

amount for colleges and universities, because I thought that was the future of our State.

In fact, we had a formula then that said if you went to a public college or university, the taxpayer would pay for 70 percent of it and the student would pay for 30 percent. If we raised your tuition, we would raise the State's share. We kept that 70/30. That is now turned completely around in Tennessee, where it is closer to 30/70 now; the student pays 30 percent and the taxpayers pay nearly 70 percent. This shift is because Medicaid mandates from Washington on every State have forced Governors and legislatures to take the money they would otherwise spend for public colleges and universities and spend it instead for Medicaid. As a result, State colleges and universities have less money, and to get more money, they must raise tuition.

When tuition goes up at the University of California, and you see students protesting, the reason is because of Washington. As I said, President Obama didn't invent this problem—this is a 30-year old problem—but he has made it worse. He made it worse with laws that say when States have less money, they have to spend more on Medicaid. If they are told from Washington to spend more on Medicaid, even though they have less revenues, they are going to spend less on something else. So they spend less on the University of California, or the State University of New York, or the University of Tennessee.

Last year in Tennessee, State funding for Medicaid went up 16 percent in actual dollars; as a result, State funding for community colleges and the University of Tennessee went down 15 percent in real cuts. That was not a cut in growth. That was a real cut. What did the state colleges and universities do? They raised tuition 8 percent. What did students do? They borrowed more money.

I have been trying to get this point across ever since I became a Senator. I said during the health care debate that everybody who voted for it ought to be sentenced to serve as Governor for 8 years in his or her State so they would understand this problem.

We cannot continue to order the States to spend more for Medicaid and expect our great colleges and universities to be affordable and continue to be the best in the world. That is the real reason why tuition is going up and loans are going up.

Here are the facts. There are still good options for students. I mentioned earlier that the average cost of tuition at a 4-year public university in America is about \$8,200. For a community college, it is around \$3,000. There are many scholarships to help them go there. It is true that loans are going up to very high levels. It is true that there are some abuses here and there—within the for-profit and other parts of the higher education system. But it is also

true that in the United States we not only have some of the best colleges and universities in the world, we have almost all of them. Many of them are public colleges and universities. They are at risk today. Why? Because of Federal health care policies that are hamstringing States and soaking up the money that States should be using to fund the universities of this country and the community colleges of this country.

Mr. President, again, I am introducing today the Student Loan Interest Rate Reduction Act. It addresses exactly the subject President Obama is talking about on the campaign trail these days. How do we keep the interest rate on subsidized Stafford loans, the new loans that began July 1—how do we keep that at 3.4 percent for 1 year? Governor Romney supports that. President Obama supports that. I support that. The only difference is how we pay for it. It will cost \$6 billion.

Our friends on the Democratic side have come up with their usual methods of paying for it: They are going to raise taxes on small business and people who create jobs.

We have a little better idea on this side, which is, let's take the \$8.7 billion back that the Federal Government overcharges students on student loans today to help pay for the health care law and give it back to the students, and let's extend this for 1 year. That will leave nearly \$3 billion extra, which we can use to shore up the Pell grant funding gap that is expected over the next couple of years.

Respectfully, I say to President Obama, when you visit the next college campus, tell the whole story. It is hard to attend and pay for college. There are many good options. Debt is up. But in fairness, the principal reason tuition is rising, and therefore debt is rising, is because of President Obama's own health care policy. He didn't start it, but he made it worse. What he has done is put into place a set of policies that are soaking up the money States would use to fund public colleges and universities and community colleges across this country, forcing them to use that money for Medicaid. As a result, the universities and community colleges have less money, they raise tuition, and that is the principal reason why we have higher tuition and higher interest rates.

The way to stop that would be to either repeal the health care law or repeal the Medicaid mandates. That would improve the quality of American public higher education, and it would improve access to higher education. It would slow down the rising of tuition and slow down the rising of student debt.

By Mr. CONRAD (for himself and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 2367. A bill to strike the word "lunatic" from Federal law, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, today I am pleased to be joined by Senator CRAPO in introducing the 21st Century Language Act of 2012. This bipartisan legislation updates federal law by eliminating references that contribute to the stigmatization of mental health conditions. Specifically, this legislation removes the word "lunatic" from several sections of the United States Code to reflect our nation's modern understanding of mental health conditions.

Recently, a North Dakota constituent contacted my office to express support for legislative efforts to remove this outdated and inappropriate language from federal law. Senator CRAPO and I agree that federal law should reflect the 21st century understanding of mental illness and disease, and that the continued use of this pejorative term has no place in the U.S. Code.

Senator CRAPO and I have worked with the Senate Banking Committee to confirm that "lunatic" is an unnecessary term and that its removal will have no impact on the broader federal law. This legislation enjoys strong support from a number of mental health advocates across the nation, including the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Mental Health America, National Council on Community Behavioral Healthcare, and the Clinical Social Work Association. I hope my colleagues will join me in working to pass this overdue update to the U.S. Code.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 435—CALLING FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN SYRIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 435

Whereas the Republic of Syria is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted at New York December 16, 1966, and the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, done at New York December 10, 1984, and voted in favor of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted at Paris December 10, 1948;

Whereas, since March 2011, the Government of Syria has engaged in a sustained campaign of violence and gross human rights violations against civilians in Syria, including the use of weapons of war, torture, extrajudicial killings, arbitrary executions, sexual violence, and interference with access to medical treatment;

Whereas the United Nations estimated that, as of April 16, 2012, at least 10,000 people had been killed in Syria since the violence began in March 2011;

Whereas, on August, 18, 2011, President Barack Obama called upon President Bashar al Assad to step aside;

Whereas, in November 2011 and February 2012, the United Nations Commission of Inquiry released reports documenting gross human rights violations committed in Syria;

Whereas the League of Arab States deployed a team of international monitors to Syria on December 26, 2011;

Whereas, on January 28, 2012, the League of Arab States suspended its monitoring mission in Syria in response to an escalation in violence;

Whereas, on March 16, 2012, United Nations and League of Arab States Special Envoy Kofi Annan presented a six-point peace plan for Syria that called on the Government of Syria to, among other things: commit to stop the fighting and urgently achieve a United Nations-supervised cessation of violence; work with the Envoy in an inclusive Syrian-led political process; cease military activity in and around civilian population centers; ensure timely provision of humanitarian assistance; release arbitrarily detained persons; ensure freedom of movement for journalists; and respect the freedom of association and the right to demonstrate peacefully;

Whereas, on March 21, 2012, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted a Presidential Statement giving full support to the efforts of Joint Special Envoy Annan and calling on the Government of Syria and the opposition in Syria to work in good faith to fully and immediately implement Mr. Annan's six point proposal;

Whereas, on April 1, 2012, the group Friends of the Syrian People met in Istanbul and announced measures to increase the pressure on the Assad regime, provide greater humanitarian relief to people in need, and support the Syrian opposition as it works toward an inclusive democratic transition.

Whereas, as of April 1, 2012, the United States Government had pledged \$25,000,000 in humanitarian assistance, as well as non-lethal communications equipment, to activists inside Syria;

Whereas, on April 5, 2012, the United Nations Security Council adopted a Presidential Statement calling on the Government of Syria to implement urgently and visibly its commitments to Mr. Annan, including ceasing armed violence within 48 hours;

Whereas, on April 14, 2012, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 2042, which authorized the deployment of an advance team of United Nations military observers to monitor adherence to a ceasefire in the country;

Whereas the Governments of Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq have provided refuge for tens of thousands of people displaced by the violence in Syria; and

Whereas the Governments of the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran continue to supply military equipment to the Government of Syria notwithstanding that government's violent repression of demonstrators:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's ongoing slaughter of his own people; (2) reaffirms that it is the policy of the United States that the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people cannot be realized so long as Bashar al-Assad remains in power and that he must step aside;

(3) recognizes the efforts of the United Nations and the League of Arab States to establish a ceasefire in Syria and to deploy international personnel to observe adherence by the Government of Syria to Special Envoy Kofi Annan's six-point peace plan to bring an end to violence and human rights violations and as a first step toward a full democratic transition in Syria;

(4) urges robust support for the United Nations-administered Emergency Response Fund to ensure the sustained provision of humanitarian and emergency medical sup-

port for the population of Syria affected by the conflict;

(5) urges the continued provision of adequate humanitarian assistance to displaced Syrians currently located in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq;

(6) calls on the President to engage with the League of Arab States, the European Union, and the Government of the Republic of Turkey to explore options to protect civilians in Syria;

(7) demands that the Government of Syria allow additional United Nations personnel into the country, with complete freedom of movement, and take necessary measures to ensure their safety in Syria so that they may observe the ceasefire and the adherence by the Government of Syria to the United Nations six-point peace plan;

(8) urges the Syrian opposition to renew its commitment to a democratic and inclusive society in the post-Assad era based on the rule of law, commitment to universal human rights for all of its people, and protections for religious and ethnic minorities;

(9) calls upon the League of Arab States, the United Nations, the Friends of the Syrian People, and other interested international bodies to continue to exert maximum diplomatic pressure for Assad to step aside and for a political transition in Syria;

(10) urges the Friends of the Syrian People to renew efforts to incentivize the enhanced cohesion of democratically oriented organizations in Syria, and to encourage these groups to make clear their intention to represent and protect the interests of all Syrians;

(11) calls upon the President to continue to provide support, including communications equipment to organizations in Syria that are representative of the people of Syria, make demonstrable efforts to protect human rights and religious freedom, reject terrorism, cooperate with international counterterrorism and nonproliferation efforts, and abstain from destabilizing neighboring countries;

(12) urges the President to develop a plan to identify weapons stockpiles and prevent the proliferation of conventional, biological, chemical, and other types of weapons in Syria; and

(13) strongly condemns the Governments of the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Iran for providing military and security equipment to the Government of Syria, which has been used to repress peaceful demonstrations and commit mass atrocities against unarmed civilian populations in Syria.

SENATE RESOLUTION 436—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF APRIL 22 THROUGH 28, 2012, AS THE "WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD"

Mr. BEGICH submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 436

Whereas there are 20,000,000 children under the age of 5 in the United States;

Whereas numerous studies show that high-quality early childhood education programs improve the likelihood that children will have success in school and in life by improving their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development;

Whereas many children eligible for, and in need of, high-quality child care, Early Head Start, Head Start, and other early childhood education programs are not served by such programs;

Whereas child care assistance and other early childhood education programs enable

parents to work, go to school, and support their families;

Whereas the individuals who work with young children deserve the respect of the people of the United States, professional support, and fair compensation to reflect the important value of their work;

Whereas economist and Nobel Laureate James Heckman has stated that investment in childhood education reaps economic returns due to outcomes such as lower special education placements, lower juvenile delinquency rates, and greater school graduation rates; and

Whereas the National Association for the Education of Young Children established the "Week of the Young Child" to bring attention to the developmental and learning needs of young children: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of April 22 through 28, 2012, as the "Week of the Young Child";

(2) encourages the people of the United States to celebrate—

(A) young children and families; and

(B) the individuals who provide high-quality care and early childhood education to the young children of the United States; and

(3) urges the people of the United States to recognize the importance of—

(A) high-quality, comprehensive early childhood education programs; and

(B) the value of those programs for preparing children to—

(i) experience positive development and education; and

(ii) enjoy lifelong success.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, today I rise to submit a resolution to recognize the Week of the Young Child.

My resolution recognizes April 22 to 28 as the Week of the Young Child. This week in Alaska, and in States and communities across the Nation, we celebrate and bring greater awareness to the importance of the early years of children's lives.

The Week of the Young Child officially began in 1971 as an annual observance and public education effort of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Nation's oldest and recognized leader in early childhood education for children from birth through age 8, to reach out to families and communities and to emphasize the crucial role adults play in giving children the foundation they need to succeed in school and beyond.

This week focuses attention on the importance of children's early years. Early childhood educators, librarians, United Ways, and other organizations provide a range of activities to highlight how each of us can help children and families thrive. This is a national issue as well as local issue. Federal policy and funding is a significant component of early childhood education in this country, from Early Head Start and Head Start to the Child Care and Development Block Grant as well as Title I and even higher education financial aid and teacher support programs for the early childhood education workforce. Yet our investments remain inadequate, especially when you consider the work of noted economists such as James Heckman on the return on investment to our Nation's economy. Today, not quite half of the poorest preschoolers in our country