

from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNS) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 333, a resolution strongly recommending that the United States renegotiate the return of the Iraqi Jewish Archive to Iraq.

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 333, *supra*.

## AMENDMENT NO. 2603

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2603 intended to be proposed to S. 1845, a bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

## AMENDMENT NO. 2712

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as co-sponsors of amendment No. 2712 intended to be proposed to S. 1845, a bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

## STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself and Mr. REED):

S. 1999. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to require the consent of parties to contracts for the use of arbitration to resolve controversies arising under the contracts and subject to provisions of such Act and to preserve the rights of servicemembers to bring class actions under such Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, our Nation has a strong tradition of ensuring that our service members are protected while they serve. To keep us safe. As the challenges facing our service members change, we must work to ensure that our laws continue to keep pace. In this regard, I have worked with my colleagues over the years to strengthen the protections for service members and their families under the Service-member Civil Relief Act, SCRA.

One such effort, the Servicemember Housing Protection Act, which I authored and was recently reported out of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, would enhance protections relating to the housing needs of our service members. I am pleased that these provisions have also been included in legislation the Senate will hopefully soon take up, Senator SANDERS's Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act, which I have cosponsored. I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation.

Today, I am joining Senator GRAHAM in introducing on a bipartisan basis legislation to further enhance SCRA protections. The SCRA Rights Protec-

tion Act seeks to protect service members from being forced to accept mandatory arbitration clauses as part of everyday transactions, such as those relating to mortgage origination, automobile leases, and student loans. Often service members sign contracts that include arbitration clauses buried in the fine print, and this eliminates their access to the courts, which can limit their ability to assert their rights and reach a fair resolution. In disputes involving SCRA rights, this bill would make arbitration clauses unenforceable unless all parties consent to arbitration after the dispute arises, and would also ensure that service members retain their right to join with other service members to file a case together as a class.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting these improvements to the SCRA that will better protect our military families while the men and women of our Armed Forces protect our Nation.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

## SENATE RESOLUTION 345—STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE RESTORATION AND PROTECTION OF STATE AUTHORITY AND FLEXIBILITY IN ESTABLISHING AND DEFINING CHALLENGING STUDENT ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS, AND STRONGLY DENOUNCING THE PRESIDENT'S COERCION OF STATES INTO ADOPTING THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS BY CONFERRING PREFERENCES IN FEDERAL GRANTS AND FLEXIBILITY WAIVERS

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. ENZI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

## S. RES. 345

Whereas education belongs in the hands of our parents, local officials, local educational agencies, and States;

Whereas the development of the common education standards known as the Common Core State Standards was originally led by national organizations, but has transformed into an incentives-based mandate from the Federal Government;

Whereas, in 2009, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), both of which are private trade associations, began developing common education standards for kindergarten through grade 12 (referred to in this preamble as the "Common Core State Standards");

Whereas, sections 9527, 9529, 9530, and 9531 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7907, 7909, 7910, and 7911) prohibit the establishment of a national curriculum, national testing, mandatory national teacher certification, and a national student database;

Whereas Federal law makes clear that the Department of Education may not be in-

volved in setting specific content standards or determining the content of State assessments in elementary and secondary education;

Whereas President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced competitive grants through the Race to the Top program under sections 14005 and 14006 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5; 123 Stat. 282) (referred to in this preamble as the "Race to the Top program") in July 2009;

Whereas, on July 24, 2009, Secretary Duncan stated, "The \$4,350,000,000 Race to the Top program that we are unveiling today is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Federal Government to create incentives for far-reaching improvement in our Nation's schools.";

Whereas, on July 24, 2009, Secretary Duncan also stated, "But I want to be clear that Race to the Top is also a reform competition, one where States can increase or decrease their odds of winning Federal support.";

Whereas, under the Race to the Top program guidelines, States seeking funds were pressed to implement 4 core, interconnected reforms, and the first of these reforms was to adopt "internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace";

Whereas, on July 24, 2009, President Obama outlined the connection between common education standards and Race to the Top program funds, stating, "I am issuing a challenge to our [N]ation's governors and school boards, principals and teachers, businesses and non-profits, parents and students: if you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools—your State can win a Race to the Top grant that will not only help students outcompete workers around the world, but let them fulfill their God-given potential.";

Whereas the selection criteria designed by the Department of Education for the Race to the Top program provided that for a State to have any chance to compete for funding, it must commit to adopting a "common set of K-12 standards";

Whereas Common Core State Standards establish a single set of education standards for kindergarten through grade 12 in English language arts and mathematics that States adopt;

Whereas Common Core State Standards were, during the initial application period for the Race to the Top program, and remain, as of the date of the adoption of this resolution, the only common set of kindergarten through grade 12 standards in the United States;

Whereas, on July 24, 2009, Secretary Duncan stated, "To speed this process, the Race to the Top program is going to set aside \$350,000,000 to competitively fund the development of rigorous, common State assessments.";

Whereas, since the Race to the Top program's inception, States have been incentivized by Federal money to adopt common education standards;

Whereas States began adopting Common Core State Standards in 2010;

Whereas States that adopted Common Core State Standards before August 2, 2010, were awarded 40 additional points out of 500 points for their Race to the Top program applications;

Whereas 45 States have adopted Common Core State Standards;

Whereas 31 States, of the 45 total, adopted Common Core State Standards before August 2, 2010;

Whereas States that have adopted Common Core State Standards are given preference in the application process for the waivers issued under the authority of section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7861) that provide flexibility with respect to certain requirements of such Act;

Whereas States that have adopted Common Core State Standards are currently collaborating to develop common assessments that will be aligned to the Common Core State Standards and replace existing end-of-the-year State assessments;

Whereas these assessments will be available in the 2014–2015 school year;

Whereas 2 consortia of States are developing common assessments: the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC);

Whereas national standards lead to national assessments and national assessments lead to a national curriculum;

Whereas education standards help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning;

Whereas challenging academic standards are vital to ensuring students are college and career ready;

Whereas blanket education standards should not be a prerequisite for Federal funding;

Whereas States are incentivized to adopt Common Core State Standards by the explicit correlation between the adoption of the Common Core State Standards by the State and the preference provided to such States through the Race to the Top program and the flexibility waivers issued under the authority of section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7861);

Whereas the Secretary of Education has created a system of grants and waivers that influence, incentivize, and coerce State educational agencies, commissions, and boards into implementing common elementary and secondary school standards and assessments endorsed by the Secretary;

Whereas when Federal funds are linked to the adoption of common education standards, the end result is increased Federal control over education and a decreased ability of schools to meet the individual needs of the students in their schools;

Whereas the implementation of Common Core State Standards will eventually impact home school and private school students when institutions of higher education are pressured to align their admission and readiness standards with curricula based on the Common Core State Standards;

Whereas the 10th amendment of the Constitution of the United States reads, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people”; and

Whereas, throughout the course of United States history, States have maintained the responsibility of education based on the 10th amendment because the explicit power of educating children was not delegated to the United States by the Constitution: Now, therefore, be it

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

(1) States and local educational agencies should maintain the right and responsibility of determining educational curricula, programs of instruction, and assessments for elementary and secondary education;

(2) the Federal Government should not incentivize the adoption of common education standards or the creation of a na-

tional assessment to align with such standards; and

(3) no application process for any Federal grant funds, or for waivers issued by the Secretary under the authority of section 9401 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7861), that occurs after the date of adoption of this resolution should award any additional points, or provide any preference, for the adoption of the Common Core State Standards or any other national common education standards.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 346—CONGRATULATING THE ATHLETES FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON AND ACROSS THE UNITED STATES WHO ARE SET TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2014 WINTER OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES IN SOCHI, RUSSIA**

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

**S. RES. 346**

Whereas the 2014 United States Olympic and Paralympic Team, also known as Team USA, is the largest delegation ever sent to a Winter Olympic Games by the United States;

Whereas the 230 members of Team USA represent the diversity of their Nation and will perform, with skill and grace, to the best of their ability;

Whereas diversity among national Olympic teams fosters greater understanding and peace among nations by upholding the values of the Olympic movement;

Whereas the members of Team USA will represent the spirit of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and fulfill the principles of modern Olympism as outlined in the Olympic Charter as modified by the International Olympic Committee on September 9, 2013;

Whereas on February 11, 2014, women will compete in ski jumping for the first time in Olympic history;

Whereas members of Team USA will compete in all 15 disciplines in the 2014 Winter Olympic Games across 7 sports, and in 94 of 98 medal events;

Whereas Team USA features 106 returning Olympians, including 13 Olympic gold medalists;

Whereas the members of Team USA from the great State of Washington who will proudly represent their Nation are—

(1) Erik Bjornsen of Winthrop, Washington, who will compete in cross-country skiing;

(2) Sadie Bjornsen of Winthrop, Washington, who will compete in cross-country skiing;

(3) J.R. Celski of Federal Way, Washington, who will compete in the 500 meter, 1,000 meter, 1,500 meter, and 5,000 meter relay events in short track speedskating;

(4) Patrick Deneen of Cle Elum, Washington, who will compete in the moguls event in freestyle skiing;

(5) Brian Gregg of Winthrop, Washington, who will compete in cross-country skiing;

(6) Torin Koos of Leavenworth, Washington, who will compete in cross-country skiing;

(7) Christian Niccum of Woodinville, Washington, who will compete in luge; and

(8) Angeli VanLaanen of Bellingham, Washington, who will compete in the halfpipe event in freestyle skiing; and

Whereas all of the athletes of Team USA should be commended and honored for their

contributions to sport, our country, and the Olympic movement: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges the dedication of the United States Olympic Committee, the national governing bodies of each sport that is an event at the 2014 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games, and the administrators, coaches, families, and all others who support the athletes participating in the Olympic and Paralympic Games; and

(2) congratulates the members of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Teams and wishes them success at the 2014 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games in Sochi, Russia.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 347—PROVIDING FOR COMPLETION OF THE ACCELERATED TRANSITION OF UNITED STATES COMBAT AND MILITARY AND SECURITY OPERATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN**

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

**S. RES. 347**

Whereas, in June 2013, the Government of Afghanistan assumed the lead for combat operations in all regions of Afghanistan consistent with the schedule agreed to by President Barack Obama and President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*,

**SECTION 1. COMPLETION OF ACCELERATED TRANSITION OF UNITED STATES COMBAT AND MILITARY AND SECURITY OPERATIONS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN.**

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States—

(1) that, in coordination with the Government of Afghanistan, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member countries, and other allies in Afghanistan, the President shall complete the accelerated transition of United States military and security operations to the Government of Afghanistan and redeploy United States Armed Forces from Afghanistan (including operations involving military and security-related contractors) by not later than December 31, 2014; and

(2) to pursue diplomatic efforts leading to a political settlement and reconciliation of the internal conflict in Afghanistan.

(b) SENSE OF THE SENATE.—It is the sense of the Senate that, should the President determine the necessity to maintain United States troops in Afghanistan to carry out missions after December 31, 2014, any such presence and missions should be authorized by a separate vote of Congress not later than June 1, 2014.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting or prohibiting any authority of the President to—

(1) modify the military strategy, tactics, and operations of United States Armed Forces as such Armed Forces redeploy from Afghanistan;

(2) attack al Qaeda forces wherever such forces are located;

(3) provide financial support and equipment to the Government of Afghanistan for the training and supply of Afghanistan military and security forces;

(4) gather, provide, and share intelligence with United States allies operating in Afghanistan and Pakistan; or