

(Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 961, a bill to protect information relating to consumers, to require notice of security breaches, and for other purposes.

S. 979

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 979, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 1085

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1085, a bill to expand eligibility for the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand benefits available to participants under such program, to enhance special compensation for members of the uniformed services who require assistance in everyday life, and for other purposes.

S. 1133

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1133, a bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration.

S. 1152

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1152, a bill to make permanent the extended period of protections for members of uniformed services relating to mortgages, mortgage foreclosure, and eviction, and for other purposes.

S. 1214

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1214, a bill to prevent human health threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the United States.

S. 1538

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1538, a bill to reform the financing of Senate elections, and for other purposes.

S. 1726

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1726, a bill to create protections for depository institutions that provide financial services to marijuana-related businesses, and for other purposes.

S. 1792

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cospon-

sor of S. 1792, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to equalize the exclusion from gross income of parking and transportation fringe benefits and to provide for a common cost-of-living adjustment, and for other purposes.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1890, a bill to amend chapter 90 of title 18, United States Code, to provide Federal jurisdiction for the theft of trade secrets, and for other purposes.

S. 2102

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2102, a bill to amend the Clayton Act and the Federal Trade Commission Act to provide that the Federal Trade Commission shall exercise authority with respect to mergers only under the Clayton Act and only in the same procedural manner as the Attorney General exercises such authority.

S. 2200

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2200, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to strengthen equal pay requirements.

S. 2263

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2263, a bill to encourage effective, voluntary private sector investments to recruit, employ, and retain men and women who have served in the United States military with annual Federal awards to private sector employers recognizing such investments, and for other purposes.

S. 2292

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2292, a bill to reform laws relating to small public housing agencies, and for other purposes.

S. 2312

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2312, a bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to make improvements to payments for durable medical equipment under the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

S. 2323

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2323, a bill to clarify the definition of nonimmigrant for purposes of chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code.

S. 2344

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2344, a bill to provide authority for ac-

cess to certain business records collected under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 prior to November 29, 2015, to make the authority for roving surveillance, the authority to treat individual terrorists as agents of foreign powers, and title VII of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 permanent, and to modify the certification requirements for access to telephone toll and transactional records by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and for other purposes.

S. 2353

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2353, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the incentives for biodiesel.

S. 2354

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2354, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit to employers who provide paid family and medical leave, and for other purposes.

S. 2357

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2357, a bill to extend temporarily the extended period of protection for members of uniformed services relating to mortgages, mortgage foreclosure, and eviction, and for other purposes.

S. 2362

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2362, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide enhanced security measures for the Visa Waiver Program, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 148

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 148, a resolution condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights.

S. RES. 320

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 320, a resolution congratulating the people of Burma on their commitment to peaceful elections.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. HELLER):

S. 2364. A bill to permit occupational therapists to conduct the initial assessment visit under a Medicare home

health plan of care for certain rehabilitation cases; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act of 2015, which I am introducing today with my colleague Senator HELLER. This bipartisan, no-cost legislation would allow occupational therapists to perform the initial home health assessment in cases in which occupational therapy is ordered by the physician, along with speech language pathology and/or physical therapy services, and skilled nursing care is not required, ensuring that Medicare beneficiaries receive timely access to essential home health therapy services.

Occupational therapy is frequently ordered as part of a physician's plan of care for patients requiring home health services, and, under certain circumstances, an occupational therapist is allowed to perform the comprehensive assessment to determine a Medicare beneficiary's continuing need for home health therapy services. However, under current Medicare law, occupational therapists are not permitted to conduct the initial assessment for home health cases, even when occupational therapy is included in the physician's order and when the case is exclusively related to rehabilitation therapy.

By permitting occupational therapists to perform initial home health assessments in limited circumstances, the Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act can help prevent delays in Medicare beneficiaries receiving essential home health therapy services, especially in areas where access to physical therapists and speech language pathologists may be limited. It is important to note that this legislation would apply only to rehabilitation therapy cases in which skilled nursing care is not required. Nurses would still be required to conduct the initial assessment for all home health cases in which skilled nursing care is ordered by the physician. Also, although the Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act would allow occupational therapists to conduct initial home health assessments, it would not alter the existing criteria for establishing eligibility for the Medicare home health benefit.

I urge my colleagues to join me and Senator HELLER in supporting the Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act, which will help ensure timely access to essential home health therapy services for Medicare beneficiaries.

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. 2364

*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 "Medicare Home Health Flexibility Act of 2015".

#### SEC. 2. PERMITTING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS TO CONDUCT THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT VISIT UNDER A MEDICARE HOME HEALTH PLAN OF CARE FOR CERTAIN REHABILITATION CASES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 484.55(a)(2) of title 42, Code of Federal Regulations, or any other provision of law, an occupational therapist may conduct the initial assessment visit for an individual who is eligible for home health services under title XVIII of the Social Security Act if the referral order by the physician—

- (1) does not include skilled nursing care;
- (2) includes occupation therapy; and
- (3) includes physical therapy or speech language pathology.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in subsection (a) shall be construed to provide for initial eligibility for coverage of home health services under title XVIII of the Social Security Act solely on the basis of a need for occupational therapy.

By Mr. HATCH:

S. 2368. An original bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the efficiency of the Medicare appeals process, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Finance; placed on the calendar.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today Senator WYDEN and I have officially introduced the Audit and Appeal Fairness, Integrity, and Reforms in Medicare, or AFIRM, Act of 2015, a bipartisan bill developed earlier this year in the Senate Finance Committee. The AFIRM Act was actually ordered reported out of the committee in June, passing by voice vote with no recorded opposition.

This legislation, comes mainly in response to the concerns many have expressed with regard to program integrity and the overall solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund.

A recent report from the Government Accountability Office found that, in fiscal year 2014 alone, Medicare covered health services for approximately 54 million elderly and disabled beneficiaries at a cost of \$603 billion in Federal funds. And, according to GAO, of that figure, approximately 10 percent of the funds were improperly paid.

That is nearly \$60 billion in improper payments—either errors or fraud—in a single fiscal year. That is an astronomical figure, and about 33 percent higher than the number we saw the year before.

This unacceptably high level of improper Medicare payments has led to an increased number of audits to identify and recapture those funds. While officials at the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have been reasonably successful in their mission to conduct audits on the more than one billion claims submitted to Medicare every year, they face an uphill battle in their efforts to recover improper payments.

In 2014, for example, CMS recovery audit contractors recovered over \$2.57 billion. While this may sound like a large number, that is less than of the 2014 Medicare improper payments estimate of \$45.8 billion, hardly a figure anyone should be proud of.

Coming on the heels of this massive loss in taxpayer funds and our Government's utter failure to retrieve them is an equally massive unintended consequence.

Due to the increasing number of audits, there has been a predictable, yet dramatic, increase in the number of Medicare appeals. Currently, there are so many appeals being filed in response to these audits that the Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals can't even docket them for 20 to 24 weeks after they are filed.

In fact, within the last month, the total backlog of Medicare appeals eclipsed 900,000. You heard that right: There are more than 900,000 appeals currently pending at the Office of Medicare Hearings and Appeals.

In fiscal year 2009, the majority of Medicare appeals were processed within 94 days. Now, 6 years later, it takes, on average, 547 days—or roughly a year and a half—to process an appeal. This is an incredibly frustrating amount of time, not only for physicians and other health care providers, but for Medicare beneficiaries as well.

Think about that for a second. It takes, on average, a year and a half for Medicare beneficiaries—many of whom live on fixed incomes—filing an appeal to find out whether their services will be covered in the end. It takes a year and a half for doctors—an increasing number of whom are already opting to not accept Medicare patients—to find out if they will be paid.

Contributing to this problem is the fact that large portions of the initial payment determinations are reversed on appeal. The Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General reported that, of the 41,000 appeals made to Administrative Law Judges, or ALJs, in fiscal year 2012, over 60 percent were partially or fully favorable to the defendant.

Such a high rate of reversals raises questions about the quality of initial determinations and whether providers and beneficiaries are facing undue burdens up front.

In order to protect beneficiaries, provide certainty for doctors, and take steps to at least partially shore up the Medicare Trust Fund, we need to address these issues now. That is why Senator WYDEN and I introduced the AFIRM Act.

If enacted, our bill will improve oversight of the Medicare audits and appeals process, effectively addressing the staggering Medicare appeals backlog. It will make the most fundamental changes to the appeals process since Medicare began. It will lay the groundwork for a more level playing field, reducing the burden on providers and suppliers, while giving auditors the tools necessary to better protect the Medicare Trust Fund.

The AFIRM Act will address these issues in five ways.

First, it will improve the audit programs by coordinating efforts between auditors and CMS to ensure that all

parties receive adequate training on current policy, increasing transparency in the audit process, and requiring that CMS create new incentives to improve auditor accuracy.

Second, the bill will make reforms to the Medicare appeals process to address the appeals backlog without sacrificing quality. Part of this will be done by raising the amount in controversy for review by an ALJ to match the amount for review required by a District Court. For cases with lower costs, a new Medicare Magistrate program will be created to allow senior attorneys with expertise in Medicare law and policies to decide cases in the same way as ALJs. This will allow more cases to be heard more quickly, while still providing ALJs full focus on the more complex cases.

Third, the bill will allow for the use of sampling and extrapolation of Medicare claims, with the appellant's consent, to expedite the appeals process.

Fourth, the bill will establish voluntary alternate dispute resolution processes for multiple pending claims with similar issues to be settled as a unit, rather than as individual appeals. This will reduce administrative costs while still providing reasonable consideration to pending claims.

Finally, the bill will also require that CMS create an independent Ombudsman for Medicare Reviews and Appeals to help resolve complaints made by appellants and those considering appeal. As with any federal program, continuing oversight and good leadership are required to have any measure of success.

These are thoughtful, bipartisan improvements, agreed on by the entire Finance Committee that will address the appeals backlog while still allowing us to improve program integrity going forward. I believe it is the best approach we can take to continue our efforts to recover lost taxpayer funds without creating undue burdens for health care providers and suppliers.

Oftentimes in Congress we find ourselves shying away from bipartisan compromises like this. Some may feel that they have more to gain, politically, if they thumb their noses at the other party. Or, inversely, they have something to lose if they actually agree on an issue with members on the other side.

Let me clearly state, for the record, that we have neither the time, nor the money to play partisan games with this issue.

The average amount of time for an appeal to get processed has gone up by more than 550 percent in just 6 years. You heard me correctly—that increase is just in the time it takes to get the appeal processed, not even ruled on. If this trend continues, and absent congressional action, I think we can assume that it will continue, imagine how much more strained, expensive, and ineffective the Medicare appeals system could become.

Truly, there is no time better than now to actually do our job and stem this rising tide.

Before I finish I want to thank Senator WYDEN for working with me on this effort and for making this a truly bipartisan endeavor. I hope all of my colleagues—on both sides of the aisle—will support the AFIRM Act.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. BURR):

S. 2372. A bill to require reporting of terrorist activities and the unlawful distribution of information relating to explosives, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I rise to introduce the Requiring Reporting of Online Terrorist Activity Act, which would require technology companies to inform appropriate law enforcement authorities when they become aware of terrorist activity online.

This provision is modeled after a similar requirement on technology companies under current law, which requires the companies to report instances of child pornography that they become aware of online.

This legislation passed the Intelligence Committee earlier this year by a vote of 15-0 as part of our annual Intelligence Authorization Act, but it was later dropped, along with other provisions, to try to move the broader intelligence bill through the Senate.

I have continued to believe that terrorists' use of the Internet is a problem that we need to address, and that the government can't do it alone. I have had conversations with the senior leaders and general counsels of major technology companies and unfortunately, I don't believe that they will report terrorist activity on their websites without a legal requirement to do so.

So I am reintroducing this provision as a stand-alone bill, especially in the wake of recent terrorist attacks that highlight the problem of terrorist activity on social media.

The investigation into the San Bernardino attack is ongoing, but so far, we have learned that sometime around the time of the attack, the female shooter, Tashfeen Malik, or an account connected to her, posted something on her Facebook page declaring allegiance to the Islamic State in Syria and the Levant or "ISIL."

Facebook has publicly confirmed that the company identified and removed the account connected to Malik because praising a terrorist attack or declaring allegiance to leaders of ISIL would violate the company's standards for use.

Facebook has said it is cooperating with law enforcement on the matter as part of the post-shooting investigation, but I would like to see technology companies notify law enforcement about terrorist activity they see online before an attack occurs.

It is important to recognize how ISIL has used social media to reinvent terrorist recruiting and plotting over the

past year and a half. I believe that now is the time for Congress to pass legislation to help law enforcement better respond to the threat.

Unlike in the past when terrorists devised intricate plots years in advance, today, thousands of ISIL followers have flooded social media with a vast and persistent effort to find followers inside the United States, identify targets of opportunity, and instruct their new supporters how to conduct more small-scale, yet lethal terrorist attacks—all in a matter of days or weeks and all online without ever meeting or vetting their operative in person.

This new trend shows that terrorism has adapted to the digital age, spreading first its propaganda and then its operational reach across the globe. Its lack of coordination or complexity makes it faster and harder to thwart than ever before, and the ubiquitous use of social media gives ISIL a wider direct audience than al-Qa'ida ever enjoyed.

To respond, we must ensure that law enforcement is aware of the threat. To do this, Congress should pass this legislation immediately, which requires technology companies to inform the appropriate authorities when they become aware of terrorist activity.

This type of requirement is not new. For years, companies have been required to notify law enforcement when they become aware of online child pornography. This bill would do essentially the same thing, but for cases of terrorism. It would not require companies to monitor their customers, nor would it chill free speech protected by the Constitution. Instead, it simply requires that clear acts of terrorist plotting or illegal activity associated with terrorism be conveyed to law enforcement.

Most social media companies already devote considerable resources to remove content or suspend the accounts of individuals who post or transmit blatant terrorist-related content. But under the current system, there is no requirement that a company provide notice to law enforcement when, through the normal course of business, it becomes aware of images, posts, or other online terrorist activity. By closing that gap and requiring that companies notify law enforcement, there is a better chance the attempts by terrorist groups like ISIL to direct an individual inside the United States to conduct a violent act will be discovered and thwarted before it is too late.

When technology companies see a picture of a child being exploited, they are required to inform law enforcement. Terrorist activity should be no different.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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

S. 2374. A bill to amend the Defense Base Act to require death benefits to be paid to a deceased employee's designated beneficiary or next of kin in the case of death resulting from a war-risk hazard or act of terrorism occurring on or after September 11, 2001; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, in September 2012, an attack on the United States facilities in Benghazi, Libya, resulted in the death of Glen Anthony Doherty, a former Navy SEAL who grew up in Winchester, MA, and three others.

Mr. Doherty was killed while defending the classified annex near the U.S. Consulate in Benghazi against a terrorist attack that also caused the deaths of U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, former Navy SEAL and C.I.A. contractor Tyrone Woods, and U.S. State Department officer Sean Smith.

Mr. Doherty was unmarried and had no dependents. It is my understanding that he activated his mandatory Defense Base Act insurance policy before deploying to Libya in 2012 believing this policy would pay benefits to his estate or next of kin in the event of his death.

After his death and despite the Doherty family's extensive efforts, they have been unable to receive financial compensation from the Central Intelligence Agency or from private insurance providers. This issue has compounded the pain the family has endured from the loss of a beloved son and brother.

No family in the CIA community should be left uncompensated if a family member falls in the line of duty.

That is why I am today introducing the Glen Anthony Doherty Overseas Security Personnel Fairness Act, which was first introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Steven Lynch. This legislation will remove a significant omission in federal law that currently prohibits the families of overseas contractors who are killed in the line of duty from receiving full death benefits if the deceased employee is unmarried with no children or other dependents. The bill would amend the Defense Base Act of 1941 to ensure that full death benefits are extended to the families or designated beneficiaries of Federal contractors who have died in service to our country as a result of a war-risk hazard or an act of terrorism.

Specifically, it would allow the payment of death benefits otherwise due a widow, widower, or surviving child of an individual employed at a military, air, or naval base outside of the United States who dies as a result of a war-risk hazard or act of terrorism occurring on or after September 11, 2001, when there is no person eligible for a death benefit under the Longshore and Harbor Workers' Compensation Act.

The bill requires payment in such a case to a beneficiary designated by the

deceased or the next of kin or the estate of the deceased under applicable state law if there is no designated beneficiary. The bill requires benefits to be paid from the Employees' Compensation Fund.

More than merely a technical or administrative concern, this issue goes to the heart of the United States government's relationship with the families of those who are killed defending our country. I ask all Senators to support this important legislation for the families of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

### SENATE RESOLUTION 331—DESIGNATING DECEMBER 12, 2015, AS "WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY"

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KING) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 331

Whereas, 24 years before the date of adoption of this resolution, the Wreaths Across America project began with an annual tradition that occurs in December, of donating, transporting, and placing 5,000 Maine balsam fir remembrance wreaths on the graves of the fallen heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas, in the 24 years preceding the date of adoption of this resolution, more than 2,416,000 wreaths have been sent to locations, including national cemeteries and veterans memorials, in every State and overseas;

Whereas the mission of the Wreaths Across America project, to "Remember, Honor, Teach", is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in all 50 States and overseas, including at—

- (1) Arlington National Cemetery;
- (2) veterans cemeteries; and
- (3) other locations;

Whereas the Wreaths Across America project carries out a week-long veterans parade between Maine and Virginia, stopping along the way to spread a message about the importance of—

- (1) remembering the fallen heroes of the United States;
- (2) honoring those who serve; and
- (3) reminding the people of the United States about the sacrifices made by veterans and their families to preserve freedoms in the United States;

Whereas, in 2014, approximately 716,000 remembrance wreaths were sent to more than 1,000 locations across the United States and overseas, an increase of more than 100 locations compared to the previous year;

Whereas, in December 2015, the tradition of escorting tractor-trailers filled with donated wreaths from Harrington, Maine, to Arlington National Cemetery will be continued by—

- (1) the Patriot Guard Riders; and
- (2) other patriotic escort units, including—
  - (A) motorcycle units;
  - (B) law enforcement units; and
  - (C) first responder units;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of individuals volunteer each December to help lay remembrance wreaths;

Whereas the trucking industry in the United States continues to support the Wreaths Across America project by providing drivers, equipment, and related serv-

ices to assist in the transportation of wreaths across the United States to over 1,000 locations;

Whereas the Senate designated December 13, 2014, as "Wreaths Across America Day"; and

Whereas, on December 12, 2015, the Wreaths Across America project will continue the proud legacy of bringing remembrance wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates December 12, 2015, as "Wreaths Across America Day";

(2) honors—

- (A) the Wreaths Across America project;
- (B) patriotic escort units, including—
  - (i) motorcycle units;
  - (ii) law enforcement units; and
  - (iii) first responder units;
- (C) the trucking industry in the United States; and

(D) the volunteers and donors involved in this worthy tradition; and

(3) recognizes—

- (A) the service of veterans and members of the Armed Forces; and
- (B) the sacrifices that veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and their families have made, and continue to make, for the United States, a great Nation.

## AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2921. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CASEY) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 207, recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance.

## TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2921. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CASEY) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 207, recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance; as follows:

Strike the fifteenth whereas clause, and insert the following:

Whereas, according to Reporters Without Borders, the 5 countries with the highest number of journalists in prison as of December 1, 2014, were China, Eritrea, Iran, Ethiopia, and Vietnam;

## AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

### COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 8, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 8, 2015, at 3 p.m., in room SR—