Federal Communications Commission with respect to regulating the Internet and broadband industry practices.

S. RES. 253

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 253, a resolution designating October 26, 2011, as ''Day of the Deployed''.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 1684. A bill to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments of 2011. For far too long, bureaucratic red tape has prevented Indian tribes from pursuing economic development opportunities on tribal trust lands, including energy development. For years, Indian tribes have expressed concerns about how Federal laws and regulations governing the management of trust resources, including energy resources, create significant delays and uncertainty in development proposals.

This bill represents an effort to deal with some of those concerns, and for the RECORD I would like to highlight some of its provisions. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 included an Indian Energy title—Title V—that, in significant part, attempts to deal with these delays and uncertainties that are inherent in the Bureau of Indian Affairs' energy leasing process, by providing Indian tribes with an alternative way to develop their energy resources. However, more than 6 years after the enactment of that act, it appears that no tribe has yet availed itself of the new energy development process authorized in the 2005 Act.

This bill includes a number of amendments to the alternative process established back in 2005, all of which are intended to facilitate the use of that section—to make the process easier for Indian tribes to follow and more predictable—be clearing away some of the red tape and other impediments.

Another amendment to this process would provide the Indian tribes with some funding to implement the processes authorized under the 2005 Energy Policy Act, in a way that should not increase the cost of the program. What this amendment would do is require the Secretary to provide funding to the tribe for its energy development activities in an amount equal any savings that the United States might realize as a result of the Indian tribe pursing this process, since the Indian tribe would be performing many functions itself rather than the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The bill requires the Secretary to identify the savings to the United States and make that amount available to the Indian tribe in a separate funding agreement.

The ultimate goal of these amendments is to facilitate economic development, provide Indian people with an opportunity to make a good living, and give the tribes greater control over the management and development of their own trust resources.

There are other energy-related issues addressed in this bill as well. There is an amendment to section 201 of the Federal Power Act that would put Indian tribes on a similar footing with States and municipalities for preferences when preliminary permits or original licenses, where no preliminary permit has been issued, for hydroelectric projects. However, this provision does not affect any preliminary permit or original license issued before the bill's enactment date or any application for an original license where no preliminary permit has been issued that was complete before the date of enactment of the bill.

The bill would also authorize a ''biomass demonstration project'' for biomass energy production from Indian forest lands, rangelands and other Federal lands in accordance with program requirements developed by the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture after consultation with Indian tribes. This amendment would promote the development of tribal biomass projects by providing them with more reliable and potentially long-term supplies of woody biomass materials.

There are many other provisions of the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2011, but the foregoing items are among the more important. Before I conclude, I would like to thank Senator AKAKA, the Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, for his leadership on this issue and for agreeing to cosponsor this bill with me as well as the other Senators who have agreed to join as cosponsors.

In closing, I urge my colleagues to help us expand economic opportunity on tribal trust lands by moving this act expeditiously.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I rise in support of the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments of 2011. I am proud to co-sponsor this bill introduced by my friend, colleague, and Vice Chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, Senator JOHN BARRASSO. I applaud his leadership and am proud to call him my full partner in our work on behalf of the Native peoples of the United States. Introduction of the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act Amendments of 2011 is an important first step. I look forward to hearings on this measure and working with all of my colleagues to increase the ability of Native communities to develop energy resources on their lands and enhance self-determination.

Indian lands hold great potential for traditional and renewable domestic energy production. Responsible development could help decrease our Nation's dependence on foreign energy sources and create much needed jobs in some of the most impoverished areas of the Nation. Today, Indian reservations make up approximately 5 percent of the United States land base, and it is estimated that those reservations contain about 10 percent of the country's energy resources. A number of Indian tribes are already working in the areas of traditional and renewable energy production, energy transmission, and energy planning. Yet, successfully tapping into the vast energy reserves in our Nation's Indian communities remains a difficult and complex task.

It remains challenging for Indian tribes to develop adequate information about their energy resources, to obtain interconnection to the electric transmission grid, and to partner with private entities to engage in energy projects. Congress recognized the potential of tribes to develop energy sources on their lands by enacting tribal provisions in the Energy Policy Act of 2005. However, many of the programs and policies authorized by Title V of the act intended to benefit tribes have not been implemented or have only been partially implemented.

The Committee on Indian Affairs has held a listening session, and we have solicited comments from stakeholders across the spectrum on the issue. Tribes have made it clear they wish to chart their own economic destinies, but that in order to do so modifications are needed to the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The legislation introduced today will address tribal concerns as well as private sector concerns and will help unlock the huge potential of Indian tribal energy development to create jobs, promote tribal self-determination, and decrease our dependence on foreign energy sources.

This bill will set clear deadlines for Secretarial approval and streamline administrative processes related to tribal energy development which will help tribes and the United States ''win the future'' by enabling development of renewable energy sources from tribal lands.

I encourage all of my colleagues to stand with me and Senator BARRASSO in support of this legislative initiative.

By Ms. MIKULSKI:

S. 1688. A bill to amend the provisions of title 5, United States Code, relating to the methodology for calculating the amount of any Postal surplus or supplemental liability under the Civil Service Retirement System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Save Our Postal Worker Jobs Act.

Even with advances in technology, America relies on the Postal Service

for everything from notes to family back home, birthday cards, medicine, tax returns and absentee voting. The Postal Service binds our nation together through communication. But the Postal Service is facing a financial crisis and it needs Congress to help.

The Save Our Postal Worker Jobs Act is simple. It doesn't restructure the Postal Service, lay off workers, or close Post Offices. It simply gives the Postal Service the authority it needs to take its own money—not taxpayer money—that it overpaid into its employee pension funds to use to help pay its obligations.

This bill is a jobs bill. Many of the plans that have been introduced to keep the U.S. Postal Service financially solvent include provisions to lay off thousands of workers, cut promised benefits, and undermine collective bargaining rights. The Postal Service has talked about reducing its workforce by more than 200,000.

Our postal service employees are on the front lines every day, working hard for America. I want them to know that I am on their side, and I will not let them be scapegoated for financial problems at the Postal Service. Through the dedication and diligence of our postal workers, the mail is delivered across the country through rain or sleet or snow. It is their work that conveys messages to family, brings medicine to our veterans and seniors, and helps our constituents who are away from home on election day have their voices heard.

This bill is about preserving the local Post Office—an important part of a neighborhood's identity and a piece of the fabric of our communities. This bill is about preserving Postal Service delivery—which is so important for rural areas like Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore. Each region has unique geography that can complicate or delay mail delivery. And reductions to the Postal Service could seriously harm those residents.

This bill alone will not solve all of the Postal Service's problems. The process of reforming the Postal Service and bringing it into the 21st Century may mean that some workers will be let go, some Post Offices may close, and some changes may be made to delivery.

Ultimately, this bill is about allowing those decisions to be thoughtfully considered, with time for the Americans who rely on the Postal Service to be heard. It's about avoiding making rash decisions with a crisis hanging over our heads.

It is about saving our postal workers' jobs.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. KYL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEE, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. 1690. A bill to preserve the multiple use land management policy in the State of Arizona, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by my colleagues, Senator KYL, Senator HATCH, Senator LEE and Senator BARRASSO in introducing legislation to prevent the Secretary of the Interior from executing his plan to ban mining on 1 million acres of Federal land in northern Arizona. A companion bill has been introduced by Congressman TRENT FRANKS in the House. The purpose behind this legislation is best outlined in a recent letter that I along with several members of the Senate and House transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior today.

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

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

OCTOBER 12, 2011.

Hon. KEN SALAZAR,
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY SALAZAR: We are writing to urge you to reconsider moving forward with a proposed 20-year withdrawal of approximately 1 million acres of federal mineral estate in northern Arizona. We predict such a decision, if finalized, would kill hundreds of potential jobs in our states and erode the trust needed for diverse stakeholders to reach agreement on how to protect and manage public lands in the future.

Grand Canyon National Park is an Arizona icon and a natural wonder that attracts visitors from around the world. The Colorado River that flows through the park is the lifeblood of the West, providing drinking water for millions in seven states. We share your desire to protect Grand Canyon National Park and the region's water supplies from adverse environmental effects that may be associated with hardrock mineral exploration and development. We disagree that the proposed withdrawal is necessary to achieve that objective. In our view, the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed withdrawal actually demonstrates that uranium mineral development would pose little, if any, threat to the park or water quality in the region. Thus, we are concerned that this proposed withdrawal is more about social agendas and political pressure than about the best available science.

The aspiration on the part of the environmental community to ban all mining activity in the Grand Canyon region is not new. It existed during the last uranium rebound of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The difference is that, back then, the environmental community put their aspirations aside to constructively work with the mining and livestock industries and Congress to reach an historic agreement on wilderness designations and multiple use land policy—an agreement that ultimately became Title III of the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 (P.L. 98–406). The Act designated over 1.1 million acres of wilderness on the Arizona Strip while, at the same time, releasing another 540,000 acres of federal land for multiple-use development; how that development would be conducted was left to the land management planning process. The Act is rightfully held up as the gold standard of stakeholder collaboration and bipartisan compromise. Until now, it has allowed sustainable uranium mining to coexist with the protection of some of our most treasured natural resources. If the decision is made to move forward with the proposed withdrawal, you will be casting aside that historic compromise and ignoring the land management plans developed through the land management planning process that identify the bulk of the proposed withdrawal area as open to uranium mineral development.

THE LEGISLATIVE HISTORY OF THE ARIZONA WILDERNESS ACT OF 1984

It is important that you review and fully consider the legislative history of the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 before making a final decision regarding the proposed withdrawal. At that time, former House Interior Committee chairman, the late Rep. Morris Udall, led the Arizona congressional delegation (including then-Rep. John McCain) in crafting the legislation. The legislative history strongly substantiates that there was a compromise regarding wilderness protection and continued uranium exploration and development on the Arizona Strip. That compromise was originally embodied in a free-standing bill, the Arizona Strip Wilderness Act of 1983 (H.R. 3562). The Arizona Strip Wilderness Act of 1983 was incorporated into the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 at Title III. A review of the House committee report (H.Rpt. 98–643, Part 1, pages 34–35) accompanying the bill demonstrates the clear recognition by Congress that the lands not designated as wilderness had significant uranium mineral potential, and that the land-management planning process would govern that future development. It states:

There is also a great desire on the part of the Bureau of Land Management and all the interest groups concerned to lay the wilderness issue to rest. This is particularly true for those companies engaged in uranium exploration and mining, as the current wilderness status of large acreages in the Arizona Strip constitutes an impediment to rational and coordinated exploration and development. Likewise, environmental groups feel that uranium activities should be excluded from certain key areas and that immediate wilderness designation for such areas is far preferable to relying on interim wilderness study protection. To this end, a broad coalition of groups and individuals sat down during the early months of 1983 and worked out an agreement that has since received the support from the Administration, the State of Arizona, the local congressman, both senators and virtually every other interest party of which the Committee is aware. Indeed, the Committee's hearings revealed nearly unanimous support for the Arizona Strip proposal. Accordingly, Title III of H.R. 4707 designates the following Arizona Strip lands as wilderness, and releases certain other lands for such non-wilderness uses as are determined appropriate though the land management planning process.

[T]he Committee has not included these lands in wilderness in recognition of their significant mineral (especially uranium) potential. In leaving these lands open for mineral exploration and potential development, the Committee emphasizes that this is an environmentally sensitive area that should be managed by the Bureau of Land Management to minimize adverse impacts on the current remote and wild values. The Committee understands that the type of mining that will take place here is of a low impact, underground type.

The hearing record on the Arizona Strip Bill is also instructive. It demonstrates that the stakeholders truly believed a ''win win'' had been struck and were willing to testify in support of the compromise. The following excerpts are taken from the testimony offered on October 21, 1983 on the Arizona Strip Wilderness Act of 1983 before the House Subcommittee on Public Lands and National Parks:

Testimony of Michael D. Scott, Regional Southwest Director, The Wilderness Society.

It [H.R. 3562] is supported by, among others, the mining industry, local government, the livestock industry, and conservationists. This unusual combination of support is not an accident. It represents many months of work at forging a compromise acceptable to the entire range of interests on the Arizona Strip.'' (Page 296)

At the same time that the Strip emerged as a top conservationist priority, energy companies, most notably Energy Fuels Nuclear (EFN), began to discover significant uranium deposits. As you know, Mr. Chairman, in most cases there are no significant minerals in wilderness or wilderness candidate lands. As unfortunately happens on occasion, some of these significant uranium deposits overlapped with outstanding wildlands in the Strip. Fortunately, EFN, is not a typical hard-rock mining company. Conservationists and EFN decided to discuss those differences. (Page 297)

Statement of Representative Bob Stump.

For many months, several divergent groups, who would usually be viewed as adversaries, have worked together to form a consensus on wilderness designation and multiple use for the Arizona Strip. The legislation which you have before you today is the result of those efforts and is proof positive that give and take on the part of all participants can result in a compromise which will address all concerns. (Page 271)

The key and important factor in this agreement is that it expresses the needs and desires of the ranching, mining, local government, public land managers and environmental communities . . . an example of business interests and environmental concerns working together. (Page 272)

Almost 800,000 acres were included in the Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas in the Arizona Strip. H.R. 3562 designates approximately 165,996 of those acres as well as 122,604 acres in the Paiute Primitive Area, Paria Primitive Area and Vermillion Cliffs Natural Area, as wilderness. The remaining 620,000 acres or 79% of the BLM Wilderness Study Areas will be released to multiple use. (Page 272)

Testimony of Gerald Grandey, Vice President, Energy Fuels Corporation.

Of what we know today, the Arizona Strip appears to be the only area in the United States that has the potential to produce relatively high grade uranium ore, which even at today's depressed market is capable of competing with foreign sources of the material, such as South Africa, Canada, and Australia. (Page 106)

The benefits to be had from the passage of the Arizona Strip Wilderness Act of 1983 are clear. The wilderness in question will be decided once and for all ending many years of potential controversy and debate. In the areas released to multiple use, our Company and others with active programs in the Arizona Strip will be able to conduct exploration in a cost effective and responsible manner. (Page 284)

Testimony of Russ Butcher, Southwest Regional Representative, National Parks Conservation Association.

It was exactly one year ago that we first met and began talking formally with the top officials of Energy Fuels Nuclear, talking about the company's uranium exploration and mining activities north of the Grand Canyon, and about the relationship of these activities to an array of Federal wilderness study areas. (Page 120)

The proposed withdrawal is a ''de facto wilderness'' designation; it will unravel decades of responsible resource development on the Arizona Strip in a misguided effort to ''save'' the Grand Canyon from the same form of uranium mining that environmental groups once agreed to. Moving forward with the proposed withdrawal will call into question the Department's interpretation of wilderness-release language in other legislation and its commitment to multiple-use policy in the years ahead. If the decision is made to finalize the proposed withdrawal, all future wilderness proposals will assuredly face even greater scrutiny as it will be clear that negotiated agreements, such as those contained in the Arizona Wilderness Act, are neither genuine nor enduring.

Again, we agree that the Grand Canyon deserves to be protected for the enjoyment of future generations. However, moving forward with the proposed withdrawal flies in the face of the legislative history regarding mineral development and responsible land management planning. We strongly urge you to reconsider the proposed withdrawal.

Sincerely,

Signed by: Senator John McCain, Senator Orrin Hatch, Senator Jon Kyl, Senator Mike Lee, Senator John Barrasso, Congressman Trent Franks, Congressman Rob Bishop, Congressman Jeff Flake, Congressman David Schweikert, Congressman Paul Gosar, Congressman Ben Quayle, Congressman Jason Chaffetz.

By Mr. BINGAMAN (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. REID, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. BEGICH, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. LEVIN):

S. 1692. A bill to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, to provide full funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, today I introduced, along with Senator MURKOWSKI and 22 other Senators S. 1692, the County Payments Reauthorization Act of 2011. The bill would provide dependable funding to support public schools, transportation infrastructure, and other critical county programs in more than 1,900 counties in 49 States. Specifically, it would continue to fund for 5 more years the Payments In Lieu of Taxes Program, and it would reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. The Secure Rural Schools Act expired at the end of September.

Economists have long said that funding for local governments not only provides one of the most efficient and immediate ways to create and save jobs, it also helps to ensure that essential community services on which economic growth depends are maintained. These programs have proven that point in recent years. They have been lifelines for financially strapped rural counties and the thousands of Americans they employ and they contract with. They employ a multitude of public school teachers, support countless miles of county road projects, fund thousands of collaborative forest and watershed restoration projects, and pay for hundreds of community wildfire risk reduction programs in all parts of the country.

I would like to give one example from my home State of New Mexico. Many of my colleagues may know that the Wallow fire this summer grew to become the largest fire in the history of Arizona. My colleagues may not know that its leading edge burned more than 15,000 acres into New Mexico, and it threatened the community of Luna in Catron County, New Mexico.

When I visited the town of Luna, the community's firefighters told me the wildfire risk reduction projects they had completed using funds from the Secure Rural Schools Program helped to save their town. The funds from this bill also will fund many projects to help their local forests and watersheds and many others around New Mexico to recover from the severe fires that burned there this summer.

Despite the important work these programs support, we recognize that funding these programs is not easy, given the financial circumstance in which we find ourselves. We worked for months to build this strong coalition in the Senate and among the stakeholders in support of these programs across the country. In the process there have been an array of differing views about the details of how these programs should be structured going forward.

For example, recognizing the difficult financial situation in communities around the country and the urgent need to create jobs, some would significantly increase funding for these programs. Others, recognizing the challenging fiscal situation that the Federal Government faces, would sharply reduce funding for these programs. Some would shift the emphasis of the Secure Rural Schools Program to forestry projects such as those covered by titles II and III of that program. Others would shift the emphasis to public schools and to road projects.

But most importantly, there has been broad agreement on the most critical issues. First, there is broad agreement that funding for these two programs is immensely important. Second, there is broad agreement that the only way for us to successfully continue that funding is for us to renew the compromise we negotiated in 2008. Congress overwhelmingly passed that compromise, it has provided funding for these programs for the last 4 years, and our communities have broadly supported it.

The alternative, which seems to have become routine in Congress, is to emphasize our differences and destroy the coalition of support that will be essential to continue funding of these programs.

I greatly appreciate the support and leadership of Senator MURKOWSKI and many others. Let me mention all those who have helped with this bill and who are cosponsoring this effort: Senator BAUCUS, Senator CRAPO, Senator WYDEN, Senator RISCH, Senator REID of Nevada, Senator COCHRAN, Senator TESTER, Senator BLUNT, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator HELLER, Senator TOM UDALL, Senator BOXER, Senator CANTWELL, Senator MURRAY, Senator BENNET, Senator MERKLEY, Senator SANDERS, Senator TIM JOHNSON, Senator BEGICH, Senator MCCASKILL, Senator MARK UDALL, Senator FRANKEN, and Senator LEVIN—all of whom are cosponsoring this important legislation.

I hope the rest of the Senate will join us once again to support the continuation of these important programs and enact this legislation.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to thank Senator BINGAMAN for leading the effort to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

Over 100 years ago this Congress passed a law which formed a compact with counties, boroughs and parishes in rural America where the National Forests are located. That compact stipulated that the Forest Service would share 25 percent of its revenues with local governments to support roads and schools.

This agreement was put into law 60 years before the Payment in Lieu of Tax law was written to help compensate counties for the loss of revenue caused by the inability to tax federal property.

Over the years, the Forest Service shared billions of dollars with the counties and, until 1990, the amount of those payments increased almost every year. In fact, the Forest Service sold $1.6 billion worth of timber in fiscal year 1990. As a result, counties received more than $402 million in 25 percent payments to support schools and roads.

More importantly, the Forest Service timber sale program in 1990 generated more than 102,000 direct and indirect jobs in areas that now have the highest unemployment rates in the country. Those timber sales generated more than $5.3 billion—that is billion with a ''B'' of economic activity and $800 million in Federal income taxes. Further, revenue from the Forest Service's timber sale program supported many of the other Forest Service's multiple-use programs, including recreation, wilderness, road building and maintenance, and fire suppression.

All that changed in 1990 and 1991, when activists used the Endangered Species Act to reduce, and in some instances stop, timber harvesting across the West. If I could wave a magic wand and legislate reforms to the many environmental laws that have been twisted and misconstrued in order to block any development of our natural resources, rather than ensuring responsible decision making by our Federal land management agencies, as Congress intended, I would.

In the long run, I think that is what is needed, and I am convinced that given the economic malaise this country suffers, the American public is beginning to understand the wrongheaded direction our Federal land management has taken over the last two and a half decades.

But I don't think I can accomplish that in this Congress, and I am compelled to avoid adding any additional pain and suffering to the shoulders of the small rural communities that depend on Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act payments. Therefore I am joining Senators BINGAMAN and WYDEN and others in cosponsoring legislation to reauthorize the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act for another 5-year period.

Senator BINGAMAN has fully described the bill, but it reauthorizes the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act at fiscal year 2011 payment levels for 5 more years. We have reduced the annual reduction in payments from the 10 percent level in current law down to a 5-percent annual reduction. Under this plan, counties, parishes, communities and schools will receive up to $364 million in temporary assistance each year for the next 5 years.

I say ''temporary'' because this program was, and is, designed to be a short-term bridge to allow counties and communities to transition to the new economic reality that our wrongheaded Federal lands policy has forced upon them.

I want everyone to also understand that while having signed on to this bill I am also considering a number of other alternative solutions that have the promise of generating enough revenue and jobs from Federal land activities to make our counties whole. I am willing to go as far as turning control of some Federal lands over to counties so that they may get some economic benefit from them. But first I will be taking a careful look at Representative HASTINGS's bill to generate additional resource management by lifting restrictions and expediting the processes needed to offer additional timber sales.

I want everyone to know that if a legitimate, acceptable, offset to pay for the cost of this program is not identified by the time the bill is ready to move to the Senate floor, I will have no alternative but to remove my name from the bill and will have to work to defeat the bill.

I would tell my fellow Senators that the folks in the House Resources Committee are fundamentally correct. We are going to have to either utilize our Federal lands to support our rural communities or we should divest the Federal Government of those lands and let the States, or the counties, manage those lands. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House to find a path forward for this approach in this and future Congresses.

I will close by speaking directly to the counties, parishes, boroughs and communities that have now depended on the Secure Rural School program for more than a decade—and for some counties in Oregon, Washington and Northwest California for more than two decades—the Secure Rural Schools Payments are coming to an end. It could be this year if enough people do not rally around the bill that Senator BINGAMAN, I, and our other cosponsors have proposed. It could be 2 years from now if Representative HASTINGS and other Representatives prevail. Or it could be 5 years from now if we find the acceptable offsets needed to pay for our legislative proposal. My fervent hope is that the program will be replaced by a forest management system that actually puts people back to work in the forest, but it's coming to an end, and the counties and schools need to prepare for that eventuality.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 1696. A bill to improve the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, I am pleased to introduce legislation to improve the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act, PSOB. This law, enacted in 1976, is a vital safety net for our first responders who are permanently disabled in the line of duty, and for the families of those who make the ultimate sacrifice while serving their fellow citizens.

This legislation, along with several technical refinements to the program, will add certain classes of first responders who, due to gaps in the law, have been left without protection. For example, the bill contains legislation I introduced in the 111th Congress in response to the tragic death of Dale Long, a decorated emergency medical responder in Vermont. The Dale Long Emergency Medical Service Providers Protection Act would protect Mr. Long's survivors and those who may follow and encounter the same limitations under the current law.

Under current PSOB law, in order to be eligible for benefits, a member of an ambulance crew must work for an organization that is deemed a unit of State or local government, and thus be deemed a public employee. In Dale Long's case, as with rescue crews across the country, he worked for a private, non-profit entity that nonetheless served his community in a way indistinguishable from an organization with status as a unit of government. Based upon this distinction, Dale Long's surviving family was ineligible for these benefits. This is unfair, and undermines the Federal policy that is in place to support and protect these men and women. The bill I introduce today would end this disparate treatment.

The legislation also includes a provision to ensure that a cadet officer killed during a dangerous training exercise would be eligible for such benefits. The current law's weakness in this

area was highlighted in a case in Maryland, during which fire cadet Racheal Wilson was killed during a training exercise. Senator MIKULSKI and Senator CARDIN have been very concerned about this situation, and I commend them for advocating for its inclusion in this legislation.

In the 111th Congress, the Judiciary Committee considered and reported the Dale Long Emergency Medical Service Providers Protection Act by voice vote. Despite the Committee's work, and the process and debate it was afforded within the Committee, the bill was objected to when I tried to get Senate consideration. This was very disappointing, given the importance of this legislation to first responders around the country, and given the fact that the legislation was fully offset.

This year, I once again introduced the Dale Long Emergency Medical Service Providers Protection Act. During the Senate's debate in February on the FAA Air Transportation Modernization and Safety Improvement Act, I worked closely with Senator INHOFE to propose an amendment that included both the Dale Long Emergency Medical Service Providers Protection Act and a proposal from Senator INHOFE to support those who volunteer their time and expertise as airplane pilots to help those in need. Our bipartisan amendment was adopted by voice vote.

During the course of the subsequent conference negotiations on the FAA authorization legislation, I worked closely with Chairman ROCKEFELLER and House Judiciary Committee Chairman LAMAR SMITH to ensure that our bipartisan amendment was retained in the conference agreement. During the course of these negotiations, Chairman SMITH proposed to expand the Dale Long Emergency Medical Service Providers Protection Act to include other changes to the current PSOB law.

For example, Chairman SMITH proposed a refinement of the Hometown Heroes law, a law that I authored and which was enacted in 2003. I worked with firefighters, police officers, and first responders to make sure that what Chairman SMITH had proposed would not only retain the spirit and intent of the original Hometown Heroes law, but, most importantly, would improve upon it to alleviate some of the administrative delays that the families of first responders had encountered in the past. This refined proposal is included in the bill.

The bill I introduce today also includes provisions to lessen the length of a currently unwieldy appeals process for claimants, clarify the list of eligible survivor beneficiaries, and make those who have been catastrophically injured eligible for peer support and counseling programs. It also removes artificial distinctions under the Hometown Heroes Act to expand the types of injuries that would make a public safety officer's survivors eligible for benefits.

The final version of the legislation to which Chairman SMITH and I agreed represents a bipartisan compromise on the overall improvement of this important program. I appreciate Chairman SMITH's willingness to work with me in support of this program, and the first responders for whom the law is intended to protect. I understand that our agreement was to be incorporated in the FAA conference report.

Unfortunately, the future for a conference agreement on the FAA legislation is unclear. Each day that passes is another day that Mr. Long's family, and others who would benefit from this legislation, must live without the assistance this benefit provides. The Public Safety Officers' Benefits Act has been in effect for over 30 years, and has brought a measure of security to survivors of fallen first responders. In 1990, Congress continued this tradition and acted again to ensure that those first responders who have been permanently disabled in the line of duty are taken care of. This longstanding policy is reflective of Congress' recognition of the importance and necessity of the men and women who commit themselves as firefighters, police officers, and medical responders.

It is difficult to imagine what communities across America would be like without these essential services. From the firefighters in Vermont who race to the scene of a rural fire during a cold winter night, to the ambulance crews providing emergency medical services following a natural disaster in Oklahoma, our dedicated first responders are all connected by their sense of duty and their selflessness in the service of their neighbors. In Congress, lawmakers have traditionally acted in support of these men and women irrespective of party and we should continue that great tradition. I hope the Senate will act quickly to pass this important 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. 1696

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 ''Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvements Act of 2011''.

SEC. 2. BENEFITS FOR CERTAIN NONPROFIT EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND CERTAIN TRAINEES; MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3711 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 901(a) (42 U.S.C. 3791(a))—

(A) in paragraph (26), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in paragraph (27), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(28) the term 'hearing examiner' includes any medical or claims examiner.'';

(2) in section 1201 (42 U.S.C. 3796)—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''follows:'' and all that follows and inserting the following: ''follows (if the payee indicated is living on the date on which the determination is made)—

''(1) if there is no child who survived the public safety officer, to the surviving spouse of the public safety officer;

''(2) if there is at least 1 child who survived the public safety officer and a surviving spouse of the public safety officer, 50 percent to the surviving child (or children, in equal shares) and 50 percent to the surviving spouse;

''(3) if there is no surviving spouse of the public safety officer, to the surviving child (or children, in equal shares);

''(4) if there is no surviving spouse of the public safety officer and no surviving child—

''(A) to the surviving individual (or individuals, in shares per the designation, or, otherwise, in equal shares) designated by the public safety officer to receive benefits under this subsection in the most recently executed designation of beneficiary of the public safety officer on file at the time of death with the public safety agency, organization, or unit; or

''(B) if there is no individual qualifying under subparagraph (A), to the surviving individual (or individuals, in equal shares) designated by the public safety officer to receive benefits under the most recently executed life insurance policy of the public safety officer on file at the time of death with the public safety agency, organization, or unit;

''(5) if there is no individual qualifying under paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (4), to the surviving parent (or parents, in equal shares) of the public safety officer; or

''(6) if there is no individual qualifying under paragraph (1), (2), (3), (4), or (5), to the surviving individual (or individuals, in equal shares) who would qualify under the definition of the term 'child' under section 1204 but for age.'';

(B) in subsection (b)—

(i) by striking ''direct result of a catastrophic'' and inserting ''direct and proximate result of a personal'';

(ii) by striking ''pay,'' and all that follows through ''the same'' and inserting ''pay the same'';

(iii) by striking ''in any year'' and inserting ''to the public safety officer (if living on the date on which the determination is made)'';

(iv) by striking ''in such year, adjusted'' and inserting ''with respect to the date on which the catastrophic injury occurred, as adjusted'';

(v) by striking '', to such officer'';

(vi) by striking ''the total'' and all that follows through ''For'' and inserting ''for''; and

(vii) by striking ''That these'' and all that follows through the period, and inserting ''That the amount payable under this subsection shall be the amount payable as of the date of catastrophic injury of such public safety officer.'';

(C) in subsection (f)—

(i) in paragraph (1), by striking '', as amended (D.C. Code, sec. 4–622); or'' and inserting a semicolon;

(ii) in paragraph (2)—

(I) by striking ''. Such beneficiaries shall only receive benefits under such section 8191 that'' and inserting '', such that beneficiaries shall receive only such benefits under such section 8191 as''; and

(II) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) payments under the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001 (49 U.S.C. 40101 note; Public Law 107–42).'';

(D) by amending subsection (k) to read as follows:

''(k) As determined by the Bureau, a heart attack, stroke, or vascular rupture suffered by a public safety officer shall be presumed to constitute a personal injury within the meaning of subsection (a), sustained in the line of duty by the officer and directly and proximately resulting in death, if—

''(1) the public safety officer, while on duty—

''(A) engages in a situation involving nonroutine stressful or strenuous physical law enforcement, fire suppression, rescue, hazardous material response, emergency medical services, prison security, disaster relief, or other emergency response activity; or

''(B) participates in a training exercise involving nonroutine stressful or strenuous physical activity;

''(2) the heart attack, stroke, or vascular rupture commences—

''(A) while the officer is engaged or participating as described in paragraph (1);

''(B) while the officer remains on that duty after being engaged or participating as described in paragraph (1); or

''(C) not later than 24 hours after the officer is engaged or participating as described in paragraph (1); and

''(3) the heart attack, stroke, or vascular rupture directly and proximately results in the death of the public safety officer,

unless competent medical evidence establishes that the heart attack, stroke, or vascular rupture was unrelated to the engagement or participation or was directly and proximately caused by something other than the mere presence of cardiovascular-disease risk factors.''; and

(E) by adding at the end the following:

''(n) The public safety agency, organization, or unit responsible for maintaining on file an executed designation of beneficiary or executed life insurance policy for purposes of subsection (a)(4) shall maintain the confidentiality of the designation or policy in the same manner as the agency, organization, or unit maintains personnel or other similar records of the public safety officer.'';

(3) in section 1202 (42 U.S.C. 3796a)—

(A) by striking ''death'', each place it appears except the second place it appears, and inserting ''fatal''; and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''or catastrophic injury'' the second place it appears and inserting '', disability, or injury'';

(4) in section 1203 (42 U.S.C. 3796a–1)—

(A) in the section heading, by striking ''**WHO HAVE DIED IN THE LINE OF DUTY**'' and inserting ''**WHO HAVE SUSTAINED FATAL OR CATASTROPHIC INJURY IN THE LINE OF DUTY**''; and

(B) by striking ''who have died in the line of duty'' and inserting ''who have sustained fatal or catastrophic injury in the line of duty'';

(5) in section 1204 (42 U.S.C. 3796b)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (9) as paragraphs (2) through (10), respectively;

(B) by inserting before paragraph (2), as so redesignated, the following:

''(1) 'candidate-officer' means an individual who is officially enrolled or admitted, as a cadet or trainee, in an officially recognized, formal program of instruction or training (such as a police or fire academy) that is solely and specifically intended to result, directly or immediately upon completion, in—

''(A) commissioning as a law enforcement officer;

''(B) conferral of authority to engage in fire suppression (as an officer or employee of a public fire department or as an officially recognized or designated member of a legally organized volunteer fire department); or

''(C) the granting of official authorization or license to engage in rescue activity or in the provision of emergency medical services as a member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew that is (or is a part of) the agency or entity sponsoring the enrollment or admission of the individual;'';

(C) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated, by striking ''consequences of an injury that'' and inserting ''an injury, the direct and proximate consequences of which'';

(D) in paragraph (4), as so redesignated—

(i) in the matter preceding clause (i)—

(I) by inserting ''or permanently and totally disabled'' after ''deceased''; and

(II) by striking ''death'' and inserting ''fatal or catastrophic injury''; and

(ii) by redesignating clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) as subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), respectively;

(E) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated—

(i) by striking ''post-mortem'' each place it appears and inserting ''post-injury''; and

(ii) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively;

(F) in paragraph (8), as so redesignated, by striking ''public employee member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew;'' and inserting ''employee or volunteer member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew (including a ground or air ambulance service) that—

''(i) is a public agency; or

''(ii) is (or is a part of) a nonprofit entity serving the public that—

''(I) is officially authorized or licensed to engage in rescue activity or to provide emergency medical services; and

''(II) is officially designated as a prehospital emergency medical response agency;''; and

(G) in paragraph (10), as so redesignated—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''as a chaplain, or as a member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew;'' and inserting ''or as a chaplain;'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by striking ''or'' after the semicolon;

(iii) in subparagraph (C)(ii), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) a member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew who, as authorized or licensed by law and by the applicable agency or entity (and as designated by such agency or entity), is engaging in rescue activity or in the provision of emergency medical services; or

''(E) a candidate-officer who is engaging in an activity or exercise—

''(i) that is a formal or required part of the program described in paragraph (1); and

''(ii) that poses or is designed to simulate situations that pose significant dangers, threats, or hazards.'';

(6) in section 1205 (42 U.S.C. 3796c), by adding at the end the following:

''(d) Unless expressly provided otherwise, any reference in this part to any provision of law not in this part shall be understood to constitute a general reference under the doctrine of incorporation by reference, and thus to include any subsequent amendments to the provision.'';

(7) in each of subsections (a) and (b) of section 1212 (42 U.S.C. 3796d–1), sections 1213 and 1214 (42 U.S.C. 3796d–2 and 3796d–3), and subsections (b) and (c) of section 1216 (42 U.S.C. 3796d–5), by striking ''dependent'' each place it appears and inserting ''person'';

(8) in section 1212 (42 U.S.C. 3796d–1)—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (1), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''Subject'' and all that follows through '', the'' and inserting ''The''; and

(ii) in paragraph (3), by striking ''reduced by'' and all that follows through ''(B) the amount'' and inserting ''reduced by the amount'';

(B) in subsection (c)—

(i) in the subsection heading, by striking ''DEPENDENT''; and

(ii) by striking ''dependent'';

(9) in section 1213(b)(2) (42 U.S.C. 3796d–2(b)(2)), by striking ''dependent's'' each place it appears and inserting ''person's'';

(10) in section 1216 (42 U.S.C. 3796d–5)—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking ''each dependent'' each place it appears and inserting ''a spouse or child''; and

(B) by striking ''dependents'' each place it appears and inserting ''a person''; and

(11) in section 1217(3)(A) (42 U.S.C. 3796d–6(3)(A)), by striking ''described in'' and all that follows and inserting ''an institution of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002); and''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 402(l)(4)(C) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) by striking ''section 1204(9)(A)'' and inserting ''section 1204(10)(A)''; and

(2) by striking ''42 U.S.C. 3796b(9)(A)'' and inserting ''42 U.S.C. 3796b(10)(A)''.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS; DETERMINATIONS; APPEALS.

The matter under the heading ''PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS BENEFITS'' under the heading ''OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS'' under title II of division B of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–161; 121 Stat. 1912; 42 U.S.C. 3796c–2) is amended—

(1) by striking ''decisions'' and inserting ''determinations'';

(2) by striking ''(including those, and any related matters, pending)''; and

(3) by striking the period at the end and inserting the following: '': *Provided further*, That, on and after the date of enactment of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvements Act of 2011, as to each such statute—

''(1) the provisions of section 1001(a)(4) of such title I (42 U.S.C. 3793(a)(4)) shall apply;

''(2) payment shall be made only upon a determination by the Bureau that the facts legally warrant the payment;

''(3) any reference to section 1202 of such title I shall be deemed to be a reference to paragraphs (2) and (3) of such section 1202; and

''(4) a certification submitted under any such statute may be accepted by the Bureau as prima facie evidence of the facts asserted in the certification:

Provided further, That, on and after the date of enactment of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvements Act of 2011, no appeal shall bring any final determination of the Bureau before any court for review unless notice of appeal is filed (within the time specified herein and in the manner prescribed for appeal to United States courts of appeals from United States district courts) not later than 90 days after the date on which the Bureau serves notice of the final determination: *Provided further*, That any regulations promulgated by the Bureau under such part (or any such statute) before, on, or after the date of enactment of the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Improvements Act of 2011 shall apply to any matter pending on, or filed or accruing after, the effective date specified in the regulations, except as the Bureau may indicate otherwise.''.

SEC. 4. EFFECTIVE DATE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b), the amendments made by this Act shall—

(1) take effect on the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) apply to any matter pending, before the Bureau of Justice Assistance or otherwise, on the date of enactment of this Act, or filed or accruing after that date.

(b) EXCEPTIONS.—

(1) RESCUE SQUADS AND AMBULANCE CREWS.—For a member of a rescue squad or ambulance crew (as defined in section 1204(8) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended by this Act), the amendments made by this Act shall apply to injuries sustained on or after June 1, 2009.

(2) HEART ATTACKS, STROKES, AND VASCULAR RUPTURES.—Section 1201(k) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended by this Act, shall apply to heart attacks, strokes, and vascular ruptures sustained on or after December 15, 2003.

(3) CANDIDATE-OFFICERS.—For a candidate-officer (as defined in section 1204(1) of the title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968, as amended by this Act), the amendments made by this Act shall apply to injuries sustained on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 291—RECOGNIZING THE RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FESTIVAL OF DIWALI

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. WARNER) submitted the following resolution, which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 291

Whereas Diwali, a festival of great significance to Indian Americans and South Asian Americans, is celebrated annually by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains throughout India, the United States, and the world;

Whereas Diwali is a festival of lights, during which celebrants light small oil lamps, place the lamps around the home, and pray for health, knowledge, peace, wealth, and prosperity in the new year;

Whereas the lights symbolize the light of knowledge within the individual that overwhelms the darkness of ignorance, empowering each celebrant to do good deeds and show compassion to others;

Whereas Diwali falls on the last day of the last month in the lunar calendar and is celebrated as a day of thanksgiving for the homecoming of the Lord Rama and worship of Lord Ganesha, the remover of obstacles and bestower of blessings, at the beginning of the new year for many Hindus;

Whereas for Sikhs, Diwali is celebrated as Bandhi Chhor Diwas (The Celebration of Freedom), in honor of the release from prison of the sixth guru, Guru Hargobind; and

Whereas for Jains, Diwali marks the anniversary of the attainment of moksha, or liberation, by Mahavira, the last of the Tirthankaras (the great teachers of Jain dharma), at the end of his life in 527 B.C.: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali; and

(2) in observance of Diwali, the festival of lights, expresses its deepest respect for Indian Americans and South Asian Americans, as well as fellow countrymen and diaspora throughout the world on this significant occasion.

SENATE RESOLUTION 292—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING OCTOBER 16, 2011, AS ''NATIONAL CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK''

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. LIEBERMAN, and Mr. LEVIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 292

Whereas the well-being of the United States requires that the young people of the United States become an involved, caring citizenry of good character;

Whereas the character education of children has become more urgent, as violence by and against youth increasingly threatens the physical and psychological well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas more than ever, children need strong and constructive guidance from their families and their communities, including schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, and civic groups;

Whereas the character of a nation is only as strong as the character of its individual citizens;

Whereas the public good is advanced when young people are taught the importance of good character and the positive effects that good character can have in personal relationships, in school, and in the workplace;

Whereas scholars and educators agree that people do not automatically develop good character and that, therefore, conscientious efforts must be made by institutions and individuals that influence youth to help young people develop the essential traits and characteristics that comprise good character;

Whereas although character development is, first and foremost, an obligation of families, the efforts of faith communities, schools, and youth, civic, and human service organizations also play an important role in fostering and promoting good character;

Whereas Congress encourages students, teachers, parents, youth, and community leaders to recognize the importance of character education in preparing young people to play a role in determining the future of the United States;

Whereas effective character education is based on core ethical values, which form the foundation of a democratic society;

Whereas examples of character are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, citizenship, and honesty;

Whereas elements of character transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences;

Whereas the character and conduct of our youth reflect the character and conduct of society, and, therefore, every adult has the responsibility to teach and model ethical values and every social institution has the responsibility to promote the development of good character;

Whereas Congress encourages individuals and organizations, especially those that have an interest in the education and training of the young people of the United States, to adopt the elements of character as intrinsic to the well-being of individuals, communities, and society;

Whereas many schools in the United States recognize the need, and have taken steps, to integrate the values of their communities into their teaching activities; and

Whereas the establishment of ''National Character Counts Week'', during which individuals, families, schools, youth organizations, religious institutions, civic groups, and other organizations focus on character education, is of great benefit to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning October 16, 2011, as ''National Character Counts Week''; and

(2) calls upon the people of the United States and interested groups—

(A) to embrace the elements of character identified by local schools and communities, such as trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship; and

(B) to observe the week with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet on Thursday, October 13, 2011, at 2:15 p.m. in Room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Carcieri Crisis: The Ripple Effect on Jobs, Economic Development and Public Safety in Indian Country.''

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at (202) 224–2251.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Committee on Indian Affairs will meet on Thursday, October 20, 2011, at 2:15 p.m. in Room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a meeting on S. 1262, the Native Culture, Language, and Access for Success in Schools Act to be followed immediately by a hearing on the following bills: S. 134, Mescalero Apache Tribe Leasing Authorization Act; S. 399, Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement Act of 2011; S. 1327, A bill to amend the Act of March 1, 1933, to transfer certain authority and resources to the Utah Dineh Corporation, and for other purposes; and S. 1345, Spokane Tribe of Indians of the Spokane Reservation Grand Coulee Dam Equitable Compensation Settlement Act.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at (202) 224–2251.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 12, 2011, at 2:30 p.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building. The Committee will hold a hearing entitled, ''Universal Service Reform—Bringing Broadband to All Americans.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 12, 2011, at 2:15 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the