

Committee on Banking Supervision before issuing final rules amending the agencies' general risk-based capital requirements for determining risk-weighted assets, as proposed in the Advanced Approaches Risk-Based Capital Rules Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, the Standardized Approach for Risk-Weighted Assets Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, and the Implementation of Basel III, Minimum Regulatory Capital Ratios Notice of Proposed Rulemaking issued in June 2012, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. 738. A bill to grant the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to authorize States to issue electronic duck stamps, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. BOXER:

S. 739. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to establish direct care registered nurse-to-patient staffing ratio requirements in hospitals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. REED, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 740. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require drug manufacturers to provide drug rebates for drugs dispensed to low-income individuals under the Medicare prescription drug benefit program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 741. A bill to extend the authorization of appropriations to carry out approved wetlands conservation projects under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act through fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. THUNE, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. BLUNT, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 742. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ALEXANDER, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 743. A bill to restore States' sovereign rights to enforce State and local sales and use tax laws, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 744. A bill to provide for comprehensive immigration reform and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

## SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. VITTER):

S. Res. 98. A resolution honoring the life, legacy, and example of British Prime Minister Baroness Margaret Thatcher; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. COONS, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. Res. 99. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that public servants should be commended for their dedication and continued service to the United States during Public Service Recognition Week; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. PAUL):

S. Res. 100. A resolution commending and congratulating the University of Louisville men's basketball team for winning its third Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association championship, and the University of Louisville women's basketball team for being runner up in the 2013 Women's Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association Basketball Tournament; considered and agreed to.

## ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 22

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 22, a bill to establish background check procedures for gun shows.

S. 33

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 33, a bill to prohibit the transfer or possession of large capacity ammunition feeding devices, and for other purposes.

S. 34

At the request of Ms. WARREN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 34, a bill to increase public safety by permitting the Attorney General to deny the transfer of firearms or the issuance of firearms and explosives licenses to known or suspected dangerous terrorists.

S. 150

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 150, a bill to regulate assault weapons, to ensure that the right to keep and bear arms is not unlimited, and for other purposes.

S. 162

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 162, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act of 2004.

S. 264

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 264, a bill to expand access to community mental health centers and improve the quality of mental health care for all Americans.

S. 306

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 306, a bill to authorize all Bureau of

Reclamation conduit facilities for hydropower development under Federal Reclamation law, and for other purposes.

S. 375

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 375, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 382, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 395

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 395, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to provide further protection for puppies.

S. 462

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 462, a bill to enhance the strategic partnership between the United States and Israel.

S. 463

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 463, a bill to amend the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 to modify the definition of the term "biobased product".

S. 475

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 475, a bill to reauthorize the Special Olympics Sport and Empowerment Act of 2004, to provide assistance to Best Buddies to support the expansion and development of mentoring programs, and for other purposes.

S. 526

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 526, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the special rule for contributions of qualified conservation contributions, and for other purposes.

S. 557

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 557, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to medication therapy management under part D of the Medicare program.

S. 572

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 572, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the conditions under which certain persons may be treated as adjudicated mentally incompetent for certain purposes.

S. 612

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 612, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to remove social security account numbers from Medicare identification cards and communications provided to Medicare beneficiaries in order to protect Medicare beneficiaries from identity theft.

S. 629

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 629, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the service in the reserve components of the Armed Forces of certain persons by honoring them with status as veterans under law, and for other purposes.

S. 646

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 646, a bill to create the National Endowment for the Oceans to promote the protection and conservation of United States ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes ecosystems, and for other purposes.

S. 675

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 675, a bill to prohibit contracting with the enemy.

S. 679

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 679, a bill to promote local and regional farm and food systems, and for other purposes.

S. 680

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 680, a bill to rescind amounts appropriated for fiscal year 2013 for the Department of Defense for the Medium Extended Air Defense System, and for other purposes.

S. 687

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNIS) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. 687, a bill to prohibit the closing of air traffic control towers, and for other purposes.

S. 691

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, her name was added as a cosponsor of S.

691, a bill to regulate large capacity ammunition feeding devices.

At the request of Mr. CARPER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Ms. WARREN, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

At the request of Mr. REED, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 691, supra.

S. 700

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 700, a bill to ensure that the education and training provided members of the Armed Forces and veterans better assists members and veterans in obtaining civilian certifications and licenses, and for other purposes.

S. 703

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 703, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for the eligibility of the Hong Kong Special Administration Region for designation for participation in the visa waiver program for certain visitors to the United States.

S. 707

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 707, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to extend the reduced interest rate for Federal Direct Stafford Loans.

S. 719

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 719, a bill to provide for

the expansion of Federal efforts concerning the prevention, education, treatment, and research activities related to Lyme and other tick-borne diseases, including the establishment of a Tick-Borne Diseases Advisory Committee.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 720, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for taxpayers making donations with their returns of income tax to the Federal Government to pay down the public debt.

S. 730

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 730, a bill to prevent criminals from obtaining firearms through straw purchasing and trafficking.

S. CON. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 6, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

S. RES. 65

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 65, a resolution strongly supporting the full implementation of United States and international sanctions on Iran and urging the President to continue to strengthen enforcement of sanctions legislation.

S. RES. 97

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 97, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the Food and Drug Administration should encourage the use of abuse-deterrent formulations of drugs.

AMENDMENT NO. 711

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 711 intended to be proposed to S. 649, a bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 714

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 714 intended to be proposed to S. 649, a bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. REED, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 714 intended to be proposed to S. 649, *supra*.

# STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 735. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve benefits and assistance provided to surviving spouses of veterans under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as the Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, one of my top priorities is to honor the promise that we made, as a nation, to care for veterans and their survivors. The Senate recently passed a resolution, which I was proud to cosponsor, designating April 5 as "Gold Star Wives Day," in honor of the Gold Star Wives of America, a nonprofit organization that provides services, support, and representation for widows and widowers whose spouses died on active duty in the military or as a result of a service-connected disability. We recently celebrated "Gold Star Wives Day," by recognizing the sacrifices of the families of fallen servicemembers and veterans.

In addition to honoring surviving spouses and families, we must take steps forward to provide the comprehensive care and benefits they need. Without a doubt, a decade of war has had a major impact on our military families. Over 6,600 U.S. servicemembers have died in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. They leave behind spouses, who must now face a variety of issues such as financial difficulties, preserving the family home, maintaining the family business, and caring for their children.

Earlier this year, the Veterans' Affairs Committee heard from the Gold Star Wives of America about the significant challenges that survivors continue to face. Among the issues the organization advocated for were improved Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits and qualification requirements. These are some of the challenges that this legislation would address.

This legislation would improve existing survivor benefits and establish a new pilot program to help address the grief counseling needs of surviving spouses. It would also expand health care and other supportive services to children who suffer from spina bifida as a result of their parent's exposure to certain herbicide agents during service in Thailand during the Vietnam War. This legislation would make a real and positive impact in the lives of the approximately 350,000 surviving spouses and children, currently receiving benefits, who have lost a loved one as a result of service to this country.

The Survivor Benefits Improvement Act of 2013 would extend the timeframe

for increased DIC benefits for surviving spouses with children from 2 years to 5 years. A 2001 evaluation of benefits for survivors of veterans with service-connected disabilities revealed that survivors with dependents perceived an approximate \$6,000 annual gap between DIC received and DIC needed. The study also found that the average total household income decreased over \$20,000 on average during the transition period after the veteran's death. As a result of this study, it was recommended that the \$250 monthly increase in DIC payment be extended from two years to five years for surviving spouses with dependent children. It has now been over a decade since the 2001 report and we still have not provided this increase.

Furthermore, a recent survey from the Department of Veterans Affairs indicated that approximately 44 percent of surviving spouse respondents had incomes below \$20,000. It is clear that this legislation is necessary to provide much needed additional support to survivors during the period following a veteran's death, especially for low-income families. We must act to remedy this shortfall immediately.

This legislation would also expand eligibility for DIC to surviving spouses who remarry at or after age 55. The lower remarriage age would ensure that surviving spouses receive benefits at a requirement level comparable to other federal survivor programs. For example, under the Military Survivor Benefit Plan and for federal employees generally, the remarriage age is 55 for retaining benefits.

At present, VA presumes that spina bifida in biological children of certain Vietnam-era and certain Korea service veterans was caused by the veterans' exposure to Agent Orange during military service. As a result, VA provides health care, vocational rehabilitation and employment services, and a monthly monetary allowance to qualifying children. Although Agent Orange was primarily used in Vietnam, it was also used at military installations and other facilities, such as those in Korea and Thailand. Veterans who served in certain occupations at certain bases in Thailand are eligible to receive service-connected disability compensation. Therefore, it is only logical that VA should also be required to provide benefits to the children of veterans with qualifying service in Thailand, who are suffering from spina bifida.

The loss of a loved one is a devastating and life changing event. This legislation would strengthen our dedication to the overall well-being of surviving spouses by providing a pilot program on grief counseling in retreat settings. The program would enable surviving spouses, and dependents in certain instances, to receive the counseling, support, and sense of community necessary to heal from losing a loved one.

We have made a steadfast and unwavering commitment not only to our vet-

erans, but to their surviving spouses and children. This legislation would strengthen, develop, and expand essential programs and benefits for survivors. Veterans and their families, who have both sacrificed so much for this country, deserve these benefits. We must deliver.

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. 735

*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 "Survivor Benefits Improvement Act of 2013".

## SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF INITIAL PERIOD FOR INCREASED DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES WITH CHILDREN.

Section 1311(f)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "two-year" and inserting "five-year".

## SEC. 3. ELIGIBILITY FOR DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION, HEALTH CARE, AND HOUSING LOANS FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES WHO REMARRY AFTER AGE 55.

Subparagraph (B) of section 103(d)(2) of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

"(B) The remarriage after age 55 of the surviving spouse of a veteran shall not bar the furnishing of benefits specified in paragraph (5) to such person as the surviving spouse of the veteran."

## SEC. 4. BENEFITS FOR CHILDREN OF CERTAIN THAILAND SERVICE VETERANS BORN WITH SPINA BIFIDA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter III of chapter 18 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

### "§ 1822. Benefits for children of certain Thailand service veterans born with spina bifida

"(a) BENEFITS AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary may provide to any child of a veteran of covered service in Thailand who is suffering from spina bifida the health care, vocational training and rehabilitation, and monetary allowance required to be paid to a child of a Vietnam veteran who is suffering from spina bifida under subchapter I of this chapter as if such child of a veteran of covered service in Thailand were a child of a Vietnam veteran who is suffering from spina bifida under such subchapter.

"(b) SPINA BIFIDA CONDITIONS COVERED.—This section applies with respect to all forms and manifestations of spina bifida, except spina bifida occulta.

"(c) VETERAN OF COVERED SERVICE IN THAILAND.—For purposes of this section, a veteran of covered service in Thailand is any individual, without regard to the characterization of that individual's service, who—

"(1) served in the active military, naval, or air service in Thailand, as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975; and

"(2) is determined by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, to have been exposed to a herbicide agent during such service in Thailand.

"(d) HERBICIDE AGENT.—For purposes of this section, the term 'herbicide agent' means a chemical in a herbicide used in support of United States and allied military operations in Thailand, as determined by the