

houses in the several states, requesting their cooperation; and be it further

Resolved, That this application constitutes a continuing application in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States until the Legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several states have made applications on the same subject.

POM-125. A communication from a citizen of the State of Illinois memorializing the State of Illinois's petition to the United States Congress calling for a constitutional convention for the purpose of proposing amendments; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations:

Special Report entitled "Legislative Activities Report of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Thirteenth Congress" (Rept. No. 114-178).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 189. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 25th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and with a preamble:

S. Res. 320. A resolution congratulating the people of Burma on their commitment to peaceful elections.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with an amended preamble:

S. Res. 326. A resolution celebrating the 135th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the United States and Romania.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Dana J. Boente, of Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of four years.

Robert Lloyd Capers, of New York, to be United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York for the term of four years.

John P. Fishwick, Jr., of Virginia, to be United States Attorney for the Western District of Virginia for the term of four years.

Emily Gray Rice, of New Hampshire, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Hampshire for the term of four years.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. LEE):

S. 2383. A bill to withdraw certain Bureau of Land Management land in the State of Utah from all forms of public appropriation,

to provide for the shared management of the withdrawn land by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Air Force to facilitate enhanced weapons testing and pilot training, enhance public safety, and provide for continued public access to the withdrawn land, to provide for the exchange of certain Federal land and State land, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 2384. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to provide for the consideration by State regulatory authorities and nonregulated electric utilities of whether subsidies should be provided for the deployment, construction, maintenance, or operation of a customer-side technology; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 2385. A bill to strengthen protections for the remaining populations of wild elephants, rhinoceroses, and other imperiled species through country-specific anti-poaching efforts and anti-trafficking strategies, to promote the value of wildlife and natural resources, to curtail the demand for illegal wildlife products in consumer countries, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2386. A bill to authorize the establishment of the Stonewall National Historic Site in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2387. A bill to restore protections for Social Security, Railroad retirement, and Black Lung benefits from administrative offset; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. LEE):

S. 2388. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to provide for reciprocal marketing approval of certain drugs, biological products, and devices that are authorized to be lawfully marketed abroad, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2389. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the rural add-on payment in the Medicare home health benefit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 2390. A bill to provide adequate protections for whistleblowers at the Federal Bureau of Investigation; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SANDERS (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2391. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend certain energy tax provisions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BROWN (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2392. A bill to enhance beneficiary and provider protections and improve transparency in the Medicare Advantage market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2393. 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; considered and passed.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. 2394. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to improve the H-1B visa program, to repeal the diversity visa lottery program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. FLAKE, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2395. A bill to reauthorize the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 2396. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 121 Spring Street SE in Gainesville, Georgia, as the "Sidney Olsen Smith, Jr. Federal Building and United States Courthouse"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2397. A bill to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to make grants to States that extend or eliminate unexpired statutes of limitation applicable to laws involving child sexual abuse; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 2398. A bill to provide benefits and services to workers who have lost their jobs or have experienced a reduction in wages or hours due to the transition to clean energy, to amend the National Labor Relations Act to establish an efficient system to enable employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 2399. A bill to provide for emissions reductions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCAIN (for himself and Ms. AYOTTE):

S.J. Res. 28. A joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Secretary of Agriculture relating to inspection of fish of the order Siluriformes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. REID):

S. Res. 333. A resolution to direct the Senate Legal Counsel to appear as amicus curiae in the name of the Senate in *Bank Markazi, The Central Bank of Iran v. Deborah D. Peterson, et al.* (S. Ct.); considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 469

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 469, a bill to improve the reproductive assistance provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs to severely wounded, ill,

or injured members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their spouses or partners, and for other purposes.

S. 571

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 571, a bill to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 578

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 624

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 624, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive co-insurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening.

S. 706

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 706, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education to have an independent advocate for campus sexual assault prevention and response.

S. 727

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 727, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include biomass heating appliances for tax credits available for energy-efficient building property and energy property.

S. 901

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 901, a bill to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a national center for research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of the descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances during service in the Armed Forces that are related to that exposure, to establish an advisory board on such health conditions, and for other purposes.

S. 1455

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1455, a bill to provide access to medication-assisted therapy, and for other purposes.

S. 1562

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Washington

(Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1562, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 1659

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1659, a bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1697

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1697, a bill to provide an exception from certain group health plan requirements to allow small businesses to use pre-tax dollars to assist employees in the purchase of policies in the individual health insurance market, and for other purposes.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors 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. 1915

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1915, a bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to make anthrax vaccines and antimicrobials available to emergency response providers, and for other purposes.

S. 2067

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2067, a bill to establish EUREKA Prize Competitions to accelerate discovery and development of disease-modifying, preventive, or curative treatments for Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, to encourage efforts to enhance detection and diagnosis of such diseases, or to enhance the quality and efficiency of care of individuals with such diseases.

S. 2186

At the request of Mr. COATS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2186, a bill to provide the legal framework necessary for the growth of innovative private financing options for students to fund postsecondary education, and for other purposes.

S. 2193

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK)

was added as a cosponsor of S. 2193, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed and for other purposes.

S. 2196

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2196, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the non-application of Medicare competitive acquisition rates to complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and accessories.

S. 2336

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2336, a bill to modernize laws, and eliminate discrimination, with respect to people living with HIV/AIDS, and for other purposes.

S. 2337

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2337, a bill to improve homeland security by enhancing the requirements for participation in the Visa Waiver Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2348

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2348, a bill to implement the use of Rapid DNA instruments to inform decisions about pretrial release or detention and their conditions, to solve and prevent violent crimes and other crimes, to exonerate the innocent, to prevent DNA analysis backlogs, and for other purposes.

S. 2351

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2351, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the annual comment period for payment rates under Medicare Advantage.

S. 2363

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2363, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to permit the Governor of a State to reject the resettlement of a refugee in that State unless there is adequate assurance that the alien does not present a security risk and for other purposes.

S. 2373

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2373, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 2377

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2377, a bill to defeat the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and protect and secure the United States, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2387. A bill to restore protections for Social Security, Railroad retirement, and Black Lung benefits from administrative offset; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, every day, Social Security provides vital benefits to millions of Americans who worked and paid into the system. To ensure workers would receive full access to these fundamental lifeline benefits, for many years, the law protected these earned benefits from attempts to recover debts. However, 20 years ago, Congress suddenly reversed course, and made a change to the law that allowed the government to cut Social Security and other hard-earned benefit payments in order to collect student loan and other Federal debts, like home loans owed to the Veterans Administration, and food stamp overpayments.

Now more than ever, the loss of these protections is creating a major hardship for American Citizens who rely on Social Security and other earned benefits to make ends meet. Student loan debt is becoming an increasingly serious problem in in Oregon and across the nation, with students and their families burdened by crushing student loan debt. Even in the best circumstances, many families will struggle to pay off crippling loans for years to come. However, for people who rely on benefits like Social Security after retirement, disability, or the death of a family member, making payments on student loans or other federal debts can become an insurmountable hardship.

Because of the lifeline nature of these earned benefits, for more than 40 years the law prevented all creditors from collecting hard-earned Social Security, Railroad Retirement, and Black Lung benefits to recoup debts. The only exceptions included unpaid Federal taxes, child support or alimony payments, and court-ordered victim restitution. These protections helped ensure that our social safety net programs were functioning as intended—something I think we can all agree is essential to preserving Social Security and other earned benefits.

Astonishingly, when the law changed as part of a 1996 omnibus budget bill, these changes were never fully debated in Congress. This means Members of

Congress never had the chance to really explore how this policy would affect beneficiaries. The legislation ultimately included some protections for the most vulnerable, but even those protections have not been updated in 20 years.

We now realize what a profound effect the loss of these protections has had on retirees and individuals with disabilities, who often live on fixed incomes. More and more seniors and people with disabilities are having their Social Security and other lifeline benefits taken away to pay federal debts. For example, according to a September 2014 GAO report, the number of individuals whose Social Security benefits were offset to pay student loan debt increased significantly between 2002 and 2013, from about 31,000 to 155,000. For individuals 65 and older with student loan-related Social Security garnishments, the number grew from about 6,000 to about 36,000 over the same period. Congress should restore sanity to the system, and reestablish the protections that these beneficiaries deserve.

That is why I, along with Senators BROWN, WHITEHOUSE, GILLIBRAND, KLOBUCHAR, SANDERS and WARREN are introducing the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act. The bill would restore the strong protections in the law that prevented the government from taking away earned benefits to pay Federal debts, and guarantee beneficiaries will be able to maintain a basic standard of living by receiving the benefits they have earned. The bill is supported by Social Security Works, The Strengthen Social Security Coalition, AFL-CIO, Justice in Aging, Campaign for America's Future, Global Policy Solutions, Student Debt Crisis, the National Organization for Women, RootsAction.org, Project Springboard, The Alliance for a Just Society, the Economic Opportunity Institute, the Progressive Change Campaign Committee, The Arc of the United States, The Public Higher Education Network of Massachusetts, the American Federation of Government Employees, and the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

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. 2387

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 “Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act”.

SEC. 2. PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY, RAILROAD RETIREMENT, AND BLACK LUNG BENEFITS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET.

(a) PROHIBITION ON ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET AUTHORITY.—

(1) ASSIGNMENT UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.—Section 207 of the Social Security Act

(42 U.S.C. 407) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) Subparagraphs (A), (C), and (D) of section 3716(c)(3) of title 31, United States Code, as such subparagraphs were in effect on the date before the date of enactment of the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act, shall be null and void and of no effect.”.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 14(a) of the Railroad Retirement Act of 1974 (45 U.S.C. 231m(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “. The provisions of section 207(d) of the Social Security Act shall apply with respect to this title to the same extent as they apply in the case of title II of such Act.”.

(B) Section 2(e) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following: “. The provisions of section 207(d) of the Social Security Act shall apply with respect to this title to the same extent as they apply in the case of title II of such Act.”.

(b) REPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (3) of section 3716(c) of title 31, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by striking “(3)(A)(i) Notwithstanding” and all that follows through “any overpayment under such program.”;

(B) by striking subparagraphs (C) and (D); and

(C) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as paragraph (3).

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Paragraph (5) of such section is amended by striking “the Commissioner of Social Security and”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to any collection by administrative offset occurring on or after the date of enactment of this Act of a claim arising before, on, or after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. CANTWELL):

S. 2389. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the rural add-on payment in the Medicare home health benefit, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague from Washington, Senator CANTWELL, to introduce the Preserve Access to Medicare Rural Home Health Services Act of 2015. This legislation would extend the modest increase in payments for home health services in rural areas that otherwise will expire on January 1 of 2018.

Home health has become an increasingly important part of our health care system. The kinds of highly skilled—and often technically complex—services that our nation's home health caregivers provide have enabled millions of our most frail and vulnerable older and disabled citizens to avoid hospitals and nursing homes and stay just where they want to be—in the comfort, privacy, and security of their own homes. I have accompanied several of Maine's caring home health nurses on their visits to patients and have seen first hand the difference that they are making for patients and their families.

Surveys have shown that the delivery of home health services in rural areas can be as much as 12 to 15 percent more costly because of the extra travel time