

Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve.

S. RES. 284

At the request of Mr. JOHANNIS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 284, a resolution calling on the Government of Iran to immediately release Saeed Abedini and all other individuals detained on account of their religious beliefs.

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 284, *supra*.

S. RES. 292

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 292, a resolution expressing support for the victims of the typhoon in the Philippines and the surrounding region.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 1704. A bill to expand the use of open textbooks in order to achieve savings for students; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. 1704

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 “Affordable College Textbook Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The high cost of college textbooks continues to be a barrier for many students in achieving higher education.

(2) According to the College Board, during the 2012-2013 academic year, the average student budget for college books and supplies was \$1,200.

(3) The Government Accountability Office found that new textbook prices increased 82 percent over the last decade and that although Federal efforts to increase price transparency have provided students and families with more and better information, more must be done to address rising costs.

(4) The growth of the Internet has enabled the creation and sharing of digital content, including open educational resources that can be freely used by students, teachers, and members of the public.

(5) Using open educational resources in place of traditional materials in large-enrollment college courses can reduce textbook costs by 80 to 100 percent.

(6) Federal investment in expanding the use of open educational resources could significantly lower college textbook costs and

reduce financial barriers to higher education, while making efficient use of taxpayer funds.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE.—The term “educational resource” means an educational material that can be used in postsecondary instruction, including textbooks and other written or audiovisual works.

(2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

(3) OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE.—The term “open educational resource” means an educational resource that is licensed under an open license and made freely available online to the public.

(4) OPEN LICENSE.—The term “open license” means a worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive, perpetual, irrevocable copyright license granting the public permission to access, reproduce, publicly perform, publicly display, adapt, distribute, and otherwise use the work and adaptations of the work for any purpose, conditioned only on the requirement that attribution be given to authors as designated.

(5) OPEN TEXTBOOK.—The term “open textbook” means an open educational resource or set of open educational resources that either is a textbook or can be used in place of a textbook for a postsecondary course at an institution of higher education.

(6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Education.

SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—From the amounts appropriated under subsection (i), the Secretary shall make grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities to support pilot programs that expand the use of open textbooks in order to achieve savings for students.

(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In this section, the term “eligible entity” means an institution of higher education or group of institutions of higher education.

(c) APPLICATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible entity desiring a grant under this section, after consultation with relevant faculty (including those engaged in the creation of open educational resources), shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the Secretary may reasonably require.

(2) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include a description of the project to be completed with grant funds and—

(A) a plan for promoting and tracking the use of open textbooks in postsecondary courses offered by the eligible entity, including an estimate of the projected savings that will be achieved for students;

(B) a plan for evaluating, before creating new open educational resources, whether existing open educational resources could be used or adapted for the same purpose;

(C) a plan for quality review and review of accuracy of any open educational resources to be created or adapted through the grant;

(D) a plan for disseminating information about the results of the project to institutions of higher education outside of the eligible entity, including promoting the adoption of any open textbooks created or adapted through the grant; and

(E) a statement on consultation with relevant faculty, including those engaged in the creation of open educational resources, in the development of the application.

(d) SPECIAL CONSIDERATION.—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary

shall give special consideration to applications that demonstrate the greatest potential to—

(1) achieve the highest level of savings for students through sustainable expanded use of open textbooks in postsecondary courses offered by the eligible entity;

(2) expand the use of open textbooks at institutions of higher education outside of the eligible entity; and

(3) produce—

(A) the highest quality open textbooks;

(B) open textbooks that can be most easily utilized and adapted by faculty members at institutions of higher education;

(C) open textbooks that correspond to the highest enrollment courses at institutions of higher education; and

(D) open textbooks created or adapted in partnership with entities, including campus bookstores, that will assist in marketing and distribution of the open textbook.

(e) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under this section shall use the grant funds to carry out any of the following activities to expand the use of open textbooks:

(1) Professional development for faculty and staff members at institutions of higher education, including the search for and review of open textbooks.

(2) Creation or adaptation of open educational resources, especially open textbooks.

(3) Development or improvement of tools and informational resources that support the use of open textbooks.

(4) Research evaluating the efficacy of the use of open textbooks for achieving savings for students.

(5) Partnerships with other entities, including other institutions of higher education, for-profit organizations, or nonprofit organizations, to carry out any of the activities described in paragraphs (1) through (4).

(f) LICENSE.—Educational resources created or adapted under subsection (e) shall be licensed under an open license.

(g) ACCESS AND DISTRIBUTION.—The full and complete digital content of each educational resource created or adapted under subsection (e) shall be made available free of charge to the public—

(1) on an easily accessible and interoperable website, which shall be identified to the Secretary by the eligible entity; and

(2) in a machine readable, digital format that anyone can directly download, edit, and redistribute.

(h) REPORT.—Upon an eligible entity's completion of a project supported under this section, the eligible entity shall prepare and submit a report to the Secretary regarding—

(1) the effectiveness of the pilot program in expanding the use of open textbooks and in achieving savings for students;

(2) the impact of the pilot program on expanding the use of open textbooks at institutions of higher education outside of the eligible entity;

(3) educational resources created or adapted under the grant, including instructions on where the public can access each educational resource under the terms of subsection (g); and

(4) all project costs, including the value of any volunteer labor and institutional capital used for the project.

(i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section for each of the 5 succeeding fiscal years after the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. PRICE INFORMATION.

Section 133(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1015b(b)) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (6); and

(2) in paragraph (9);

(A) by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B); and

(B) by striking “a college textbook that—” and inserting “a college textbook that may include printed materials, computer disks, website access, and electronically distributed materials.”.

SEC. 6. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that institutions of higher education should encourage the consideration of open textbooks by faculty within the generally accepted principles of academic freedom that establishes the right and responsibility of faculty members, individually and collectively, to select course materials that are pedagogically most appropriate for their classes.

SEC. 7. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

Not later than July 1, 2016, the Secretary shall prepare and submit a report to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives detailing—

(1) the open textbooks created or adapted under this Act;

(2) the adoption of such open textbooks; and

(3) the savings generated for students, States, and the Federal Government through the use of open textbooks.

SEC. 8. GAO REPORT.

Not later than July 1, 2017, the Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare and submit a report to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives on the cost of textbooks to students at institutions of higher education. The report shall particularly examine—

(1) the change of the cost of textbooks;

(2) the factors that have contributed to the change of the cost of textbooks;

(3) the extent to which open textbooks are used at institutions of higher education; and

(4) the impact of open textbooks on the cost of textbooks.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 1705. A bill to provide a Federal charter for the National Fab Lab Network, a national network of local digital fabrication facilities providing community access to advanced manufacturing tools for learning skills, developing inventions, creating businesses, and producing personalized products; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. 1705

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “National Fab Lab Network Act of 2013”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Scientific discoveries and technical innovations are critical to the economic and national security of the United States.

(2) Maintaining the leadership of the United States in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics will require a di-

verse population with the skills, interest, and access to tools required to advance these fields.

(3) Just as earlier digital revolutions in communications and computation provided individuals with the Internet and personal computers, a digital revolution in fabrication will allow anyone to make almost anything, anywhere.

(4) Fab labs like the Center for Bits and Atoms at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology provide a model for a new kind of national laboratory that links local facilities for advanced manufacturing to expand access and empower communities.

(5) A coordinated national public-private partnership will be the most effective way to accelerate the provision of this infrastructure for learning skills, developing inventions, creating businesses, and producing personalized products.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL FAB LAB NETWORK.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term “fab lab” means a facility—

(A) equipped with an integrated suite of fabrication tools to convert digital designs into functional physical things and scanning tools to convert physical things into digital designs; and

(B) available for a range of individual and collaborative educational, commercial, creative, and social purposes, based on guidelines established by the NFLN relating to sustainable operation; and

(2) the term “NFLN” means the National Fab Lab Network.

(b) FEDERAL CHARTER.—The National Fab Lab Network is a federally chartered nonprofit corporation, which shall facilitate the creation of a national network of local fab labs and serve as a resource to assist stakeholders with the effective operation of fab labs.

(c) MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Eligibility for membership in the NFLN and the rights and privileges of members shall be as provided in the constitution and bylaws of the NFLN. The Board of Directors, officers, and other employees of the NFLN, and their powers and duties, shall be provided in the bylaws of the NFLN.

(2) BOARD OF DIRECTORS.—The Board of Directors of the NFLN shall include—

(A) the Director of the Fab Foundation;

(B) members of the manufacturing sector and entrepreneurial community; and

(C) leaders in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education.

(3) COORDINATION.—When appropriate, the NFLN should work with Manufacturing Extension Partnership Centers of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Small Business Administration, and other agencies of the Federal Government to provide additional resources to fab lab users.

(d) FUNCTIONS.—The NFLN shall—

(1) serve as the coordinating body for the creation of a national network of local fab labs in the United States;

(2) provide a first point of contact for organizations and communities seeking to create fab labs, providing information, assessing suitability, advising on the lab lifecycle, and maintaining descriptions of prospective and operating sites;

(3) link funders and sites with operational entities that can source and install fab labs, provide training, assist with operations, account for spending, and assess impact;

(4) perform outreach for individuals and communities on the benefits available through the NFLN;

(5) facilitate use of the NFLN in synergistic programs, such as workforce training, job creation, research broader impacts, and the production of civic infrastructure; and

(6) offer transparency in the management, governance, and operation of the NFLN.

(e) PURPOSES.—In carrying out its functions, the NFLN’s purposes and goals shall be to—

(1) create a national network of connected local fab labs to empower individuals and communities in the United States; and

(2) foster the use of distributed digital fabrication tools to promote science, technology, engineering and math skills, increase invention and innovation, create businesses and jobs, and fulfill needs.

(f) FUNDING.—The NFLN may accept gifts from private individuals, corporations, government agencies, or other organizations.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. COONS, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 1709. A bill to require the Committee on Technology of the National Science and Technology Council to develop and update a national manufacturing competitiveness strategic plan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor again today to talk about jobs, about manufacturing jobs, about the high-quality, high-skill wage jobs America needs for today and for the future.

Today I have introduced a bill which shows that dealing with our ongoing challenges of supporting our manufacturing sector and growing jobs in our manufacturing sector can have bipartisan solutions. Senator MARK KIRK of Illinois joined me in introducing the American Manufacturing Competitiveness Act, which has a simple but important objective: to require the creation of a national manufacturing strategy.

Today more than 12 million Americans are directly employed in manufacturing. As I have said on the floor before as part of our Manufacturing Jobs for America Initiative, manufacturing jobs are good jobs. They are high-skilled jobs, they are high-wage jobs, they are high-benefit jobs, and they have a terrific secondary benefit in terms of the other support and service sector jobs that come along with manufacturing jobs in a community.

We need to know the direction we are heading as a country as we try to support the growth of manufacturing. We have grown more than half a million manufacturing jobs in the last 3 years. That is an encouraging sign. We are one of the most productive in the output of our manufacturing sector of all the countries in the world.

What we have lacked is a very coordinated strategy between the Federal Government, State governments, and the private sector to align all of our investments—our investments in research and development, our investments in new skills, our investments in infrastructure—to make sure they are all heading in the right direction.

Do our competitors have national manufacturing strategies? Absolutely. Germany, China, India, South Africa,

and Russia all have thoroughly developed, deeply researched, and prominently successful strategies for how to accelerate and sustain manufacturing as a key part of their economies.

This bill would amend the America COMPETES Act. It would require every 4 years that the Secretary of Commerce, advised by a board of 15 different folks, pull together and think through, research, and then deliver a national manufacturing strategy. This doesn't require new programs. It doesn't even necessarily require new funding or new Federal expenditures. It only requires that we coordinate all the different areas where the Federal Government is investing in supporting manufacturing and where State and local governments are working in partnership with the private sector. This may be a small but vital step toward giving the lift we need for our manufacturing sector to continue its sustained growth of the last few years.

Why is a manufacturing strategy essential? Because we have a couple of areas where, frankly, we are falling short—in infrastructure, in access to capital, and in skills. Having a highly skilled manufacturing workforce is one of the things we need to do if we are going to win the fight to regain our international prominence as the leading global manufacturing country.

The Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte, a global consulting firm, have both independently concluded that there are as many as 600,000 manufacturing jobs in America today that are unfilled because of a lack of a workforce with the relevant skills. The Society of Manufacturing Engineers estimates that number could increase to 3 million by 2015.

So a focus through a national strategy and through some facilitating investments and legislation by this body and the House and by enactment by the President and investments across-the-board could deal with these important skill gaps.

Why are there skill gaps in manufacturing? Many Americans have a misconception about what manufacturing is like today. They have a picture in their heads of manufacturing from 10, 20, or 30 years ago when it required simple labor, when it required repeated routine tasks such as simply putting on a bolt or affixing a particular piece onto a vehicle, where there wasn't any teamwork, there wasn't any continuous improvement required, and there weren't analytical skills required. That was the manufacturing line of the past, not of today and certainly not of the future. In fact, the skills required to be successful in modern advanced manufacturing are quite different from what they were 10, 20, or 30 years ago. Today one has to work as part of a team and be able to troubleshoot and problem-solve.

There are fewer people working on manufacturing lines, but they are higher in productivity because the analytical skills they are bringing to the job

are greater than they have ever been before. That is also why manufacturing can be a more satisfying career, a more rewarding place to work than it was in the past, because it engages the whole human being. It engages the whole worker. It allows them to have ownership of the quality of the finished product.

One of the lessons American automobile manufacturing learned in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s as it faced the threat of higher quality auto manufacturing elsewhere in the world was to not only retool the manufacturing line but to empower the individual worker to be engaged in quality control.

Those of us here in the Senate who worked in the manufacturing industry know what it meant to have gone through a process where we had to certify. You had to go through a searching auditing process to be able to demonstrate, if you were a component supplier or if you were part of a supply chain, that you were meeting world-class standards. In fact, the ISO 9000 system—the International Organization for Standardization—and its 9000 series audits that swept through the country over 20 years and ended up resulting in a higher quality of manufacturing was just the first of a number of steps toward requiring those who were working in manufacturing facilities to have a higher level of skills.

One of the ways in which we have an ongoing challenge is that manufacturers—medium and small manufacturers with whom I visited up and down the State of Delaware—don't know the level of skills and the quality of skills of young people they wish to hire who may have just finished high school or might have taken a certificate course with a community college. We don't have a transportable, translatable certificate for basic manufacturing skills.

One of the innovations of the IT industry was a whole series of skills certifications that allow someone to know, when they are hiring a young person to do office support for IT or when they are hiring someone to be a network administrator, whether they have the practical skills they need to do that job and do it well. They can't guess that by where they went to high school or what courses they took at a college. We don't have a similar sort of reliable, transportable, translatable, manufacturing skill certification process. That may be a part of this national manufacturing strategy.

We certainly have heard from manufacturers large and small—not only in Delaware but around the country—about what they need, what would put a floor beneath their growth and would allow them to be globally competitive. No. 1 would be a stronger, skilled workforce; No. 2 would be more access to capital; and No. 3 would be more and better access on a fair basis to a global market and a global economy.

We have had a great first couple of weeks with the Manufacturing Jobs for America Initiative. More than 25 Sen-

ators have contributed more than 40 bills. Many of these are broad or bold or bipartisan bills that contain the ideas that I think can sustain and grow manufacturing in the United States going forward. It is a growing menu of bills—bills that are bipartisan and that I believe not only need but deserve a vote on the floor later in this Congress.

I am grateful to Senator KIRK for partnering with me in introducing this bill today, the American Manufacturing Competitiveness Act, and I am hopeful it will pick up more bipartisan sponsors in the days and weeks ahead. I also hope, working in partnership with the Manufacturing Caucus, ably led by Senator STABENOW and Senator GRAHAM, we will begin to hammer out the bipartisan bills that will deserve a vote on this floor and that will ultimately reach enactment through the Congress and by signature of our President. With that, we might well be able to deliver on what we hear most often from our constituents: Help us grow high-quality jobs in this country.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. CASEY):

S. 1714. A bill to impose sanctions with respect to Syria, to expand existing sanctions with respect to Syria, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am here to talk about the Syria Sanctions Enhancement Act of 2013, which I am very proud to introduce today, with bipartisan support, joined by my colleagues Senators AYOTTE, CORNYN, and CASEY. This bill is a comprehensive effort to update our existing system of sanctions and to reflect the reality that President Bashar al-Assad and his murderous regime continue to engage in a horrible civil war against the Syrian people.

This bill builds upon the longstanding U.S. sanctions regime against Syria begun in 2004 to deal with that government's policies supporting terrorism, continuing its occupation of Lebanon, pursuing weapons of mass destruction and missile programs, and undermining U.S. and international efforts to stabilize Iraq. Following events in Syria beginning in March of 2011, a series of executive orders have been issued to address the ongoing violence and human rights abuses that have been supported and perpetrated relentlessly by the Assad regime. Fortunately, Congress has come together on a bipartisan basis to sanction many people who are committing terrible atrocities. Now is the time to add to those sanctions, to enhance and enforce them, and ensure they encompass everyone who is enabling Assad to continue his massacres against his own people.

I have seen some of the effects of this cruel war in person. Earlier this year, I traveled to the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, with Senator McCain and Senator GRAHAM, where I saw firsthand

how the Assad regime has torn families and lives apart. I returned home from that trip convinced, along with my colleagues, that the United States cannot stand idle while this war rages on and over 1 million Syrians are displaced from their country—a substantial part—the estimates are 30 percent of its entire population displaced from their homes. I remain convinced the United States should take action not only with sanctions but with more effective humanitarian relief. Sanctions are an effective way to cut off Assad's financing and therefore his source of power. Humanitarian relief is necessary to aid the Syrian people who have become refugees in such enormous numbers, even as we pursue those sanctions.

Thankfully, most of the world has come together to denounce and isolate Assad for his horrible abuses. Appallingly, though, a few—most notably Russian banks—finance Assad and enable his continued atrocities.

In September, Senators AYOTTE, CORNYN, SHAHEEN, and I urged the Treasury Department to sanction those Russian banks that are perpetrating war in Syria. They are enabling that war as well as the atrocities it has spawned, and there is significant evidence that some Russian banks, including VTB, VEB, and Gazprombank, have given financial cover to Assad and may still be hiding his assets. This bill, the Syria Sanctions Enhancement Act, would ensure that those actors do not go unpunished. It would sanction financial institutions doing business with Assad and his senior officials, and it would also provide for a full accounting of all Assad's assets. If Assad is hiding money in Russian banks or elsewhere, we need to know where that money is, because it rightly belongs to the people of Syria, not to its murderous dictator.

But our actions against Assad must be wider in scope than simply the financial sector. Therefore, the Syria Sanctions Enhancement Act looks at all the perpetrators of horrific violence who empower Assad and it creates sanctions against them. This bill codifies existing executive orders that sanction senior Syrian officials and people who sell or invest in the Syrian Government. It sanctions anyone who helps the Assad government develop weapons of mass destruction or provides them with conventional weapons. They are responsible for the majority of killings in Syria. They are complicit, and knowingly, purposefully—they are not merely the enablers, they are the providers of those assets used by Assad against his own people.

We have seen how some unscrupulous arms dealers continue to provide arms to the Assad regime that enable his killing. Just yesterday, I was pleased to announce that the Defense Department will stop doing business with Rosoboronexport, the arms dealer that is selling weapons to Assad. Think of it: The U.S. Government was financing,

with U.S. taxpayer money, purchases of helicopters for the Afghan Government, to go to the Afghans with the knowledge that that same Russian export agency was selling weapons to Assad. It was stopped, but it is just one example of a company that allows Assad to continue killing his own people.

This bill also requires the President to submit a list of people responsible for human rights abuses committed against the people of Syria. The President must submit a list of those culpable individuals who should be held accountable for human rights abuses committed by Assad against his own people, and the bill will sanction anyone who has provided goods, services or support to enable human rights abuses.

As my colleagues can see, this bill would do quite a few things, but there are a number of important things it will not do. It will not prevent the United States from supporting the moderates who are fighting against the Assad regime, and it would not jeopardize our ongoing efforts to destroy Syria's chemical weapons stockpile; rather, it creates a strategic framework to ensure that the prolonged dismantling of chemical weapons does not serve as a cover for the international community to ignore the brutal reality of these slaughters throughout Syria. The bill is carefully crafted to ensure that the sanctions do not target the people of Syria themselves who are just trying to survive during a difficult time. That is why humanitarian relief from this country is of such paramount importance.

Over the past few months, there has been a lot of debate over what the United States should or should not do in Syria.

Over these past months, the debate has focused on military force and many have been hesitant to use such military force in Syria. But that does not mean the United States can or should stand idle on the sidelines as hundreds of thousands of people are dying and the war threatens to create a wider conflict in the Middle East. I think we can all agree, on both sides of the aisle, that we should be strengthening sanctions against the human rights abusers and supporters of Assad and his military that is tirelessly, relentlessly, and purposefully murdering his own people.

This bill is a bipartisan attempt to move forward around the common concerns of helping the Syrian people. In the coming days, I look forward to a debate on this bill and the way forward in Syria as we consider Iran's nuclear program and other important factors. There will be a meeting in Geneva upcoming. I view this bill as a means of strengthening our government's hand as we seek peace in Syria and seek to strengthen those forces in Syria that seek to protect their own people.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this important effort to ensure that the United States continues to stand up and speak out

strongly on the side of the people of Syria against a regime that is striving solely and single-mindedly to keep itself in power at all costs, in fact, whatever the cost in the slaughter and displacement of its own people.

By Mr. Kaine (for himself and Mr. Chambliss):

S. 1717. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve oversight of educational assistance provided under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Servicemember Education Reform and Vocational Act of 2013, SERVE. I am pleased Senator Chambliss joins me in introducing this bill. This bipartisan legislation will improve the quality of education for our veterans and military members.

To date, over one million veterans have taken advantage of the Post-9/11 GI Bill and \$30 billion has been invested. Yet graduation rates remain a concern and the unemployment rate among veterans, especially young veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, remains higher than the national average.

As the United States begins to draw down its forces after more than a decade at war, it is more important than ever to demonstrate our commitment to the brave men and women who have served and sacrificed to protect our Nation. An important part of this commitment is ensuring our Nation's veterans are prepared for their transition from military service to civilian life.

In Virginia, one in every nine individuals is a veteran, and we have 27 installations across the State, making Virginia as connected to the military as any State in the country.

As I have travelled throughout Virginia and have had the opportunity to meet with servicemembers, veterans, and their families, I have listened to their concerns and ideas. These conversations have reinforced my commitment to fight persistent barriers to veterans' employment, and ensure that veterans have access to quality education programs that yield results.

For these reasons, it is our responsibility to ensure that the Nation's investment in veteran education and training yields successful results and gives these men and women the tools they need to succeed in the workforce.

I am a strong believer that education is the best investment that any country can make to ensure the success of its citizens. This is why my first bill, the TROOP Talent Act, focused on assisting our servicemembers and veterans in their efforts to gain civilian credentials and transition into the workforce.

The bill I am introducing today, the SERVE Act, is companion legislation that will raise the bar on minimum standards that educational institutions

must meet to ensure servicemembers are getting a quality education.

The bill will require institutions to disclose information such as graduation rates, withdrawal policies, and program costs to students and ensure programs fully deliver what they advertise.

The bill will require institutions to provide access to academic and/or career counseling for military and veteran students in hopes of not only improving their chances of graduating, but also helping prepare them for future careers.

The bill will facilitate the use of VA and DoD educational benefits for employment training programs by creating a 5-State pilot program. States will be charged with developing best practices needed to ensure that quality employment training, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training programs are available and accessible for beneficiaries of the post-9/11 GI Bill program.

The bill will require an annual report to relevant Senate and House Committees with disaggregated information on which schools and programs veteran and military students are putting their educational benefits toward.

Today's veterans have been referred to as "the next Greatest Generation." They answered the call to serve our Nation.

They have put it all on the line and invested heavily and personally in the future of our country. Let us do everything we can to capitalize on their experience and character and prepare them for the challenges they and our Nation will face in the future.

The SERVE Act will ensure that the educational benefits our veterans and military members earned are being spent on quality education.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 295—EXPRESSING THE SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF OCTOBER 20, 2013 AS THE "NATIONAL DAY ON WRITING"

Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BENNET, and Ms. LANDRIEU) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 295

Whereas people in the 21st century are writing more than ever before for personal, professional, and civic purposes;

Whereas the social nature of writing invites people of every age, profession, and walk of life to create meaning through composing;

Whereas more and more people in every occupation consider writing to be essential and influential in their work;

Whereas writers continue to learn how to write for different purposes, audiences, and occasions throughout their lifetimes;

Whereas developing digital technologies expand the possibilities for composing in multiple media at a faster pace than ever before;

Whereas young people are leading the way in developing new forms of composing by using different forms of digital media;

Whereas effective communication contributes to building a global economy and a global community;

Whereas the National Council of Teachers of English, in conjunction with its many national and local partners, honors and celebrates the importance of writing through the National Day on Writing;

Whereas the National Day on Writing celebrates the foundational place of writing in the personal, professional, and civic lives of the people of the United States;

Whereas the National Day on Writing highlights the importance of writing instruction and practice at every educational level and in every subject area;

Whereas the National Day on Writing emphasizes the lifelong process of learning to write and compose for different audiences, purposes, and occasions;

Whereas the National Day on Writing honors the use of the full range of media for composing, from traditional tools like print, audio, and video, to Internet website tools like blogs, wikis, and podcasts; and

Whereas the National Day on Writing encourages all people of the United States to write, as well as to enjoy and learn from the writing of others: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the designation of October 20, 2013, as the "National Day on Writing";

(2) strongly affirms the purposes of the National Day on Writing; and

(3) encourages educational institutions, businesses, community and civic associations, and other organizations to celebrate and promote the National Day on Writing.

SENATE RESOLUTION 296—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 13, 2013, AS "NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK"

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. SCHATZ) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 296

Whereas, in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge on Pelican Island in Florida;

Whereas, in 2013, the National Wildlife Refuge System, administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, is the premier system of lands and waters to conserve wildlife in the world, and has grown to approximately 150,000,000 acres, 561 national wildlife refuges, and 38 wetland management districts in every State and territory of the United States;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important recreational and tourism destinations in communities across the United States, and these protected lands offer a variety of recreational opportunities, including 6 wildlife-dependent uses that the National Wildlife Refuge System manages: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation;

Whereas, in 2013, 364 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have hunting programs and 303 units of the National Wildlife Refuge System have fishing programs, averaging approximately 2,500,000 hunting visits and nearly 7,000,000 fishing visits each year;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System experienced nearly 31,000,000 wildlife observation visits during fiscal year 2013;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important to local businesses and gateway communities;

Whereas, for every \$1 appropriated, national wildlife refuges generate nearly \$5 in economic activity;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System experiences nearly 47,000,000 visits each year, which generated more than \$2,400,000,000 and more than 35,000 jobs in local economies during fiscal year 2011;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System encompasses every kind of ecosystem in the United States, including temperate, tropical, and boreal forests, wetlands, deserts, grasslands, arctic tundras, and remote islands, and spans 12 time zones from the Virgin Islands to Guam;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are home to more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 species of reptiles and amphibians, and more than 1,000 species of fish;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are the primary Federal lands that foster production, migration, and wintering habitat for waterfowl;

Whereas, since 1934, the sale of the Federal Duck Stamp to outdoor enthusiasts has generated more than \$850,000,000 in funds, which has enabled the purchase or lease of more than 5,500,000 acres of wetland habitat for waterfowl and numerous other species in the National Wildlife Refuge System;

Whereas the recovery of 386 threatened and endangered species is supported on refuge lands;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are cores of conservation for larger landscapes and resources for other agencies of the Federal Government and State governments, private landowners, and organizations in their efforts to secure the wildlife heritage of the United States;

Whereas more than 38,000 volunteers and approximately 220 national wildlife refuge "Friends" organizations contribute more than 1,400,000 hours annually, the equivalent of more than 700 full-time employees, and provide an important link to local communities;

Whereas national wildlife refuges provide an important opportunity for children to discover and gain a greater appreciation for the natural world;

Whereas, because there are national wildlife refuges located in several urban and suburban areas and one refuge located within an hour drive of every metropolitan area in the United States, national wildlife refuges employ, educate, and engage young people from all backgrounds in exploring, connecting with, and preserving the natural heritage of the United States;

Whereas, since 1995, refuges across the United States have held festivals, educational programs, guided tours, and other events to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week during the second full week of October;

Whereas the Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to seek stakeholder input on the implementation of "Conserving the Future: Wildlife Refuges and the Next Generation", an update to the strategic plan of the Fish and Wildlife Service for the future of the National Wildlife Refuge System;

Whereas the week beginning on October 13, 2013, has been designated as "National Wildlife Refuge Week" by the Fish and Wildlife Service; and

Whereas the designation of National Wildlife Refuge Week by the Senate would recognize more than a century of conservation in the United States, raise awareness about the importance of wildlife and the National Wildlife Refuge System, and celebrate the myriad recreational opportunities available to enjoy this network of protected lands: Now, therefore, be it