

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.

PORTMAN, Mr. KING, Mr. RUBIO, and Mr. LANKFORD) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 69

Whereas it is a human right for all peoples to enjoy the fundamental freedom of religion, and the United States remains committed to promoting and protecting those that have been marginalized and persecuted because of their faith;

Whereas Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance”;

Whereas the freedom to worship by minority religious communities worldwide has come under repeated and deadly attack, and often religious minorities are regarded as enemies of the state;

Whereas the freedom to proselytize by minority religious communities has also come under repeated and deadly attack in recent years through so-called blasphemy laws and anti-conversion laws that are punishable by fines, imprisonment, and death;

Whereas, on November 1, 2010, the deadliest ever recorded attack on Iraqi Christians occurred at the Sayidat al-Nejat Catholic Cathedral located in central Baghdad, where militants stormed the church and detonated 2 suicide vests filled with ball bearings, killing 58, including 2 priests, and wounding 78 parishioners;

Whereas, in November 2010, Aasia Bibi, a Christian mother of five, was fined \$1,100 and sentenced to death by hanging for blasphemy, becoming the first woman condemned to death on blasphemy charges in Pakistan, and remains jailed today appealing her sentence;

Whereas, on December 29, 2011, the Shia religious leader Tajul Muluk’s Islamic boarding school in Madura Island, Indonesia was burned down in an arson attack by 300 anti-Shi’ite protestors, causing 500 Shia residents to flee from their homes, and on January 1, 2012, the Indonesian Ulama Council issued a fatwa against his teachings, leading to blasphemy charges and the arrest of Muluk on April 12, 2012, in Sampang, where he remains in prison;

Whereas, on July 28, 2012, Saeed Abedini, a Christian pastor with dual Iranian and United States citizenship, was arrested on charges solely based on his Christian faith, convicted, and sentenced to eight years in a brutal Iranian prison where he remains today;

Whereas, on October 17, 2013, 10 bombs exploded in the minority Shi’ite districts of Baghdad, killing 44 people, including 6 children, and on that same day a suicide bomber drove into a village in the northern province of Nineveh, killing 15 Shabaks, who are mainly Shi’ites and are viewed as apostates by extreme Sunni Islamists;

Whereas, on November 16, 2013, Zhang Shaojie, a member of Three-Self church and pastor of the government-sanctioned Nanle County Christian Church, China, was arrested, fined \$16,000, and given a 12 year prison sentence for “gathering a crowd to disrupt the public order,” in what is believed to be retaliation for his advocacy on behalf of his congregation and community;

Whereas, on May 15, 2014, a Sudanese Christian woman, Meriam Ibrahim, was imprisoned and sentenced to death by hanging for allegedly committing apostasy from Islam and faced constant pressure to renounce her faith of Christianity while in prison, and

only after immediate and sustained pressure by the United States Senate and the Department of State was she released and allowed to leave the country, settling in New Hampshire with her husband and two children;

Whereas, on November 10, 2014, a young Christian Pakistani couple, Shama Bibi and Sajjad Maseeh, who was four months pregnant with her fifth child, were brutally beaten by a mob in Punjab Province, had their legs broken so they could not flee, and were locked in a brick kiln to burn to death while a crowd of 1,200 watched for alleged blasphemy of the desecration of a Koran;

Whereas, since 2010, the Nigerian terrorist organization Boko Haram, which translates to “western education is a sin,” has destroyed more than 1,000 churches across Nigeria, abducted hundreds of Christians to forcibly convert to Islam, and in increasingly violent attacks beginning in 2014, has killed more than 1,700 Christians;

Whereas, according to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, over 15,000 people in North Korea are presently incarcerated in prison labor camps for attempting to practice their religion and face constant abuse in attempts to force them to renounce their faith;

Whereas, since the beginning of its reign of terror, ISIL has sought to destroy any person of faith that does not embrace their own perverted interpretation of Islam, leading to the destruction of Jonah’s tomb in Mosul, the destruction of Sunni shrines and mosques in Ninevah, the destruction of Christian churches in Syria, and the slaughter of anyone who resists their teachings; and

Whereas seven Indian states have so-called “anti-conversion” apostasy laws that require officials to assess the legality of conversions, and fine and/or imprison those responsible for the conversions if it is determined to be illegal: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) remains committed to protecting the human right and the fundamental freedom of religion, especially those of religious minorities;

(2) recognizes that government policies prohibiting the freedom of thought and religion are designed to harass and intimidate religious groups; and

(3) urges in the strongest terms that the United States Government lead the international effort in calling for the repeal of all existing apostasy and blasphemy laws.

SENATE RESOLUTION 70—DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 2015 AS “NATIONAL CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING AWARENESS MONTH”

Mr. SCHUMER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 70

Whereas carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that is produced whenever any fuel, such as natural gas, propane, gasoline, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal, is burned;

Whereas devices that produce carbon monoxide include cars, boats, gasoline engines, stoves, and heating systems, and carbon monoxide produced from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces;

Whereas carbon monoxide is often referred to as the “silent killer” because it is colorless, odorless, tasteless, and nonirritating, and ignoring early stages of carbon monoxide poisoning may cause unconsciousness and continual exposure to danger;

Whereas according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year in the United States, carbon monoxide poi-

soning kills more than 400 individuals and sends approximately 20,000 individuals to emergency rooms;

Whereas when people breathe in carbon monoxide, the poisonous gas enters the bloodstream and prevents adequate intake of oxygen, which can damage tissues and result in death;

Whereas given their common preexisting medical conditions, individuals older than age 65 are particularly vulnerable to carbon monoxide poisoning;

Whereas for most individuals who suffer from carbon monoxide poisoning, the early signs of exposure to low concentrations of carbon monoxide include mild headaches and breathlessness upon moderate exercise;

Whereas sustained or increased exposure to carbon monoxide can lead to flu-like symptoms, including severe headaches, dizziness, tiredness, nausea, confusion, irritability, and impaired judgment, memory, and coordination;

Whereas breathing in low concentrations of carbon monoxide can cause long-term health damage, even after exposure to the gas ends;

Whereas most cases of carbon monoxide exposure occur during the winter months of December, January, and February when oil and gas heaters are more heavily in use;

Whereas on January 17, 2009, Amanda J. Hansen, a junior and member of the swim team at West Seneca West High School, in West Seneca, New York, passed away from carbon monoxide poisoning while sleeping near a faulty basement boiler during a sleepover party;

Whereas Amanda J. Hansen loved Spanish, was a member of the Spanish Honor Society at West Seneca West High School, and wanted to eventually teach Spanish;

Whereas Amanda J. Hansen hoped to attend college at the University of North Carolina;

Whereas responding to tragedy, Ken and Kim Hansen established the Amanda Hansen Foundation to honor their daughter by raising money for a scholarship fund and spreading awareness about the dangers of carbon monoxide and the importance of taking safety measures, such as using carbon monoxide detectors in residences;

Whereas the Amanda Hansen Foundation works with lawmakers and local communities to educate the public on the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning;

Whereas the Amanda Hansen Foundation raises money for purchasing carbon monoxide detectors for individuals who cannot afford them and has given away 17,000 carbon monoxide detectors;

Whereas the Amanda Hansen Foundation and Ken and Kim Hansen through their work with the Foundation collaborate with other national organizations to ensure that carbon monoxide detectors are as ubiquitous as possible;

Whereas the Hansen family fought in 2010 for the passage of “Amanda’s Law”, a law that mandates the installation of carbon monoxide detectors in new and existing residences with fuel burning appliances and the replacement of such detectors every 5 years;

Whereas the Amanda Hansen Foundation has paid to replace furnaces in the Buffalo, New York area with furnaces that are safer and more energy efficient; and

Whereas in memory of their daughter, the Hansen family has worked tirelessly to make New York and the rest of the United States a safer place: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates February 2015 as “National Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Awareness Month”.