

1, 2013 through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5915. A communication from the Chairwoman of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5916. A communication from the Chairman of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5917. A communication from the Acting Director of the Peace Corps, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Inspector General's Semiannual Report for the period of October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-241. A resolution adopted by the Legislature of Rockland County, New York, urging the United States Congress to pass H.R. 4065 and S. 2032—The Smartphone Theft Protection Act; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

POM-242. A resolution adopted by the Legislature of Rockland County, New York, expressing support for the energetic advocacy of federal representatives for increasing the strictness of the regulations that govern rail transport of hazardous liquids; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

POM-243. A resolution adopted by the Council of the City of Santa Ana, California, expressing support for comprehensive federal immigration reform and urging the 113th Congress to enact reforms that secure our borders, ensure economic strength, and promote stronger communities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

POM-244. A resolution approved by the Town Board, Town of Jefferson, Wisconsin, supporting the passage of an amendment to the United States Constitution regarding constitutional rights and political spending; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. VITTER, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 2414. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to prohibit the regulation of emissions of carbon dioxide from new or existing power plants under certain circumstances; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 2415. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to eliminate limitations on direct contributions to candidates, to require disclosure of certain con-

tributions within 24 hours of receipt, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 2416. A bill to apply laws that restrict the political speech of American citizens to media corporations; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2417. A bill to provide greater controls and restriction on revolving door lobbying; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2418. A bill to amend title 11 and title 29, United States Code, to increase the amount of unsecured claims for salaries and wages given priority in bankruptcy, to provide for payments to retirees to compensate for lost health insurance benefits resulting from the bankruptcy of their former employer, to protect the health benefits of employees and retirees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. TOOMEY:

S. 2419. A bill to protect America's veterans from dishonesty and malfeasance in the delivery of medical services and to hold the Department of Veterans Affairs accountable to those they serve; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mrs. FISCHER:

S. 2420. A bill to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to increase transparency in Federal budgeting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Budget.

By Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 2421. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2151 et seq.) to reform the Food for Peace Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. BEGICH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. Kaine, Mr. REED, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BROWN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHUMER, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 2422. A bill to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 2423. A bill to improve wait times for appointments for hospital care, medical services, and other health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, to improve accountability of employees responsible for long wait times for such appointments, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. COBURN, Mr. BURR, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. COATS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. JOHANNES, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. ENZI, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 2424. A bill to provide veterans with the choice of medical providers and to increase transparency and accountability of operations of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota (for himself and Mr. KIRK):

S. Res. 464. A resolution designating June 2014 as "National Aphasia Awareness Month" and supporting efforts to increase awareness of aphasia; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. Res. 465. A resolution commemorating the centennial of Webster University; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. AYOTTE (for herself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. Res. 466. A resolution designating the week of October 27 through November 2, 2014, as "National Drug Take-Back Week", and designating October 2014 as "National Prescription Opioid and Heroin Abuse Awareness Month"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 162

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) 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. 429

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 429, a bill to enable concrete masonry products manufacturers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for concrete masonry products.

S. 539

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor 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. 709

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 709, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, leading to better care and outcomes for Americans living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

S. 895

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 895, a bill to improve the ability of the Food and Drug Administration to study the use of antimicrobial drugs in food-producing animals.

S. 1011

At the request of Mr. JOHANNES, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr.

SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1011, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 1066

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1066, a bill to allow certain student loan borrowers to refinance Federal student loans.

S. 1324

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1324, a bill to prohibit any regulations promulgated pursuant to a presidential memorandum relating to power sector carbon pollution standards from taking effect.

S. 1332

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1332, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 1341

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1341, a bill to modify the Forest Service Recreation Residence Program as the program applies to units of the National Forest System derived from the public domain by implementing a simple, equitable, and predictable procedure for determining cabin user fees, and for other purposes.

S. 1431

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1431, a bill to permanently extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

S. 1656

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1656, a bill to clarify that volunteers at a children's consignment event are not employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938.

S. 1688

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1688, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the members of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), collectively, in recognition of their superior service and major contributions during World War II.

S. 1695

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1695, a bill to designate a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.

S. 1708

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island

(Mr. WHITEHOUSE) 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. 1965

At the request of Mr. WALSH, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1965, a bill to amend the East Bench Irrigation District Water Contract Extension Act to permit the Secretary of the Interior to extend the contract for certain water services.

S. 1979

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1979, a bill to provide for USA Retirement Funds, to reform the pension system, and for other purposes.

S. 2004

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2004, a bill to ensure the safety of all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, children, older individuals, and individuals with disabilities, as they travel on and across federally funded streets and highways.

S. 2013

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS), the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) 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. 2031

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2031, a bill to amend the Act to provide for the establishment of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in the State of Wisconsin, and for other purposes, to adjust the boundary of that National Lakeshore to include the lighthouse known as Ashland Harbor Breakwater Light, and for other purposes.

S. 2070

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2070, a bill to reduce the number of nuclear-armed submarines operated by the Navy, to prohibit the development of a new long-range penetrating bomber aircraft, to prohibit the procurement of new intercontinental ballistic missiles, and for other purposes.

S. 2192

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr.

SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2192, a bill to amend the National Alzheimer's Project Act to require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to prepare and submit, directly to the President for review and transmittal to Congress, an annual budget estimate (including an estimate of the number and type of personnel needs for the Institutes) for the initiatives of the National Institutes of Health pursuant to such an Act.

S. 2270

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors 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.

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2270, *supra*.

S. 2292

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2292, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes.

S. 2359

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) were added as cosponsors of S. 2359, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect and preserve access of Medicare beneficiaries in rural areas to health care providers under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 2371

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2371, a bill to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 to provide for macroeconomic analysis of the impact of major revenue legislation.

S. 2395

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2395, a bill to repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002.

S. 2399

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2399, a bill to safeguard the voting rights of Native American and Alaska Native voters and to provide the resources and oversight necessary to ensure equal access to the electoral process.

S. 2413

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 2413, a bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 451

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 451, a resolution recalling the Government of China's forcible dispersion of those peaceably assembled in Tiananmen Square 25 years ago, in light of China's continued abysmal human rights record.

S. RES. 453

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 453, a resolution condemning the death sentence against Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag, a Sudanese Christian woman accused of apostasy.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. VITTER, and Mrs. FISCHER):

S. 2414. A bill to amend the Clean Air Act to prohibit the regulation of emissions of carbon dioxide from new or existing power plants under certain circumstances; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. 2414

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 "Coal Country Protection Act" or the "Protecting Jobs, Families, and the Economy From EPA Overreach Act".

SEC. 2. REGULATION OF EMISSIONS OF CARBON DIOXIDE FROM NEW OR EXISTING POWER PLANTS.

(a) LIMITATION ON REGULATION.—The Clean Air Act is amended by inserting after section 312 (42 U.S.C. 7612) the following:

"SEC. 313. LIMITATION ON REGULATION OF EMISSIONS OF CARBON DIOXIDE FROM NEW OR EXISTING POWER PLANTS.

"(a) DEFINITION OF NEW OR EXISTING POWER PLANT.—In this section, the term 'new or existing power plant' means a fossil fuel-fired power plant that commences operation at any time.

"(b) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law (including regula-

tions), the Administrator may not promulgate any regulation or guidance that limits or prohibits any new carbon dioxide emissions from a new or existing power plant, and no such regulation or guidance shall have any force or effect, until the date on which—

"(1) the Secretary of Labor certifies to the Administrator that the regulation or guidance will not generate any loss of employment;

"(2) the Director of the Congressional Budget Office certifies to the Administrator that the regulation or guidance will not result in any loss in the gross domestic product of the United States;

"(3) the Administrator of the Energy Information Administration certifies to the Administrator that the regulation or guidance will not generate any increase in electricity rates in the United States; and

"(4) the Chairperson of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and the President of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation certify to the Administrator the reliability of electricity delivery under the regulation or guidance."

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—The Clean Air Act is amended by redesignating the second section 317 (42 U.S.C. 7617) (relating to economic impact assessment) as section 318.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. BEGICH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. REED, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BROWN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SCHUMER, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 2422. A bill to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; read the first time.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I rise today to introduce the Ensuring Veterans Access to Care Act of 2014.

I thank the 16 cosponsors of this legislation, and they are Senators ROCKEFELLER, BEGICH, SHAHEEN, KAINE, REED, MERKLEY, CASEY, WHITEHOUSE, BLUMENTHAL, HEINRICH, UDALL of New Mexico, SCHATZ, BALDWIN, WYDEN, HIRONO, and LEAHY.

It is safe to say there is broad bipartisan agreement among all of us that every veteran in this country who enters the VA health care system deserves high-quality care and deserves that care in a timely manner.

Overall, talking to veterans in Vermont and, in fact, throughout this country, talking to the veterans service organizations who represent their interests and reading independent studies, they all confirm that by and large, once veterans get into the VA health care system, the system is, in fact, quite good.

However, it has become clear—and I think all of us are aware of what has happened in the last month—that while quality is generally good, there are too many veterans throughout this country waiting too long to access this care.

In recent years, the VA has seen a huge increase in its patient load.

In fact, in the last 4 years, 2 million new veterans have come into the system, many of them with very complicated health care cases, including TBI, post-traumatic stress disorder, and many of the needs that older veterans and older people generally have.

Despite this fact, it is still absolutely unacceptable that some veterans are forced onto long waiting lists for care, and it is totally intolerable—it is reprehensible—that any VA employee could be manipulating data in Phoenix or anyplace else to hide how long veterans have been on waiting lists to see doctors. This is an issue that must be dealt with and must be dealt with rapidly and strongly.

These problems are real, and they have to be addressed. But they should not be an excuse to walk away from a system that serves 6.5 million veterans every single year and 230,000 veterans every single day. This is a system we must fix, not a system that we should ditch.

We must focus on the underlying problems and work to transform the VA.

In general, what our legislation does is it works in three basic areas. No. 1, we give greater authority to the Secretary to fire incompetent senior officials. No. 2, we take very significant steps to shorten the wait times that many veterans are now experiencing. And No. 3, we address the long-term health care needs of the VA in terms of a shortage of staff, doctors, and nurses that currently exists in various locations around the country.

Let me go through some of those issues right now.

Several weeks ago my Republican colleague from Florida requested a vote on legislation that would allow VA Secretaries to immediately remove senior executives due to poor performance.

So let us be clear. I strongly support the effort to make sure that we get rid of incompetent or worse senior executives at the VA. There is no debate about that. But here is what the debate is about. I do not think it is a good idea to give the Secretary of an institution, of an agency that has some 300,000 employees, the ability to simply fire without any due process.

What I worry about is that you can move toward a situation where the VA health care system is politicized in a way that it should not be.

Let me give an example. A new President comes in with a new Secretary. The new Secretary says—whether it is a Democratic President or a Republican President—I want to get rid of 300 senior-level appointees and bring in 300 new people. Four years later, another President comes in—different party—and says: We are going to get rid of those 300 people and bring in 300 more people.

I do not think that provides the kind of stability that the largest integrated