

to held a hearing entitled, "U.S. Strategic Objectives Towards Iran."

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 1, 2011, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Insider Trading and Congressional Accountability."

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 1, 2011, at 2:15 p.m. in room 628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled "Deficit Reduction and Job Creation: Regulatory Reform in Indian Country."

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on December 1, 2011, at 10 a.m., in SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT INFORMATION, FEDERAL SERVICES AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Services, and International Security be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 1, 2011, at 10:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, "The financial and Societal Costs of Medicating America's Foster Children."

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Tiffany Griffin, a fellow in Senator BINGAMAN's office, be granted the privilege of the floor during today's session of the Senate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Roger Yang, a member of the staff of Senator MERKLEY, be granted the privilege of the floor today.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVISTS DEBT RELIEF EXTENSION ACT OF 2011

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2192, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2192) to exempt for an additional 4-year period, from the application of the means-test presumption of abuse under chapter 7, qualifying members of reserve components of the Armed Forces and members of the National Guard who, after September 11, 2001, are called to active duty or to perform a homeland defense activity for not less than 90 days.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in 2008, I was proud to join Senator DURBIN in support of the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act, which President Bush signed into law. This last week I have been able to arrange on behalf of the Senate Judiciary Committee for expedited action on the bill's extension, and that the Senate is passing unanimously. I commend Chairman LAMAR SMITH and the House Judiciary Committee for moving this legislation, and Representative COHEN, the bill's author, for his leadership and attention to the issue. Without this measure, the authority we provided to help our Guard and Reserve families would expire. By taking this action we preserve the assistance this authority provides.

It is a privilege to work on behalf of the men and women who serve in the Vermont National Guard. They have and continue to make all Vermonters proud. I cannot say enough about the men and women who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. They and their families deserve the full support of Congress for the sacrifices they make. Especially now, where multiple conflicts have demanded even more of them, when so many have been called into active service, we need to keep them foremost in our thoughts.

Extending the protections of the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Act for another 4 years is the right thing to do. The bill the Senate passes today will exempt qualifying members of the Guard and Reserve from the harsh means test imposed in our bankruptcy laws a few years ago. As a result of Congress's enactment of a 2005 bankruptcy measure, passed at the behest of large banks and credit card companies, Americans who must make the difficult decision to seek the protection of the bankruptcy court now face onerous requirements to demonstrate that they are experiencing sufficient hardship to enter chapter 7 bankruptcy. Under the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Extension Act, qualifying members of the Guard and Reserve will be protected against the burden of this requirement for another 4 years.

In my view, no American, particularly in times of such economic hardship, should have this burdensome requirement of the so-called means test imposed upon them. The bankruptcy system was established to protect Americans and give them a fresh start. The 2005 enactment turned the law on its head. I opposed this provision in the Senate in 2005, and continue to have serious misgivings about a policy that presumes that Americans facing extreme financial hardships are abusing the bankruptcy process.

Passage of the National Guard and Reservists Debt Relief Extension Act is a step forward toward correcting our current policy.

I also note that passage of this legislation is another example of the good cooperation that exists between the Senate and House Judiciary Committees operating across the aisle and across the Capitol. Last night, the Senate passed H.R. 394, the Federal Courts Jurisdiction and Venue Clarification Act, a bill sponsored by Chairman SMITH to bring clarity to the operation of Federal jurisdictional and venue statutes, thereby helping to reduce wasteful litigation over these issues. This bipartisan bill was cosponsored in the House by Representatives by HOWARD COBLE, ranking member JOHN CONYERS, Jr., and HANK JOHNSON of Georgia. Companion legislation was introduced in the Senate by Senator KLOBUCHAR, who chairs the Senate Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Administrative Oversight and the Courts, and was cosponsored by Senator SESSIONS, the ranking member on the subcommittee.

These two bills are just the most recent examples of legislation I have worked with Chairman SMITH to enact. Of course, we worked together to enact the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act to revitalize our patent laws. We worked together on authorizing the extension of the term of FBI Director Mueller, which required a statutory exception, and on reauthorizing the USA PATRIOT Act.

Other examples include H.R. 368, Representative HANK JOHNSON's bill to clarify removal provisions for matters filed in State courts against Federal agencies and officers; H.R. 398, Representative LOFGREN's bill to toll certain time periods for those in active service to our country; S.1637, Senator KLOBUCHAR's bill to clarify how time is calculated under the Federal Rules; and H.R. 2944, Chairman SMITH's bill to extend the authority of the U.S. Parole Commission.

In addition to these nine measures, we are continuing to work on a number of additional bills, including: S. 1639, Senator TESTER's bill to amend the American Legion charter; and S. 1541, Senator BENNET's bill to revise the Blue Star Mothers' charter.

I look forward to our continued collaborative relationship. Our successful efforts across the aisle and across the Capitol show that the partisan gridlock

that has become all too prevalent these days does not govern everywhere.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 2192) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, December 5, 2011, at 4:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar items Nos. 363, 364, 365, and 406, under the previous order.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2011

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m. on Monday, Decem-

ber 5, 2011; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 4:30 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; and that following morning business, the Senate proceed to executive session under the previous order.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, the next rollcall vote will be Monday at 5:30 p.m. on confirmation of one of the judicial nominations. We expect the remaining three judges to be confirmed by consent.

As a reminder, cloture was filed on the nomination of Caitlin Joan Halligan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia. That cloture vote will occur at noon on Tuesday.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2011, AT 2 P.M.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come be-

fore the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 9:52 p.m., adjourned until Monday, December 5, 2011, at 2 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
MARILYN B. TAVENNER, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES, VICE DONALD M. BERWICK, RESIGNED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

RICHARD M. SCOTT

WITHDRAWAL

Executive message transmitted by the President to the Senate on December 1, 2011 withdrawing from further Senate consideration the following nomination:

DONALD M. BERWICK, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE CENTERS FOR MEDICARE AND MEDICAID SERVICES, VICE MARK B. MCCLELLAN, WHICH WAS SENT TO THE SENATE ON JANUARY 26, 2011.