

(Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1882, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ensure that valid generic drugs may enter the market.

S. 1886

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1886, a bill to prevent trafficking in counterfeit drugs.

S. 1894

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1894, a bill to deter terrorism, provide justice for victims, and for other purposes.

S. 1903

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1903, a bill to prohibit commodities and securities trading based on nonpublic information relating to Congress, to require additional reporting by Members and employees of Congress of securities transactions, and for other purposes.

S. 1904

At the request of Mr. DEMINT, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCHE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1904, a bill to provide information on total spending on means-tested welfare programs, to provide additional work requirements, and to provide an overall spending limit on means-tested welfare programs.

S. 1925

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1925, a bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994.

S. 1944

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 1944, a bill to create jobs by providing payroll tax relief for middle class families and businesses, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 310

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 310, a resolution designating 2012 as the "Year of the Girl" and Congratulating Girl Scouts of the USA on its 100th anniversary.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. McCASKILL):

S. 1960. A bill to provide incentives to create American jobs; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today, along with my friend and colleague Senator McCASKILL, to introduce legislation we believe is essential to restoring growth and creating jobs in our economy.

Our bipartisan bill is comprised of proposals in four general categories. First: taxes—we would protect American workers from payroll tax increases and preserve and provide new tax incentives for small business job creators to help spur job growth.

Second: infrastructure—we propose restoring and expanding funding to rebuild our nation's crumbling roads, bridges, and water treatment plants, adding jobs now and ensuring that the critical infrastructure needed for long-term economic growth is properly maintained.

Third: sensible regulatory reform—we focus on cutting the tangle of red-tape that is holding businesses back from expanding and adding jobs.

Fourth: job training—we propose fundamentally reforming the hodge-podge of Federal jobs training programs to focus on what really works. We also propose extending the charitable deduction for books and computers.

We would offset the cost of these proposals with a 10-year, 2 percent surtax on those with incomes of a million dollars or more, but with a "carve out" to protect small business owner-operators: our nation's job creators.

Let me discuss these proposals in further detail. With respect to taxes, Senator McCASKILL and I believe that action must be taken quickly to extend the two percent payroll tax cut for employees that is scheduled to expire at the end of this month. Unless we do so, 159 million Americans will face a tax increase of up to \$2,000 at a time when the economy is still weak. With so many American families struggling to make ends meet, the last thing we ought to do is to allow an automatic tax increase to take effect in less than a month.

But keeping taxes steady won't be enough to get the economy going again. If we want more jobs, we must do more. That is why Senator McCASKILL and I are proposing that the two percent payroll tax cut be extended to employers, too, on the first \$10 million of payroll. This targets small and medium-sized employers who have historically been the source of our nation's job growth.

We also extend bonus depreciation and Section 179 expensing at the current level, to encourage businesses to use this tax benefit to invest in the tools American workers need to remain the best in the world.

In the global competition for jobs, American workers go head-to-head with workers from China, India, and other countries, who are paid far less than Americans, and whose working conditions would rightly be viewed as unacceptable here in the United States.

The middle-class, the source of America's economic strength, was built

by making sure American workers had the best tools in the world, so they would be the most productive workers in the world. Productivity and tools go hand-in-hand, and in the global competition for jobs, the worker with the best tools wins.

The provisions I have described will help businesses invest and keep the American worker ahead of the global competition.

There are several other tax benefits in our package. One is an innovative proposal that originated with Senators MARK PRYOR and SCOTT BROWN to generate investment in new high-tech companies. We all know how dynamic these young companies can be—a decade ago, Google was a fledgling search engine and Facebook didn't even exist. Today, Google executes billions of searches every week, and Facebook has 800 million members, and growing. Both are valued at more than \$100 billion, but most important, both employ thousands of American workers.

But without the right investment at the right time, these two companies would not exist. Nor would many other companies in the high-tech field, or the millions of jobs they have created. The tax credit we propose will help the high tech firms of the future get the support they need to get off the ground, and become a part of the American story.

It is also important to help established companies stay on the cutting edge by extending the Research and Development tax credit.

Before I go on to describe the other provisions of this bipartisan jobs bill, I would like to explain further the small business "carve out" we built into our offset. Many on my side of the aisle have voiced the concern that a surtax would fall on small businesses. I share that concern. Most of our nation's small businesses are structured as "flow-through" entities, such as "subchapter S" corporations. These flow-through entities do not pay taxes directly, but instead distribute their income to their owners, who then pay tax on that income on their individual income tax returns.

To impose a surtax on this income as if it were the owners' personal income would be a mistake—we would be raising taxes on our nation's job creators at the exact same time we are trying to get our nation's job engine started again.

If we ignore this reality, we risk taxing small businesses as if they are "the wealthy." They are not.

We cannot impose higher taxes on flow-through income without taking money out of small businesses—money that is needed to help those small businesses invest and add jobs. That is why Senator McCASKILL and I are proposing to "carve out" owner-operator small business income so it is not subject to the surtax.

The way we would accomplish this is to separate "active business income" from "passive business income," tracking the passive activity rules of Section 469 of the tax code. Basically, this

means that business owner-operators who “materially participate” in the running of their businesses will be protected from the surtax, while those who are passive investors will pay higher rates.

This is as it should be. Owner-operators are actively engaged in running their small businesses. They are on the front lines of our economy, and of the communities in which they live. The pass-through income that shows up on their tax returns is critical to their ability to finance investment, and grow their businesses. Left in their hands, this income will lead to more jobs and buy the tools that make American workers more productive.

Let me turn now to the other provisions of our bill.

With respect to infrastructure, our bill would provide \$10 billion to capitalize the U.S. Department of Transportation’s State Infrastructure Bank program. These banks are revolving loan funds established and administered by State DOT’s to complement traditional funding by providing loans, loan guarantees, and other forms of non-grant assistance that leverage private dollars. This one-time infusion would allow states to voluntarily utilize this additional funding, while at the same time ensuring that there is sufficient oversight, reporting and public disclosure requirements.

Additionally, my bill would provide \$25 billion in supplemental appropriations for existing highway and bridge formula programs. This funding is meant to supplement and not replace the approximately \$40 billion appropriated annually under the current Surface Transportation authorization for similar transportation programs. According to the Federal Highway Administration’s most recent estimates, every \$1 billion spent on highway construction supported approximately 30,000 jobs.

It is essential that we rebuild our nation’s deteriorating infrastructure. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, it would cost more than \$200 billion annually to substantially improve the conditions of our nation’s roads and bridges—far more than current levels of national investment. Our legislation will not only create jobs but also bolster important road and bridge investments throughout the United States.

I am pleased to hear that the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, AASHTO, a nonprofit, nonpartisan association, supports what we have proposed in our bill. These investments not only create jobs now when they are needed most, but they also address our nation’s aging infrastructure, a daunting but essential task.

There is also no shortage of sewer and drinking water infrastructure needs in states and communities across the nation. The American Society of Civil Engineers’ latest infrastructure report card gave the nation’s water in-

frastructure a D–, and the Environmental Protection Agency estimates \$187.9 billion in wastewater needs and \$334.8 billion in drinking water needs over the next 20 years.

To help ensure the provision of safe water, we propose providing \$800 million in additional funding to the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Funds, CWSRF and DWSRF, to help ensure these critical infrastructure programs are funded at the fiscal year 2010 levels of \$2.1 billion for CWSRF and \$1.387 billion for DWSRF. Water infrastructure investments provide significant environmental, economic, and public health benefits in our states and communities.

Investment in water infrastructure also creates jobs. The National Association of Utility Contractors, for example, estimates that one billion dollars invested in water infrastructure can create over 26,000 jobs.

As I meet with businesses, a chief complaint is that regulations and red tape are preventing them from growing and adding jobs. Our bill also contains important reforms to our regulatory system by incorporating provisions I offered earlier this year as the CURB Act, which stands for Clearing Unnecessary Regulatory Burdens. These provisions are designed to force Federal agencies to cut the red tape that impedes job growth.

All too often it seems Federal agencies do not take into account the impacts to small businesses and job growth before imposing new rules and regulations. The bill we are introducing today obligates them to do so in three ways: first, by requiring Federal agencies to analyze the indirect costs of regulations, such as the impact on job creation, the cost of energy, and consumer prices.

Currently, Federal agencies are not required by statute to analyze the indirect cost regulations can have on the public, such as higher energy costs, higher prices, and the impact on job creation. However, Executive Order 12866, issued by President Clinton in 1993, obligates agencies to provide the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs with an assessment of the indirect costs of proposed regulations. Our bill would essentially codify this provision of President Clinton’s Executive Order.

Second, our bill obligates Federal agencies to comply with public notice and comment requirements and prohibits them from circumventing these requirements by issuing unofficial rules as “guidance documents.”

After President Clinton issued Executive Order 12866, Federal agencies found it easier to issue so-called “guidance documents,” rather than formal rules. Although these guidance documents are merely an agency’s interpretation of how the public can comply with a particular rule, and are not enforceable in court, as a practical matter they operate as if they are legally binding. Thus, they have been used by agencies

to circumvent OIRA regulatory review and public notice and comment requirements.

In 2007, OMB issued a Bulletin which contained a provision closing this loophole by imposing “Good Guidance Practices” on Federal agencies. This requires agencies to provide public notice and comment for significant guidance documents. Our bill would essentially codify this OMB Bulletin.

Third, our bill helps out the “little guy” trying to navigate our incredibly complex and burdensome regulatory environment. So many small businesses don’t have a lot of capital on hand. When a small business inadvertently runs afoul of a Federal regulation for the first time, that first penalty could sink the business and the jobs it supports. Our bill directs agencies to search their files to determine whether a small business is facing a paperwork violation for the first time, and to offer to waive the penalty for that violation if no harm has come of it. It simply doesn’t make sense to me to punish small businesses the first time they accidentally fail to comply with paperwork requirements, so long as no harm comes from that failure.

One example of a planned onerous regulatory action by the Environmental Protection Agency is the Maximum Achievable Control Technology standards for boilers and incinerators, known as Boiler MACT. While currently being reworked by the agency, these rules could cost manufacturers billions of dollars, and potentially lead to the loss of thousands of jobs, especially in some of the hardest hit areas across the Nation. According to a recent study commissioned by the American Forest and Paper Association, implementing the rule as previously drafted could cause 36 pulp and paper mills around the country to close, putting over 20,000 Americans out of work—18% of the industry’s workforce. For this reason, our legislation includes the EPA Regulatory Relief Act, which currently has 40 bipartisan cosponsors, to guarantee the 15 months the EPA itself requested, to provide the agency with the testing data needed for achievable rules and provide manufacturers with the time needed for the capital planning to comply with these very complex and expensive rules.

Maine has lost more than a third of its manufacturing jobs during the past decade, and I am wary of imposing costly new regulations that could lead to more mill closures and lost jobs. I remain committed to working with my Senate colleagues and the EPA to help ensure that the Boiler MACT rules are crafted to protect public health without harming the forest products industry, which is the lifeblood of many small, rural communities.

We must also act to reform our Federal jobs training programs. In our current fiscal climate, we need to ensure that our Federal dollars are being used

as efficiently and productively as possible. The Collins-McCaskill bill requires OMB to study the consolidation of duplicative job training programs and make legislative recommendations to Congress that contemplate consolidating job training programs under a single agency. Of the savings that result from this consolidation, half will be devoted to classroom, field, and hands-on training, and the other half will be used to reduce the deficit.

In closing, Senator MCCASKILL and I believe this is the first comprehensive bipartisan jobs bill to be introduced in the Senate since the President's speech before the Joint Session of Congress in September. With the end of the year just three weeks away, we must take action now to protect the American public from a tax increase that will occur automatically on January 1. We must also work together to help grow the economy and add jobs. In achieving these goals, I would ask my colleagues to consider the approach Senator MCCASKILL and I have proposed in this bipartisan jobs legislation.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. WEBB, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 1961. A bill to provide level funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program; to the Committee on Appropriations.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am introducing the bipartisan LIHEAP Protection Act, along with my colleagues Senator SNOWE from Maine and Senator SANDERS from Vermont, and many of our colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I am pleased to see such broad support for funding for this critical program even in the midst of our budget challenges.

Indeed, LIHEAP is a lifeline, providing vulnerable families with vital assistance when they need it most by helping low-income families and seniors on fixed-incomes with their energy bills.

Last year, Congress provided \$4.7 billion for LIHEAP. In an effort to control Federal spending, the Administration proposed an approximately 45 percent cut in LIHEAP funds from last year's level, down to about \$2.57 billion in 2012. The Senate and House Appropriations bills only partially restored this drastic cut, to roughly \$3.6 billion and \$3.4 billion, respectively.

These cutbacks could put our most vulnerable citizens at risk, especially as the number of households eligible for the program already exceeds those receiving assistance. Given the difficult economy and the projected rise in household energy expenditures, as much as 8 percent more than last year

for those who heat their homes with heating oil according to the Energy Information Administration, it does not make sense to cut vital LIHEAP funding.

We also need to act quickly. If funding is not finalized before winter, millions of low-income households run the risk of not receiving assistance during the coldest months when they need it most. Given the uncertainty in the full year appropriations for LIHEAP, which resulted in the release of only \$1.7 billion in LIHEAP funding to States in October, some States have already begun lowering LIHEAP grant amounts.

LIHEAP is a smart investment. For every dollar in benefits paid, \$1.13 is generated in economic activity, according to economists Mark Zandi and Alan S. Blinder.

I know we face a lot of difficult budget decisions around here, but I, along with so many of my colleagues, believe that LIHEAP should not be the place where we seek savings.

I look forward to working to provide level funding for LIHEAP for fiscal year 2012.

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. 1961

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 "LIHEAP Protection Act".

SEC. 2. LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section—

(1) is to ensure the appropriation for fiscal year 2012 of the total amounts described in subsection (b), for payments described in that subsection, under this Act or prior appropriations Acts; and

(2) is not to require the appropriation of additional amounts for those payments, under appropriations Acts enacted after this Act.

(b) APPROPRIATION.—In addition to any amounts appropriated under any provision of Federal law, as of the date of enactment of this Act, there is appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for fiscal year 2012—

(1) an amount sufficient to yield a total amount of \$4,501,000,000, for making payments under subsections (b) and (d) of section 2602 of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 8621), and all of such total amount shall be used under the authority and conditions applicable to such payments under the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011; and

(2) an amount sufficient to yield a total amount of \$200,000,000, for making payments under section 2602(e) of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 8621(e)), notwithstanding the designation requirement of such section 2602(e), and all of such total amount shall be used under the authority and conditions applicable to such payments under the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

It is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) this Act should be carried out in a manner consistent with the Budget Control Act of 2011 (Public Law 112-25; 125 Stat. 240);

(2) the Secretary of Health and Human Services should continue and expedite program integrity efforts to identify best practices used by grant recipients under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, provide training and technical assistance to such grant recipients, recommend policy changes, and assess and mitigate risk at the Federal, State and local levels, in order to eliminate any waste, fraud, and abuse in the Program and strengthen the Program so all Program funds reach the households who need them most; and

(3) every Program dollar going to waste, fraud, and abuse is a dollar not being spent as the dollar is needed or intended.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about an issue of enormous importance to the people of the State of Vermont and people all over this country; that is, the issue of making sure that in America this winter nobody goes cold, that nobody freezes to death, that children do not become ill because the thermostats in their homes are turned down so low.

The issue I am talking about is to ask for support for legislation that is being introduced by Senator JACK REED of Rhode Island and Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE of Maine which would level fund the LIHEAP program at \$4.7 billion. As most of my colleagues know, LIHEAP is the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Here is the problem we face. We are in the midst of a horrendous recession. Unemployment is sky high. In many cases, wages are in decline, poverty is increasing, and at the same time the price for home heating oil and propane gas is going up. According to the Energy Information Administration, average expenditures for households that heat with oil or propane are forecast to be higher than in any previous winter. Heating oil prices are currently averaging about \$3.90 a gallon. So what people in the Northeast and people all over this country are looking at are the highest home heating oil prices we have ever seen, coming in the midst of a terrible recession, with unemployment high and wages in decline.

In Vermont, heating oil prices are already 34 percent higher than they were at the same time last year. It is currently \$3.82 a gallon, compared to \$2.85 a gallon last year. What is happening is that because of cuts—significant cuts—in LIHEAP funding, the average LIHEAP benefit in Vermont is 45 percent less this year than it was last year, and that is \$474 per family as opposed to \$866 last year.

One thing that has to be understood about LIHEAP is that nearly 80 percent of funding from this program goes to our citizens who are elderly, families with preschool kids, and the disabled. So the people who benefit from this program are some of the most vulnerable people in our country. Eighty percent of the funding, once again, goes to senior citizens, families with preschool children, young children, and people who are dealing with disabilities.

It is not uncommon in the State of Vermont and in other States for the temperatures to drop to 10 below zero or 20 below zero in the wintertime. When people do not have enough funds to heat their homes or their apartments, serious problems arise.

What I want to do is take a moment to read some comments my office has received from Vermonters all over the State who are trying desperately to stay warm this winter.

Josie Crosby, 81 years of age, of Brattleboro, VT, said this:

We will have money for one more tank. After that, I don't know.

That is a woman who is 81 years of age who has money for one more tank of oil. After that, she is not sure how they will stay warm in the winter.

A 48-year-old from Orleans County in the northern part of our State wrote this:

I was able to get 100 gallons of fuel last week, and for that I am grateful. The struggle begins now on how to stretch that fuel as long as possible. I had to buy a portable electric heater to keep halfway warm while waiting for fuel assistance. I don't even want to see how high my electric bill will be. I am an honorably discharged disabled veteran and have limited funds. I have already slashed my food bill, so what goes next? My meds, my electric service, my home?

That is from a disabled vet in the northern part of Vermont.

A 59-year-old woman in central Vermont writes:

I have been keeping my thermostat as low as I can "almost" tolerate. I bundle up in the house with several sweaters, and even a coat and hat at times. When company arrives, I am embarrassed at how ridiculous I probably appear. I am just barely squeaking through each month. I have made cuts everywhere possible, including food.

Wendy Raven, 62, from Whitingham, VT, writes:

I had to drag my bed out of my bedroom and put it in the living room, then close off the bedroom for the winter. I will have to eat even less than I do now in order to pay my fuel bills. I have done everything I can to button up the place, but now all I can do is pray I get through the winter without a bill so large it will again take me until next fall to pay it off.

Is that where we are in the United States of America—that we force people to live under those conditions?

A 31-year-old woman from Bennington, VT, writes:

We are now trying to stay warm by scraping up enough for a gallon or two of heating oil a week, and keeping the thermostat down very low. I turn the furnace off during the day when my child is in school and turn it on an hour before she gets home so that the house gets warm. We are hoping to qualify for crisis fuel assistance or we are in trouble, because there is nowhere to get the extra money needed to pay for the fuel, especially considering its continuously increasing cost. We have to choose what bills to pay each month and what ones not in order to put food on the table.

In this great Nation, in the midst of a recession, in the midst of high unemployment, in the midst of growing poverty, we as the Senate must be very clear that nobody in this country is

going to go cold this winter; that we are not going to pick up a paper in Maine or Rhode Island or Vermont or North Dakota and read that some senior citizen was found frozen to death. That is not what we are going to allow. That is why Senators JACK REED, OLYMPIA SNOWE, I, and many others are working hard so that at the very least we can level fund LIHEAP so that nobody in our country goes cold this winter.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 345—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE CLOSURE OF UMATILLA ARMY CHEMICAL DEPOT, OREGON

Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 345

Whereas, in December 2001, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2002 (Public Law 107-107) was signed into law, which included authorization for a 2005 round of defense base closure and realignment (BRAC);

Whereas, on February 16, 2004, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld included the closure of the Umatilla Army Chemical Depot, Oregon, as one of his recommendations for the 2005 round of defense base closure and realignment;

Whereas, on September 8, 2005, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, in its report making recommendations to the President, found that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's assertion that the chemical demilitarization mission at Umatilla would be complete by the 2nd quarter of 2011 was optimistic, and wrote, "An examination of status information for the depot's mission completion and subsequent closure revealed that dates may slip beyond the 6-year statutory period for completion of BRAC actions.";

Whereas, in that same report, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission took the Secretary of Defense's recommendation "Close Umatilla Chemical Depot, OR" and changed it to "On completion of the chemical demilitarization mission in accordance with treaty obligations, close Umatilla Chemical Depot, OR";

Whereas, by doing so, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission acknowledged that the closure of Umatilla Army Chemical Depot would happen when the demilitarization mission is completed, even if that is after September 15, 2011; and

Whereas Congress did not pass a joint resolution of disapproval with respect to the Commission's report, and the report and recommendations became law: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That, in light of the clear history, the Senate reiterates its original intent and reaffirms its direction that the closure of the Umatilla Army Chemical Depot, Oregon, and subsequent management and disposal shall be carried out in accordance with procedures and authorities contained in the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (part A of title XXIX of Public Law 101-510; 10 U.S.C. 2687 note).

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet in executive session on Wednesday, December 14, 2011, at 10 a.m. in SD-430 to mark up the following:

S. 1855, the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act Reauthorization of 2011;

Wendy Spencer, to be Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service;

Deepa Gupta, to be a member of the National Council on the Arts;

Christopher Merrill, to be a member of the National Council on the Humanities;

Stephanie Orlando, to be a member of the National Council on Disability;

Gary Blumenthal, to be a member of the National Council on Disability; and

en bloc, one hundred and seventy-eight nominations to the Public Health Service.

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact the committee on (202) 224-5375.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. 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 December 7, 2011, at 2:30 p.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a hearing entitled, "Turning the Investigation on the Science of Forensics."

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 7, 2011, at 10 a.m., in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Drug Shortages: Why They Happen and What They Mean."

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. 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 7, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled "Homegrown Terrorism: The Threat to Military Communities Inside the United States."

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 7, 2011, at 10 a.m., in