

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs has adopted rules governing its procedures for the 113th Congress. Pursuant to Rule XXVI, paragraph 2, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of the committee rules be printed in the RECORD.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS RULES OF PROCEDURE

I. MEETINGS

(A) Unless otherwise ordered, the Committee shall meet on the first Wednesday of each month. The Chairman may, upon proper notice, call such additional meetings as deemed necessary.

(B) Except as provided in subparagraphs (b) and (d) of paragraph 5 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public. The Committee shall prepare and keep a complete transcript or electronic recording adequate to fully record the proceedings of each meeting whether or not such meeting or any part thereof is closed to the public.

(C) The Chairman of the Committee, or the Ranking Majority Member present in the absence of the Chairman, or such other Member as the Chairman may designate, shall preside over all meetings.

(D) Except as provided in rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no meeting of the Committee shall be scheduled except by majority vote of the Committee or by authorization of the Chairman of the Committee.

(E) The Committee shall notify the office designated by the Committee on Rules and Administration of the time, place, and purpose of each meeting. In the event such meeting is canceled, the Committee shall immediately notify such designated office.

(F) Written or electronic notice of a Committee meeting, accompanied by an agenda enumerating the items of business to be considered, shall be sent to all Committee Members at least 72 hours (not counting Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) in advance of each meeting. In the event that the giving of such 72-hour notice is prevented by unforeseen requirements or Committee business, the Committee staff shall communicate notice by the quickest appropriate means to Members or appropriate staff assistants of Members and an agenda shall be furnished prior to the meeting.

(G) Subject to the second sentence of this paragraph, it shall not be in order for the Committee to consider any amendment in the first degree proposed to any measure under consideration by the Committee unless a written or electronic copy of such amendment has been delivered to each Member of the Committee at least 24 hours before the meeting at which the amendment is to be proposed. This paragraph may be waived by a majority vote of the Members and shall apply only when 72-hour written notice has been provided in accordance with paragraph (F).

II. QUORUMS

(A) Subject to the provisions of paragraph (B), eight Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the reporting or approving of any measure or matter or rec-

ommendation. Five Members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for purposes of transacting any other business.

(B) In order to transact any business at a Committee meeting, at least one Member of the minority shall be present. If, at any meeting, business cannot be transacted because of the absence of such a Member, the matter shall lay over for a calendar day. If the presence of a minority Member is not then obtained, business may be transacted by the appropriate quorum.

(C) One Member shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of receiving testimony.

III. VOTING

(A) Votes may be cast by proxy. A proxy shall be written and may be conditioned by personal instructions. A proxy shall be valid only for the day given.

(B) There shall be a complete record kept of all Committee actions. Such record shall contain the vote cast by each Member of the Committee on any question on which a roll call vote is requested.

IV. HEARINGS AND HEARING PROCEDURES

(A) Except as specifically otherwise provided, the rules governing meetings shall govern hearings.

(B) At least one week in advance of the date of any hearing, the Committee shall undertake, consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, to make public announcements of the date, place, time, and subject matter of such hearing.

(C)(1) Each witness who is scheduled to testify at a hearing of the Committee shall submit 40 copies of such witness' testimony to the Committee not later than 48 hours before the witness' scheduled appearance at the hearing.

(2) Any witness who fails to meet the deadline specified in paragraph (1) shall not be permitted to present testimony but may be seated to take questions from Committee members, unless the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member determine there is good cause for the witness' failure to meet the deadline or it is in the Committee's interest to permit such witness to testify.

(D) The presiding Member at any hearing is authorized to limit the time allotted to each witness appearing before the Committee.

(E) The Chairman, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member of the Committee, is authorized to subpoena the attendance of witnesses and the production of memoranda, documents, records, and any other materials. If the Chairman or a Committee staff member designated by the Chairman has not received from the Ranking Minority Member or a Committee staff member designated by the Ranking Minority Member notice of the Ranking Minority Member's non-concurrence in the subpoena within 48 hours (excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays) of being notified of the Chairman's intention to subpoena attendance or production, the Chairman is authorized following the end of the 48-hour period involved to subpoena the same without the Ranking Minority Member's concurrence. Regardless of whether a subpoena has been concurred in by the Ranking Minority Member, such subpoena may be authorized by vote of the Members of the Committee. When the Committee or Chairman authorizes a subpoena, the subpoena may be issued upon the signature of the Chairman or of any other Member of the Committee designated by the Chairman.

(F) Except as specified in Committee Rule VII (requiring oaths, under certain circumstances, at hearings to confirm Presidential nominations), witnesses at hearings will be required to give testimony under

oath whenever the presiding Member deems such to be advisable.

V. MEDIA COVERAGE

Any Committee meeting or hearing which is open to the public may be covered by television, radio, and print media. Photographers, reporters, and crew members using mechanical recording, filming, or broadcasting devices shall position and use their equipment so as not to interfere with the seating, vision, or hearing of the Committee Members or staff or with the orderly conduct of the meeting or hearing. The presiding Member of the meeting or hearing may for good cause terminate, in whole or in part, the use of such mechanical devices or take such other action as the circumstances and the orderly conduct of the meeting or hearing may warrant.

VI. GENERAL

All applicable requirements of the Standing Rules of the Senate shall govern the Committee.

VII. PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS

(A) Each Presidential nominee whose nomination is subject to Senate confirmation and referred to this Committee shall submit a statement of his or her background and financial interests, including the financial interests of his or her spouse and of children living in the nominee's household, on a form approved by the Committee which shall be sworn to as to its completeness and accuracy. The Committee form shall be in two parts:

1) Information concerning employment, education, and background of the nominee which generally relates to the position to which the individual is nominated and which is to be made public; and

2) Information concerning the financial and other background of the nominee, to be made public when the Committee determines that such information bears directly on the nominee's qualifications to hold the position to which the individual is nominated.

(B) At any hearing to confirm a Presidential nomination, the testimony of the nominee and, at the request of any Member, any other witness shall be under oath.

(C) Committee action on a nomination, including hearings or a meeting to consider a motion to recommend confirmation, shall not be initiated until at least five days after the nominee submits the form required by this rule unless the Chairman, with the concurrence of the Ranking Minority Member, waives this waiting period.

VIII. NAMING OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES

It is the policy of the Committee that no Department of Veterans Affairs facility shall be named after any individual unless:

(A) Such individual is deceased and was:

(1) A veteran who (i) was instrumental in the construction or the operation of the facility to be named, or (ii) was a recipient of the Medal of Honor or, as determined by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, otherwise performed military service of an extraordinarily distinguished character;

(2) A Member of the United States House of Representatives or Senate who had a direct association with such facility;

(3) An Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, a Secretary of Veterans Affairs, a Secretary of Defense or of a service branch, or a military or other Federal civilian official of comparable or higher rank; or

(4) An individual who, as determined by the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member, performed outstanding service for veterans.

(B) Each Member of the Congressional delegation representing the State in which the

designated facility is located must indicate in writing such Member's support of the proposal to name such facility after such individual.

(C) The pertinent State department or chapter of each Congressionally chartered veterans' organization having a national membership of at least 500,000 must indicate in writing its support of such proposal.

IX. AMENDMENTS TO THE RULES

The rules of the Committee may be changed, modified, amended, or suspended at any time provided, however, that no less than a majority of the entire membership so determine at a regular meeting with due notice or at a meeting specifically called for that purpose. The rules governing quorums for reporting legislative matters shall govern rules changes, modification, amendments, or suspension.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I rise today in support of S.47, the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act. This legislation provides much needed funding and support for law enforcement in our fight against domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking.

This bill has enjoyed wide bipartisan support over the years. Crimes against women and children will not be tolerated. Tuesday, the Senate once again approved VAWA with a 78-22 overwhelmingly bipartisan vote. I was proud to cosponsor the Violence Against Women Act and I urge my colleagues in the House to stand with America's women and children and quickly pass this critical legislation.

We have an obligation to do our part and protect women and children on the streets and in their homes. And this legislation provides the resources needed to further this very important effort. Reauthorizing this funding is particularly important for my home State of Louisiana, which unfortunately ranks among the top five States in incidences of domestic violence homicides in the Nation.

Last year, Louisiana received \$4.9 million in Violence Against Women Act grants. These dollars helped fund critical programs through organizations like Wellspring Alliance for Family, which provides domestic violence and sexual assault services in Monroe, LA, and the Crescent House program in New Orleans. And these funds don't just supplement established programs. In fact, the vast majority wouldn't be possible in the first place without VAWA grants because many service providers count on more than 90 percent of their funding from the Federal Government.

Last year, Louisiana's 18 shelters provided more than 90,000 shelter nights, answered more than 38,000 crisis calls and despite serving 17,000 clients, the shelters had to turn away almost 2,000 people for lack of resources. In one national survey, 60 percent of the shelters in Louisiana reported that they lacked funding and 25 percent reported that they lacked shelter beds or

housing for victims of domestic violence and their children.

These statistics are troubling. And I think they are an important part of why VAWA is so critical to women and children in communities across Louisiana and throughout our country. But numbers don't tell the whole story. You have to talk to the people on the ground, to the people who have dedicated their lives and careers to helping women and children in need, to truly appreciate the impact of this legislation.

For example, Beth Meeks, executive director of the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, visited a program in New Orleans. While visiting that program, Beth spoke with a young mother with her baby, only to discover that the baby was 6 days old. The young mother had been at the program for a few weeks and had been terribly abused when she was nearly 9 months pregnant. She and her baby survived but her child was born in shelter care. What would have been the outcome if a shelter had not been available?

The program that Beth visited, like every domestic violence program in Louisiana, was heavily supported by Violence Against Women Act dollars. Additionally, law enforcement officers, advocates, and prosecutors are all supported by funds available under the act. Louisiana's current budget challenges have serious implications for these vital services. In December 2012, Louisiana cut \$1 million from the budget for these programs, jeopardizing their very existence.

Louisiana is not alone. Programs all over the Nation have experienced reductions in grants and losses in donations during the recent economic downturn. That is why we must reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. We have made significant progress in the last 20 years. We must continue to provide support to State and local government and the nonprofit entities that provide critical services.

I congratulate the people who are committed to providing important services to those who need them most. We owe a great deal of gratitude to leaders like Beth Meeks of the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence, leaders like Mary Claire Landry of the Family Justice Center in New Orleans, and like Valerie Bowman of the Family Justice Center in Monroe, and leaders in the law enforcement community like Tommy Clark, chair of the Louisiana Chiefs of Police Association Domestic Violence Committee.

I am proud that the Senate has taken action on this important piece of legislation and I urge my colleagues in the House of Representatives to do the same.

BAHRAIN TWO YEARS LATER

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, 2 years ago today thousands of Bahrainis took to the streets to call for political reform and an end to ongoing human

rights abuses in their country. The government responded to these peaceful demonstrations not by addressing grievances or offering to work with the aggrieved, but by unleashing its state security forces upon them. The security forces fired on the protesters with tear gas and live ammunition; although many protesters were rounded up, arrested, and tortured, their spirit would not be broken.

I am deeply disappointed that the government of Bahrain continues to stall, to stonewall, and to stymie any progress on addressing the root causes of the protesters' grievances. I shared the initial hopes of many Bahrainis, who viewed the establishment of the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry, BICI, as a positive step on behalf of the government. I was encouraged when the final BICI report detailed the government's systemic use of intimidation, violence, abuse, and detention that documenting these abuses would lead to real reform. As outlined in the BICI report, over the weeks and months of its initial crackdown, more than 30 protesters were killed, nearly 1,800 were tortured, and 4,500 were fired from their jobs. Religious sites were destroyed and doctors who treated injured protesters were arrested, tortured, and imprisoned.

The Bahraini government has spent considerable time and resources to convince the world that progress has been made, but I am sorry to say that the facts do not bear this out. Banning peaceful protests is not progress. Using tear gas as a weapon is not progress. Shooting teenagers is not progress. There is, quite frankly, little to be optimistic about if one examines the regime's track record over the last 2 years. According to the Project on Middle East Democracy, POMED, the government of Bahrain has only fully implemented three of 26 recommendations in the BICI report. Even worse, POMED found no meaningful progress whatsoever toward six of the BICI recommendations. The Bahrain Center for Human Rights similarly finds that the government of Bahrain has taken only superficial steps "while continuing to commit the same human rights violations."

Although the Bahraini government offered to engage in a national dialogue, my staff and I have read reports that the government may only be planning to moderate a discussion between political parties, rather than act as a full and productive participant in the dialogue. I sincerely hope that is not the case, and I call on the government of Bahrain to live up to its rhetoric, engage in genuine and sustained dialogue, and work to see that real progress is made. As a first step to restoring some of the trust it has lost, the Bahraini government should immediately implement all 26 BICI report recommendations and immediately release all political prisoners in Bahrain.

After 2 years, surely the government of Bahrain is tired of fighting its own