. We made it easier for students to repay loans through the Income-Based Re-

payment Program. We did this all at no cost to the taxpayer.

For many colleges and universities, the transition from FFEL to the Direct Loan program has been a resounding success as there has been no disruption to borrowers or financial aid administrators.

For those borrowers who are in the middle of the transition period, I, along with my good colleague Senator FRANKEN, am introducing the Student Loan Simplification and Opportunity Act. This legislation, by simplifying loan repayment and reducing the loan amount, benefits college graduates. And this legislation, by removing costly subsidies provided to private lenders, saves 1.8 billion dollars that will be reinvested in the Pell Grant Program, thereby ensuring that other deserving students can afford to attend college.

The Student Loan Simplification and Opportunity Act would allow students with both FFEL loans and Direct Loans to voluntarily transfer their FFEL debt to a Direct Loan servicer over a nine-month period.

By converting loans, the likelihood that a borrower may miss a payment and end up further in debt would decrease. On average, a borrower with multiple loan servicers has a 20 percent higher chance of defaulting on their loan payments. Yet, this program not only simplifies a borrower's loan repayment, it reduces the amount owed. Borrowers who transferred their debt would be rewarded with up to a 2 percent reduction in the principal amount of their FFEL loan.

I am proud to introduce the Student Loan Simplification and Opportunity Act, as this legislation will benefit both borrowers and taxpayers.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 1079. A bill to amend title 41, United States Code, and title 10, United States Code, to extend the number of years that multiyear contracts may be entered into for the purchase of advanced biofuel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mrs. MURRAY. 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. 1079

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 “Domestic Fuel for Enhancing National Security Act of 2011”.

SEC. 2. MULTIYEAR CONTRACTS FOR ADVANCED BIOFUEL.

(a) CIVILIAN AGENCY CONTRACTS.—Subsection (a) of section 3903 of title 41, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:

“(1) MULTIYEAR CONTRACT.—The term ‘multiyear contract’—

“(A) means a contract for the purchase of property or services for more than one, but not more than five, program years, except as provided in subparagraph (B);

“(B) in the case of a contract for the purchase of advanced biofuel, means a contract for the purchase of such fuel for a period of up to 15 program years; and

“(C) may provide that performance under the contract during the second and subsequent years of the contract is contingent upon the appropriation of funds and (if it does so provide) may provide for a cancellation payment to be made to the contractor if such appropriations are not made.

“(2) ADVANCED BIOFUEL.—The term ‘advanced biofuel’ has the meaning given such term in section 211(o)(1)(B) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7545(o)(1)(B)).”.

(b) DEFENSE CONTRACTS.—Subsection (k) of section 2306b of title 10, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(k) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:

“(1)(A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term ‘multiyear contract’ means a contract for the purchase of property or services for more than one, but not more than five, program years.

“(B) In the case of a contract for the purchase of advanced biofuel, the term ‘multiyear contract’ means a contract for the purchase of such fuel for a period of up to 15 program years.

“(C) Such a contract may provide that performance under the contract during the second and subsequent years of the contract is contingent upon the appropriation of funds and (if it does so provide) may provide for a cancellation payment to be made to the contractor if such appropriations are not made.

“(2) The term ‘advanced biofuel’ has the meaning given such term in section 211(o)(1)(B) of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7545(o)(1)(B)).”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to contracts entered into on or after the date occurring 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 199—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF “CROHN'S AND COLITIS AWARENESS WEEK”

Mr. REID of Nevada (for himself, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 199

Whereas Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are serious, chronic inflammatory diseases of the gastrointestinal tract;

Whereas Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, collectively known as inflammatory bowel disease, afflict approximately 1,400,000 people in the United States, 30 percent of whom are diagnosed as children;

Whereas the cause of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are unknown and no medical cure exists;

Whereas Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis can affect anyone, at any age, and is being diagnosed with increased frequency in children;

Whereas Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis patients are at high risk for developing colorectal cancer;

Whereas a lack of awareness among health professionals and the general public may