

and implementing relocation and sharing arrangements and, with respect to spectrum vacated by the Department of Defense, certification under section 1062 of P.L. 106-65 by the Secretaries of Defense and Commerce and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that replacement spectrum provides comparable technical characteristics to restore essential military capability; and

(6) given the need to determine equitable outcomes for the Nation in relation to spectrum use that balance the private sector's demand for spectrum with national security and other critical federal missions, all interested parties should be encouraged to continue the collaborative efforts between industry and government stakeholders that have been launched by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to assess and recommend practical frameworks for the development of relocation, transition, and sharing arrangement and plans for 110 megahertz of federal spectrum in the 1695-1710 MHz and the 1755-1850 MHz bands.

Under the previous order, the Presiding Officer appointed Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. REED, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. WEBB, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BROWN of Massachusetts, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. VITTER conferees on the part of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. MURRAY). The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate continue in morning business until 7 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2012

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I now lay before the Senate a message from the House with respect to H.R. 2838.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the House of Representatives:

Resolved, That the bill from the House of Representatives (H.R. 2838) entitled "An Act to authorize appropriations for the Coast Guard for fiscal years 2012 through 2015, and for other purposes," do pass with amendments.

AMERICAN FISHERIES ACT VESSELS

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, I rise to engage in a colloquy with my col-

league from the State of Alaska, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and my colleague from the State of Washington, Ms. CANTWELL, regarding a provision in H.R. 2838, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2012, that deals with two great fisheries of the Bering Sea. The American Fisheries Act—AFA—regulates one of the single greatest fishery resources in the world: Alaska Pollock. This fishery produces over 2 billion pounds of product in most years and is sustainably harvested, thanks to standards set under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Amendment 80 to the Bering Sea Groundfish Fishery Management Plan regulates fishing for other species of groundfish like Pacific cod, Atka mackerel and yellowfin sole and while smaller than the AFA fishery, it still ranks among the major fisheries of the world.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I agree these are two great fisheries and economic drivers of our thriving seafood industry. I have a question about Section 307 of H.R. 2838, which I understand is intended to clarify longstanding restrictions that have applied with respect to certain vessels under the American Fisheries Act. I know that Senator CANTWELL and the senior Senator from Washington, Mrs. MURRAY, have worked with Senator BEGICH and others to develop this language for inclusion in the final version of the Coast Guard bill as received from the other body last week, and I think it is important for us to make clear what it is intended to do. I am told that this provision is designed to maintain and reinforce the separation that exists between these two fisheries, and nothing more. Currently, none of these 20 AFA vessels participate in the Amendment 80 fishery, and under Amendment 97 to the Bering Sea Fishery Management Plan they are expressly prohibited from doing so. Is it true that Section 307 maintains this separation?

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I appreciate Senator MURKOWSKI raising this issue, as I know it is of great importance to both our States, and I am happy to discuss the intent and effect of the provision to which she is referring. Senator MURRAY and I have worked closely with Senator BEGICH, with the Commerce Committee, and with our colleagues in the other body to develop this language for inclusion in the Coast Guard bill. Section 307 of H.R. 2838 does, as Senator MURKOWSKI states, clarify longstanding restrictions that apply to certain vessels under the American Fisheries Act. The intent of this language is to maintain the status quo between two separate and distinct fisheries: one regulated under the American Fisheries Act and the other by Amendment 80 to the Bering Sea Fishery Management Plan. There has always been a careful balance struck between these two sectors, and we need to maintain that balance in order to protect the investments and job opportunities they provide. This

language is in no way intended to upset that balance, but rather to insure that the status quo of separate and mutually exclusive sectors remains in place while affording the Amendment 80 fleet the opportunity to replace their older vessels with new ones and to encourage the economic investments that would follow.

Mr. BEGICH. Madam President, as chairman of the Commerce Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and the Coast Guard, I concur with my colleagues that this is an important provision, and I want to reiterate that it is only designed to maintain and reinforce the separation between these two fisheries, and nothing more. As NOAA informed our offices via email this week: "There is currently a regulatory prohibition on AFA vessels from being used as replacement vessels in the Amendment 80 fleet. The concerns addressed in the assistance address what would occur if that regulatory prohibition were to be removed. Subject to judicial interpretation, any change to the status quo would need to be made through the Council's and NOAA Fisheries' rule-making process and is unlikely to occur in the near future."

I thank my colleagues.

SURVIVAL CRAFT

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, as my colleagues know, I was the lead Senate author of the Americans with Disabilities Act the ADA. The ADA stands for a simple proposition—that disability is a natural part of the human experience and that all people with disabilities have a right to make choices and participate fully in all aspects of society. Thanks to the ADA, our country has become a more welcoming place not just for people with a variety of disabilities but for everyone.

In that context, I want to raise an issue in H.R. 2838, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of 2012. Under current law, there is a provision that requires that no survival craft allow a person to be submerged in water. H.R. 2838 requires a study and report on this requirement to be completed within 6 months. While I have no objection to the Coast Guard doing another report on the issue, I want to be sure that this study will appropriately take into account the specific needs of people with a diverse variety of disabilities who may need to utilize these survival craft. For example, my expectation is that the study would not recommend that all individuals be required to hold on to the outside of the survival craft or other items, since an individual with a significant disability may not be able to do so, as a result of their disability. In addition, it is important that not only the means of egress, but also the avenues for evacuation and rescue should be accessible for people with disabilities.

I would also want to be sure that the study will be completed within the 6 month designated period.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I very much appreciate the comments of

the Senator from Iowa. My expectation is that the Coast Guard study and report will include the consideration of the specific needs of individuals with disabilities with respect to their use of survival craft, and will not make any recommendations that could be considered discriminatory against people with disabilities, or require individuals with disabilities to perform actions which they may be unable to do as a result of their specific disability. The goal of the study and report should be an inclusive one which allows people with disabilities to participate fully in the underlying activity, and provides a full and equal opportunity for each person with a disability to utilize these survival craft in a safe manner, as necessary. I will continue to work with my colleague from Iowa and the Coast Guard on these issues and I will encourage the Coast Guard to complete their report within the 6 month period so that new requirements will take effect in a timely manner.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I appreciate the efforts of the Senator from West Virginia, the chairman of the Commerce Committee, and I look forward to continuing to work with him to assure that individuals with disabilities have access to survival craft that will properly protect them from injury.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Madam President, I rise today to celebrate the final passage of a reconciled Coast Guard authorization bill for fiscal years 2013 and 2014. This achievement is the culmination of several months of careful negotiation between the Senate and the House, and is a tribute to what can happen when we rise above trivial partisanship, roll up our sleeves, and reach across the aisle on behalf of the American people.

The United States Coast Guard is truly unique among the services and agencies of the Federal Government. As a branch of our Armed Forces, it defends the Nation in time of war, but it also functions as a Federal agency with law enforcement and regulatory authority in a number of areas critical to our national security, economic security, and environment. Today, the Coast Guard is charged with 11 statutory missions that include saving lives at sea; protecting our ports, waterways, and maritime infrastructure from terrorists; responding to natural disasters; interdicting drugs and migrants at sea; and protecting our marine environment.

Each and every day, we ask the 42,000 men and women of the Coast Guard to put their lives on the line to carry out these important missions. Over the past few years, we have seen the Coast Guard take the lead in responding to numerous crises like Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, the earthquake in Haiti, and the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. In all of these cases, the Coast Guard has met and exceeded our expectations. We have asked them to do more with less and they have responded. The least we can do is to

make sure they have the tools essential to carrying out their missions successfully. With the passage of this year's Coast Guard reauthorization bill, I believe we're on our way towards meeting that responsibility.

This bipartisan bill authorizes additional funding and personnel levels for the Coast Guard over fiscal years 2013 and 2014, improving its ability to carry out its three overarching roles of maritime security, safety and stewardship successfully. The bill also makes a number of changes to the Coast Guard's major acquisitions authorities critical to the ongoing and needed recapitalization of its aging fleet. Additionally, the bill addresses America's increasing presence in a changing Arctic by ensuring that the Coast Guard maintains and strengthens its capability to conduct polar ice operations in support of its statutory missions and operational needs of the United States Navy. Importantly, the bill also gives the Coast Guard greater parity with its sister Armed Services by further aligning Coast Guard management and personnel authorities with statutory authorities of the Department of Defense to better support its service members and their families.

The bill's passage would not have been successful without the tireless efforts of many here in Congress. I first want to thank Senator BEGICH, who, after assuming the chairmanship of the Oceans Subcommittee at the beginning of this Congress, quickly went to work on drafting the Senate's version of the Coast Guard bill. His legislation, of which I was a proud cosponsor, served as a blueprint for the Senate's negotiations with the House.

I also want to thank my dear friend and ranking member of the Commerce Committee, Senator HUTCHISON. Her efforts were instrumental to moving the ball down the field. It is increasingly difficult to get consensus in this body, particularly for legislation that needs unanimity. Without her efforts to hammer out differences across the aisle, today's achievement would not have been possible. Senator HUTCHISON will be missed.

In recent weeks, much attention was given to the efforts to pass needed reauthorization for the Department of Defense and each of the Armed Services under it. It was a tough slog, but in the end it demonstrated what can be achieved when the Senate works as it should. In its own quiet way, the passage of this legislation for this essential service branch is a testament to that as well.

Mr. BEGICH. I further ask that the Senate immediately proceed to a voice vote on a motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 2838.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

Mr. BEGICH. I further ask that the motion to reconsider be made and laid

upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; and that any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

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

Mr. BEGICH. To conclude, this is the Coast Guard reauthorization bill. It is a bill that has taken a while to work out between all of the parties, but it has incredible value, obviously, for my home State of Alaska and for the Presiding Officer's home State of Washington and for, really, the country to make sure we have the right elements for our Coast Guard. It is very exciting to see it now moves from this side, and we anticipate the House will accept it.

So thank you very much, Madam President. I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO MATTHEW WALKER

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the outstanding service provided by one of my long-serving staff members, Matthew Walker, to the Small Business Committee, our beloved home State of Maine, and indeed our Nation. Matt is a dedicated individual whose enthusiasm and insights will be sorely missed. As he moves on to the next step in his professional life, I wish him the best and thank him for his years of service.

A native son of Bangor, ME, Matt attended my alma mater, the University of Maine, before earning his Juris Doctor from the Maine School of Law. I first met Matt when he served as an intern in my office in 1994, when I was still a Member of the House of Representatives, and since then he has been an integral part of my staff for nearly 14 years collectively. Among his experiences, he has been a volunteer on my first Senatorial campaign, worked in two of my district offices handling constituent casework, served in my personal office in Washington, and most recently, Matt performed the absolutely crucial role of Deputy Staff Director and Chief Counsel on the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. From these roles he has gained diverse and invaluable knowledge from many areas, from providing effective constituent services to the people of Maine to drafting and introducing significant legislation. His flexibility and wide range of experience have made him a vital member of my staff. On the Small Business Committee, Matt has been a trusted advisor on a host of legislative issues that have come before the Committee since 2003, as well as shaping the Committee's agenda during my tenure as chair and ranking member.