By Mr. NELSON:

S. Res. 23. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that a postage stamp should be issued to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Juan Ponce de Leon landing on Florida; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. THUNE, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. WARNER, Mr. HELLER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COBURN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BROWN, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. VITTER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WICKER, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. Res. 24. A resolution commemorating the 10-year anniversary of the loss of the Space Shuttle Columbia; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL)):

S. Res. 25. A resolution honoring Gonzaga University on its 125th anniversary; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 29

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 29, a bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions.

S. 33

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) 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. 40

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 40, a bill to restore Americans' individual liberty by striking the Federal mandate to purchase insurance.

S. 43

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 43, a bill to require that any debt limit increase be balanced by equal spending cuts of the next decade.

S. 47

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 47, a bill to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act of 1994.

S. 84

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 84, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 109

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 109, a bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects.

S. 162

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) 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. 169

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 169, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to authorize additional visas for well-educated aliens to live and work in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 171

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 171, a bill to appropriate such funds as may be necessary to ensure that members of the Armed Forces, including reserve components thereof, and supporting civilian and contractor personnel continue to receive pay and allowances for active service performed when a Governmentwide shutdown occurs.

S. 180

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) were added as cosponsors of S. 180, a bill to delay the enforcement of any rulings of the National Labor Relations Board until there is a final resolution in pending lawsuits.

S. 183

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 183, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for fairness in hospital payments under the Medicare program.

S. 188

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 188, a bill to prevent certain individuals purportedly appointed to the National Labor Relations Board from receiving salaries, and to prevent an unconstitutional quorum of the Board from taking agency actions, until there is a final decision in pending lawsuits regarding the constitutionality of certain alleged recess appointments.

S. 189

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 189, a bill to establish an employment-based immigrant visa for alien entrepreneurs who have received significant capital from investors to establish a business in the United States.

S. RES. 12

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 12, a resolution recognizing the third anniversary of the tragic earthquake in Haiti on January 12, 2010, honoring those who lost their lives in that earthquake, and expressing continued solidarity with the people of Haiti.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. MORAN):

S. 193. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for startup businesses to use a portion of the research and development credit to offset payroll taxes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, each and every day the folks I represent in Delaware ask me why doesn't the Senate, why doesn't the Congress focus on jobs and focus on getting our economy moving again instead of what seem to be endless partisan struggles over secondary issues.

What I wanted to speak to was a bipartisan bill, which I am introducing, which focuses on how to help create innovation-focused jobs again in the United States.

As you know all too well, our economic recovery has been slower than we had hoped. Although it has been steady, there are still far too many Americans out of work in my home State of Delaware, more than 30,000, but we are building our way back.

The task before us is to think not just about an immediate economic crisis but to take a breath and, instead, focus strategically on the long-term future, to take account of what kind of an economy we want to build for our children and our grandchildren for the America of today and tomorrow.

The engine of our Nation's greatest economic successes has always been innovation. From the light bulb to the search engine, American inventors and innovators, those who have taken risks and started companies, have created jobs by the thousands and changed lives by the millions. Before new ideas scaled to market and reach out to change the world, they first have to start in a lab or garage.

I know from my own 8 years in the private sector, my work for a materials-based science company in Delaware, the products we take for granted that are today household items in the world marketplace, often started as just the sliver of an idea, an idea that

needed refining through determined investment in research and development.

If we want to fuel the next generation of innovation, if we want to lay a strong foundation for job creation through invention, I think we have to start by supporting research and development. Research and development is the lifeblood of great American companies and is what will allow us to make things in this country and to be a leading manufacturer in the world and deserves focused investment.

If we look at it, nearly 70 percent of America's private sector R&D and about 90 percent our patents are actually in manufacturing, a sector that deserves particular attention. Revitalizing American manufacturing will create high-quality, middle-class jobs for the long run, but doing so depends on our ability to take great ideas and turn them into marketable products or improvements in manufacturing processes that can and will result in things being made right here in America. Startups and small businesses all across this country are already taking chances to do just that, and I think it is time for all of us in Congress to take a chance on them.

Last year, I worked in a bipartisan way with Senator ENZI, Senator RUBIO, Senator SCHUMER, and others to introduce a bill that would make startup companies eligible for the existing research and development or R&D tax credit. I am proud to reintroduce that legislation as the Startup Innovation Credit Act of 2013 with our original cosponsors, as well as Senator BLUNT, Senator STABENOW, and Senator MORAN.

This broad bipartisan support suggests a bill whose time has come. Although we represent, among the cosponsors, very different parts of our country, very different backgrounds, all of us know that to strengthen our economy we have to support innovation and entrepreneurship. Each of us is committed to fostering the kind of environment which supports the private sector and which turns ideas into innovations, innovations into products, and products into companies that help create good jobs.

Under current policy, one way we do that federally is by supporting research and development through the existing R&D tax credit. Companies that invest in R&D generate new products, which sparks new industries with spillover benefits for all kinds of sectors. That is why there has long been strong bipartisan support for the existing R&D tax credit. By all accounts it is working. The R&D has helped tens of thousands of American companies succeed and create jobs.

But there is a critical gap in the existing R&D credit. It isn't available to startups because they are not yet profitable, and thus they don't have an income tax liability against which to take a credit. In fact, more than half the R&D credit last year was taken by companies with revenue over $1 billion, well-established, profitable companies. There is nothing wrong with that; it is just not targeting these tax expenditures toward the sector of our economy that is taking the greatest risk and in some ways has the greatest potential.

This gaping hole in our policy around R&D can be fixed with a relatively simple tweak. I have been working on finding this solution since I first came here. In fact, the very first bill I introduced included an expanded version of the R&D credit.

Today, we take another step toward seeing this solution implemented with the reintroduction of this bipartisan Startup Innovation Credit Act. It says in order to spur research and development, we should allow companies to claim the R&D tax credit against their employment taxes, against their W–2 instead of their income tax liability. That opens this credit to new companies that don't yet have an income tax liability.

There lots of companies we could choose. Let me pick one example, DeNovix, a small company based in my home State of Delaware that is developing instrumentation for bioresearch with a team that includes molecular biologists and engineering professionals.

The managing director of DeNovix, Fred Kielhorn, said the legislation we are introducing would help that company to offset some of the costs of bringing new, innovative, technology-based products to market and for that this bill earned his strong support.

He is just one of many. There is a remarkable list of outside groups, companies, and organizations that have supported it. I will mention a few: Silicon Valley Leadership Group; Revolution, led by Steve Case of AOL; Delaware Chamber of Commerce; the Association for Manufacturing Technology Policy; American Small Manufacturers Coalition; and BIO, a national organization that supports companies doing research and development in the biotechnology space.

Supporting small innovative companies in critical early stages of research and development, in my view could unleash untold innovations for growth and create new jobs for America. At its heart, today's legislation is a jobs bill.

Between 1980 and 2005, all net new jobs created in the United States were created by firms 5 years old or less, all of them, about 40 million jobs over those 25 years. This credit is specifically designed toward those new, young, risk-taking firms. It does not pick winners and losers, it doesn't focus on a specific area of the economy or technology, but instead supports all private sector investments, judgments, and decisions that prioritize investment in research and development. Cash in the pocket of small startup companies, such as this tax credit, can make a real difference, especially with financing and credit so hard to come by.

It was once said the States are the laboratory of democracy. In fact, that is where this idea has come from. Credits just like this have been done before in Iowa, Arizona, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and they have been game changers, helping companies get off the ground and keep their doors open during those demanding first years where they invest and spend so much on hiring and growth.

We know this can work. We also know more than half our current Fortune 500 companies were launched during a recession or a bear market. The next great American company that may redefine whole categories that may be known worldwide for its products, its services, may be starting right now in a garage or lab somewhere in this great country. It is an exciting prospect.

In fact, we are depending on our inventors, our innovators, and our small business owners to help innovate our way to a stronger economy and fuel a new generation of job creation. Let's give them the support they need and they deserve at a time when they need it the most.

I am grateful for all the cosponsors of this bipartisan legislation in this Chamber and as well to Congressman GERLACH of Pennsylvania and Congressman KIND of Wisconsin, who will introduce the House version of this legislation next week.

Rather than shutting our startups out of the R&D tax credit, let's open the doors to these innovators and see what they can do. I am confident they will surprise us yet again with how high they can reach and how far they can go. I think this is a wise investment in opening the doors of innovation, invention, and job creation for our future.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 194. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax rate parity among all tobacco products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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. 194

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 ''Tobacco Tax Equity Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHING EXCISE TAX EQUITY AMONG ALL TOBACCO PRODUCT TAX RATES.

(a) TAX PARITY FOR PIPE TOBACCO AND ROLL-YOUR-OWN TOBACCO.—Section 5701(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''$2.8311 cents'' and inserting ''$24.78''.

(b) TAX PARITY FOR SMOKELESS TOBACCO.—

(1) Section 5701(e) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''$1.51'' and inserting ''$13.42'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''50.33 cents'' and inserting ''$5.37''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) SMOKELESS TOBACCO SOLD IN DISCRETE SINGLE-USE UNITS.—On discrete single-use units, $50.33 per thousand.''.

(2) Section 5702(m) of such Code is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''or chewing tobacco'' and inserting ''chewing tobacco, or discrete single-use unit'';

(B) in paragraphs (2) and (3), by inserting ''that is not a discrete single-use unit'' before the period in each such paragraph;

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) DISCRETE SINGLE-USE UNIT.—The term 'discrete single-use unit' means any product containing tobacco that—

''(A) is not intended to be smoked; and

''(B) is in the form of a lozenge, tablet, pill, pouch, dissolvable strip, or other discrete single-use or single-dose unit.''.

(c) TAX PARITY FOR LARGE CIGARS.—Paragraph (2) of section 5701(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''but not more than 40.26 cents per cigar'' and inserting ''but not less than 5.033 cents per cigar and not more than 100.66 cents per cigar''.

(d) TAX PARITY FOR ROLL-YOUR-OWN TOBACCO AND CERTAIN PROCESSED TOBACCO.—Subsection (o) of section 5702 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting '', or processed tobacco removed or transferred to a person other than a person with a permit provided under section 5713'' after ''wrappers thereof''.

(e) CLARIFYING TOBACCO PRODUCT DEFINITION AND TAX RATE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 5702 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(c) TOBACCO PRODUCTS.—The term 'tobacco products' means—

''(1) cigars, cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, pipe tobacco, and roll-your-own tobacco, and

''(2) any other product containing tobacco that is intended or expected to be consumed.''.

(2) TAX RATE.—Section 5701 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(i) OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS.—Any product described in section 5702(c)(2) or not otherwise described under this section, including any product that has been determined to be a tobacco product by the Food and Drug Administration through its authorities under the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, shall be taxed at a level of tax equivalent to the tax rate for cigarettes on an estimated per use basis as determined by the Secretary.''.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section shall apply to articles removed (as defined in section 5702(j) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) after the last day of the month which includes the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) DISCRETE SINGLE-USE UNITS AND PROCESSED TOBACCO.—The amendments made by subsections (b)(1)(C), (b)(2), and (d) shall apply to articles removed (as defined in section 5702(j) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986) after the date that is 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 197. A bill to authorize improvements to flood damage reduction facilities adjacent to the American and Sacramento Rivers near Sacramento, California, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to reintroduce the Natomas Basin Flood Protection Improvements Act of 2013.

This legislation authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to improve the flood control infrastructure in the Sacramento area. The improvements will safeguard hundreds of thousands of homes and businesses.

There is a pressing need to improve levees in Sacramento.

The Army Corps perpetually cites the city as one of our nation's most at-risk for severe flooding. A quick review of the Corps' National Levee Database will tell you why. Of the nearly 300 miles of levees within 10 miles of Sacramento the Corps has deemed 94 miles of levees, or 32 percent, ''unacceptable.'' An unacceptable designation means the levee is deficient to the point where it does not provide the protection it is supposed to.

The Corps has deemed 29 miles of levees, only 10 percent, ''minimally acceptable.''

The Corps has yet to even review the remaining 172 miles, 58 percent.

None of the 300 miles of levees within 10 miles of Sacramento received the passing grade of ''acceptable.''

But even in this high-risk city, there are priority areas. And the Natomas basin, which lies between the American and Sacramento rivers, is the top priority for Sacramento flood control.

More than 100,000 people in the Natomas flood plain are at high or moderate risk of flooding.

The vast majority of these homes would be inundated with more than 10 feet of water should a levee break.

In some places, inundation levels would exceed 20 feet.

The risks are clear. The Army Corps of Engineers estimates the damage from a single flood could top $7 billion.

Recognizing the need to upgrade the Natomas levees, the Corps of Engineers completed a Chief's Report in December 2010 that identified $1.1 billion in essential levee improvements.

According to the report, the principal levee modifications include the widening of 41.9 miles of existing levees; installation of about 34.8 miles of soil bentonite cutoff wall; installation of 8.3 miles of seepage berms, and bridge remediation on State Route 99.

In addition, the report recommends the creation of 75 acres of canal habitat, 200 acres of marsh habitat, and 60 acres of woodland habitat to ensure the project complies with the Endangered Species Act.

The cost of these improvements will be significant, but the burden will be shared.

Understanding the urgency of this work, the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency, SAFCA, and the California Department of Water Resources have begun work on the levee. They have invested more than $400 million in the Natomas Basin project, far more than their share, and completed about 18 miles of the basin's 42 miles of levees.

I want to recognize SAFCA and the people of Sacramento for this good work. They have done the right thing, moving ahead before the federal authorization, because people's lives and property are in danger.

I am proud to say the people of Sacramento have really stepped up and contributed. On two occasions county voters approved special tax assessments to begin paying for the repairs on the levee system, first in 2007 and again in 2011.

The most recent assessment passed overwhelmingly with 84.5 percent of voters supporting the measure.

This kind of local commitment should be a model for the Nation. When such major vulnerabilities exist that threaten a community, it is imperative to act quickly.

If the Sacramento levees fail, the results will be devastating Sacramento International Airport, which serves 4.4 million passengers per year and is the primary air-cargo hub for the region, will be largely underwater.

Interstate 5, Interstate 80 and State Route 99 will be closed or restricted. These roads serve as freight arteries and facilitate the passage of more than 2,500 trucks per day.

Access to the Port of West Sacramento, the city's primary seaport, will be jeopardized.

Just months ago Super-storm Sandy slammed into the East Coast. The destruction in New York and New Jersey reminded us that unpredictable weather events can overwhelm our infrastructure with devastating consequences.

But with well-placed timely investments, much of worst damage can be averted. That's why even during the worst economic downturns in a generation, Sacramento voters stood together and passed the local tax-measure to fund this critical project.

We don't know when the next flood will occur, but we do know Sacramento has a well-documented history of catastrophic flooding.

Record-breaking storms hit the region in 1956, 1964, 1986 and 1997.

During the 1997 storm, levee failures in the nearby cities of Olivehurst, Arboga, Wilton, Manteca and Modesto caused mass evacuations and millions of dollars in damage.

Going back even further, an even more devastating flood in 1861 occurred when the American River Levee failed. California's newly elected Governor, Leland Stanford, was forced to take a row-boat to his inauguration at the State Capitol. The flooding was so bad the state government was temporarily relocated to San Francisco.

U.S. Geological Survey scientists now believe that the 1861 storm may have been an atmospheric river storm, or ''ARkStorm.'' These events, which occur every 200 to 400 years, can produce truly devastating floods.

In 2011, the USGS conducted a study about the impacts of a large ARkStorm in California's Central Valley. The results were shocking.

The storm would cause a 300 mile long, 20 mile wide flood zone across much of our nation's most productive agriculture lands. It would force the evacuation of 1.5 million residents and cause hundreds of landslides damaging roads, highways, and homes. The study estimates the cost to private homeowners and businesses would be $725 billion, nearly three times the cost of a major earthquake in the State.

The bottom line is this: the infrastructure currently in place will not stand up to a storm of this magnitude.

And the Natomas Basin Flood Protection Improvements Act of 2011 is one small step toward preparing for such a disaster.

This legislation is nearly identical to the bill I introduced with my friend and colleague Senator BOXER, the Chairwoman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, last Congress. The only change is that the current bill does not include language from the previous bill that specifically allowed ''credits'' for non-federal work on the project.

This modification should not be interpreted to reflect a change my support for the work of the local entities; I believe they have done the right thing by beginning construction on this project, and I support them receiving credit for their work.

Instead, the modification was included to comport with work being done by Chairwoman BOXER on the upcoming Water Resources Development Act, or WRDA. That bill will generically address non-Federal crediting provisions and I will work with Chairman BOXER to ensure that Sacramento can still receive credits for the work they have completed.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 197

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 ''Natomas Basin Flood Protection Improvements Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. PROJECT MODIFICATION, AMERICAN AND SACRAMENTO RIVERS, CALIFORNIA.

The project for flood damage reduction, American and Sacramento Rivers, California, authorized by section 101(a)(1) of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–303; 110 Stat. 3662; 113 Stat. 319; 117 Stat. 1839; 121 Stat. 1947), is modified to authorize the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to construct improvements to flood damage reduction facilities adjacent to the American and Sacramento Rivers in the vicinity of Sacramento, California, substantially in accordance with the report of the Chief of Engineers entitled ''American River Watershed (Common Features) Project, Natomas Basin, Sacramento and Sutter Counties, California'', and dated December 30, 2010, at an estimated total cost of $1,389,500,000, with an estimated Federal cost of $921,200,000 and an estimated non-Federal cost of $468,300,000.

By Mr. BEGICH:

S. 199. A bill to amend the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to require that oil produced from Federal leases in certain Arctic waters be transported by pipeline to onshore facilities and to provide for the sharing of certain outer Continental Shelf revenues from areas in the Alaska Adjacent Zone; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I wish to speak about legislation I am introducing today that would restore basic fairness to how our Nation shares revenue from energy produced Federal waters.

The Alaska Adjacent Zone Safe Oil Transport and Revenue Sharing Act would provide Alaskans with the same share of Federal bonus bid and royalty revenue, 37.5 percent, as residents of Gulf Coast States. This is about fairness and a fix that is long overdue. Alaskans deserve to be treated as well as residents of the Gulf Coast. We bear the risks and the responsibilities of offshore development. It is only fair that we share in the proceeds.

Revenue sharing will provide funding for the State of Alaska, local governments and tribes to mitigate effects of development and provide support for public sector infrastructure required to both develop the resources and respond in terms of emergency.

The measure distributes to Alaska 37.5 percent of the Federal bonus bids and royalty share from any energy development, fossil or renewable. Of that 37.5 percent; 25 percent is directed to local governments; 25 percent is directed to Alaska Native corporations; 10 percent is directed to tribal governments; and 40 percent is directed to the State of Alaska.

Additionally, the Federal share is subdivided with 15 percent of the Federal royalties directed, without further appropriation, to the Land and Water Conservation Fund; and 7.5 percent directly to deficit reduction.

In addition, this legislation requires oil produced in the Federal waters of the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas to be brought ashore by pipeline, a method that is safer than tanker transport and secures future throughput for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

I am committed to putting in place all the pieces necessary to responsibly develop oil and gas from the Arctic Ocean. Beyond better permit coordination, that I have worked on in other legislation and with the administration, this includes more accurate marine science and the two main features of this bill: sharing revenue with the state and coastal communities as well as keeping Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, TAPS, flowing into the future.

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. 199

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 ''Alaska Adjacent Zone Safe Oil Transport and Revenue Sharing Act''.

SEC. 2. PRODUCTION OF OIL FROM CERTAIN ARCTIC OFFSHORE LEASES.

Section 5 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1334) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(k) OIL TRANSPORTATION IN ARCTIC WATERS.—The Secretary shall—

''(1) require that oil produced from Federal leases in Arctic waters in the Chukchi Sea planning area, Beaufort Sea planning area, or Hope Basin planning area be transported by pipeline to onshore facilities; and

''(2) provide for, and issue appropriate permits for, the transportation of oil from Federal leases in Arctic waters in preproduction phases (including exploration) by means other than pipeline.''.

SEC. 3. REVENUE SHARING FROM AREAS IN ALASKA ADJACENT ZONE.

Section 18 of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1344) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(i) REVENUE SHARING FROM AREAS IN ALASKA ADJACENT ZONE.—

''(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

''(A) COASTAL POLITICAL SUBDIVISION.—The term 'coastal political subdivision' means a county-equivalent subdivision of the State all or part of which—

''(i) lies within the coastal zone (as defined in section 304 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1453)); and

''(ii) the closest point of which is not more than 300 statute miles from the geographical center of any leased tract.

''(B) DISTANCE.—The terms 'distance' means minimum great circle distance.

''(C) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term 'Indian tribe' means an Alaska Native entity recognized and eligible to receive services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the headquarters of which is located within 300 miles of the geographical center of a leased tract.

''(D) LEASED TRACT.—The term 'leased tract' means a tract leased under this Act for the purpose of drilling for, developing, and producing oil or natural gas resources.

''(E) RENEWABLE ENERGY.—The term 'renewable energy' means solar, wind, ocean, current, wave, tidal, or geothermal energy.

''(F) STATE.—The term 'State' means the State of Alaska.

''(2) REVENUE SHARING.—Subject to paragraphs (3), (4), and (5), effective beginning on the date of enactment of this subsection, the State shall, without further appropriation or action, receive 37.5 percent of all revenues derived from all rentals, royalties, bonus bids, and other sums due and payable to the United States from energy development in any area of the Alaska Adjacent Zone, including from all sources of renewable energy leased, developed, or produced in any area in the Alaska Adjacent Zone.

''(3) ALLOCATION AMONG COASTAL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS OF THE STATE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall pay 25 percent of any allocable share of the State, as determined under paragraph (2), directly to coastal political subdivisions.

''(B) ALLOCATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—For each leased tract used to calculate the allocation of the State, the Secretary shall pay the coastal political subdivisions within 300 miles of the geographical center of the leased tract based on

the relative distance of the coastal political subdivisions from the leased tract in accordance with this subparagraph.

''(ii) DISTANCES.—For each coastal political subdivision, the Secretary shall determine the distance between the point on the coastal political subdivision coastline closest to the geographical center of the leased tract and the geographical center of the tract.

''(iii) PAYMENTS.—The Secretary shall divide and allocate the qualified outer Continental Shelf revenues derived from the leased tract among coastal political subdivisions in amounts that are inversely proportional to the applicable distances determined under clause (ii).

''(4) ALLOCATION AMONG REGIONAL CORPORATIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall pay 25 percent of any allocable share of the State, as determined under this subsection, directly to certain Regional Corporations established under section 7(a) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1606(a)).

''(B) ALLOCATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—For each leased tract used to calculate the allocation of the State, the Secretary shall pay the Regional Corporations, after determining those Native villages within the region of the Regional Corporation which are within 300 miles of the geographical center of the leased tract based on the relative distance of such villages from the leased tract, in accordance with this paragraph.

''(ii) DISTANCES.—For each such village, the Secretary shall determine the distance between the point in the village closest to the geographical center of the leased tract and the geographical center of the tract.

''(iii) PAYMENTS.—The Secretary shall divide and allocate the qualified outer Continental Shelf revenues derived from the leased tract among the qualifying Regional Corporations in amounts that are inversely proportional to the distances of all of the Native villages within each qualifying region.

''(iv) REVENUES.—All revenues received by each Regional Corporation under clause (iii) shall be—

''(I) treated by the Regional Corporation as revenue subject to the distribution requirements of section 7(i)(1)(A) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1606(i)(1)(A)); and

''(II) divided annually by the Regional Corporation among all 12 Regional Corporations in accordance with section 7(i) of that Act.

''(v) FURTHER DISTRIBUTION TO VILLAGE CORPORATIONS.—A Regional Corporation receiving revenues under clause (iii) or (iv)(II) shall further distribute 50 percent of the revenues received to the Village Corporations in the region and the class of stockholders who are not residents of those villages in accordance with section 7(j) of that Act (43 U.S.C. 1606(j)).

''(5) ALLOCATION AMONG INDIAN TRIBES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall pay 10 percent of any allocable share of the State, as determined under this subsection, directly to Indian tribes.

''(B) ALLOCATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—For each leased tract used to calculate the allocation of the State, the Secretary shall pay Indian tribes based on the relative distance of the headquarters of the Indian tribes from the leased tract, in accordance with this subparagraph.

''(ii) DISTANCES.—For each Indian tribe, the Secretary shall determine the distance between the location of the headquarters of the Indian tribe and the geographical center of the tract.

''(iii) PAYMENTS.—The Secretary shall divide and allocate the qualified outer Continental Shelf revenues derived from the leased tract among the Indian tribes in amounts that are inversely proportional to the distances described in clause (ii).

''(6) CONSERVATION ROYALTY.—After making distributions under paragraph (2) and section 31, the Secretary shall, without further appropriation or action, distribute a conservation royalty equal to 15 percent of Federal royalty revenues derived from an area leased under this subsection from all areas leased under this subsection for any year, into the land and water conservation fund established under section 2 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–5) to provide financial assistance to States under section 6 of that Act (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–8).

''(7) DEFICIT REDUCTION.—After making distributions in accordance with paragraph (2) and in accordance with section 31, the Secretary shall, without further appropriation or action, distribute an amount equal to 7.5 percent of Federal royalty revenues derived from an area leased under this subsection from all areas leased under this subsection for any year, into direct Federal deficit reduction.''.

SEC. 4. IMPOSITION OF EXCISE TAX ON BITUMEN TRANSPORTED INTO THE UNITED STATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 4612 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking ''and natural gasoline'' and inserting '', natural gasoline, and bitumen'', and

(2) by inserting at the end the following new paragraph:

''(10) BITUMEN.—The term 'bitumen' includes diluted bitumen, bituminous mixtures, or any oil manufactured from bitumen or a bituminous mixture.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to oil and petroleum products received or entered after December 31, 2013.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. LEE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. VITTER, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. ENZI):

S. 202. A bill to expand the use of E-Verify, to hold employers accountable, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today, along with several colleagues, I am introducing legislation to permanently authorize and expand the E-Verify program. My bill, the Accountability Through Electronic Verification Act, will be a tool for employers who want a legal workforce and it will enhance our ability to hold employers accountable for their hiring practices.

Known as the Basic Pilot Program, E-Verify currently provides employers with a simple, web-based tool to verify the work eligibility of new hires. In 1986, Congress made it unlawful for employers to knowingly hire or employ aliens not eligible to work in the United States. Under current law, if the documents provided by an employee reasonably appear on their face to be genuine, the employer has met its obligation to review the worker's documents.

Because identity theft and counterfeit documents became a thriving industry after the 1986 bill, Congress looked to create a program to help employers verify the work eligibility of its new hires. We created the Basic Pilot Program in 1996. Employers in this program can electronically verify a new hires' employment authorization by checking data of employees with records maintained by the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration.

Currently, the E-Verify program is voluntary and free for all employers to use. It is a proven tool in combating illegal immigration. Today, I am proposing that the program be a staple in every workplace so that American workers are on a level playing field with cheaper foreign labor.

My legislation would increase penalties on employers who continue to hire people unauthorized to work in the country. Employers would be required to check the status of current employees within 3 years, and would allow employers to run a check prior to offering a job, saving that employer valuable time and resources. Employers will also be required to re-check those workers whose authorization is about to expire, such as those who come to the United States on temporary visas.

My bill also addresses identity theft concerns. The Social Security Administration would be required to develop algorithm technology that would flag social security numbers that are being used more than once. For those who find themselves victim of identity theft, this bill would amend the criminal code to clarify identity fraud is punishable regardless if the defendant did not have knowledge of the victim. This provision stems from the 2009 Supreme Court decision holding that identity theft requires proof that an individual knew the number being used belonged to an actual person.

While everyone may not agree with every aspect of this bill, it serves as a starting point for a much-needed conversation about worksite enforcement. The President and many members in Congress are going to make it a priority to pass an immigration reform bill this year. We need to act. We need change. We need a better system in place for future generations.

Part of the discussion on immigration will be on a reliable employment verification program. People back home want employers to be held accountable. And, employers want to be responsible. People want to see our government do more to reduce the magnet for people to cross our borders illegally. We must take this opportunity to make sure that employers are abiding by, and able to abide by, the rules. Let us give them the tools they need to do that. I hope more colleagues will join me in my effort to achieve accountability through electronic verification and by making E-Verify a permanent program.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KING):

S. 206. A bill to expand the HUBZone program for communities affected by base realignment and closure, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today I am introducing legislation to expand the geographic boundaries of HUBZones located at former U.S. military installations closed through the so-called Base Closure and Realignment—or BRAC—process. This legislation mirrors S. 3675, the HUBZone Expansion Act of 2012, which I introduced with Senator Snowe last session.

I am pleased to have my new colleague from Maine, Senator ANGUS KING, join me in offering this legislation. Senator KING knows the impact a base closing can have on a local community all too well, coming as he does from Brunswick, ME, which recently lost a major military installation through the BRAC process. Military bases are often the economic heart of the towns and cities in which they are located, and communities can struggle for years to overcome the closure of those facilities.

In recognition of this fact, Congress passed legislation providing HUBZone status for 5 years to military facilities closed through the BRAC process. This allows small businesses located within the HUBZone to obtain certain federal contracting preferences. The HUBZone program is also available to small businesses located in ''economically distressed communities,'' that suffer from low income, high poverty rates, or high unemployment.

According to the Congressional Research Service, there are currently 127 BRAC-related HUBZones in the United States. Unfortunately, for many of the military bases that have been closed, HUBZone status has not brought the benefits we had hoped for. One of the reasons is simple—the law defines the geographic boundaries of a BRAC-related HUBZone to be the same as the boundaries of the base that was closed. When that is combined with the requirement that 35 percent of the employees of a qualifying business must live within the HUBZone, the problem is clear: very few people live on these former bases, so it is difficult or impossible for businesses to get the workers they need to meet the requirements of the HUBZone program.

As I mentioned, one of these HUBZones is located at the former Brunswick Naval Air Station, in Brunswick, Maine. This facility closed in 2011, as a result of the 2005 BRAC round. When the Navy left, Brunswick and its neighbor, Topsham, lost more than 2400 military and civilian personnel. These two towns have a combined population of just 22,000, so losing the Naval Air Station has had a significant economic impact on them. Because so few people actually live within the boundaries of the former base, its HUBZone designation does not provide the help they need, and that we had hoped for.

My legislation would expand the geographic boundaries of BRAC-related HUBZones to include the town or county where the closed installation is located, or census tracts contiguous to the installation, up to a total population base of 50,000. This would provide a large enough pool of potential workers to enable qualifying businesses to locate within the HUBZone, and to help host communities overcome the loss of military installations closed through the BRAC process.

The Association of Defense Communities has endorsed the concept of expanding BRAC-related HUBZones in this manner. In December, the ADC wrote to Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman LEVIN and Ranking Member MCCAIN, noting how important it is that ''Congress restore its intent to support BRAC-impacted communities attracting small businesses to help build and strengthen their local economies.''

Steve Levesque, the Executive Director of the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority, or ''MRRA,'' which oversees the redevelopment of the former Brunswick Naval Air Station, has also urged Congress to modify the HUBZone program. In a letter to me last month, Steve explained that BRAC facilities do not have the residential areas needed to support the 35 percent residency requirement for businesses located within the HUBZone. As a consequence, these businesses cannot ''realize the HUBZone benefits for BRAC'd installations as envisioned by Congress.''

This point was underscored in a letter from Heather Blease, an entrepreneur who is hoping to locate a new business at the former Brunswick Naval Air Station. Ms. Blease describes the HUBZone law as ''flawed,'' because the 35 percent residency requirement makes it impossible for businesses like hers to achieve HUBZone status.

I ask my collegues to consider the legislation we are offering today to help communities get back on their feet after the loss of a military installation closed through the BRAC process.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that letters of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

ASSOCIATION OF DEFENSE COMMUNITIES,
Washington, DC, December 11, 2012.

Hon. CARL LEVIN,
Chairman, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

Hon. JOHN MCCAIN,
Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN AND RANKING MEMBER MCCAIN: The Association of Defense Communities (ADC) admires your longstanding support of current and former military communities. ADC, the leading organization representing those communities, always appreciates the opportunity to share information with you and your staff that may help strengthen communities with active installations and those that continue to redevelop following base closure or realignment.

Communities that have been impacted by Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) often face severe economic distress for years, especially during times of national economic difficulty. To assist in these communities' recovery, Congress authorized in the Small Business Reauthorization Act of 1997 that BRAC-impacted communities would receive Small Business Administration HUBZone certification, a federal initiative that further helps small businesses in disadvantaged areas to compete for federal contracts. The designation gives small businesses relocating to closed military installation areas equal footing with businesses in other disadvantaged areas that receive the designation because of their location in under-utilized census tracts.

While the intent of Congress was to provide the HUBZone designation to help closed military installations attract small businesses, one aspect of the HUBZone program actually works against these redevelopment areas. To maintain HUBZone status, 35 percent of a business' employees must also live in a HUBZone area. Because a military installation's HUBZone area encompasses only the base itself, many closed military installations do not have a substantial number of HUBZone-certified residential areas from which to draw sufficient future employees for the businesses desiring to locate on those properties. Thus, it is often impossible for a business to qualify for HUBZone status and compete fairly against other small businesses.

Many defense community leaders are hopeful this issue can be resolved without additional spending, creation of a new government program or a change in government contracting goals. Senator Susan Collins is also working to address this issue during the final stages of the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act. We look forward to sharing further information with your office and hers to help explain why it is important to defense communities that Congress restore its intent to support BRAC-impacted communities attracting small businesses to help build and strengthen their local economies.

As always, ADC appreciate your service and support and hopes you will contact us if we may be of further assistance.

Respectfully,

ROBERT M. MURDOCK,
President, Association of Defense Communities.

MIDCOAST REGIONAL REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY,
Brunswick, ME, December 11, 2012.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
U.S. Senator, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS: I represent the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority, which is charged with redeveloping the former Naval Air Station Brunswick, Maine that closed in 2011 and is now known as Brunswick Landing.

We seek your assistance in modifying the current federal program related to SBA HUBZones to make it a more effective tool for businesses locating at Brunswick Landing. Over the past several years, we have had several companies inquire about the current HUBZone status of the former NAS Brunswick. In fact, we are currently working with one company who is willing to locate here and create upwards of 200 jobs, if we are successful in getting the current HUBZone program for closed military installations broadened.

With the implementation of the latest 2005 BRAC round, a number of military installations have been closed across the country resulting in severe economic distress for those communities and States that have realized these closures. Redeveloping these BRAC'd properties proved quite difficult in good economic times, and now it is made even more difficult with the national and State economic recession we are experiencing.

While it would seem that the HUBZone designation for a closed military installation would be an aid to its redevelopment efforts, the 35% residency rule in the existing law actually makes the program not a very effective redevelopment tool for these properties at all. With the exception of closed military installations, most of the HUBZones in the Country are census tract based. Under current law, only the closed military base itself (i.e., the geographic area which used to be the former base) is designated as a HUBZone, which is a much smaller area than the census tract basis. Furthermore, many closed military installations do not have a substantial amount of residential areas from which to draw sufficient future employees (35%) for the businesses desiring to locate on those properties.

In addition the above, the Small Business Act established a five year time-frame for the duration of the HUBZone from the actual date of base closure. This is of particular concern given that the actual transfer of properties from the military services to the base closure communities often occurs many years following closure. Thus, these properties are not available for business development until actually transferred.

The net effect is that eligible HUB businesses seeking new or expanded opportunities on closed installations cannot meet these requirements and thus are not able to realize the HUBZone benefits for BRAC'd installations as envisioned by Congress. This issue exacerbates the difficulties for us and other similar communities to overcome the devastating economic effects of base closures.

In order to make the BRAC HUBZone designation an effective economic development tool for Brunswick Landing, as well as all the other closed installations across the country, the attached amendment language to the existing law is recommended. It should be noted that these recommendations do not create a new program, require additional government spending, or increase federal contracting goals.

Thank you for your service to our Country and the State of Maine and your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

STEVEN H. LEVESQUE,
Executive Director.

HEATHER D. BLEASE,
Freeport, ME, December 12, 2012.

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,
U.S. Senator, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS: I have established a new contact center business that focuses on providing service to the federal government. A key strategy for our success hinges upon the establishment of my business as a HUBZone certified entity.

As a native of Brunswick, Maine, I am keenly interested in locating my business at the former Brunswick Naval Air Station, now called Brunswick Landing. As a BRAC facility, the SBA rules limit the boundary of the HUBZone geographically to base property which has very few housing units.

In order to achieve HUBZone certification, 35% of my employees need to reside within the HUBZone.

As the law is written, I cannot locate at Brunswick Landing and hope to achieve HUBZone status. The BRAC HUBZone law is flawed as written. Our Congress attempted to create an economic development vehicle to help communities recover from base closures, but unless the law is tweaked, the HUBZone designation is meaningless.

Please help modify the existing definition for BRAC HUBZones by broadening the boundary of the HUBZone for closed military installations to include the surrounding community. In the case of my company, it provides me with HUBZone employees to put to work so I can meet the HUBZone certification requirements.

If the law is changed, I will locate my business at Brunswick Landing and provide hundreds of jobs to the economically depressed area. Otherwise, I will need to seek out other alternatives.

Thank you for your service to our country, the State of Maine and your interest in helping small businesses thrive.

With greatest respect,

HEATHER D. BLEASE,
CEO, Savi Systems, LLC.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 23—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT A POSTAGE STAMP SHOULD BE ISSUED TO COMMEMORATE THE 500TH ANNIVERSARY OF JUAN PONCE DE LEON LANDING ON FLORIDA

Mr. NELSON submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs:

S. RES. 23

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the United States Postal Service should issue a postage stamp to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Juan Ponce de Leon landing on Florida; and

(2) the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee of the United States Postal Service should recommend to the Postmaster General that such a stamp be issued.

SENATE RESOLUTION 24—COMMEMORATING THE 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE LOSS OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE ''COLUMBIA''

Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. THUNE, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. WARNER, Mr. HELLER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COBURN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. RUBIO, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BROWN, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. VITTER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. WICKER, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 24

Whereas a sense of adventure is innate to the human spirit;

Whereas the urge to explore continues to motivate the United States as a nation;

Whereas the global leadership of the United States is determined by the resolve of the people of the United States;

Whereas the drive to innovate and explore has led the people of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and related industry and education leaders to make important discoveries with a broad impact on humanity, in spite of inherent risk;

Whereas the men and women of the space program of the United States have captured the curiosity of the people of the United States, inspiring generations of scientists, engineers, and pioneers, and delivering technological advances and innovation, scientific research, and international partnerships to the benefit of nearly all sectors of the economy of the United States;

Whereas, on February 1, 2003, the United States joined the world in mourning the loss of 7 astronauts who perished aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia as it re-entered the atmosphere of the Earth;

Whereas United States Air Force Colonel Rick D. Husband, Mission Commander; United States Navy Commander William ''Willie'' C. McCool, Pilot; United States Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Michael P. Anderson, Payload Commander/Mission Specialist; United States Navy Captain David M. Brown, Mission Specialist; United States Navy Commander Laurel B. Clark, Mission Specialist; Dr. Kalpana Chawla, Mission Specialist; and Israeli Air Force Colonel Ilan Ramon, Payload Specialist were killed in the line of duty and in pursuit of discovery during the STS–107 mission;

Whereas the people of the United States are driven to continue the exploration and pursuit of discovery with as much passion and determination as these brave men and women;

Whereas an innate curiosity about what lies beyond our world drives us to expand the limits of human exploration and discovery in space, in the furtherance of the leadership and strategic interests of the United States;

Whereas exploring the heavens and the celestial bodies of the solar system is not without great risk and peril;

Whereas the loss of the 7 brave souls aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia and others who have sacrificed their lives in pursuit of human space exploration shall forever serve as a solemn reminder of the firm commitment of the United States to devote the capacity and resources necessary to improve safety, minimize risk, and do everything possible to protect the next generation of explorers willing to risk themselves in the service of mankind;

Whereas those involved in the Space Shuttle program of the United States have sought to apply the lessons learned from the Space Shuttle Columbia accident to future human spaceflight by the United States, which included 22 additional program missions and shepherding the Space Shuttle program to its safe and successful conclusion;

Whereas the lessons learned from the Space Shuttle Columbia accident should be applied to current policy of the space program of the United States; and

Whereas the people of the United States will not forget the sacrifice of those 7 determined explorers aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia, as well as others who perished in the exploration of the unknown: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) remembers the 7 astronauts who tragically lost their lives aboard the Space Shuttle Columbia as it re-entered the atmosphere of the Earth 10 years ago on February 1, 2003;

(2) expresses its condolences to the friends and families of the astronauts who died that day;

(3) commends those who have honored the memory of the Space Shuttle Columbia over the past decade, including the employees of Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as regular citizens and volunteers, who assisted