

S. 1002

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1002, a bill to prohibit theft of medical products, and for other purposes.

S. 1086

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize the Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act of 2004, to provide assistance to Best Buddies to support the expansion and development of mentoring programs, and for other purposes.

S. 1148

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1148, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of assistance to homeless veterans, to improve the regulation of fiduciaries who represent individuals for purposes of receiving benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1283

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1283, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to permit leave to care for a same-sex spouse, domestic partner, parent-in-law, adult child, sibling, grandchild, or grandparent who has a serious health condition.

S. 1301

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1301, a bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2012 through 2015 for the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, to enhance measures to combat trafficking in persons, and for other purposes.

S. 1673

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1673, a bill to establish the Office of Agriculture Inspection within the Department of Homeland Security, which shall be headed by the Assistant Commissioner for Agriculture Inspection, and for other purposes.

S. 1880

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1880, a bill to repeal the health care law's job-killing health insurance tax.

S. 1884

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1884, a bill to provide States with incentives to require elementary schools and secondary schools

to maintain, and permit school personnel to administer, epinephrine at schools.

S. 1915

At the request of Mr. JOHANNIS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1915, a bill to amend the Motor Carrier Safety Improvement Act of 1999 to provide clarification regarding the applicability of exemptions relating to the transportation of agricultural commodities and farm supplies, and for other purposes.

S. 1935

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. LUGAR) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1935, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition and celebration of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the March of Dimes Foundation.

S. 1956

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1956, a bill to prohibit operators of civil aircraft of the United States from participating in the European Union's emissions trading scheme, and for other purposes.

S. 2010

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2010, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 2027

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2027, a bill to improve microfinance and microenterprise, and for other purposes.

S. 2103

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2103, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect pain-capable unborn children in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

S. 2134

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2134, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for certain requirements relating to the retirement, adoption, care, and recognition of military working dogs, and for other purposes.

S. 2150

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2150, a bill to amend title XVI of the Social Security Act to clarify that the value of certain funeral and burial arrangements are not to be considered available resources under the supplemental security income program.

S. 2156

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2156, a bill to amend the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Act to permit the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, to set prices for Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps and make limited waivers of stamp requirements for certain users.

S. RES. 310

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 1589

At the request of Mr. DEMINT, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1589 proposed to S. 1813, a bill to reauthorize Federal-aid highway and highway safety construction programs, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1617

At the request of Mr. JOHANNIS, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1617 intended to be proposed to S. 1813, a bill to reauthorize Federal-aid highway and highway safety construction programs, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1818

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1818 proposed to S. 1813, a bill to reauthorize Federal-aid highway and highway safety construction programs, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1822

At the request of Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1822 proposed to S. 1813, a bill to reauthorize Federal-aid highway and highway safety construction programs, and for other purposes.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WEBB (for himself, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts, Mr. CARPER, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 2179. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve oversight of educational assistance provided under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. WEBB. Mr. President, today, I am introducing The Military and Veterans Educational Reform Act of 2012. This bi-partisan bill will ensure that all educational institutions receiving

funding from the Post-9/11 GI Bill and Tuition Assistance educational programs are governed by the appropriate quality standards.

I am pleased to be joined in this initiative by Senators HARKIN, CARPER, McCASKILL and Senator SCOTT BROWN.

I have been working on this legislation for several months. It includes many recommendations made by Veterans service organizations, military organizations and various GAO reports on the need to improve the accountability and oversight of educational institutions.

This past year marked the second-year anniversary of the implementation of the landmarks Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, which I introduced on my first day in office. I take pride in saying that we have been able to provide the proper investment in the future of those who, since 9/11, have given so much to this country.

History demonstrates clearly that well educated veterans not only have an easier transition and readjustment experience, but also boast higher income levels and enjoy a better quality of life.

Since 2009, more than 1.1 million servicemembers and veterans have applied to receive their new benefits and nearly 700,000 have received benefits under the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

For these reasons, I believe that we in the Congress need to do all we can to ensure that we are preserving the integrity of the greatest GI Bill our veterans and military members have ever had.

Concern with waste in the for-profit sector is not a new issue. If we look back in history, 5 years following the creation of the World War II GI Bill in 1944, we saw that more than 5,000 for-profit schools were created. Many of these schools had questionable outcomes and catered exclusively to veterans.

The World War II GI Bill was almost derailed because of the thousands of for-profit colleges created overnight targeting veterans. Due to the concern with the reported waste and abuse in the system, the Vietnam GI Bill tuition provision became a flat monthly stipend.

Recent data shows that 8 of the 10 largest recipients of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits are for-profit institutions. Many of these schools have more than doubled the amount of Post-9/11 GI Bill dollars they received from 2009–2011.

The growth in this sector has been tremendous in the past couple of years. Between 1998 and 2008, for-profit schools grew 225 percent.

Last month, the Department of Defense released new data showing that for-profit colleges received half of all military tuition assistance dollars—\$280 million out of \$563 million spent last year on this program.

In 2009, the 15 publicly traded for-profit education companies spent \$3.7 billion on marketing. A disproportionate share of this money is going to

marketing and recruitment of veterans into poorly performing for-profit schools, and the results of the Veteran's Administration data on the GI Bill reflect this.

The problem is not necessarily the growth of the for-profit sector. There are some for-profit institutions that are providing our students a great education. But with huge Federal dollars being spent in this sector, we owe it to the taxpayers and to our veterans to carefully monitor and provide adequate oversight. Even more important, we owe it to the men and women who served that the GI benefits they have earned will not be lost or squandered on an education that fails to equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful.

In light of these issues, I have introduced the Military and Veterans Educational Reform Act of 2012. My legislation requires schools participating in educational assistance programs through the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to meet the same educational standards currently required for other federal funding, such as the Pell Grant. This bill strengthens the responsibilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense to assist individuals in making an informed decision to further their continued academic success.

This legislation will increase transparency of information about educational institutions, provide critical services to assist students in the decision-making process and throughout their career, and promote interagency information sharing by requiring all programs receiving funding from Tuition Assistance and Post-9/11 GI Bill be Title IV eligible. Title IV eligibility strengthens the requirements programs must meet in order to receive Federal funding.

By also increasing the transparency of educational institutions by requiring them to provide information to potential students on graduation rates, default rates, and other critical information to ensure that individuals have the information necessary in choosing the best academic program.

By expanding the training and outreach responsibilities of the State Approving Agencies by requiring them to conduct outreach activities to veterans and members of the Armed Forces, requiring State Approving Agencies to conduct audits of schools and to report those findings to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

By requiring that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense develop a centralized complaints process for individuals to report instances of misrepresentation, fraud, waste and abuse and other complaints against educational institutions.

By requiring that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense provide counseling to individuals before they use their benefits.

By increasing greater coordination between the Department of Veterans

Affairs, the Department of Defense and the Department of Education by requiring information sharing among these agencies.

This is a bill that I hope both sides of the aisle will support. It not only aims at preserving the greatest educational benefits for our veterans and military students but it also ensures that our Federal dollars are being spent on quality education.

By Mr. BEGICH:

S. 2180. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax credit for professional school personnel in early childhood education, to expand the deduction for certain expenses of teachers to teachers in early childhood education, and to modify the credit for dependent care services; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. President, today I rise to introduce a package of legislation, the Keep Investing in Developmental Success, KIDS, Act of 2012. These three early childhood bills will address access, quality and affordability in early education programs.

These bills, S. 2180, S. 2181, and S. 2182, are a step towards a commitment to effective early education programs. We all want America's kids ready to learn and ready to succeed when they enter school.

All the data shows early education is one of the strongest predictors of graduation.

The payoff is clear: every dollar invested in early education programs today returns \$16 in better outcomes for individuals, families and communities. You can't find a better investment and the payoff is very clear when you see and talk to the kids who have gone through Head Start.

One snowy night about a month ago in Anchorage, I met with about 50 strongly committed Alaska educators to talk about how to improve our schools and prepare our students for the competitive 21st century economy.

From that conversation arose the idea for three bills I am introducing today.

First, we will amend the tax code to provide a tax credit for early childhood educators. The Tax Relief for Early Educators Act will expand the deductions for certain expenses for early childhood education and increase the child care tax credit so more parents can afford to put their children in quality early child development programs.

Right now, a family pays more than \$1,400 a month for two young children. For most working families, that is not only a hardship, that is out of reach. Because employees of early childhood programs tend to earn low wages, we also will offer them a tax credit of up to \$3,000 and expand the deduction for certain expenses to early childhood educators.

Second, we will create a new student loan forgiveness program for graduates of associate's or bachelor's programs in early education. The Preparing and Reinvesting in Early Education Act, or

PRE ED, will provide needed relief for early educators and encourage more to work with kids through age five. Well-trained educators providing quality early education to our children makes all the difference in a child's success.

Third, we need to reward companies offering onsite or near-site childcare with a company cost-share. We know it works for the company and for the employee—just look around our state.

In Alaska BP, Credit Union One and Fairbanks Memorial Hospital are great examples. They all offer quality onsite centers. They know it makes more productive employees.

The Child Care Public-Private Partnership Act will establish a program to provide child care through partnerships. Through new grant incentives for small and medium companies, we can help more Alaska companies do the same.

This package of bills, the KIDS Act, is not a new idea, and I appreciate my colleagues who have come before this body with similar proposals. However, this is the time to pass these bills—for working families struggling to make ends meet. Parents should have access to affordable, high-quality early care and learning services, early childhood educators should have liveable wages and benefits and business will be more productive.

In closing, let me say I feel very privileged to be involved with policy discussions and the formation of bills such as these. This is a bipartisan issue. I strongly encourage my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring these bills and I urge their quick action and approval.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 391—CON-DEMNING VIOLENCE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF SYRIA AGAINST JOURNALISTS, AND EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON FREEDOM OF THE PRESS IN SYRIA

Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BINGAMAN, and Mr. LAUTENBERG) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 391

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1738 (2006) obliges states to ensure the safety of journalists in war zones;

Whereas, since the uprisings in Syria began in January 2011, the Government of Syria has denied entry to foreign journalists and arrested, abducted, beaten, tortured, and killed journalists, photographers, and bloggers to prevent the free flow of accurate information to the outside world;

Whereas restrictions imposed by the Government of Syria on media have made it extraordinarily difficult to verify death tolls and the exact nature and course of events within the country;

Whereas Syrian state media reports differ significantly from the few independent reports that make their way out of Syria;

Whereas Reporters Without Borders, an international nongovernmental organization that advocates freedom of the press and freedom of information, has listed Bashar al-Assad as a Predator of Freedom of the Press;

Whereas the League of Arab States called for the media to be allowed into Syria during its monitoring mission that was suspended indefinitely on January 28, 2012, due to the "critical deterioration of the situation" in Syria;

Whereas freelance journalist Ferzat Jarban was tortured and killed on November 19 or 20, 2011, after filming protests in Al-Qassir, Syria;

Whereas videographer Basil al-Sayed died on December 27, 2011, from a gunshot wound he suffered 5 days earlier at a checkpoint in the Baba Amr neighborhood in the city of Homs, Syria;

Whereas Shukri Abu al-Burghul of the state-owned daily Al Thawra and Radio Damascus died on January 3, 2012, in Damascus, Syria from a gunshot wound to the head he suffered four days earlier;

Whereas Gilles Jacquier, a correspondent with France 2 television, was killed in a grenade explosion on January 11, 2012, while covering demonstrations in the city of Homs;

Whereas freelance journalist Mazhar Tayyara, a videographer and photojournalist who contributed to Agence France-Presse and other international outlets, was killed by government forces' fire in the city of Homs on February 4, 2012;

Whereas New York Times correspondent Anthony Shadid died of an asthma attack on February 16, 2012, while attempting to leave Syria after reporting inside the country for a week, gathering information on the Free Syrian Army and other armed elements of the resistance to the government of President Bashar al-Assad;

Whereas freelance journalist Rami al-Sayed, who filmed videos of Syrian security forces' repressive acts, was killed on February 21, 2012, while covering the bombardment of the city of Homs by Government of Syria forces;

Whereas journalist Marie Colvin of the Sunday Times, a United States citizen, and freelance photojournalist Remi Ochlik were killed on February 22, 2012, after their makeshift press center in Homs was struck by rockets fired by Government of Syria forces;

Whereas, on February 22, 2012, Department of State Spokesman Mark Toner stated, "[T]oday, we're also clearly deeply troubled and saddened by reports that American journalist Marie Colvin and French journalist Remi Ochlik were killed today in Homs as a result of the intense shelling, the ongoing intense shelling by the Syrian regime. . . . We, of course, extend our deepest condolences to their families and loved ones and just note that their sacrifice in chronicling the daily suffering of the people of Homs stands as a testament to journalism's highest standards.";

Whereas 13 opposition activists in Syria were killed during a weeklong attempt to rescue 4 foreign journalists, 2 of whom were injured, who were trapped in Homs as a result of the bombardment by the Government of Syria that killed Marie Colvin and Remi Ochlik;

Whereas videographer Anas al-Tarsha, who documented unrest in the besieged city of Homs, was killed by a mortar round while filming the bombardment of the city's Qarabees district on February 24, 2012;

Whereas, from 1992 through 2010, zero journalists were killed in Syria according to the Committee to Protect Journalists; and

Whereas the Government of Syria has continued to arbitrarily arrest and detain prominent Syrian journalists and bloggers: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) calls on the Government of Syria to immediately open the country up to independent and foreign journalists and immediately end its media blackout;

(2) condemns in the strongest possible terms the Government of Syria's abuse, intimidation, and violence towards journalists, videographers, and bloggers;

(3) calls on the Government of Syria to immediately release all journalists, videographers, and bloggers who have been detained, arrested, or imprisoned;

(4) pays tribute to the journalists who have lost their lives while reporting on the conflict in Syria;

(5) commends the bravery and courage of journalists who continue to operate in harm's way;

(6) supports the people of Syria seeking access to a free flow of accurate news and other forms of information;

(7) recognizes the critical role that technology plays in helping independent journalists report the facts on the ground;

(8) condemns all acts of censorship and other restrictions on freedom of the press, freedom of speech, and freedom of expression in Syria;

(9) strongly condemns all nations that assist or enable the Government of Syria's ongoing repression of the media; and

(10) reaffirms the centrality of press freedom to efforts by the United States Government to support democracy and promote good governance around the world.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 392—URGING THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY TO SAFEGUARD ITS CHRISTIAN HERITAGE AND TO RETURN CONFISCATED CHURCH PROPERTIES

Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. KIRK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 392

*Resolved*, That it is the sense of the Senate that the Secretary of State, in all official contacts with officials and representatives of the Government of Turkey, should emphasize that the Government of Turkey should—

(1) end all forms of religious discrimination;

(2) allow the rightful church and lay owners of Christian church properties, without hindrance or restriction, to organize and administer prayer services, religious education, clerical training, appointments, and succession, religious community gatherings, social services, including ministry to the needs of the poor and infirm, and other religious activities;

(3) return to their rightful owners all Christian churches and other places of worship, monasteries, schools, hospitals, monuments, relics, holy sites, and other religious properties, including movable properties, such as artwork, manuscripts, vestments, vessels, and other artifacts; and

(4) allow the rightful Christian church and lay owners of Christian church properties, without hindrance or restriction, to preserve, reconstruct, and repair, as they see fit, all Christian churches and other places of worship, monasteries, schools, hospitals, monuments, relics, holy sites, and other religious properties within Turkey.