

Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Panama; Eric Seth Rubin, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Bulgaria; Kyle R. Scott, of Arizona, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Serbia; Todd C. Chapman, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ecuador; Jean Elizabeth Manes, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of El Salvador; and Linda Swartz Taglialatela, of New York, a Career Member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Barbados, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Ebert-Gray, Hill, Feeley, Rubin, Scott, Chapman, Manes, and Taglialatela nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

STEM CELL THERAPEUTIC AND RESEARCH REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 311, H.R. 2820.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2820) to reauthorize the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

H.R. 2820

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Reauthorization Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF THE C.W. BILL YOUNG CELL TRANSPLANTATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 379(d)(2)(B) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 274k(d)(2)(B)) is amended—

(1) by striking "remote collection" and inserting "collection"; and

(2) by inserting "including remote collection," after "cord blood units".

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 379B of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 274m) is amended—

(1) by striking "\$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and"; and

(2) by inserting "and \$30,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020" before the period at the end.

(c) SECRETARY REVIEW ON STATE OF SCIENCE.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Director of the National Institutes of Health, the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, and the Administrator of the Health Resources and Services Administration, including the Advisory Council on Blood Stem Cell Transplantation established under section 379(a) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 274k(a)), and other stakeholders, where appropriate given relevant expertise, shall conduct a review of the state of the science of using adult stem cells and birthing tissues to develop new types of therapies for patients, for the purpose of considering the potential inclusion of such new types of therapies in the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program (established under such section 379) in addition to the continuation of ongoing activities. Not later than June 30, 2019, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives recommendations on the appropriateness of such new types of therapies for inclusion in the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program.

SEC. 3. CORD BLOOD INVENTORY.

Section 2 of the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 274k note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking "one-time";

(2) by striking subsection (c);

(3) by redesignating subsections (d) through (h) as subsections (c) through (g), respectively;

(4) in subsection (d) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking "paragraphs (2) and (3)" and inserting "paragraphs (2), (3), and (4)";

(B) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking "subsection (d)" and inserting "subsection (c)"; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

"(4) CONSIDERATION OF BEST SCIENCE.—The Secretary shall take into consideration the best scientific information available in order to maximize the number of cord blood units available for transplant when entering into contracts under this section, or when extending a period of funding under such a contract under paragraph (2).

"(5) CONSIDERATION OF BANKED UNITS OF CORD BLOOD.—In extending contracts pursuant to paragraph (3), and determining new allocation amounts for the next contract period or contract extension for such cord blood bank, the Secretary shall take into account the number of cord blood units banked in the National Cord Blood Inventory by a cord blood bank during the previous contract period, in addition to consideration of the ability of such cord blood bank to increase the collection and maintenance of additional, genetically diverse cord blood units."

(5) in subsection (f) (as so redesignated)—

(A) by striking paragraph (4); and

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (5) and (6) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

(6) in subsection (g) (as so redesignated)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by striking "\$23,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2014 and"; and

(ii) by inserting "and \$23,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020" before the period at the end; and

(B) by striking paragraph (2).

SEC. 4. DETERMINATION ON THE DEFINITION OF HUMAN ORGAN.

Not later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall issue determinations with respect to the inclusion of peripheral blood stem cells and umbilical cord blood in the definition of human organ.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 2820), as amended, was passed.

COMMEMORATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 317 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 317) commemorating the 20th anniversary of the opening of the American Visionary Art Museum.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 317) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of November 18, 2015, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, January 11, at 5 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 213; that there be 30 minutes for debate on the nomination, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination; that following the disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the Record; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate’s action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, scheduling a vote on this nomination has been a top priority for Senator TOOMEY, and we are happy to do that just now.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, December 10; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; finally, that the Senate recess from 3 p.m. until 4:30 p.m. for the all-Members briefing.

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

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous con-

sent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator PETERS.

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

The Senator from Michigan.

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I rise today to express my support for the Every Student Succeeds Act.

I am pleased that the Senate was able to come together on a bipartisan basis to pass meaningful education reform, and I commend Senator MURRAY and Senator ALEXANDER for their leadership on this bill.

I would like to speak about three things this bill does that I strongly support and that I believe are of particular importance. First, the bill supports financial literacy programming. Family financial literacy programming can ensure that our Nation’s parents and children have the skills necessary to properly utilize credit, finance an education, manage a household budget, and plan for retirement. I believe that we must do all we can to help our Nation’s parents and students succeed in every aspect of their lives.

Second, the Every Student Succeeds Act addresses the lack of data on dual status youth—children who come into contact with both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Many at-risk children lack stable home lives, and they are frequently funneled through the school-to-prison pipeline. I was happy to work with the chairman and ranking member to include language in the bill that will help us identify and assist our most vulnerable youth.

Finally, I was happy to join Senator GARDNER in introducing language that will begin to help schools address the dual enrollment availability gap by enabling high schools to expand access to such programs using title I funding. I applaud the bill’s focus on dual enrollment and early/middle college programs. At a time when student debt is crushing young Americans’ economic prospects, dual enrollment and early/middle college programs allow high school students to begin earning college credit by taking college-level courses either at their school, online or through a local higher education institution. These models improve access to college while reducing degree completion time and tuition costs.

Findings from the ACT’s most recent “Condition of College and Career Readiness” report suggest that many students are ready for dual enrollment programs. Forty-two percent of the most recent cohort of high school graduates who took the ACT test were ready for college-level mathematics. Nearly 30 percent were college ready in all four subject areas: English, reading, mathematics, and science.

Unfortunately, hurdles to assessing dual enrollment are particularly pronounced for low-income students who also face the greatest obstacles to col-

lege completion. After participating in these programs, many students who may not have planned on attending college realize their potential and go on to attain higher levels of education. A recent study found that dual and concurrent enrollment participation increases the probability of a student completing a degree by 6 percent.

In addition to a Gardner-Peters amendment, the Every Student Succeeds Act includes several other provisions that support dual enrollment and early/middle college programs. The bill supports professional development for teachers, principals, and other school leaders, focused on building their capacity to deliver dual or concurrent enrollment opportunities.

Additionally, States and school districts will be able to use resources provided through the student support and academic enrichment grants to improve students’ access to dual enrollment programs, either online or in person. These policy improvements will make an incredible difference for the Nation’s students.

There are a number of Senators who support dual enrollment and early/middle college programs, and I plan on introducing legislation to support dual enrollment and early/middle college programs in the near future.

My legislation would amend the Higher Education Act to expand access to dual and concurrent enrollment programs as well as early/middle college programs that enable students to earn college credit while in high school. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the coming months to expand access to these programs.

Again, I applaud the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 5:54 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, December 10, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate December 9, 2015:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

CATHERINE EBERT-GRAY, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA, AND TO SERVE CONCURRENTLY AND WITHOUT ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION AS AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE SOLOMON ISLANDS AND AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF VANUATU.

G. KATHLEEN HILL, OF COLORADO, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MALTA.

JOHN D. FEELEY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER-COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA.