

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA), on public and private entities regulated by FERC, such as electric utilities, by requiring them to pay fees in some circumstances. The bill would impose two additional mandates on public entities. One would require state and tribal governments to certify to DOE whether or not they have updated residential and commercial building codes to meet the latest standards developed by building efficiency organizations. The other would preempt state and local environmental and liability laws if they conflict with emergency orders issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The bill also would impose private-sector mandates on electric transmission organizations and traders of oil contracts and on individuals seeking compensation for damages caused by utilities operating under certain emergency orders. Based on information from DOE and analyses of similar requirements, CBO estimates that the aggregate cost of complying with mandates in the bill would fall below the annual thresholds established in UMRA for intergovernmental and private-sector mandates (\$77 million and \$154 million in 2015, respectively, adjusted annually for inflation).

CBO has not reviewed some provisions of section 2001 and section 4303 for intergovernmental or private-sector mandates. Those provisions would provide the Secretary of Energy with emergency authority to protect the electric transmission grid from cybersecurity threats and would protect entities subject to that authority from liability. Section 4 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act excludes from the application of that act any legislative provisions that are necessary for national security. CBO has determined that those provisions fall within that exclusion.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016 OBJECTION

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, this afternoon the House of Representatives passed a new version of the Intelligence authorization bill for fiscal year 2016. I am concerned that section 305 of this bill would undermine independent oversight of U.S. intelligence agencies, and if this language remains in the bill, I will oppose any request to pass it by unanimous consent.

Section 305 would limit the authority of the watchdog body known as the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board. In my judgment, curtailing the authority of an independent oversight body like this board would be a clearly unwise decision. Most Americans whom I talk to want intelligence agencies to work to protect them from foreign threats, and they also want those agencies to be subject to strong, independent oversight, and this provision would undermine some of that oversight.

Section 305 states that the Privacy and Civil Liberties Board shall not have the authority to investigate any covert action program. This is problematic for two reasons. First, while this board's oversight activities to date have not focused on covert action, it is reasonably easy to envision a covert action program that could have a significant impact on Americans' privacy and civil liberties—for example, if it

included a significant surveillance component.

An even bigger concern is that the CIA, in particular, could attempt to take advantage of this language and could refuse to cooperate with investigations of its surveillance activities by arguing that those activities were somehow connected to a covert action program. I recognize that this may not be the intent of this provision, but in my 15 years on the Intelligence Committee, I have repeatedly seen senior CIA officials go to striking lengths to resist external oversight of their activities. In my judgment, Congress should be making it harder, not easier, for intelligence officials to stymie independent oversight.

For these reasons, it is my intention to object to any unanimous consent request to pass this bill in its current form. I look forward to working with my colleagues to modify or remove this provision.

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND CONFERENCE

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my opening remarks during the conference with the House of Representatives on S. 1177, the Every Child Achieves Act, be printed in the RECORD.

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

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND CONFERENCE

Representative Kline, Representative Scott, Senator Murray, ladies and gentlemen.

We're here for one reason today, because I sat down with Patty Murray in January and she gave me some good advice and I took it.

And the advice was—why don't we see if we can develop a bipartisan beginning to this bill, because we had failed in the last two congresses.

And as a result we ended up with a bill that passed by the Senate after many amendments, 81 to 17.

Newsweek magazine recently reminded us what we already knew very well: No Child Left Behind is a law that everybody wants fixed. Governors, teachers, superintendents, parents, Republicans, Democrats, students they all want to see this law fixed.

There is a consensus about that. And, fortunately, there is a consensus about how to do it.

And that consensus is this—Continue the law's important measurements of academic progress of students but restore to states, school districts, classroom teachers and parents the responsibility for deciding what to do about improving student achievement.

That's why in the Senate the bill passed 81 to 17.

That's why the bill had the support of the nation's governors, the Chief State School Officers, the school superintendents, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers.

There were some differences between the House bill and Senate bill. Fundamentally, they were based upon that same consensus.

Both end the waivers through which the U.S. Department of Education has become, in effect, a national school board for more than 80,000 Schools in 42 states.

Both end the federal Common Core mandate.

Both move decisions about whether schools and teachers are succeeding or failing out of Washington, D.C., and back to states and communities and teachers where those decisions belong because the real way to higher standards, better teachers and real accountability is through states, communities, and classrooms—not through Washington, D.C.

That's why I believe this conference will be successful, that both houses will approve our conference work product and I believe the president will sign the legislation into law.

Even though this agreement, in my opinion, is the most significant step toward local control of schools in 25 years, some Republicans would like to go further.

I am one of them.

But my Scholarship for Kids proposal, which would have given states the option to allow federal dollars to follow children to the schools their parents choose, only received 45 votes in the Senate. We need 60.

So I have decided, like a president named Reagan once advised, that I'll take 80 percent of what I want and I'll fight for the other 20 percent on another day.

Besides, if I were to vote no, I would be voting to leave in place the federal Common Core mandate, the national school board, the waivers in 42 states. Let me repeat: Voting no is voting to leave in place the Common Core mandate, the national school board, and waivers in 42 states.

There are a lot of people counting on us: 50 million children and 3.4 million teachers and 100,000 public schools.

The law expired seven years ago. If it were strictly applied, every school in America a failing school.

Teachers and children and parents have been waiting all that time. If this were homework, they would give us a failing grade for being tardy.

So I hope we will remind ourselves, and this is my conclusion, that it is a great privilege to serve in the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate.

That there is no need for us to have that privilege if all we do is announce our opinions. We could do that at home, or on the radio, or the newspaper or the street corner.

As members of the Congress, after we have our say, our job is to get a result.

We're not the Iraqi parliament.

We are members of the United States Congress, and I hope that we will demonstrate that we cherish that privilege and that we cherish our children by building upon this consensus—fixing the law that everybody wants fixed—and showing that we are capable of governing by bringing badly needed certainty to federal education policy in 100,000 public schools.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a copy of my closing remarks during the conference with the House of Representatives on S. 1177, the Every Child Achieves Act, be printed in the RECORD.

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

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND CONFERENCE

The real winners today are 100,000 public schools which are attended by 50 million children, where three and a half million teachers work and are eager for us to bring some certainty to federal education policy.

This is a law that everybody knows needs fixing. But also in fixing this law we know that there were alligators lurking in every

corner of the pond, and the fact that we were able to both in the Senate and the House navigate that pond and deal with respectfully with one another—and also recognize in some cases our different points of view couldn't be included—I think, is a great credit to the process.

Governors, teachers, superintendents, Republicans and Democrats, wanted us to do this, and we've done it so far. There's not only consensus on the need to fix it, but we have now shown today that in the House and Senate of the United States, there is consensus on how to fix it. And that means we'll keep the important measures of student achievement, but we will restore to states, communities and classroom teachers the responsibility with what to do about the results of the tests.

This would not have happened without your leadership and Rep. Bobby Scott, who has been a terrific partner in all this, and the cooperation of the members of the House and Senate on this committee.

I've complimented Senator Murray perhaps excessively over the last year, but she has been absolutely key to this. So I thank you for the opportunity to participate in this.

I came to the Senate not just to make a speech but also to try and get a result and today we've gotten one.

TRIBUTE TO BONNIE CARROLL

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, last week President Obama awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, our Nation's highest civilian honor, to my longtime friend and fellow Alaskan Bonnie Carroll. In my judgment, this is a recognition long due. While America may have first heard the name Bonnie Carroll last week, our military families have long viewed her as a lifeline, a true woman of valor.

Bonnie is the founder of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, TAPS. She founded TAPS after the death of her husband, Alaska Army National Guard BG Tom Carroll, in a military plane crash on November 12, 1992.

TAPS is an organization that provides support to military families who have lost a loved one. TAPS welcomes anyone who is grieving the death of someone who died in the military. Its families have experienced loss in a variety of ways—from combat, suicide, terrorism, homicide, negligence, accidents, and illness. Our survivors include mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, fiancés, and other relatives of those who have died.

Since its launch in 1994, TAPS has cared for the more than 50,000 surviving family members through a national network of peer-based emotional support services, a 24/7 helpline available to those grieving a loss, connections to community-based care throughout the Nation, and casework assistance for families navigating all of the resources and benefits available to them.

One of TAPS' most respected programs is its "Good Grief Camp," which is offered to young people who have lost a loved one. This program pairs

young survivors with Active-Duty military mentors. Military mentors help the young survivors learn how our Nation honors those who have served and sacrificed and companion these children during their grief journey.

I suspect that many of our fellow Americans had never heard of Bonnie Carroll or TAPS before. Unlike some of the others honored at last week's ceremony—people like Barbra Streisand, Steven Spielberg, and James Taylor—Bonnie is not a celebrity. She does not seek attention for herself. Her laser focus is on helping military families, and she does nothing to distract herself or her organization from that mission. But that doesn't make her any less a rockstar. And now America knows why.

Incredible as it may seem, Bonnie Carroll's road to distinction did not begin with her work at TAPS. Her resume includes service to America as a member of the Air National Guard, the U.S. Air Force Reserve, as a senior staff member in the Reagan White House Cabinet Affairs Office, and the VA's White House liaison in the administration of President George W. Bush. She relocated to Baghdad to serve with the Coalition Provisional Authority. She has served on countless boards and commissions related to military health, suicide prevention, and grief therapy.

Bonnie reflects the very best of the Alaskan spirit, a spirit of community and service before self. I am honored to join with the President in recognizing the extraordinary contributions of Bonnie Carroll, my dear friend, fellow Alaskan, and great American.

TRIBUTE TO ALICE WATERS

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Alice Waters, groundbreaking chef, restaurant owner, author, and activist who was recently awarded the National Humanities Medal by President Obama for her pioneering role in the sustainable food movement.

As a student at the University of California, Berkeley, in the 1960s, Alice developed a passion for social activism. While studying abroad in Paris one semester, she began to realize the impact food can have on our daily lives. Exposed to lively discussions over fresh, locally sourced home-cooked meals, a simple yet revolutionary idea took root, and in 1971 she and a group of friends opened Chez Panisse in Berkeley.

It was a concept that took off almost immediately: fresh, local, and organic food that changed with the seasons. As the restaurant's success grew, Alice and her staff created a network of local farmers and producers whose dedication to sustainable agriculture supplied Chez Panisse's fresh ingredients, helped to pioneer farm-to-table-cuisine, and served as a model for future generations of restaurant owners.

Alice's influence spread far beyond the kitchen. In 1996, she created the

Edible Schoolyard Project to help schools develop community gardens, so students can better understand the origins of their food and how to create fresh, local, and healthy meals. Today there are more than 5,000 Edible Schoolyard Project locations worldwide, and the effort helped inspire First Lady Michelle Obama to plant a vegetable garden on the South Lawn of the White House.

Alice has said that "good food is a right, not a privilege," and her work is helping to make that a reality. She has revolutionized the way our country cooks, eats, and thinks about food—and we are all better because of it.

I am proud to congratulate my friend, Alice Waters, on this incredible honor and wish her many more years of continued success.

RECOGNIZING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the 100th anniversary of the American Medical Women's Association, AMWA, the first national organization of women physicians.

One hundred years ago, less than 6 percent of all physicians in the United States were women. Recognizing a crucial need to provide support for these pioneering women and to bring diversity to the medical field, Dr. Bertha Van Hoosen founded the AMWA on November 18, 1915, in Chicago.

The AMWA quickly established a network and support system for women in the medical profession and documented their lack of opportunities in postgraduate training, internships, and academic appointments.

Over the years, the AMWA successfully advocated to increase leadership roles for women doctors, sponsored research and panel discussions on medical women in the workforce, and established scholarship and mentorship programs to encourage the next generation of women leaders. The AMWA has also worked to improve women's health by addressing issues from human trafficking and affordable contraceptive care, to childhood obesity and osteoporosis risk across the globe.

For the past century, the American Medical Women's Association has served as the vision and voice of women in medicine. As we celebrate their extraordinary milestone, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the AMWA for their tireless efforts to open the door for generations of women physicians. Because of their work, countless men, women, and children have benefited from the dedicated service of AMWA members, and for that we are all grateful.

OBSERVING WORLD AIDS DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to commemorate the 28th World AIDS Day. This day is a time to recognize the tremendous progress we have