

(Mr. RISCH) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2036, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition and celebration of the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

S. 2134

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) 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. 2179

At the request of Mr. WEBB, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 2226

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNIS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2226, a bill to prohibit the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from awarding any grant, contract, cooperative agreement, or other financial assistance under section 103 of the Clean Air Act for any program, project, or activity carried out outside the United States, including the territories and possessions of the United States.

S. 2234

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2234, a bill to prevent human trafficking in government contracting.

S. 2250

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2250, a bill to prevent homeowners from being forced to pay taxes on forgiven mortgage loan debt.

S. 2264

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2264, a bill to provide liability protection for claims based on the design, manufacture, sale, offer for sale, introduction into commerce, or use of certain fuels and fuel additives, and for other purposes.

S. 2325

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. BAUCUS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2325, a bill to authorize further assistance to Israel for the Iron Dome anti-missile defense system.

S. 2347

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. AKAKA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2347, a bill to amend title XVIII of the

Social Security Act to ensure the continued access of Medicare beneficiaries to diagnostic imaging services.

S. 3083

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) were added as cosponsors of S. 3083, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to require certain nonresident aliens to provide valid immigration documents to claim the refundable portion of the child tax credit.

S.J. RES. 19

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

S. RES. 380

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 380, a resolution to express the sense of the Senate regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capability.

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 380, *supra*.

S. RES. 399

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 399, a resolution calling upon the President to ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 3196. A bill to establish the National Women's High-Growth Business Bipartisan Task Force, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce S. 3196 and S. 3197. This legislation will strengthen the resources and support that we provide to women entrepreneurs, and to strengthen oversight of the SBA's technical assistance programs. The SBA's Entrepreneurial Development programs are a vital source of training and management support for entrepreneurs, and I am pleased to work with Chair LANDRIEU to improve these programs and ensure that the taxpayer dollars that support them are being utilized in the

most efficient and effective way possible.

The Women's Small Business Ownership Act of 2012 builds upon our commitment to providing assistance to women entrepreneurs, whose firms have grown at the rate of other firms. The SBA's Women's Business Center, WBC, program provides critical assistance to economically or socially disadvantaged entrepreneurs, especially women. The bill I am introducing today with Chair LANDRIEU holds funding for the WBC program at current levels for the next three years, in recognition that now is not the time to grow Federal programs, including proven ones like the SBA's technical assistance efforts.

Our bill also makes necessary improvements to the WBC program, such as establishing a process and criteria that the SBA must follow in administering grants under this program, and expanding eligible entities that can host Women's Business Centers to include local economic development organizations and community colleges. It also improves the transparency of project funds to ensure that WBC hosts are not comingling their grant funds with those for separate purposes and initiatives.

To further strengthen growth in women-owned businesses, we are also introducing the National Women's High-Growth Business Bipartisan Task Force Act of 2012. This legislation would repeal the National Women's Business Council and replace it with a Women's High-Growth Business Bipartisan Task Force charged with developing and promoting initiatives, policies, and programs designed to encourage the formation of startups and high-growth small business concerns owned by women.

Under current law, the Council receives funding to employ an executive director and four additional employees, who may receive a maximum pay rate of GS 15. However, most other advisory committees across the government and SBA operate without staff, and under this bill we will save taxpayers nearly \$1 million by transitioning the current Council into a Task Force, similar to the Interagency Veteran's Task Force at the SBA, which was established in 2008.

Additionally, this legislation places an emphasis on high-growth small businesses owned and controlled by women. Recently, the Kauffman Foundation, based in Kansas City, MO, researched the effects of startups as part of the American economy. These reports demonstrate the necessity of new and young start-ups to act as mechanisms for reviving the American economy; particularly those of high-growth entrepreneurs. In this rapidly growing area of high-growth firms, which often incorporate intellectual property endeavors, this bill ensures that women's small business concerns are being addressed, with an emphasis on achieving and maximizing high-growth potential.

Finally, I am pleased to join Chair LANDRIEU in introducing the Strengthening Resources for America's Entrepreneurs Act. This legislation aims to improve oversight and coordination among the SBA's existing entrepreneurial development, ED, programs, including the Women's Business Centers, WBC, the Small Business Development Centers, SBDC, and the Service Corps of Retired Executives, SCORE, by setting performance measures, reducing duplication, and increasing partnerships with local entrepreneurial training providers to make them more effective and responsive to the needs of small businesses.

Importantly, this legislation makes several changes to the SBA's entrepreneurial development programs at no cost to taxpayers. The bill instructs the SBA to develop a plan outlining how to use ED initiatives to create new jobs over the next 2 years, improves cross-program coordination to maximize use of program resources, establishes a consistent data collection process for all of its technical assistance programs, and ensures that someone is available to assist small businesses at all SBA district offices. By requiring the SBA to collect data will provide important insights into the strengths of the ED programs and highlight where there is room for improvement.

Now, more than ever, we in Congress must do everything within our power to help small businesses drive our Nation's economic recovery, and the SBA programs we are reauthorizing today are critical elements of that support. In the coming weeks, I look forward to working with the Chair and my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to move these bills through the full Senate.

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. 3196

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 "National Women's High-Growth Business Bipartisan Task Force Act of 2012".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the terms "Administration" and "Administrator" mean the Small Business Administration and the Administrator thereof, respectively;

(2) the term "Task Force" means the National Women's High-Growth Business Bipartisan Task Force established under section 3; and

(3) the term "small business concern owned and controlled by women" has the meaning given that term in section 3(n) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632(n)).

SEC. 3. NATIONAL WOMEN'S HIGH-GROWTH BUSINESS BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the National Women's High-Growth Business Bipartisan Task Force, which shall serve as

an independent source of advice, research, and policy recommendations to—

- (1) the Administrator;
- (2) the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Women's Business Ownership of the Administration;
- (3) Congress;
- (4) the President; and
- (5) other Federal departments and agencies.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) NUMBER OF MEMBERS.—The Task Force shall be composed of 15 members, of which—

(A) 8 shall be individuals who own small business concerns owned and controlled by women, including not fewer than 2 individuals who own small business concerns owned and controlled by women in industries in which women are traditionally underrepresented;

(B) 2 shall be individuals having expertise conducting research on women's business, women's entrepreneurship, new business development by women, and high-growth business development; and

(C) 5 shall be individuals who represent women's business organizations, including women's business centers and women's business advocacy groups.

(2) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.—

(A) OWNERS OF SMALL BUSINESS CONCERNS OWNED AND CONTROLLED BY WOMEN.—Of the members of the Task Force described in paragraph (1)(A)—

(i) 2 shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate;

(ii) 2 shall be appointed by the Ranking Member of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate;

(iii) 2 shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives; and

(iv) 2 shall be appointed by the Ranking Member of the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives.

(B) OTHER MEMBERS.—The members of the Task Force described in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph (1) shall be appointed by the Administrator.

(C) INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.—The individuals described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) shall appoint the initial members of the Task Force not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

(D) GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS.—In making an appointment under this paragraph, the individuals described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) shall give consideration to the geographic areas of the United States in which the members of the Task Force live and work, particularly to ensure that rural areas are represented on the Task Force.

(E) POLITICAL AFFILIATION.—Not more than 8 members of the Task Force may be members of the same political party.

(3) CHAIRPERSON.—

(A) ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON.—The members of the Task Force shall elect 1 member of the Task Force as Chairperson of the Task Force.

(B) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the position of Chairperson of the Task Force shall be filled by the Task Force at the first meeting of the Task Force after the date on which the vacancy occurs.

(4) TERM OF SERVICE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term of service of each member of the Task Force shall be 3 years.

(B) TERMS OF INITIAL APPOINTEES.—Of the members of the Task Force first appointed after the date of enactment of this Act—

(i) 6 shall be appointed for a term of 4 years, including—

(I) 1 member appointed by the individuals described in each of clauses (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv) of paragraph (2)(A); and

(II) 2 members appointed by the Administrator; and

(ii) 5 shall be appointed for a term of 5 years, including—

(I) 1 member appointed by the individuals described in each of clauses (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv) of paragraph (2)(A); and

(II) 1 member appointed by the Administrator.

(5) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Task Force shall be filled not later than 30 days after the date on which the vacancy occurs, in the manner in which the original appointment was made, and shall be subject to any conditions that applied to the original appointment. An individual chosen to fill a vacancy shall be appointed for the unexpired term of the member replaced.

(6) PROHIBITION ON FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), no member of the Task Force may serve as an officer or employee of the United States.

(B) EXCEPTION.—A member of the Task Force who accepts a position as an officer or employee of the United States after appointment to the Task Force may continue to serve on the Task Force for not more than 30 days after the date of such acceptance.

(7) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—

(A) NO COMPENSATION.—Each member of the Task Force shall serve without compensation.

(B) EXPENSES.—The Administrator shall reimburse the members of the Task Force for travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with section 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

(c) DUTIES.—The Task Force shall—

(1) review and monitor plans and programs developed in the public and private sectors that affect the ability of small business concerns owned and controlled by women to obtain capital and credit and to access markets, and provide advice on improving coordination between such plans and programs;

(2) monitor and promote the plans, programs, and operations of the Federal departments and agencies that contribute to the formation and development of small business concerns owned and controlled by women, and make recommendations to Federal departments and agencies concerning the coordination of such plans, programs, and operations;

(3) develop and promote initiatives, policies, programs, and plans designed to encourage the formation of startups and high-growth small business concerns owned and controlled by women;

(4) advise the Administrator on the development and implementation of an annual comprehensive plan for joint efforts by the public and private sectors to facilitate the formation and development of startups and high-growth small business concerns owned and controlled by women; and

(5) examine the link between women who own small business concerns and intellectual property, including—

(A) the number of patents, trademarks, and copyrights granted to women; and

(B) the challenges faced by high-growth small business concerns owned and controlled by women in obtaining and enforcing intellectual property rights.

(d) POWERS.—

(1) HEARINGS.—The Task Force may hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Task Force considers advisable to carry out its duties.

(2) TASK GROUPS.—The Task Force may, from time to time, establish temporary task groups, as necessary to carry out the duties of the Task Force.

(3) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Upon request of the Chairperson of the Task

Force, the head of any Federal department or agency shall furnish such information to the Task Force as the Task Force considers necessary to carry out its duties.

(4) USE OF MAILS.—The Task Force may use the United States mails in the same manner and under the same conditions as Federal departments and agencies.

(5) GIFTS.—The Task Force may accept, use, and dispose of gifts or donations of services or property.

(e) MEETINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall meet—

- (A) not less than 3 times each year;
- (B) at the call of the Chairperson; and
- (C) upon the request of—

(i) the Administrator;

(ii) the Chairperson and Ranking Member of the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate; or

(iii) the Chairperson and Ranking Member of the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives.

(2) PARTICIPATION OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—

(A) PARTICIPATION ENCOURAGED.—The Task Force shall allow and encourage participation in meetings by representatives from Federal agencies.

(B) FUNCTIONS OF REPRESENTATIVES OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—A representative from a Federal agency—

(i) may be used as a resource; and

(ii) may not vote or otherwise act as a member of the Task Force.

(3) LOCATION.—Each meeting of the full Task Force shall be held at the headquarters of the Administration, unless, not later than 1 month before the meeting, a majority of the members of the Task Force agree to meet at another location.

(4) SUPPORT BY ADMINISTRATOR.—The Administrator shall provide suitable meeting facilities and such administrative support as may be necessary for each full meeting of the Task Force.

(f) REPORTS.—

(1) REPORTS BY TASK FORCE.—

(A) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 30 days after the end of each fiscal year, the Task Force shall submit to the President and to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives, a report containing—

(i) a detailed description of the activities of the Task Force, including a report on how the Task Force has carried out the duties described in subsection (c);

(ii) the findings and recommendations of the Task Force; and

(iii) the recommendations of the Task Force for—

(I) promoting intellectual property rights for high-growth small business concerns owned and controlled by women; and

(II) such legislative and administrative actions as the Task Force considers appropriate to promote the formation and development of small business concerns owned and controlled by women.

(B) FORM OF REPORTS.—The report required under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) any concurring or dissenting views of the Administrator; and

(ii) the minutes of each meeting of the Task Force.

(2) REPORTS BY CHIEF COUNSEL FOR ADVOCACY.—

(A) STUDIES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Not less frequently than twice each year, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration, in consultation with the Task Force, shall conduct a study of an issue that is important to small business concerns owned and controlled by women.

(ii) TOPICS.—The topic of a study under clause (i) shall—

(I) be an issue that the Task Force determines is critical to furthering the interests of small business concerns owned and controlled by women; and

(II) relate to—

(aa) Federal prime contracts and subcontracts awarded to small business concerns owned and controlled by women;

(bb) access to credit and investment capital by women entrepreneurs;

(cc) acquiring and enforcing intellectual property rights; or

(dd) any other issue relating to small business concerns owned and controlled by women that the Task Force determines is appropriate.

(iii) CONTRACTING.—In conducting a study under this subparagraph, the Chief Counsel may contract with a public or private entity.

(B) REPORT.—The Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall—

(i) submit a report containing the results of each study under subparagraph (A) to the Task Force, the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate, and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives; and

(ii) make each report submitted under clause (i) available to the public online.

(g) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Task Force.

SEC. 4. REPEAL.

(a) FINAL REPORTS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act—

(1) the Interagency Committee on Women's Business Enterprise shall submit to the President and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report containing the information described in paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) of section 404 of the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 7104), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) the National Women's Business Council shall submit to the President and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report containing the information described in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of section 406(d)(6) of the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 7106), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) REPEAL.—The Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 631 note) is amended by striking title IV (15 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.).

(c) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 8(b)(1)(G) (15 U.S.C. 637(b)(1)(G)), by striking “and to carry out the activities authorized by title IV of the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988”; and

(2) in section 29(g) (15 U.S.C. 656(g))—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “women's business enterprises (as defined in section 408 of the Women's Business Ownership Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 631 note))” and inserting “small business concerns owned and controlled by women”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(B)(ii)—

(i) in subclause (VI), by adding “and” at the end;

(ii) in subclause (VII), by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting a period; and

(iii) by striking subclauses (VIII), (IX), and (X).

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsections (b) and (c) shall take effect 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 3197. A bill to reauthorize the women's business center program of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. SNOWE. 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. 3197

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 “Women's Small Business Ownership Act of 2012”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITION.

In this Act, the term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the Small Business Administration.

SEC. 3. OFFICE OF WOMEN'S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 29(g) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(g)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in clause (i), by striking “in the areas” and all that follows through the end of subclause (I), and inserting the following: “to address issues concerning the management, operations, manufacturing, technology, finance, retail and product sales, international trade, Government contracting, and other disciplines required for—

“(I) starting, operating, and increasing the business of a small business concern;”; and

(ii) in clause (ii), by striking “Women's Business Center program” each place that term appears and inserting “women's business center program”; and

(B) in subparagraph (C), by inserting before the period at the end the following: “, the National Women's Business Council, and any association of women's business centers”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) TRAINING.—The Administrator may provide annual programmatic and financial examination training for women's business ownership representatives and district office technical representatives of the Administration to enable representatives to carry out their responsibilities.

“(4) PROGRAM AND TRANSPARENCY IMPROVEMENTS.—The Administrator shall maximize the transparency of the women's business center financial assistance proposal process and the programmatic and financial examination process by—

“(A) providing public notice of any announcement for financial assistance under subsection (b) or a grant under subsection (1) not later than the end of the first quarter of each fiscal year;

“(B) in the announcement described in subparagraph (A), outlining award and program evaluation criteria and describing the weighting of the criteria for financial assistance under subsection (b) and grants under subsection (1);

“(C) minimizing paperwork and reporting requirements for applicants for and recipients of financial assistance under this section;

“(D) standardizing the programmatic and financial examination process; and

“(E) providing to each women’s business center, not later than 60 days after the completion of a site visit to the women’s business center (whether conducted for an audit, performance review, or other reason), a copy of any site visit reports or evaluation reports prepared by district office technical representatives or officers or employees of the Administration.”.

(b) CHANGE OF TITLE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by striking paragraphs (1) and (4);

(ii) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

(iii) by inserting before paragraph (4), as so redesignated, the following:

“(2) the term ‘Director’ means the Director of the Office of Women’s Business Ownership established under subsection (g);”;

(B) by striking “Assistant Administrator” each place that term appears and inserting “Director”; and

(C) in subsection (g)(2), in the paragraph heading, by striking “ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR” and inserting “DIRECTOR”.

(2) WOMEN’S BUSINESS OWNERSHIP ACT OF 1988.—Title IV of the Women’s Business Ownership Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.) is amended—

(A) in section 403(a)(2)(B), by striking “Assistant Administrator” and inserting “Director”;

(B) in section 405, by striking “Assistant Administrator” and inserting “Director”; and

(C) in section 406(c), by striking “Assistant Administrator” and inserting “Director”.

SEC. 4. WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER PROGRAM.

(a) WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), as amended by section 3(b) of this Act—

(A) by inserting before paragraph (2) the following:

“(1) the term ‘association of women’s business centers’ means an organization—

“(A) that represents not less than 51 percent of the women’s business centers that participate in a program under this section; and

“(B) whose primary purpose is to represent women’s business centers;”;

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

“(3) the term ‘eligible entity’ means—

“(A) a private nonprofit organization;

“(B) a State, regional, or local economic development organization;

“(C) a development, credit, or finance corporation chartered by a State;

“(D) a junior or community college, as defined in section 312(f) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1058(f)); or

“(E) any combination of entities listed in subparagraphs (A) through (D);”;

(C) in paragraph (4), by striking “and” at the end;

(D) in paragraph (5), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(E) by adding after paragraph (5) the following:

“(6) the term ‘women’s business center’ means a project conducted by an eligible entity under this section.”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2), and (3) as subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(B) by striking “The Administration” and all that follows through “5-year projects” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administration may provide financial assistance to an eligible entity to conduct a project under this section”;

(C) by striking “The projects shall” and inserting the following:

“(2) USE OF FUNDS.—The project shall be designed to provide training and counseling that meets the needs of women, especially socially and economically disadvantaged women, and shall”; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may award financial assistance under this subsection of not less than \$100,000 and not more than \$150,000 per year.

“(B) LOWER AMOUNT.—The Administrator may award financial assistance under this subsection to a recipient in an amount that is less than \$100,000 if the Administrator determines that the recipient is unable to make a non-Federal contribution of \$100,000 or more, as required under subsection (c).

“(C) EQUAL ALLOCATIONS.—If the Administration has insufficient funds to provide financial assistance of not less than \$100,000 for each recipient of financial assistance under this subsection in any fiscal year, the Administrator shall provide an equal amount of financial assistance to each recipient in the fiscal year, unless a recipient requests a lower amount than the allocated amount.

“(4) CONSULTATION WITH ASSOCIATIONS OF WOMEN’S BUSINESS CENTERS.—The Administrator shall consult with each association of women’s business centers to develop—

“(A) a training program for the staff of women’s business centers and the Administration; and

“(B) recommendations to improve the policies and procedures for governing the general operations and administration of the women’s business center program, including grant program improvements under subsection (g)(4).”;

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1) by striking “the recipient organization” and inserting “an eligible entity”;

(B) in paragraph (3), in the second sentence, by striking “a recipient organization” and inserting “an eligible entity”;

(C) in paragraph (4)—

(i) by striking “recipient of assistance” and inserting “eligible entity”;

(ii) by striking “such organization” and inserting “the eligible entity”; and

(iii) by striking “recipient” and inserting “eligible entity”; and

(D) in paragraph (5)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking “a recipient organization” and inserting “an eligible entity”; and

(ii) by striking “the recipient organization” each place it appears and inserting “the eligible entity”; and

(E) by adding at end the following:

“(6) SEPARATION OF PROJECT AND FUNDS.—An eligible entity shall—

“(A) carry out a project under this section separately from other projects, if any, of the eligible entity; and

“(B) separately maintain and account for any financial assistance under this section.”;

(4) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking “applicant organization” and inserting “eligible entity”;

(B) by striking “a recipient organization” and inserting “an eligible entity”; and

(C) by striking “site”;

(5) by striking subsection (f) and inserting the following:

“(f) APPLICATIONS AND CRITERIA FOR INITIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

“(1) APPLICATION.—Each eligible entity desiring financial assistance under subsection (b) shall submit to the Administrator an application that contains—

“(A) a certification that the eligible entity—

“(i) has designated an executive director or program manager, who may be compensated using financial assistance under subsection (b) or other sources, to manage the center on a full-time basis;

“(ii) as a condition of receiving financial assistance under subsection (b), agrees—

“(I) to receive a site visit by the Administrator as part of the final selection process;

“(II) to undergo an annual programmatic and financial examination; and

“(III) to the maximum extent practicable, to remedy any problems identified pursuant to the site visit or examination under subclause (I) or (II); and

“(iii) meets the accounting and reporting requirements established by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget;

“(B) information demonstrating that the eligible entity has the ability and resources to meet the needs of the market to be served by the women’s business center for which financial assistance under subsection (b) is sought, including the ability to obtain the non-Federal contribution required under subsection (c);

“(C) information relating to the assistance to be provided by the women’s business center for which financial assistance under subsection (b) is sought in the area in which the women’s business center is located;

“(D) information demonstrating the experience and effectiveness of the eligible entity in—

“(i) conducting financial, management, and marketing assistance programs, as described in subsection (b)(2), which are designed to teach or upgrade the business skills of women who are business owners or potential business owners;

“(ii) providing training and services to a representative number of women who are socially and economically disadvantaged; and

“(iii) working with resource partners of the Administration and other entities, such as universities; and

“(E) a 5-year plan that describes the ability of the women’s business center for which financial assistance is sought—

“(i) to serve women who are business owners or potential business owners by conducting training and counseling activities; and

“(ii) to provide training and services to a representative number of women who are socially and economically disadvantaged.

“(2) ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.—The Administrator shall make any request for additional information from an organization applying for financial assistance under subsection (b) that was not requested in the original announcement in writing.

“(3) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS FOR INITIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall—

“(i) review each application submitted under paragraph (1), based on the information described in such paragraph and the criteria set forth under subparagraph (B) of this paragraph; and

“(ii) to the extent practicable, as part of the final selection process, conduct a site visit to each women’s business center for which financial assistance under subsection (b) is sought.

“(B) SELECTION CRITERIA.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall evaluate applicants for financial assistance under subsection (b) in accordance with selection criteria that are—

“(I) established before the date on which applicants are required to submit the applications;

“(II) stated in terms of relative importance; and

“(III) publicly available and stated in each solicitation for applications for financial assistance under subsection (b) made by the Administrator.

“(ii) REQUIRED CRITERIA.—The selection criteria for financial assistance under subsection (b) shall include—

“(I) the experience of the applicant in conducting programs or ongoing efforts designed to teach or enhance the business skills of women who are business owners or potential business owners;

“(II) the ability of the applicant to begin a project within a minimum amount of time;

“(III) the ability of the applicant to provide training and services to a representative number of women who are socially and economically disadvantaged; and

“(IV) the location for the women’s business center proposed by the applicant, including whether the applicant is located in a State in which there is not a women’s business center receiving funding from the Administration.

“(C) PROXIMITY.—If the principal place of business of an applicant for financial assistance under subsection (b) is located less than 50 miles from the principal place of business of a women’s business center that received funds under this section on or before the date of the application, the applicant shall not be eligible for the financial assistance, unless the applicant submits a detailed written justification of the need for an additional center in the area in which the applicant is located.

“(D) RECORD RETENTION.—The Administrator shall maintain a copy of each application submitted under this subsection for not less than 7 years.”; and

(6) in subsection (m)—

(A) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the following:

“(3) APPLICATION AND APPROVAL FOR RENEWAL GRANTS.—

“(A) SOLICITATION OF APPLICATIONS.—The Administrator shall solicit applications and award grants under this subsection for the first fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of the Women’s Small Business Ownership Act of 2012, and every third fiscal year thereafter.

“(B) CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.—Each eligible entity desiring a grant under this subsection shall submit to the Administrator an application that contains—

“(i) a certification that the applicant—

“(I) is an eligible entity;

“(II) has designated a full-time executive director or program manager to manage the women’s business center operated by the applicant; and

“(III) as a condition of receiving a grant under this subsection, agrees—

“(aa) to receive a site visit as part of the final selection process;

“(bb) to submit, for the 2 full fiscal years before the date on which the application is submitted, annual programmatic and financial examination reports or certified copies of the compliance supplemental audits under OMB Circular A 133 of the applicant; and

“(cc) to remedy any problem identified pursuant to the site visit or examination under item (aa) or (bb);

“(ii) information demonstrating that the applicant has the ability and resources to meet the needs of the market to be served by the women’s business center for which a grant under this subsection is sought, including the ability to obtain the non-Federal contribution required under paragraph (4)(C);

“(iii) information relating to assistance to be provided by the women’s business center in the area served by the women’s business center for which a grant under this subsection is sought;

“(iv) information demonstrating that the applicant has worked with resource partners of the Administration and other entities;

“(v) a 3-year plan that describes the ability of the women’s business center for which a grant under this subsection is sought—

“(I) to serve women who are business owners or potential business owners by conducting training and counseling activities; and

“(II) to provide training and services to a representative number of women who are socially and economically disadvantaged; and

“(vi) any additional information that the Administrator may reasonably require.

“(C) REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall—

“(I) review each application submitted under subparagraph (B), based on the information described in such subparagraph and the criteria set forth under clause (ii) of this subparagraph; and

“(II) whenever practicable, as part of the final selection process, conduct a site visit to each women’s business center for which a grant under this subsection is sought.

“(ii) SELECTION CRITERIA.—

“(I) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall evaluate applicants for grants under this subsection in accordance with selection criteria that are—

“(aa) established before the date on which applicants are required to submit the applications;

“(bb) stated in terms of relative importance; and

“(cc) publicly available and stated in each solicitation for applications for grants under this subsection made by the Administrator.

“(II) REQUIRED CRITERIA.—The selection criteria for a grant under this subsection shall include—

“(aa) the total number of entrepreneurs served by the applicant;

“(bb) the total number of new startup companies assisted by the applicant;

“(cc) the percentage of clients of the applicant that are socially or economically disadvantaged; and

“(dd) the percentage of individuals in the community served by the applicant who are socially or economically disadvantaged.

“(iii) CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUED FUNDING.—In determining whether to make a grant under this subsection, the Administrator—

“(I) shall consider the results of the most recent evaluation of the women’s business center for which a grant under this subsection is sought, and, to a lesser extent, previous evaluations; and

“(II) may withhold a grant under this subsection, if the Administrator determines that the applicant has failed to provide the information required to be provided under this paragraph, or the information provided by the applicant is inadequate.

“(D) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 60 days after the date of each deadline to submit applications, the Administrator shall approve or deny any application under this paragraph and notify the applicant for each such application of the approval or denial.

“(E) RECORD RETENTION.—The Administrator shall maintain a copy of each application submitted under this paragraph for not less than 7 years.”; and

(B) by striking paragraph (5) and inserting the following:

“(5) AWARD TO PREVIOUS RECIPIENTS.—There shall be no limitation on the number of times the Administrator may award a grant to an applicant under this subsection.”.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 29 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656) is amended—

(A) in subsection (h)(2), by striking “to award a contract (as a sustainability grant) under subsection (l) or”;

(B) in subsection (j)(1), by striking “The Administration” and inserting “Not later than November 1 of each year, the Administrator”;

(C) in subsection (k)—

(i) by striking paragraphs (1), (2), and (4);

(ii) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (5); and

(iii) by inserting before paragraph (5), as so redesignated, the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administration to carry out this section, to remain available until expended, \$14,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2013, 2014, and 2015.

“(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts made available under this subsection may only be used for grant awards and may not be used for costs incurred by the Administration in connection with the management and administration of the program under this section.

“(3) CONTINUING GRANT AND COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT AUTHORITY.—

“(A) PROMPT DISBURSEMENT.—Upon receiving funds to carry out this section for a fiscal year, the Administrator shall, to the extent practicable, promptly reimburse funds to any women’s business center awarded financial assistance under this section if the center meets the eligibility requirements under this section.

“(B) SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION.—If the Administrator has entered into a grant or cooperative agreement with a women’s business center under this section, the Administrator may not suspend or terminate the grant or cooperative agreement, unless the Administrator—

“(i) provides the women’s business center with written notification setting forth the reasons for that action; and

“(ii) affords the women’s business center an opportunity for a hearing, appeal, or other administrative proceeding under chapter 5 of title 5, United States Code.”;

(D) in subsection (m)—

(i) in paragraph (2), by striking “subsection (b) or (l)” and inserting “this subsection or subsection (b)”;

(ii) in paragraph (4)(D), by striking “or subsection (l)”;

(E) by redesignating subsections (m) and (n), as amended by this Act, as subsections (l) and (m), respectively.

(2) PROSPECTIVE REPEAL.—Section 1401(c)(2) of the Small Business Jobs Act of 2010 (15 U.S.C. 636 note) is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”;

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(C) by redesignating paragraph (6), as added by section 4(a)(3)(E) of the Women’s Small Business Ownership Act of 2012, as paragraph (5).”.

(c) EFFECT ON EXISTING GRANTS.—

(1) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—A nonprofit organization receiving a grant under section 29(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act, shall continue to receive the grant under the terms and conditions in effect for the grant on the day before the date of enactment of this Act, except that the nonprofit organization may not apply for a renewal of the grant under section 29(m)(5) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)(5)), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act.

(2) LENGTH OF RENEWAL GRANT.—The Administrator may award a grant under section

29(1) of the Small Business Act, as so redesignated by subsection (b)(5) of this Act, to a nonprofit organization receiving a grant under section 29(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 656(m)), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act, for the period—

(A) beginning on the day after the last day of the grant agreement under such section 29(m); and

(B) ending at the end of the third fiscal year beginning after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. STUDY AND REPORT ON ECONOMIC ISSUES FACING WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS.

(a) **STUDY.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a broad study of the unique economic issues facing women's business centers located in covered areas to identify—

(1) the difficulties such centers face in raising non-Federal funds;

(2) the difficulties such centers face in competing for financial assistance, non-Federal funds, or other types of assistance;

(3) the difficulties such centers face in writing grant proposals; and

(4) other difficulties such centers face because of the economy in the type of covered area in which such centers are located.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study under subsection (a), which shall include recommendations, if any, regarding how to—

(1) address the unique difficulties women's business centers located in covered areas face because of the type of covered area in which such centers are located;

(2) expand the presence of, and increase the services provided by, women's business centers located in covered areas; and

(3) best use technology and other resources to better serve women business owners located in covered areas.

(c) **DEFINITION OF COVERED AREA.**—In this section, the term "covered area" means—

(1) any State that is predominantly rural, as determined by the Administrator;

(2) any State that is predominantly urban, as determined by the Administrator; and

(3) any State or territory that is an island.

SEC. 6. STUDY AND REPORT ON OVERSIGHT OF WOMEN'S BUSINESS CENTERS.

(a) **STUDY.**—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study of the oversight of women's business centers by the Administrator, which shall include—

(1) an analysis of the coordination by the Administrator of the activities of women's business centers with the activities of small business development centers, the Service Corps of Retired Executives, and Veteran Business Outreach Centers;

(2) a comparison of the types of individuals and small business concerns served by women's business centers and the types of individuals and small business concerns served by small business development centers, the Service Corps of Retired Executives, and Veteran Business Outreach Centers; and

(3) an analysis of performance data for women's business centers that evaluates how well women's business centers are carrying out the mission of women's business centers and serving individuals and small business concerns.

(b) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report containing the results of the study under subsection (a), which shall include recommendations, if any, for eliminating the duplication of services provided by women's business centers, small business development centers, the Service Corps of Retired Execu-

tives, and Veteran Business Outreach Centers.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. KYL):

S. 3201. A bill to reform graduate medical education payments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I introduce the Graduate Medical Education, GME, Reform Act, along with my colleague Senator KYL. This legislation is a continuation of my longstanding efforts to support our future health care workforce and improve patient care.

While there are a variety of initiatives to support the education and training of physicians, none are more substantial than the GME funding provided by Medicare. This program either directly or indirectly supports every single physician trained in this country. No other Federal or State program can claim this credit.

Unfortunately, the size of the program has led some to propose its funding be cut and redirected toward deficit reduction. The President's Fiscal Commission, the Domenici-Rivlin plan, and even some Members of Congress have made this recommendation. Reducing GME funding by the levels specified in these proposals could be devastating to training programs.

These proposals stem from an assertion by the congressionally authorized Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, MedPAC, that teaching hospitals are overpaid for the education and training they currently provide residents, and that GME funding should be better used to align residency training with key improvements in our health care delivery system. However, the Fiscal Commission and the Rivlin-Domenici plan ignored the latter aspect of MedPAC's recommendation. MedPAC did not recommend removing GME funding from the system. Instead, MedPAC suggested Congress should make teaching hospitals more accountable for the GME funding they currently receive. In MedPAC's proposal, all GME funding would stay in the system to help support and improve medical education and training.

The legislation we are introducing today aligns closely with MedPAC's proposal for greater accountability by teaching hospitals and enhanced effectiveness in the use of GME funding, but with some key changes. One such change would enable hospitals to compete for additional GME funding in order to provide a greater incentive for teaching hospitals to improve their programs.

Teaching hospitals incur higher costs than other hospitals. They invest in the newest technologies and employ the physician supervisors most qualified to train our future doctors. Moreover, as a result of the new health care reform law, many of these hospitals, physician supervisors, and residents will treat an influx of patients begin-

ning in 2014. GME funding is critical to building and sustaining our health care infrastructure and future health care workforce.

It is critical that GME funding remain intact, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't use this opportunity to encourage these programs to do more to better train residents in: primary care delivery, a variety of settings and systems, care coordination, and how to work in inter-professional and multidisciplinary teams. The new oversight provided for in the GME Reform Act would help to break down the silos in medicine and ensure that physicians work together to provide patients with comprehensive health care.

In addition, the legislation would enhance GME payment transparency, which we hope will help prove to the skeptics that this funding serves a critical purpose.

I am particularly pleased that the Association of American Medical Colleges has expressed support for legislation. While the organization would prefer this legislation be included as part of an overall effort to increase the number of residents trained each year, which I also support, I believe we must begin a dialogue about a sensible and thoughtful approach to improving GME accountability and transparency. I hope my colleagues will take careful look at our legislation, and I look forward to working with them on this important issue.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, the Federal Government now pays for more than half of all health care costs in this country, and that number is likely to grow with the rapidly aging U.S. population. Indeed, Medicare will face a nearly ⅓ enrollment increase in the coming decade. We have promised health care benefits to these seniors; to keep that promise, we must ensure there are enough physicians to treat them. Unfortunately, the medical workforce is shrinking; estimates show that we may experience a shortage of up to 159,000 physicians by 2025.

In light of these sobering statistics, the government has a strong interest in doing more to encourage the training of physicians who can deliver quality care to our Nation's seniors. Even if we continue funding medical education at current levels, we will soon face a severe crisis in access to medical care. Cutting this medical education funding would be counter-intuitive at best; dangerous at worst. In recent years, however, there have been several proposals to do just that.

It is true that there is a lack of transparency and accountability around this funding—mainly because we do not require hospitals to report on how money is spent, and because we have not set workforce goals for hospitals to meet. But that does not necessarily mean that the money is spent poorly, or that it is an area ripe for funding reductions.

Rather than simply slash funding, we should work to remedy this lack of

transparency and encourage hospitals to meet certain quality metrics. The Graduate Medical Education Reform Act offers one promising avenue to do so. Under this bill, if a teaching hospital produces quality residents as measured by certain consensus-based metrics, it can get up to a 3 percent increase in indirect medical education funding. Conversely, a hospital that fails to meet the metrics can be penalized by up to 3 percent.

This is one common-sense approach that maintains overall current funding levels while encouraging quality teaching programs. I urge my colleagues to join Senator REED and me in supporting this measure.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BURR, Mr. NELSON, of Florida, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 3202. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to ensure that deceased veterans with no known next of kin can receive a dignified burial, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, today, as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am proud to introduce the Dignified Burial of Veterans Act of 2012 with Senator BURR, Ranking Member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and my Senate colleagues from the state of Florida, Senators NELSON and RUBIO.

When America's heroes make a commitment to serve their country, we make a promise to care for them. One of the many ways in which we care for our veterans is by helping to provide them with a burial that honors their service.

That is why I was concerned when I learned that a veteran at a VA National Cemetery had an inappropriate burial. This veteran, with no known next-of-kin, was buried in a cardboard container that later disintegrated to the point where the veteran's remains were exposed and found during a raise and realign project at the cemetery. The veteran's remains were later placed in a bag and reburied with what was left of the cardboard box. This defies logic.

There is no reason why the remains of a veteran should ever be treated with this lack of dignity.

Yet, under current law, VA is not authorized to purchase a casket or urn for veterans who do not have a next-of-kin to provide one, or the resources to be buried in an appropriate manner.

We must take steps to prevent this from occurring again. That is why this bill would authorize VA to furnish a casket or urn to a deceased veteran when VA is unable to identify the veteran's next-of-kin and determines that sufficient resources are not otherwise available to furnish a casket or urn for burial in a national cemetery. This bill would further require that VA report back to Congress on the industry standard for urns and caskets and whether burials at VA's national cemeteries are meeting that standard.

I think we can all agree that every veteran deserves a dignified burial. Today, I am pleased to stand with my bipartisan colleagues to introduce a bill that would ensure that they receive one.

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. 3202

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 "Dignified Burial of Veterans Act of 2012".

SEC. 2. FURNISHING CASSETS AND URNS FOR DECEASED VETERANS WITH NO KNOWN NEXT OF KIN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as subsections (g) and (h), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection (f):

"(f) The Secretary may furnish a casket or urn, of such quality as the Secretary considers appropriate for a dignified burial, for burial in a national cemetery of a deceased veteran in any case in which the Secretary—

"(1) is unable to identify the veteran's next of kin, if any; and

"(2) determines that sufficient resources for the furnishing of a casket or urn for the burial of the veteran in a national cemetery are not otherwise available."; and

(3) in subsection (h), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(4) A casket or urn may not be furnished under subsection (f) for burial of a person described in section 2411(b) of this title."

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsections (f) and (h)(4) of section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act and shall apply with respect to deaths occurring on or after such date.

SEC. 3. REPORT ON COMPLIANCE OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WITH INDUSTRY STANDARDS FOR CASSETS AND URNS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the compliance of the Department of Veterans Affairs with industry standards for caskets and urns.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A description of industry standards for caskets and urns.

(2) An assessment of compliance with such standards at National Cemeteries administered by the Department with respect to caskets and urns used for the interment of those eligible for burial at such cemeteries.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 466—CALLING FOR THE RELEASE FROM PRISON OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF UKRAINE YULIA TYMOSHENKO

Mr. INHOFE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 466

Whereas Ukraine has experienced encouraging growth and reforms since it declared its independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991 and adopted its first constitution in 1996;

Whereas the 1996 constitution provided basic freedoms like the freedom of speech, assembly, religion, and press, but was ultimately too weak to contain the existing corruption-laced political culture inherited from its communist past;

Whereas, as a result of the electoral fraud by which Mr. Yanukovich was declared the winner, the citizens of the Ukraine organized a series of protests, strikes, and sit-ins, which came to be known as "The Orange Revolution";

Whereas the Orange Revolution, in concert with United States and international pressure, forced the Supreme Court of Ukraine to require an unprecedented second run-off election, which resulted in opposition leader Mr. Yushchenko defeating Mr. Yanukovich by a margin of 52 percent to 44 percent;

Whereas, in the 2010 presidential election, incumbent Yushchenko won only 5.5 percent in the first round of voting, which left former Prime Minister Yanukovich and then Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko to face one another in the run-off election;

Whereas, Mr. Yanukovich defeated Ms. Tymoshenko by a margin of 49 percent to 44 percent;

Whereas, shortly after the 2010 inauguration of Mr. Yanukovich, the Ukrainian Constitutional Court found most of the 2004 Orange Revolution inspired constitutional reforms unconstitutional;

Whereas, in 2010, President Yanukovich appointed Viktor Pshonka Prosecutor General, equivalent to the United States Attorney General;

Whereas, since Mr. Pshonka's appointment, more than a dozen political leaders associated with the 2004 Orange Revolution have faced criminal charges under the Abuse of Office and Exceeding Official Powers articles of the Ukrainian Criminal Code;

Whereas, in 2011, Prosecutor General Pshonka brought charges under these Abuse of Office articles against former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko over her decision while in office to conclude a natural gas contract between Ukraine and Russia;

Whereas, on October 11, 2011, Tymoshenko was found guilty and sentenced to seven years in prison, fined \$189,000,000, and banned from holding public office for three years;

Whereas, recognizing the judicial abuses present in Ukraine, the Parliamentary Assembly Council of Europe (PACE) passed Resolution 1862 on January 26, 2012;

Whereas Resolution 1862 declared that the Abuse of Office and Exceeding Official Powers articles under which Tymoshenko was convicted are "overly broad in application and effectively allow for ex post facto criminalization of normal political decision making";

Whereas, since Ms. Tymoshenko's imprisonment, the Prosecutor General's Office has reopened additional cases against her that were previously closed and thought to be sealed under a ten year statute of limitations;

Whereas, on October 28, 2011, the Ukrainian Deputy Prosecutor General alleged in a television interview that Ms. Tymoshenko was involved in contract killings, tax evasion, bribery, and embezzlement;

Whereas, at the time of the Deputy Prosecutor's public allegations, no formal charges were filed, thereby violating Ms. Tymoshenko's right to "presumed innocence" guaranteed by Article 6(2) of the European Convention on Human Rights;