

of J. Christopher Stevens, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, and Sean Smith in recognition of their contributions to the Nation; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, on September 11, 2012, militants attacked the Temporary Mission Facility of the United States, and its personnel, in Benghazi, Libya. As the attack unfolded, our people attempted to defend the Mission and protect United States diplomatic personnel. Tragically, they did not succeed and four brave Americans sacrificed their lives.

Today, along with Senators AYOTTE, WARREN, FEINSTEIN, BOXER, WYDEN, and MERKLEY, I am introducing legislation to honor Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens, Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, and Sean Smith by posthumously awarding them the Congressional Gold Medal in recognition of their selfless service and extraordinary contributions to the nation, at the cost of their lives. These distinguished public servants and warriors made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation, and their memories will live on as an inspiration to all for their bravery and commitment to our Nation.

J. Christopher Stevens was serving as United States Ambassador to Libya and previously served twice in the country, as both Special Representative to the Libyan Transitional National Council and as the Deputy Chief of Mission. He served in the United States Foreign Service for twenty-one years. Public service was his life work. He started his career serving as a Peace Corps volunteer teaching English in Morocco.

Glen A. Doherty grew up in Winchester, MA. He was a Navy SEAL for twelve years. He served in Iraq and Afghanistan, attaining the rank of Petty Officer First Class and earned the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation medal.

Tyrone Woods was a Navy Seal for 20 years. He also served in both Iraq and Afghanistan, attaining the rank of Senior Chief Petty Officer when he retired. In Iraq, he led multiple raids and reconnaissance missions and earned the Bronze Star.

Both Glen Doherty and Tyrone Woods were working to protect American personnel abroad when the Temporary Mission Facility of the United States in Benghazi, Libya, was attacked. As the coordinated attack unfolded, Glen and Tyrone exposed themselves to enemy fire as they engaged attackers armed with guns, mortars, and rocket-propelled grenades. Their ultimate sacrifice saved the lives of American personnel who were rescued and safely returned to their families.

Sean Smith served in the Air Force for 6 years, attained the rank of Staff Sergeant and was awarded the Air Force Commendation Medal. After leaving the Air Force, he served in the State Department for 10 years on various assignments which took him to

places such as Baghdad, Brussels, Pretoria, the Hague, and Tripoli.

As their careers attest, all four men served our Nation honorably and with high distinction and utmost bravery. They made the supreme sacrifice for our country, and this medal represents the deep gratitude of a nation that will never forget their heroic service.

I ask all Senators to join me in support of this legislation to posthumously award these four brave American heroes the Congressional Gold Medal for giving our Nation their last full measure of devotion.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2929. Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. BOOZMAN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3594, to extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, and for other purposes.

SA 2930. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. JOHNSON)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1616, to provide for the identification and prevention of improper payments and the identification of strategic sourcing opportunities by reviewing and analyzing the use of Federal agency charge cards.

SA 2931. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. LANKFORD) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 310, condemning the ongoing sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, and other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants and urging the prosecution of the perpetrators and those complicit in these crimes.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2929. Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. BOOZMAN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3594, to extend temporarily the Federal Perkins Loan program, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Federal Perkins Loan Program Extension Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORITY TO MAKE LOANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 461 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking “of stimulating and assisting in the establishment and maintenance of funds at institutions of higher education for the making of low-interest loans to students in need thereof” and inserting “assisting in the maintenance of funds at institutions of higher education for the making of loans to undergraduate students in need”; and

(B) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

“(b) AUTHORITY TO MAKE LOANS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—

“(A) LOANS FOR NEW UNDERGRADUATE FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN BORROWERS.—Through September 30, 2017, an institution of higher education may make a loan under this part to an eligible undergraduate student who, on

the date of disbursement of a loan made under this part, has no outstanding balance of principal or interest on a loan made under this part from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution, but only if the institution has awarded all Federal Direct Loans, as referenced under subparagraphs (A) and (D) of section 455(a)(2), for which such undergraduate student is eligible.

“(B) LOANS FOR CURRENT UNDERGRADUATE FEDERAL PERKINS LOAN BORROWERS.—Through September 30, 2017, an institution of higher education may make a loan under this part to an eligible undergraduate student who, on the date of disbursement of a loan made under this part, has an outstanding balance of principal or interest on a loan made under this part from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution, but only if the institution has awarded all Federal Direct Stafford Loans as referenced under section 455(a)(2)(A) for which such undergraduate student is eligible.

“(C) LOANS FOR CERTAIN GRADUATE BORROWERS.—Through September 30, 2016, with respect to an eligible graduate student who has received a loan made under this part prior to October 1, 2015, an institution of higher education that has most recently made such a loan to the student for an academic program at such institution may continue making loans under this part from the student loan fund established under this part by the institution to enable the student to continue or complete such academic program.

“(2) NO ADDITIONAL LOANS.—An institution of higher education shall not make loans under this part after September 30, 2017.

“(3) PROHIBITION ON ADDITIONAL APPROPRIATIONS.—No funds are authorized to be appropriated under this Act or any other Act to carry out the functions described in paragraph (1) for any fiscal year following fiscal year 2015.”; and

(C) by striking subsection (c).

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Notwithstanding the amendments made under paragraph (1) of this subsection, an eligible graduate borrower who received a disbursement of a loan under part E of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa et seq.) after June 30, 2016 and before October 1, 2016, for the 2016–2017 award year, may receive a subsequent disbursement of such loan by June 30, 2017, for which the borrower received an initial disbursement after June 30, 2016 and before October 1, 2016.

(b) DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS FROM STUDENT LOAN FUNDS.—Section 466 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087ff) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking “After September 30, 2003, and not later than March 31, 2004” and inserting “Beginning October 1, 2017”; and

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking “September 30, 2003” and inserting “September 30, 2017”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking “After October 1, 2012” and inserting “Beginning October 1, 2017”; and

(B) by striking “September 30, 2003” and inserting “September 30, 2017”; and

(3) in subsection (c)(1), by striking “October 1, 2004” and inserting “October 1, 2017”.

(c) ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS NOT PERMITTED.—Section 422 of the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. 1226a) shall not apply to further extend the duration of the authority under paragraph (1) of section 461(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087aa(b)), as amended by subsection (a)(1) of this section, beyond September 30, 2017, on the basis of the extension under such subsection.

SEC. 3. DISCLOSURE REQUIRED PRIOR TO DISBURSEMENT.

Section 463A(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087cc-1(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (12), by striking “and” after the semicolon;

(2) in paragraph (13), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(14) a notice and explanation regarding the end to future availability of loans made under this part;

“(15) a notice and explanation that repayment and forgiveness benefits available to borrowers of loans made under part D are not available to borrowers participating in the loan program under this part;

“(16) a notice and explanation regarding a borrower’s option to consolidate a loan made under this part into a Federal Direct Loan under part D, including any benefit of such consolidation;

“(17) with respect to new undergraduate Federal Perkins loan borrowers, as described in section 461(b)(1)(A), a notice and explanation providing a comparison of the interest rates of loans under this part and part D and informing the borrower that the borrower has reached the maximum annual borrowing limit for which the borrower is eligible as referenced under subparagraphs (A) and (D) of section 455(a)(2); and

“(18) with respect to current undergraduate Federal Perkins loan borrowers, as described in section 461(b)(1)(B), a notice and explanation providing a comparison of the interest rates of loans under this part and part D and informing the borrower that the borrower has reached the maximum annual borrowing limit for which the borrower is eligible on Federal Direct Stafford Loans as referenced under section 455(a)(2)(A).”.

SA 2930. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. JOHNSON)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1616, to provide for the identification and prevention of improper payments and the identification of strategic sourcing opportunities by reviewing and analyzing the use of Federal agency charge cards; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Saving Federal Dollars Through Better Use of Government Purchase and Travel Cards Act of 2015”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **IMPROPER PAYMENT.**—The term “improper payment” has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (31 U.S.C. 3321 note).

(2) **QUESTIONABLE TRANSACTION.**—The term “questionable transaction” means a charge card transaction that from initial card data appears to be high risk and may therefore be improper due to non-compliance with applicable law, regulation or policy.

(3) **STRATEGIC SOURCING.**—The term “strategic sourcing” means analyzing and modifying a Federal agency’s spending patterns to better leverage its purchasing power, reduce costs, and improve overall performance.

SEC. 3. EXPANDED USE OF DATA ANALYTICS.

(a) **STRATEGY.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator for General Services, shall develop a strategy to expand the use of data analytics in managing government purchase and travel

charge card programs. These analytics may employ existing General Services Administration capabilities, and may be in conjunction with agencies’ capabilities, for the purpose of—

(1) identifying examples or patterns of questionable transactions and developing enhanced tools and methods for agency use in—

(A) identifying questionable purchase and travel card transactions; and

(B) recovering improper payments made with purchase and travel cards;

(2) identifying potential opportunities for agencies to further leverage administrative process streamlining and cost reduction from purchase and travel card use, including additional agency opportunities for card-based strategic sourcing;

(3) developing a set of purchase and travel card metrics and benchmarks for high risk activities, which shall assist agencies in identifying potential emphasis areas for their purchase and travel card management and oversight activities, including those required by the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-194); and

(4) developing a plan, which may be based on existing capabilities, to create a library of analytics tools and data sources for use by Federal agencies (including inspectors general of those agencies).

SEC. 4. GUIDANCE ON IMPROVING INFORMATION SHARING TO CURB IMPROPER PAYMENTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services and the inter-agency charge card data management group established under section 5, shall issue guidance on improving information sharing by government agencies (including inspectors general) for the purposes of section 3(a)(1).

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The guidance issued under subsection (a) shall—

(1) require relevant officials at Federal agencies to identify high-risk activities and communicate that information to the appropriate management levels within the agencies;

(2) require that appropriate officials at Federal agencies review the reports issued by charge card-issuing banks on questionable transaction activity (such as purchase and travel card pre-suspension and suspension reports, delinquency reports, and exception reports), including transactions that occur with high risk activities, and suspicious timing or amounts of cash withdrawals or advances;

(3) provide for the appropriate sharing of information related to potential questionable transactions, fraud schemes, and high risk activities with General Services Administration Office of Charge Card Management and the appropriate officials in Federal agencies; and

(4) include other requirements determined appropriate by the Director for the purposes of carrying out this Act.

SEC. 5. INTERAGENCY CHARGE CARD DATA MANAGEMENT GROUP.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Administrator of General Services and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall establish a purchase and travel charge card data management group to develop and share best practices for the purposes described in section 3(a).

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The best practices developed under subsection (a) shall—

(1) cover rules, edits, and task order or contract modifications related to charge card-issuing banks;

(2) include the review of accounts payable information and purchase and travel card

transaction data of agencies for the purpose of identifying potential strategic sourcing and other additional opportunities (such as recurring payments, utility payments, and grant payments) for which the charge cards or related payment products could be used as a payment method; and

(3) include other best practices as determined by the Administrator and Director.

(c) **MEMBERSHIP.**—The purchase and travel charge card data management group shall meet regularly as determined by the co-chairs, for a duration of three years, and include those agencies as described in section 2 of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-194) and others identified by the Administrator and Director.

SEC. 6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) **GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION REPORT.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator for General Services shall submit a report to Congress on the implementation of this Act, including the metrics used in determining whether the analytic and benchmarking efforts have reduced, or contributed to the reduction of, questionable or improper payments as well as improved utilization of card-based payment products.

(b) **AGENCY REPORTS AND CONSOLIDATED REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of each Federal agency described in section 2 of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-194) shall submit a report to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on that agency’s activities to implement this Act.

(c) **OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET REPORT TO CONGRESS.**—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall submit to Congress a consolidated report of agency activities to implement this Act, which may be included as part of another report submitted to Congress by the Director.

(d) **REPORT ON ADDITIONAL SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES.**—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of General Services shall submit a report to Congress identifying and exploring further potential savings opportunities for government agencies under the Federal charge card programs. This report may be combined with the report required under subsection (a).

SA 2931. Mr. McCONNELL (for Mr. LANKFORD) proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 310, condemning the ongoing sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, and other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants and urging the prosecution of the perpetrators and those complicit in these crimes; as follows:

On page 3, line 4, insert “by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants” before the semicolon at the end.

On page 3, line 10, strike “and”.

On page 4, line 2, strike the period at the end and inserting “; and”.

On page 4, after line 2, add the following:

(4) defines “complicit”, for purposes of this resolution, as having knowingly and willingly taken actions which have directly supported, promoted, enabled, aided, abetted, or encouraged crimes involving sexual violence against women and children from Yezidi, Christian, Shabak, Turkmen, or other religious communities by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria militants, including actively working to deny, cover up, or alter evidence of such crimes.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 16, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "The Administration's Strategy in Afghanistan."

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Joshua Manning, a NASA fellow and a detailee, and Brandon Fisher, a Coast Guard fellow at the commerce committee, be allowed floor privileges for the 114th Congress.

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

MEASURE INDEFINITELY POSTPONED—H. CON. RES. 91

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that H. Con. Res. 91 be indefinitely postponed.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 269, 433, 435, 436, and 437.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Thomas O. Melia, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development; Gabriel Camarillo, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force; Marcel John Lettre, II, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; the Navy, Vice Adm. Kurt W. Tidd to be Admiral; and Thomas Edgar Rothman, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2016.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote en bloc without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that following disposition of the nominations, the motions 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; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Melia, Camarillo, Lettre, Tidd, and Rothman nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination under the privileged section of the Executive Calendar: PN892; that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; 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 the nomination; that any related statements 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.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Steven Michael Haro, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Haro nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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

SECURING FAIRNESS IN REGULATORY TIMING ACT OF 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3831, which was received from the House.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3831) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the annual comment period for payment rates under Medicare Advantage.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill 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 bill (H.R. 3831) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SAVING FEDERAL DOLLARS THROUGH BETTER USE OF GOVERNMENT PURCHASE AND TRAVEL CARDS ACT OF 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 315, S. 1616.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1616) to provide for the identification and prevention of improper payments and the identification of strategic sourcing opportunities by reviewing and analyzing the use of Federal agency charge cards.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the Carper substitute amendment which is at the desk 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 with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 2930) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Saving Federal Dollars Through Better Use of Government Purchase and Travel Cards Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) IMPROPER PAYMENT.—The term "improper payment" has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (31 U.S.C. 3321 note).

(2) QUESTIONABLE TRANSACTION.—The term "questionable transaction" means a charge card transaction that from initial card data appears to be high risk and may therefore be improper due to non-compliance with applicable law, regulation or policy.

(3) STRATEGIC SOURCING.—The term "strategic sourcing" means analyzing and modifying a Federal agency's spending patterns to better leverage its purchasing power, reduce costs, and improve overall performance.

SEC. 3. EXPANDED USE OF DATA ANALYTICS.

(a) STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator for General Services, shall develop a strategy to expand the use of data analytics in managing government purchase and travel charge card programs. These analytics may employ existing General Services Administration capabilities, and may be in conjunction with agencies' capabilities, for the purpose of—

(1) identifying examples or patterns of questionable transactions and developing enhanced tools and methods for agency use in—

(A) identifying questionable purchase and travel card transactions; and

(B) recovering improper payments made with purchase and travel cards;

(2) identifying potential opportunities for agencies to further leverage administrative process streamlining and cost reduction from purchase and travel card use, including additional agency opportunities for card-based strategic sourcing;