

(Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 209, a bill to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005, and for other purposes.

S. 257

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 257, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to physician supervision of therapeutic hospital outpatient services.

S. 259

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 259, a bill to modify the efficiency standards for grid-enabled water heaters.

S. 271

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 271, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 272

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 272, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

S. 275

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 275, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of home as a site of care for infusion therapy under the Medicare program.

S. 282

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 282, 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. 295

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 295, a bill to amend section 2259 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 299

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED)

were added as cosponsors of S. 299, a bill to allow travel between the United States and Cuba.

S. 301

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) were added as cosponsors of S. 301, 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. 308

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 308, a bill to reauthorize 21st century community learning centers, and for other purposes.

S. 309

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 309, a bill to prohibit earmarks.

S. 316

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) were added as cosponsors of S. 316, a bill to amend the charter school program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

S. 355

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 355, a bill to support the provision of safe relationship behavior education and training.

S. RES. 40

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 40, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding efforts by the United States and others to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 396. A bill to establish the Proprietary Education Oversight Coordination Committee; 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. 396

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 "Proprietary Education Oversight Coordination Improvement Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) EXECUTIVE OFFICER.—The term "executive officer", with respect to a proprietary institution of higher education that is a publicly traded corporation, means—

(A) the president of such corporation;

(B) a vice president of such corporation who is in charge of a principal business unit, division, or function of such corporation, such as sales, administration, or finance; or

(C) any other officer or person who performs a policy making function for such corporation.

(2) FEDERAL EDUCATION ASSISTANCE.—The term "Federal education assistance" means any Federal financial assistance provided under any Federal law through a grant, a contract, a subsidy, a loan, a guarantee, an insurance, or any other means to a proprietary institution of higher education, including Federal financial assistance that is disbursed or delivered to such institution, on behalf of a student, or to a student to be used to attend such institution, except that such term shall not include any monthly housing stipend provided under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code.

(3) PRIVATE EDUCATION LOAN.—The term "private education loan"—

(A) means a loan provided by a private educational lender (as defined in section 140(a) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1650(a))) that—

(i) is not made, insured, or guaranteed under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.);

(ii) is issued expressly for postsecondary educational expenses to a borrower, regardless of whether the loan is provided through the educational institution that the subject student attends or directly to the borrower from the private educational lender (as so defined); and

(iii) is not made, insured, or guaranteed under title VII or title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 292 et seq. and 296 et seq.); and

(B) does not include an extension of credit under an open end consumer credit plan, a reverse mortgage transaction, a residential mortgage transaction, or any other loan that is secured by real property or a dwelling.

(4) PROPRIETARY INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term "proprietary institution of higher education" has the meaning given the term in section 102(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(b)).

(5) RECRUITING AND MARKETING ACTIVITIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term "recruiting and marketing activities" means activities that consist of the following:

(i) Advertising and promotion activities, including paid announcements in newspapers, magazines, radio, television, billboards, electronic media, naming rights, or any other public medium of communication, including paying for displays or promotions at job fairs, military installations, or college recruiting events.

(ii) Efforts to identify and attract prospective students, either directly or through a contractor or other third party, including contact concerning a prospective student's potential enrollment or application for a grant, a loan, or work assistance under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) or participation in preadmission or advising activities, including—

(I) paying employees responsible for overseeing enrollment and for contacting potential students in-person, by phone, by email, or by other internet communications regarding enrollment; and

(II) soliciting an individual to provide contact information to an institution of higher

education, including through websites established for such purpose and funds paid to third parties for such purpose.

(iii) Such other activities as the Secretary of Education may prescribe, including paying for promotion or sponsorship of education or military-related associations.

(B) EXCEPTIONS.—Any activity that is required as a condition of receipt of funds by an institution under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.), is specifically authorized under such title, or is otherwise specified by the Secretary of Education, shall not be considered to be a recruiting and marketing activity under subparagraph (A).

(6) STATE APPROVAL AGENCY.—The term “State approval agency” means any State agency that determines whether an institution of higher education is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education.

(7) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—The term “veterans service organization” means an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a committee to be known as the “Proprietary Education Oversight Coordination Committee” (referred to in this Act as the “Committee”) and to be composed of the head (or the designee of such head) of each of the following Federal entities:

- (1) The Department of Education.
- (2) The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.
- (3) The Department of Justice.
- (4) The Securities and Exchange Commission.
- (5) The Department of Defense.
- (6) The Department of Veterans Affairs.
- (7) The Federal Trade Commission.
- (8) The Department of Labor.
- (9) The Internal Revenue Service.
- (10) At the discretion of the President, any other relevant Federal agency or department.

(b) PURPOSES.—The Committee shall have the following purposes:

- (1) Coordinate Federal oversight of proprietary institutions of higher education to—
 - (A) improve enforcement of applicable Federal laws and regulations;
 - (B) increase accountability of proprietary institutions of higher education to students and taxpayers; and
 - (C) ensure the promotion of quality education programs.
- (2) Coordinate Federal activities to protect students from unfair, deceptive, abusive, unethical, fraudulent, or predatory practices, policies, or procedures of proprietary institutions of higher education.

(3) Encourage information sharing among agencies related to Federal investigations, audits, or inquiries of proprietary institutions of higher education.

(4) Increase coordination and cooperation between Federal and State agencies, including State Attorneys General and State approval agencies, with respect to improving oversight and accountability of proprietary institutions of higher education.

(5) Develop best practices and consistency among Federal and State agencies in the dissemination of consumer information regarding proprietary institutions of higher education to ensure that students, parents, and other stakeholders have easy access to such information.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) DESIGNEES.—For any designee described in subsection (a), the head of the member entity shall appoint a high-level official who

exercises significant decision making authority for the oversight or investigatory activities and responsibilities related to proprietary institutions of higher education of the respective Federal entity of such head.

(2) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary of Education or the designee of such Secretary shall serve as the Chairperson of the Committee.

(3) COMMITTEE SUPPORT.—The head of each entity described in subsection (a) shall ensure appropriate staff and officials of such entity are available to support the Committee-related work of such entity.

SEC. 4. MEETINGS.

(a) COMMITTEE MEETINGS.—The members of the Committee shall meet regularly, but not less than once during each quarter of each fiscal year, to carry out the purposes described in section 3(b).

(b) MEETINGS WITH STATE AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS.—The Committee shall meet not less than once each fiscal year, and shall otherwise interact regularly, with State Attorneys General, State approval agencies, veterans service organizations, and consumer advocates to carry out the purposes described in section 3(b).

SEC. 5. REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Committee shall submit a report each year to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and any other committee of Congress that the Committee determines appropriate.

(b) PUBLIC ACCESS.—The report described in subsection (a) shall be made available to the public in a manner that is easily accessible to parents, students, and other stakeholders, in accordance with the best practices developed under section 3(b)(5).

(c) CONTENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The report shall include—

- (A) an accounting of any action (as defined in paragraph (3)) taken by the Federal Government, any member entity of the Committee, or a State—
 - (i) to enforce Federal or State laws and regulations applicable to proprietary institutions of higher education;
 - (ii) to hold proprietary institutions of higher education accountable to students and taxpayers; and
 - (iii) to promote quality education programs;
- (B) a summary of complaints against each proprietary institution of higher education received by any member entity of the Committee;

- (C) the data described in paragraph (2) and any other data relevant to proprietary institutions of higher education that the Committee determines appropriate; and
- (D) recommendations of the Committee for such legislative and administrative actions as the Committee determines are necessary to—
 - (i) improve enforcement of applicable Federal laws;
 - (ii) increase accountability of proprietary institutions of higher education to students and taxpayers; and
 - (iii) ensure the promotion of quality education programs.

(2) DATA.—

(A) INDUSTRY-WIDE DATA.—The report shall include data on all proprietary institutions of higher education that consists of information regarding—

- (i) the total amount of Federal education assistance that proprietary institutions of higher education received for the previous academic year, and the percentage of the total amount of Federal education assistance provided to institutions of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Edu-

cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)) for such previous academic year that reflects such total amount of Federal education assistance provided to proprietary institutions of higher education for such previous academic year;

(ii) the total amount of Federal education assistance that proprietary institutions of higher education received for the previous academic year, disaggregated by—

(I) educational assistance in the form of a loan provided under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.);

(II) educational assistance in the form of a grant provided under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.);

(III) educational assistance provided under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code;

(IV) assistance for tuition and expenses under section 2007 of title 10, United States Code;

(V) assistance provided under section 1784a of title 10, United States Code; and

(VI) Federal education assistance not described in subclauses (I) through (V);

(iii) the percentage of the total amount of Federal education assistance provided to institutions of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)) for such previous academic year for each of the programs described in subclauses (I) through (VI) of clause (ii) that reflects such total amount of Federal education assistance provided to proprietary institutions of higher education for such previous academic year for each of such programs;

(iv) the average retention and graduation rates for students pursuing a degree at proprietary institutions of higher education;

(v) the average cohort default rate (as defined in section 435(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1085(m))) for proprietary institutions of higher education, and an annual list of cohort default rates (as so defined) for all proprietary institutions of higher education;

(vi) for careers requiring the passage of a licensing examination—

(I) the passage rate of individuals who attended a proprietary institution of higher education taking such examination to pursue such a career; and

(II) the passage rate of all individuals taking such exam to pursue such a career; and

(vii) the use of private education loans at proprietary institutions of higher education that includes—

(I) an estimate of the total number of such loans; and

(II) information on the average debt, default rate, and interest rate of such loans.

(B) DATA ON PUBLICLY TRADED CORPORATIONS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The report shall include data on proprietary institutions of higher education that are publicly traded corporations, consisting of information on—

(I) any pre-tax profit of such proprietary institutions of higher education—

(aa) reported as a total amount and an average percent of revenue for all such proprietary institutions of higher education; and

(bb) reported for each such proprietary institution of higher education;

(II) revenue for such proprietary institutions of higher education spent on recruiting and marketing activities, student instruction, and student support services, reported—

(aa) as a total amount and an average percent of revenue for all such proprietary institutions of higher education; and

(bb) for each such proprietary institution of higher education;

(III) total compensation packages of the executive officers of each such proprietary institution of higher education;

(IV) a list of institutional loan programs offered by each such proprietary institution of higher education that includes information on the default and interest rates of such programs; and

(V) the data described in clauses (ii) and (iii).

(ii) **DISAGGREGATED BY OWNERSHIP.**—The report shall include data on proprietary institutions of higher education that are publicly traded corporations, disaggregated by corporate or parent entity, brand name, and campus, consisting of—

(I) the total cost of attendance for each program at each such proprietary institution of higher education, and information comparing such total cost for each such program to—

(aa) the total cost of attendance for each program at each public institution of higher education; and

(bb) the average total cost of attendance for each program at all institutions of higher education, including such institutions that are public and such institutions that are private;

(II) total enrollment, disaggregated by—

(aa) individuals enrolled in programs taken online; and

(bb) individuals enrolled in programs that are not taken online;

(III) the average retention and graduation rates for students pursuing a degree at such proprietary institutions of higher education;

(IV) the percentage of students enrolled in such proprietary institutions of higher education who complete a program of such an institution within—

(aa) the standard period of completion for such program; and

(bb) a period that is 150 percent of such standard period of completion;

(V) the total cost of attendance for each program at such proprietary institutions of higher education;

(VI) the average cohort default rate, as defined in section 435(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1085(m)), for such proprietary institutions of higher education, and an annual list of cohort default rates (as so defined) for all proprietary institutions of higher education;

(VII) the median educational debt incurred by students who complete a program at such a proprietary institution of higher education;

(VIII) the median educational debt incurred by students who start but do not complete a program at such a proprietary institution of higher education;

(IX) the job placement rate for students who complete a program at such a proprietary institution of higher education and the type of employment obtained by such students;

(X) for careers requiring the passage of a licensing examination, the rate of individuals who attended such a proprietary institution of higher education and passed such an examination; and

(XI) the number of complaints from students enrolled in such proprietary institutions of higher education who have submitted a complaint to any member entity of the Committee.

(iii) **DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS ASSISTANCE.**—

(I) **IN GENERAL.**—To the extent practicable, the report shall provide information on the data described in clause (ii) for individuals using, to pay for the costs of attending such a proprietary institution of higher education, Federal education assistance provided under—

(aa) chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code;

(bb) section 2007 of title 10, United States Code; and

(cc) section 1784a of title 10, United States Code.

(II) **REVENUE.**—The report shall provide information on the revenue of proprietary institutions of higher education that are publicly traded corporations that is derived from the Federal education assistance described in subclause (I).

(C) **COMPARISON DATA.**—To the extent practicable, the report shall provide information comparing the data described in subparagraph (B) for proprietary institutions of higher education that are publicly traded corporations with such data for public institutions of higher education disaggregated by State.

(3) **ACCOUNTING OF ANY ACTION.**—For the purposes of paragraph (1)(A), the term “any action” shall include—

(A) a complaint filed by a Federal or State agency in a local, State, Federal, or tribal court;

(B) an administrative proceeding by a Federal or State agency involving noncompliance of any applicable law or regulation; or

(C) any other review, audit, or administrative process by any Federal or State agency that results in a penalty, suspension, or termination from any Federal or State program.

SEC. 6. FOR-PROFIT COLLEGE WARNING LIST FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Each academic year, the Committee shall publish a list to be known as the “For-Profit College Warning List for Parents and Students” to be comprised of proprietary institutions of higher education—

(1) that have engaged in illegal activity during the previous academic year as determined by a Federal or State court;

(2) that have entered into a settlement resulting in a monetary payment;

(3) that have had any higher education program withdrawn or suspended; or

(4) for which the Committee has sufficient evidence of widespread or systemic unfair, deceptive, abusive, unethical, fraudulent, or predatory practices, policies, or procedures that pose a threat to the academic success, financial security, or general best interest of students.

(b) **DETERMINATIONS.**—In making a determination pursuant to subsection (a)(4), the Committee may consider evidence that includes the following:

(1) Any consumer complaint collected by any member entity of the Committee.

(2) Any complaint filed by a Federal or State agency in a Federal, State, local, or tribal court.

(3) Any administrative proceeding by a Federal or State agency involving noncompliance of any applicable law or regulation.

(4) Any other review, audit, or administrative process by any Federal or State agency that results in a penalty, suspension, or termination from any Federal or State program.

(5) Data or information submitted by a proprietary institution of higher education to any accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary of Education pursuant to section 496 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) or the findings or adverse actions of any such accrediting agency or association.

(6) Information submitted by a proprietary institution of higher education to any member entity of the Committee.

(7) Any other evidence that the Committee determines relevant in making a determination pursuant to subsection (a)(4).

(c) **PUBLICATION.**—Not later than July 1 of each fiscal year, the Committee shall publish the list under subsection (a) prominently and in a manner that is easily accessible to par-

ents, students, and other stakeholders, in accordance with any best practices developed under section 3(b)(5).

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 397. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a temporary dividends received deduction for dividends received from a controlled foreign corporation; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I introduce the Foreign Earnings Reinvestment Act that would generate the flow of an estimated \$1.9 trillion back into the American economy by temporarily allowing companies to return profits earned overseas to the U.S. at a reduced tax rate. It is no secret that one of the primary reasons why this money is laying idle and doing nothing to spur job creation is due to the fact that our Nation has the highest corporate tax rate in the free world at 35 percent. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, when you add in additional State and local taxes the combined corporate rate jumps to a staggering 39.1 percent. Whereas, the average combined corporate tax rate for the rest of the developed world, excluding the U.S. is around 25 percent.

Congress has long debated tax reform and has failed to act. It is my hope that, under a Republican controlled Congress, we will be able to move forward with tax reform, which includes lowering both the personal and corporate tax rate and eliminating tax loopholes. If we are not going to act on behalf of the American taxpayer than we need to make available temporary tax incentives to bring this money back home providing a much needed boost to our economy.

The Foreign Earnings Reinvestment Act would encourage American companies to bring overseas earnings back to the United States and creates strong incentives for those firms to invest these earnings in U.S. employees.

Specifically, the bill would temporarily reduce the current 35 percent corporate rate to an 8.75 percent effective rate on foreign earnings brought back to the United States. If companies are able to show that they are expanding their payroll by 10 percent through net job creation or higher payroll, the bill would allow these corporations to obtain up to a 5.25 percent effective repatriation rate. In addition, the bill discourages U.S. companies from reducing employment by including in a company's gross income calculation of \$75,000 per full-time position that is eliminated.

This common sense legislation will drive the roughly \$1.9 trillion currently parked overseas back here to the United States, boosting our economy and spurring job creation.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 401. A bill to amend rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure to improve attorney accountability, and for

other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There be no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 401

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 “Lawsuit Abuse Reduction Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. ATTORNEY ACCOUNTABILITY.

(a) SANCTIONS UNDER RULE 11.—Rule 11(c) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “may” and inserting “shall”;

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking “Rule 5” and all that follows through “motion.” and inserting “rule 5.”; and

(3) in paragraph (4), by striking “situated” and all that follows through the end of the paragraph and inserting “situated, and to compensate the parties that were injured by such conduct. Subject to the limitations in paragraph (5), the sanction shall consist of an order to pay to the party or parties the amount of the reasonable expenses incurred as a direct result of the violation, including reasonable attorneys’ fees and costs. The court may also impose additional appropriate sanctions, such as striking the pleadings, dismissing the suit, or other directives of a nonmonetary nature, or, if warranted for effective deterrence, an order directing payment of a penalty into the court.”.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act or an amendment made by this Act shall be construed to bar or impede the assertion or development of new claims, defenses, or remedies under Federal, State, or local laws, including civil rights laws, or under the Constitution of the United States.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. RISCH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 405. A bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes; read the first time.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am here on the floor today with my friend and colleague from the State of Idaho to speak in support of legislation we have just dropped today; that is, the Bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act of 2015. I have introduced it today, along with the prime cosponsor, Senator HEINRICH from New Mexico.

I think it is important to recognize that this bipartisan bill is supported with original cosponsors, including the Senator from Idaho, Mr. RISCH, Senator MANCHIN, Senator FISCHER, and Senator HEITKAMP, as well as myself and Senator HEINRICH. I wish to acknowledge the role of Senator HEINRICH in this and his staff for working with us to revise and reintroduce this important bill. I would also like to acknowledge the great work the bipartisan leadership of the Senate’s Sportsmen’s Caucus has done on this issue, led ably by my friend from Idaho. I think it is important to recognize the groundwork, the leg work that went

into the development of this bill and the work the caucus did in doing so. So I thank my colleagues for all of their good, hard work.

We are here today to not only announce this reintroduction—because this is now the third Congress we have tried to advance the Bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act—but also to really kind of re-up the conversation about its importance and really to urge the Senate to come together to pass legislation such as we are talking about today.

We have sportsmen all over the country. I come from a big State that is wide open, and people come to Alaska to hunt and to fish. They never want to leave, and that is fine. That is how my husband came to Alaska—it was the lure of sport fishing on the Kenai River. So many of our military are on assignment to Alaska, and they end up staying because of the hunting and fishing and other recreational opportunities Alaska offers. It is not just places such as Alaska and Idaho that offer great outdoors opportunities; it is all over the country, from big cities to small towns, North and South.

For so many of us, hunting is a tradition that is passed down from generation to generation. Certainly my family is evidence of that. I think it is important to recognize that while we talk about hunting and fishing as being the best known recreational opportunities, we also include with this legislation enthusiasts who go outside to go boating and so many of the other outdoor activities.

We speak often on this floor about jobs and economic opportunities and what they bring to our Nation, the important role they play. Sportsmen and sportswomen really are economic contributors when we think about their role. Back in 2013 there were approximately 37 million people who hunted or fished in America. That is roughly equal to the entire population of the State of California. Those numbers are always on the rise. Again, when we have strong numbers, we also have strong economic impacts. Sports men and women spent roughly \$90 billion in 2013. Those numbers have probably risen since then. Those dollars go not only to the gear and equipment, which is what we would expect, but also to the travel industry, to the hospitality industry, and to so many other sectors of the economy.

Spending by sports men and women also aids our conservation efforts. Excise taxes on fishing and hunting and shooting equipment, motorboat fuel, as well as the fees for licenses and stamps are all dedicated to State fish and wildlife management and conservation. These folks care deeply about the environment and conservation, and that is why these excise taxes are in place to take care of our natural resources. Since their establishment, the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs have contributed over \$14.5 billion to conservation.

I mentioned Alaska and its role as kind of a magnet for those who like to

hunt and fish. In my State alone, we have over 125,000 individuals who engage in hunting every year. It has created more than \$439 million in retail sales and \$195 million in salaries and wages. In Alaska, we bring in over \$53 million to the State and local governments each year. We had a big holiday a year or so ago when Cabela’s opened its doors. It was as though we had finally arrived on the scene. All of our sportsmen—hunters and fishermen—were loving it.

On the fishing side, when we think about the economic impact in my State, it is even more impressive. Last year over 460,000 people bought fishing licenses to take part in some of the best fishing in the world. It brought about \$1.4 billion to Alaska’s economy. These are huge contributors to our tax base, to our economy, and they are key to who we are as a State.

Our Bipartisan Sportsmen’s Act of 2015 that we are introducing today builds on the efforts of last year. Last year’s bill saw 46 Members of this Chamber coming together to support it. We have taken all of the provisions from the previous bill except for two that were enacted in other legislation and then we have added some additional bipartisan provisions. We have Senator HEINRICH’s revised HUNT Act. We have a couple of others that are new to the bill. All told, these measures increase access to provide greater opportunities for sports men and women to enjoy our public lands.

There are a lot of different components in the bill. I know my colleague from Idaho will speak to several of them. I wish to highlight a couple that I think are important in this discussion.

First is a bill I have championed for several years now called the Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act. It protects recreational hunting and fishing on our BLM and our National Forest Service lands while reaffirming other prior congressional actions enacted to protect hunting and wildlife conservation. So the bill we have introduced—again, this is the same one we have had previously—requires BLM and Forest Service lands to be open to hunting, to recreational fishing, or recreational shooting as a matter of law unless the managing agency acts to close lands to such activity. So it is open unless otherwise closed. Leaving lands open unless closed means that agencies need not take action then to open them up to hunting and fishing. Agencies are still permitted to close or put restrictions on land for a number of purposes, such as resource conservation and public safety. But on the whole this is really an affirmation that sportsmen and sportswomen are welcome on our public lands. Isn’t that what our public lands are supposed to be all about, which is being able to access them?

The Hunting, Fishing, and Recreational Shooting Protection Act has again been included in this bill. This

was introduced previously by Senators THUNE and KLOBUCHAR as a standalone bill, but its language is very important to many of us and to nearly all the sportsmen's groups we have heard from.

We also have provisions in the bill that deal with some of the efforts to limit ammunition and fishing tackle by some organizations. I think we know that if we can't access, if we can't afford traditional ammunition and fishing tackle, it makes it pretty tough to go out and enjoy these opportunities.

We have good pieces in here relating to conservation priorities, including the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

I again the Sportsmen's Caucus and Senator HEINRICH as the prime Democratic lead on this bill. My hope is that we will be able to build this coalition on the floor and get even beyond the number 46, which is what we had last go-around with this legislation.

I think we will have good discussion within the committee and here on the Senate floor. My hope is that the third time is going to be the charm for this sportsmen's legislation. It is important to us, it is important to our economy, and it is an issue which I am certainly willing to take aim at. Sorry for the pun.

With that, I yield to my friend from Idaho.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today also in support of the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015. I am honored to be here today with Senators MURKOWSKI, Idahoans and Alaskans have a lot in common when it comes to outdoor sporting activities, including hunting and fishing. Senator CRAPO and I were honored to host Senator MURKOWSKI in Idaho. Although we don't have the acres Alaska has, we certainly have that diverse environment for hunting and fishing in many different areas of the State that support and will continue to support both fishing and game.

This bill is cosponsored by a bipartisan team of Senators who are committed to advancing the agenda of sportsmen and sportswomen. Senators MURKOWSKI and HEINRICH, along with the leaders of the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus—myself and Senator MANCHIN as the co-chairmen and Senator FISCHER and Senator HEITKAMP as the co-vice chairmen—make up the largest bipartisan caucus in Congress, and we have diligently labored to craft this bipartisan legislation that is supported by a broad coalition of sportsmen's groups. Indeed, we have worked on it substantially more since the first of the year. Last year we labored over it at great length and were not able to get it across the finish line, but we are cautiously optimistic this year that we have hit that right spot where we actually can get this across the finish line this year.

One provision of this package will encourage States to create and maintain public shooting ranges. This will promote gun safety by providing a venue to teach young adults about firearms. These public ranges can also serve as a place to hold hunter education classes and can be used as facilities to train police forces.

This bill will also allow any legal gun owner to carry a firearm on land administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This provision will require the Army Corps to conform their regulations to align with local laws related to firearms. I wish to thank my colleague from Idaho, Senator MIKE CRAPO, for his hard work and leadership on this particular issue. I know the sportsmen of Idaho and across the country are pleased to know that this legislation will allow firearms on Army Corps land and that it is included in this bipartisan sportsmen's package.

This bill will also reauthorize the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, a program that enables the Bureau of Land Management to sell public land for community development and other projects. This land-for-land approach creates jobs and generates funding for the BLM to acquire critical inholdings from willing sellers.

I am also proud to include a provision supported by my colleague from Wyoming, Senator MIKE ENZI, to allow archery equipment to be transported and possessed in national parks. Archery is one of the fastest growing sports in America. It should not be illegal to carry a bow in a national park.

I am happy to work with my colleagues to include this important provision in this Sportsmen's Act. Whether you hunt or fish to put food on the table or for sport or to pass down a tradition to your family or for game-management purposes, there is something in this bill for you.

With more than half a million sportsmen and sportswomen in the State of Idaho, this legislation will ensure they can continue to access their favorite hunting or fishing sport. In fact, the number of people who hunt each year in Idaho would fill Boise State Broncos stadium more than 6½ times. Most of you are familiar with that stadium since it is the only stadium in America that has blue turf, and most everyone has seen that.

For those of us who hunt and fish, it is difficult to put into words why this legislation is so important. I ask everyone I talk to about these issues to encourage and teach youngsters about hunting and fishing. In Idaho this last year 14,000 kids purchased a junior fishing license, and approximately 14,000 purchased a junior hunting license. These numbers could be higher, and they should be higher. It is important to teach and mentor these future generations—those coming behind us—about hunting and fishing and to hand down this culture to them. Hunting and fishing give us a great reason to be in the great outdoors, a great reason to

hand down traditions, and a great reason to support the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act of 2015.

I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to work with this bipartisan coalition we put together, to cosponsor and to work with us to pass this legislation.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I am pleased today to join my colleagues from Alaska and New Mexico in introducing the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act.

In North Dakota, hunting and fishing are a huge part of our lives. We have opening day circled on our calendars like we do birthdays and anniversaries. It was in North Dakota where America's conservationist President, Theodore Roosevelt, fell in love with our State and recognized the need to preserve our Nation's fish and game for future generations. As President Roosevelt once said:

The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased and not impaired in value. Conservation means development as much as it does protection.

It is an honor to be able to help introduce this important legislation and continue to advance voluntary conservation measures that have kept our State a world-class destination for hunters and fishermen.

This bill would continue programs such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation which have successful track records of working with non-profits, State and local governments and private landowners to promote voluntary conservation of fish and game habitat.

It also includes a number of provisions that will enable our hunters and fishers to access the lands their tax dollars pay to maintain. Additionally, it would set aside funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund for improving recreational access to Federal lands. It would also direct agencies to identify high-priority Federal hunting and fishing lands where there is currently no access and work to provide access to sportsmen.

One section of the bill is particularly important to my State—enabling greater use of funds for public shooting ranges. We have a number of extremely popular target ranges in North Dakota and, with the great influx in population to the area, they have been under considerable stress. One such range in the city of Watford City has had to shut down as the city expanded around it. This bill would allow North Dakota Game and Fish to work with the city to move and reopen the range and provide a safe place for hunters to practice their skills.

I want to thank Senators MURKOWSKI and HEINRICH, as well as Senators RISCH, MANCHIN, and FISHER for being excellent partners through the Sportsmen's Caucus to introduce this bipartisan bill. I look forward to working with them to bring this bill to the floor and sending it to the President to become law.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act. I am pleased to join my colleague in introducing this legislation.

I am grateful for the opportunity to work with my colleagues on legislation that will promote our country's hunting, fishing, and conservation heritage.

This bill does a lot of good things. It prevents antihunting groups from restricting sportsmen's ammunition choices, which would unnecessarily drive up hunting costs, impede participation in shooting sports, and consequently decrease conservation funding.

The Sportsmen's Act provides States with more flexibility to build and maintain public shooting ranges in order to provide Americans with more opportunities to engage in recreational and competitive shooting activities. The legislation also expands and enhances hunting and fishing opportunities on Federal lands by establishing a more open policy for access to recreational activities on our public lands.

I am especially encouraged by the fact that this bill contains provisions I have championed that would increase transparency regarding the judgment fund. It has the potential to help our efforts to track taxpayer-funded litigation that impacts our public lands policies.

As my colleagues may or may not know, the judgment fund is administered by the Treasury Department and is used to pay certain court judgments and settlements against the Federal Government. Essentially, this fund acts as an unlimited amount of money that is set aside to pay for Federal Government liability. It is not subject to the annual appropriations process, and, even more remarkably, the Treasury Department has no reporting requirements, so these funds are paid out with very little oversight or scrutiny.

This is no small matter, as the judgment fund disburses billions of dollars in payments every year. Because the Treasury Department has no binding reporting requirements, few public details exist about where these funds are going and why.

The Public Lands Council has decried the lack of oversight of the judgment fund by stating:

Certain groups continuously sue the federal government, and [the] Treasury simply writes a check to foot the bill without providing Members of Congress and the American taxpayers basic information about the payment.

This kind of litigation can have a big impact on sportsmen and others who enjoy multiple uses of Federal lands. This is because the government is permitted to blindly fund lawsuits by activist groups who use the court as a backdoor to policy making.

A recent report from the GAO found that cases filed against the EPA have shown a pattern of these groups working in unison with big law firms to sue under the same statutes in order to push their political agenda through the courts.

The legislation I introduced this week with Senator GARDNER, known as the Judgment Fund Transparency Act, will bring these cases to light. That bill has been included as a provision to the Sportsmen's Act and will provide even greater transparency and accountability.

I am proud to be a vice chair of the Sportsmen's Caucus, and I look forward to continuing our work to advance these important legislative measures.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss our truly bipartisan sportsmen's bill. This is a bipartisan bill which has been worked on for quite some time, and I think its time has come. They say Paul Masson's wine's time has come. It has. We have Senators LISA MURKOWSKI from Alaska, MARK HEINRICH from New Mexico, JIM RISCH from Idaho, myself from West Virginia, HEIDI HEITKAMP from North Dakota, and DEB FISCHER from Nebraska. It is balanced. I think we will find total support hopefully on both sides.

Let me talk about the bill and what it does. It is good for sportsmen, hunters, and lovers of the outdoors. This is a bill which shows that Democrats and Republicans can truly come together and work together. The bill should be a model for how we can make things work here in Washington, and we hope the country will be watching.

West Virginia has more than 1.6 million acres of public land open to hunting. In a State that is our size, if they flatten the State, it would be bigger than Texas. But with all the mountains and hills and everything, it is an absolutely wonderful and beautiful place to grow up and live and hunt and enjoy the outdoors.

We have a year-round fishing season with more than 20,000 miles of streams and more than 100 public fishing lakes. In 2011 West Virginia saw more than 400,000 hunters and sportsmen supporting more than 12,000 jobs—400,000 hunters supporting 12,000 West Virginia jobs. These sportsmen spent \$870 million on hunting and fishing in West Virginia and generated \$81 million in State and local taxes. That is an industry within itself. In a small State such as ours, we are very appreciative of every job and every dollar that helps us provide a better quality of life.

Let me tell you about growing up in West Virginia. It was funny. I had a conversation on the floor of the Senate with some of my colleagues, and we were talking about many issues. We started talking about how we grew up and this and that, and he said: You know, Joe, I grew up in a community in a part of the city where I never knew anybody who owned a gun.

I was thinking how much he missed. That means he had never been hunting. No one ever taught him how to shoot and be safe—the safety things we should learn. I kept thinking about that. I thought to myself and I told him: You know something, I grew up in

a town where I didn't know anybody who didn't have a gun. It is just the cultures we have.

If this bill helps introduce people to the love of the outdoors, to the sport, whether it is just shooting from the standpoint of targets or sports shooting or actually hunting and basically the game—it is very nutritional and very healthy. Venison is a big staple of the diet in West Virginia. It is very good quality meat and very low in fat, very high in protein and fiber. It is great.

You start learning about gun safety. My father was not a hunter. My father never got into it. My grandfather was not a hunter. My uncles were very much involved. But my dad made sure we had a sporting club in the little town, a little coal mining town, and the people who were very astute in this basically took all of us under their wing. They would teach us how to shoot. They would teach us the safety. They would teach us how to respect where we—if we are going to shoot something, we should be able to harvest the game or know somebody who would use it for nutritional values. Don't waste a thing. But also go out in the woods and enjoy the beauty God gave us. I look back on those days.

Then I took my grandson hunting the first time. First of all, I couldn't believe how good his eyesight was and how good he could shoot. It is something that now he is fixated on, and he does a great job, and I am so happy to see him. My son loves fishing, and I take him with me all the time. It is a family tradition. We do it once a year. We do a whole family trip where everybody goes.

This bill, the Sportsmen's Act of 2015, does so many things all over America. It really helps us promote and continue to promote the love of the outdoors, the love of hunting, the love of fishing, basically of sports shooting, competitive sports shooting, pleasurable sports shooting, learning the safety of a gun, what we should and should not do, learning to respect others around us, making sure safety is the first and foremost thing we do.

I hope this bill gets very quick action, very favorable action. We can start out this new year, if you will, on something that is truly overwhelmingly a bipartisan bill. I am sure there will be people who have something they might object to in any piece of legislation. They will have to work hard to find something in this bill they can object to because I think it is put together the right way, in a bipartisan way. It is good for America.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 69—CALLING FOR THE PROTECTION OF RELIGIOUS MINORITY RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS WORLDWIDE

Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. THUNE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr.