

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. BARRASSO): S. 2322. A bill to reauthorize Federal-aid highway and highway safety construction programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 357

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 357, a bill to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

S. 506

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 506, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide recruitment and retention incentives for volunteer emergency service workers.

S. 539

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 539, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to foster more effective implementation and coordination of clinical care for people with pre-diabetes and diabetes.

S. 635

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 635, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 865

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 865, a bill to provide for the establishment of a Commission to Accelerate the End of Breast Cancer.

S. 917

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 917, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a reduced rate of excise tax on beer produced domestically by certain qualifying producers.

S. 933

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 933, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2018.

S. 942

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New York

(Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 942, a bill to eliminate discrimination and promote women's health and economic security by ensuring reasonable workplace accommodations for workers whose ability to perform the functions of a job are limited by pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition.

S. 1012

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1012, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve operations of recovery auditors under the Medicare integrity program, to increase transparency and accuracy in audits conducted by contractors, and for other purposes.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1174, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers.

S. 1188

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1188, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of the individual mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 1208

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1208, a bill to require meaningful disclosures of the terms of rental-purchase agreements, including disclosures of all costs to consumers under such agreements, to provide certain substantive rights to consumers under such agreements, and for other purposes.

S. 1307

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1307, a bill to provide for evidence-based and promising practices related to juvenile delinquency and criminal street gang activity prevention and intervention to help build individual, family, and community strength and resiliency to ensure that youth lead productive, safe, healthy, gang-free, and law-abiding lives.

S. 1397

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1397, a bill to improve the efficiency, management, and inter-agency coordination of the Federal permitting process through reforms overseen by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and for other purposes.

S. 1507

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1507, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify the treatment of general welfare benefits provided by Indian tribes.

S. 1517

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1517, a bill to amend the Public Health Services Act and the Social Security Act to extend health information technology assistance eligibility to behavioral health, mental health, and substance abuse professionals and facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1622

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1622, a bill to establish the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children, and for other purposes.

S. 1708

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1708, a bill to amend title 23, United States Code, with respect to the establishment of performance measures for the highway safety improvement program, and for other purposes.

S. 1823

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1823, a bill to amend part E of title IV of the Social Security Act to better enable State child welfare agencies to prevent human trafficking of children and serve the needs of children who are victims of human trafficking, and for other purposes.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 1862, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Monuments Men, in recognition of their heroic role in the preservation, protection, and restitution of monuments, works of art, and artifacts of cultural importance during and following World War II.

S. 2009

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2009, a bill to improve the provision of health care by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans in rural and highly rural areas, and for other purposes.

S. 2013

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator

from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2013, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal of Senior Executive Service employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs for performance, and for other purposes.

S. 2018

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2018, a bill to provide for the use of hand-propelled vessels in Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, and the National Elk Refuge, and for other purposes.

S. 2042

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2042, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to reauthorize the National Estuary Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2113

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2113, a bill to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes.

S. 2152

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2152, a bill to direct Federal investment in carbon capture and storage and other clean coal technologies, and for other purposes.

S. 2154

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2154, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize the Emergency Medical Services for Children Program.

S. 2190

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2190, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of the employer mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 2206

At the request of Mr. COBURN, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2206, a bill to streamline the collection and distribution of government information.

S. 2213

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2213, a bill to replace the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection with a five-person Commission.

S. 2255

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2255, a bill to remove the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan from treatment as terrorist organizations and for other purposes.

S. 2270

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2270, a bill to clarify the application of certain leverage and risk-based requirements under the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

S. 2295

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2295, a bill to establish the National Commission on the Future of the Army, and for other purposes.

S. 2302

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2302, a bill to provide for a 1-year extension of the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2304

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2304, a bill to amend the charter school program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

S. 2305

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2305, a bill to amend the method by which the Social Security Administration determines the validity of marriages under title II of the Social Security Act.

S.J. RES. 19

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 19, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to contributions and expenditures intended to affect elections.

AMENDMENT NO. 3009

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3009 intended to be proposed to S. 2262, a bill to promote energy savings in residential buildings and industry, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 2317. A bill to restrict confidentiality agreements that prohibit the disclosure of information relating to hazards to public safety or health, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce the Safety over Secrecy Act, which prohibits courts from enforcing confidentiality agreements in the settlement of civil suits involving hazards to public health and safety. This bill will ensure that plaintiffs in such suits do not have to remain silent about their experiences as a condition of settling their disputes.

While confidentiality agreements can be useful tools to protect sensitive information and trade secrets, too often they are used to hide important safety concerns from regulators, policymakers, the news media, public health experts, and the general public. Over the past 20 years, we have learned of numerous cases where court-approved secrecy has shielded serious public health and safety dangers from the public—putting hundreds, if not thousands, of lives at risk. These cases have involved hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking,” asbestos, defective auto components, and “adverse incidents” from drugs.

Typically in these cases, victims face large corporations that can spend unlimited amounts of money defending lawsuits and prolonging their resolution. Faced with mounting litigation expenses and medical bills, plaintiffs often seek to settle their suits. In exchange for damages, they are forced to agree to provisions that prohibit them from discussing their cases or revealing information disclosed during litigation. Defendants are thus able to keep damaging information from getting out. As a result the public, as well as regulatory agencies, remain unaware of the risks.

Let us take fracking, where drillers from Pennsylvania to Arkansas and Wyoming to Texas have entered into cash settlements or property buyouts with individuals who claim fracking has contaminated their water and polluted their air. In the vast majority of these cases, the cost of the awards has been the plaintiffs’ silence. As Aaron Bernstein, associate director of the Center for Health and the Global Environment at the Harvard School of Public Health, put it in an interview, non-disclosure agreements “have interfered with the ability of scientists and public health experts to understand what is at stake” in the country’s quickly evolving energy infrastructure.

Perhaps the most notorious case of fracking hush money is the Hallowich case. In that case, Chris and Stephanie Hallowich’s dream house—built on acres of land in southwestern Pennsylvania—turned out to be sitting atop the Marcellus Shale, one of the biggest fracking operations in the country. The previous land owner had leased the mineral rights to various gas companies. Soon after moving in, Chris,