

S. RES. 401

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 401, a resolution expressing appreciation for Foreign Service and Civil Service professionals who represent the United States around the globe.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. KYL, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mr. LAUTENBERG):

S. 3173. A bill to allow funds under title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to be used to provide training to school personnel regarding how to recognize child sexual abuse; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of myself and Senator HUTCHISON, to introduce bipartisan legislation that would expand No Child Left Behind professional development funding to include training for teachers and school personnel on how to recognize signs of sexual abuse in students.

According to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, 695,000 children were victims of maltreatment in 2010. Approximately 9.2 percent, or 63,940 children, were victims of sexual abuse; this is an increase from 7.6 percent in 2009.

Recent events have shown that warning signs of sexual abuse in children are being missed. The vast majority of States mandate that teachers report suspicions of child abuse, yet not all States require teachers to participate in training.

According to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, 60 percent of all reports of child abuse and neglect are made by professionals, yet only 16 percent of abuse and neglect is reported by education personnel.

Given the amount of time teachers and school personnel spend with children, it is of absolute importance that the warning signs of child sexual abuse be identified, reported, and acted on. It is critical to make sure all school personnel have access to training on how to recognize child sexual abuse.

The Helping Schools Protect Our Children Act of 2012 expands the list of allowable uses for Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA, Title II funding to permit States to use this funding to train teachers, principals, and other school personnel on how to recognize child sexual abuse. Under current law, Title II provides grants to States for a variety of purposes related to recruitment, retention, and professional development of K-12 teachers and principals. Our bill would allow professional development funds in schools to be used to provide teachers with the tools to recognize child sexual abuse.

I am proud that Senator KAY BAILEY HUTCHISON, Senate Minority Whip JON

KYL, and my colleague Senator FRANK LAUTENBERG have joined me as original cosponsors on this bill.

It is essential that as mandated reporters, school personnel should have the proper training to recognize child abuse. When there are no witnesses, what happens behind closed doors in an abusive home can scar a child for a lifetime. The more we learn to recognize the signs of abuse or neglect, the better we will foster a safe environment for young people to learn and grow.

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. 3173

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 "Helping Schools Protect Our Children Act of 2012".

SEC. 2. TRAINING TEACHERS TO RECOGNIZE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE.

(a) STATE ACTIVITIES.—Section 2113(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6613(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(19) Providing training for all school personnel, including teachers, principals, and pupil services personnel, regarding how to recognize child sexual abuse."

(b) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY ACTIVITIES.—Section 2123(a) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6623(a)) is amended by inserting after paragraph (8) the following:

"(9) Providing training for all school personnel, including teachers, principals, and pupil services personnel, regarding how to recognize child sexual abuse."

(c) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES.—Subpart III of part A of title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6631 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 2132(a), by striking "the activities" and inserting "activities"; and

(2) in section 2134(a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking "and" after the semicolon;

(B) in paragraph (2)(C), by striking the period at the end and inserting "; or"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(3) providing training for school personnel, including teachers, principals, and pupil services personnel, regarding how to recognize child sexual abuse."

By Mr. KERRY:

S. 3174. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to direct the Administrator of the Small Business Administration to establish a vocational and technical entrepreneurship development program; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Vocational and Technical Entrepreneurship Development Act to provide critically needed support to help expand entrepreneurship education programs for young adults. At a time when young adults ages 18-24 face an unemployment rate of approximately twice the national average, it is more important than ever to provide additional resources to help

them start their own business. Young entrepreneurs need our help to give them the skills necessary to turn their passion into a successful career.

The Vocational and Technical Entrepreneurship Development Act provides support through small business development centers for high schools, technical schools, and nonprofit organizations serving young adults to develop and implement entrepreneurship education programs. Entrepreneurs who have access to business education programs are more likely to succeed, which often translates to jobs not only for them but for their communities as well. Small businesses are the engine of our economy and the ingenuity of young American entrepreneurs will continue to help drive our economic growth in the future. It is critical that we do everything possible to support our young entrepreneurs and harness their great ideas today that will turn into jobs tomorrow. I ask my colleagues to support job growth and the entrepreneurs who are the future of our economy by supporting this legislation.

By Mr. AKAKA:

S. 3175. A bill to amend subchapter III of chapter 84 of title 5, United States Code, to authorize certain employees to be automatically enrolled to increase contributions to Thrift Savings Plan accounts; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Save More Tomorrow Act of 2012. This act seeks to make a modest, commonsense modification to the Thrift Savings Plan, or TSP, which is the tax-deferred, defined contribution plan for Federal employees, similar to private sector 401(k) plans.

The Save More Tomorrow Act would build on the Thrift Savings Plan Enhancement Act of 2009, which was enacted with support from large, bipartisan majorities in Congress. Under the Thrift Savings Plan Enhancement Act, new Federal employees are automatically enrolled in the TSP unless they opt out, with a default employee contribution rate of 3 percent of basic pay. This legislation would adjust the TSP's automatic enrollment mechanism to allow it to automatically increase employee contributions, unless the employee chooses a different contribution rate. To accomplish this, the bill authorizes the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board, the agency that administers the TSP, to pair the current auto enrollment at 3 percent with automatic escalation of 1 percent per year, for at least 2 consecutive years following the first year of enrollment. This promotes a goal of the Federal Employees' Retirement System Act of 1986, often referred to as FERSA, which was designed to encourage Federal employees to save at least 5 percent of their pay in the TSP.

This "three plus one plus one" model closely mirrors the model Congress

prescribed for the private sector in the Pension Protection Act of 2006, which Mr. BOEHNER of Ohio introduced, the House and Senate passed with significant bipartisan support, and President George W. Bush signed into law. In enacting the Pension Protection Act, Congress endorsed pairing automatic enrollment with automatic escalation, by incentivizing companies to automatically enroll employees in 401(k) plans at no less than a 3 percent savings rate, and automatically escalate that rate by at least 1 percent for at least 3 years.

This act is informed by rigorous oversight I have conducted as Chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia. For example, at a recent Subcommittee hearing, Dr. Brigitte Madrian, a Harvard Kennedy School professor and leading expert on employer-sponsored retirement savings plans, stated, “the evidence from the private sector is that automatic escalation is, in fact, extremely effective at increasing employee savings rates. And you asked specifically is this [automatic escalation] something that should be considered for the Thrift Savings Plan, and I would say absolutely.”

To preempt any possible misconceptions or misunderstandings that may arise regarding this act, I want to be clear from the outset about which employees the Save More Tomorrow Act applies to, and the voluntary nature of the bill. Since this act builds on the statutory framework established by the Thrift Savings Enhancement Act, it only applies to newly hired Federal employees who are eligible to participate in the TSP’s automatic enrollment feature. Additionally, just like the TSP’s auto enrollment feature, auto escalation authorized by this act would be voluntary, and allow participants to terminate default contributions, or change contribution rates, at any time.

This bill has a limited, targeted scope. It would increase the savings only of the small percentage of new employees who enroll in the TSP, but do not raise their contribution rate enough to reach the goal Congress established with FERSA of having most Federal employees contributing at least 5 percent of basic pay. Under the Thrift Savings Plan Enhancement Act, an impressive 97.2 percent of new Federal employees are enrolling in the TSP—82,632 Federal employees have been automatically enrolled in the TSP since the practice began in August 2010. Most of those employees increase their contributions far above the default rate of 3 percent. These enrollees boast an average TSP savings rate of 12.1 percent. Currently, only about 9 percent of employees in the Federal Employee Retirement System enrolled in the TSP contribute less than 5 percent.

Of course, one must not confuse this act’s limited scope with the potential

benefits. From the most recent survey of TSP participants, we know that just like in the private sector, low-income workers who can least afford to forgo matching contributions are the most likely to do so. Lower-income Federal employees are more than twice as likely as higher-income employees to cite automatic enrollment as the reason they are contributing to the TSP. Many employees who contribute less than 5 percent are not even aware of the benefits of increasing the amount they save—18 percent of this group reported they did not contribute 5 percent because they were unaware agencies matched contributions dollar-for-dollar on the first 3 percent of basic pay, and 50 cents on the dollar for the next 2 percent.

Today’s Federal workers must plan carefully to ensure their retirement security. Fortunately, the vast majority of the Federal employees are responsibly saving for retirement, exhibiting average savings rates that are far greater than the private sector. However, I am concerned that the most financially vulnerable Federal employees, individuals earning less than \$25,000 a year, are saving at a lower rate that will hinder their ability to retire with dignity. We should build on the success of the Thrift Savings Plan Enhancement Act by making it as easy as possible for employees to increase their contributions.

The Save More Tomorrow Act is a limited, yet effective legislative response to do just this. Informed by rigorous data from real world experiences in the private sector, this act represents the best in serious, evidence-based policymaking. The modest authorities provided by the Save More Tomorrow Act will enhance the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board’s ability to meet FERSA’s goal of encouraging TSP contributions of 5 percent of pay. I strongly urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

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. 3175

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 “Save More Tomorrow Act of 2012”.

SEC. 2. AUTOMATIC ESCALATIONS.

Section 8432(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “enrolled to make” and all that follows and inserting the following: “enrolled to—

“(i) make contributions under subsection (a) at the default percentage of basic pay; and

“(ii) increase the percentage of basic pay contributed under subsection (a) by the eligible individual by 1 percent each year beginning in the first year following the year in which the eligible individual began making

contributions under clause (i) and each year thereafter for not less than 2 years (which the Executive Director shall establish by regulation).”; and

(2) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting “and have the contributions of the individual automatically increased” after “automatically enrolled”; and

(B) in clause (i), by inserting “(which shall terminate the automatic increases in the contributions of the employee under subparagraph (A)(ii))” after “automatic enrollment”; and

(C) in clause (ii), by inserting “and an automatic increase in contributions under subparagraph (A)(i)” after “automatic enrollment”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 459—COMMENDING THE 1ST STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION UPON ITS COMPLETION OF A DEPLOYMENT TO AFGHANISTAN IN SUPPORT OF OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Mr. BEGICH (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 459

Whereas the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, known as the “Arctic Wolves”, is headquartered in Fort Wainwright, Alaska and is made up of approximately 4,300 selfless, brave, and dedicated soldiers;

Whereas the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division has a distinguished history of service to the United States, beginning with World War I and continuing through Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom;

Whereas the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division most recently departed for Afghanistan in April 2011, following 2 deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom;

Whereas, while deployed in Afghanistan, the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division conducted more than 60 named operations in Zabul Province and Southern Kandahar Province;

Whereas, while deployed in Afghanistan, the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division conducted more than 7,500 patrols;

Whereas, while deployed in Afghanistan, the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division cleared more than 600 improvised explosive devices and more than 9,300 pounds of explosives;

Whereas 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division members Specialist James R. Burnett, Jr., Private Danny Chen, Private First Class Matthew C. Colin, Specialist Ryan J. Cook, Private First Class Douglas L. Cordo, First Sergeant Kenneth B. Elwell, Specialist Douglas J. Green, Private First Class Ryan J. Larson, Specialist Christophe Jean Claude Marquis, Sergeant First Class Johnathan B. McCain, Specialist Bradley L. Melton, Private First Class Brandon S. Mullins, Private First Class Dustin P. Napier, Specialist Calvin M. Pereda, Private First Class Cheizray Pressley, Sergeant Rodolfo Rodriguez, Jr., Sergeant Timothy D. Sayne, Sergeant Jeffrey C. S. Sherer, Private First Class Tyler M. Springmann, Private Lamarol J. Tucker, and Private First Class