

health issues. All veterans are entitled to the best health care we can give them; and

Whereas, According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, several variables affect a veteran's ability to access VA health care. Veterans may have difficulty travelling to a distant facility for care or be unable to secure an appointment in an acceptable period of time to deal quickly with a medical issue; and

Whereas, To provide a more flexible VA health care system, Congress enacted the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, allowing for care outside of the traditional VA system. Under the act, the new Choice Program will provide many veterans with VA compensated health care at a non-VA center, providing more timely appointments, less bureaucratic red tape, and easier travel; and

Whereas, As currently structured, the Choice Program limits non-VA health care to veterans residing more than 40 miles from a VA health facility. The law does not differentiate between types of VA health care facilities. Therefore, a veteran living near a small VA clinic but needing specialty cardiology care at a VA facility 100 miles away will not be allowed to access private cardiology care. Also, the program requires that every appointment for care be cleared by a program manager. Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate Concurring), That we urge the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Congress to create a pilot program in Michigan instituting a flexible Veterans Choice Card system structured similar to a traditional health care program for all veterans in Michigan; and be it further*

*Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs.*

POM-131. A petition by a citizen from the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to propose, for ratification by special conventions held within the individual states, an amendment to the United States Constitution which would establish a procedure by which members of the United States Senate and of the United States House of Representatives may be involuntarily removed from office by means of a recall election; 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, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and an amendment to the title and with an amended preamble:

S. Res. 99. A resolution calling on the Government of Iran to fulfill its promises of assistance in the case of Robert Levinson, the longest held United States civilian in our Nation's history.

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

S. Res. 330. A resolution congratulating the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet for winning the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with amendments and with a preamble:

S. Res. 361. A resolution urging robust funding for humanitarian relief for Syria.

## EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

\*Beth F. Cobert, of California, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management for a term of four years.

\*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

## 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. TESTER (for himself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 2527. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the mental health treatment provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to veterans who served in classified missions; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON:

S. 2528. A bill to promote the safe manufacture, use, and transportation of lithium batteries and cells, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Ms. CANTWELL, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2529. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require that the Buy American purchase requirement for the school lunch program include fish harvested within United States waters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 2530. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the exemption for certain aircraft from the excise taxes on transportation by air; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 2531. A bill to authorize State and local governments to divest from entities that engage in commerce-related or investment-related boycott, divestment, or sanctions activities targeting Israel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 2532. A bill to authorize appropriations for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and the Clean Water State Revolving Fund; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 2533. A bill to provide short-term water supplies to drought-stricken California and provide for long-term investments in drought resiliency throughout the Western United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. TOOMEY:

S. 2534. A bill to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a permanent background check system for private security officers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 2535. A bill to provide deadlines for corrosion control treatment steps for lead and

copper in drinking water, and other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 2536. A bill to require the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to issue a notice of proposed rulemaking regarding the inclusion in aircraft medical kits of medications and equipment to meet the emergency medical needs of children; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 2537. A bill to amend the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1987 with respect to certain prohibitions regarding the Palestine Liberation Organization under that Act; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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

S. 2538. A bill to provide resources and incentives for the enforcement of immigration laws in the interior of the United States and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CASEY (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. REED, Ms. WARREN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 2539. A bill to amend the Social Security Act to provide for mandatory funding, to ensure that the families that have infants and toddlers, have a family income of not more than 200 percent of the applicable Federal poverty guideline, and need child care have access to high-quality infant and toddler child care by the end of fiscal year 2026, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

## SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. Res. 370. A resolution recognizing that for nearly 40 years, the United States and the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have worked toward stability, prosperity, and peace in Southeast Asia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. SASSE):

S. Con. Res. 30. A concurrent resolution expressing concern over the disappearance of David Sneddon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

## ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 71

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 71, a bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects.

S. 391

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 391, a bill to preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.

S. 613

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 613, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve the efficiency of summer meals.

S. 800

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 800, a bill to improve, coordinate, and enhance rehabilitation research at the National Institutes of Health.

S. 901

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) 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. 1081

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1081, a bill to end the use of body-gripping traps in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

S. 1378

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) were added as cosponsors of S. 1378, a bill to strengthen employee cost savings suggestions programs within the Federal Government.

S. 1566

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1566, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to require group and individual health insurance coverage and group health plans to provide for coverage of oral anticancer drugs on terms no less favorable than the coverage provided for anticancer medications administered by a health care provider.

S. 1622

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1622, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act with respect to devices.

S. 1831

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1831, a bill to revise section 48 of title 18, United States Code, and for other purposes.

S. 1890

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Mis-

issippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) 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. 1909

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1909, a bill to protect communities from destructive Federal overreach by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

S. 1968

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1968, a bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require certain companies to disclose information describing any measures the company has taken to identify and address conditions of forced labor, slavery, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labor within the company's supply chains.

S. 2021

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2021, a bill to prohibit Federal agencies and Federal contractors from requesting that an applicant for employment disclose criminal history record information before the applicant has received a conditional offer, and for other purposes.

S. 2040

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2040, a bill to deter terrorism, provide justice for victims, and for other purposes.

S. 2144

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the names of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2144, a bill to improve the enforcement of sanctions against the Government of North Korea, and for other purposes.

S. 2166

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2166, a bill to amend part B of title IV of the Social Security Act to ensure that mental health screenings and assessments are provided to children and youth upon entry into foster care.

S. 2178

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2178, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent certain provisions of the Heartland, Habitat, Harvest, and Horticulture Act of 2008 relating to timber, and for other purposes.

S. 2218

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Massachu-

setts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2218, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat certain amounts paid for physical activity, fitness, and exercise as amounts paid for medical care.

S. 2235

At the request of Mr. UDALL, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2235, a bill to repeal debt collection amendments made by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015.

S. 2272

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2272, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 regarding proprietary institutions of higher education in order to protect students and taxpayers.

S. 2423

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2423, a bill making appropriations to address the heroin and opioid drug abuse epidemic for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

S. 2437

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2437, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the burial of the cremated remains of persons who served as Women's Air Forces Service Pilots in Arlington National Cemetery, and for other purposes.

S. 2444

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2444, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for the disposition, within 60 days, of an application to exempt a projectile from classification as armor piercing ammunition.

S. 2469

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2469, a bill to repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act.

S. 2474

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2474, a bill to allow for additional markings, including the words "Israel" and "Product in Israel," to be used for country of origin marking requirements for goods made in the geographical areas known as the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

S. 2487

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2487, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to identify mental health care and suicide

prevention programs and metrics that are effective in treating women veterans as part of the evaluation of such programs by the Secretary, and for other purposes.

S. 2492

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2492, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide matching payments for retirement savings contributions by certain individuals.

S. 2497

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2497, a bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to provide protections for retail customers, and for other purposes.

S. 2502

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2502, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to ensure that retirement investors receive advice in their best interests, and for other purposes.

S. 2505

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2505, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that retirement investors receive advice in their best interests, and for other purposes.

S. 2512

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) were added as cosponsors of S. 2512, a bill to expand the tropical disease product priority review voucher program to encourage treatments for Zika virus.

S. RES. 346

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 346, a resolution expressing opposition to the European Commission interpretive notice regarding labeling Israeli products and goods manufactured in the West Bank and other areas, as such actions undermine the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

AMENDMENT NO. 3167

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3167 intended to be proposed to S. 2012, an original bill to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 3215

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3215 intended to be proposed to S. 2012, an original bill to provide for the modernization of the energy policy of the United States, and for other purposes.

## STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 2533. A bill to provide short-term water supplies to drought-stricken California and provide for long-term investments in drought resiliency throughout the Western United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the historic drought that is devastating California and much of the West.

To help address this disaster, today I am introducing the California Long-Term Provisions for Water Supply and Short-Term Provisions for Emergency Drought Relief Act.

Let me begin by saying that the El Niño we're seeing now in California brings with it some good news.

The Sierra Nevada snowpack is the deepest it has been in 5 years, and water content is up.

The California Department of Water Resources reported in early-February that the statewide snowpack stands at 25.4 inches, or 130 percent of the historical average.

But we are faced with three problems.

First, one El Niño—even a strong El Niño—won't be sufficient to pull us out of this drought. Experts say we need at least 3 consecutive years of above-average precipitation.

Second, we lack the infrastructure needed to store much of this water. We need to do more to increase the amount of water we can hold from wet years to dry years.

And while river flows are extremely high from these winter storms, we are not taking advantage of them to the extent we should.

What that means is tens of thousands of acre-feet are flowing out into the Pacific Ocean rather than being collected for later use.

So while California is getting some much-needed rain, it's not likely to be enough to end this historic drought.

Let me be clear; this drought is hurting California.

Mr. President, 69 communities are facing significant water supply and water quality issues, 2,591 wells are critically low or dry affecting some 13,000 residents; California's economy lost \$2.7 billion from the drought in 2015.

The agricultural sector lost approximately \$1.8 billion from the drought in 2015, exceeding the \$41.5 billion loss in 2014.

More than 1 million acres of California farmland were fallowed in 2015, an increase of more than 600,000 acres over 2011.

Since 2014, the drought has led to 35,000 permanent jobs lost in California, 21,000 seasonal and part-time agricultural jobs have also been lost.

Farmworkers cannot find employment and are forced to move in with family members or friends who are also struggling.

Some single mothers are traveling as far as Washington State for work to help support their families.

Land subsidence from pumping too much groundwater has caused large areas of the San Joaquin Valley to sink by as much as two inches per month. As a result, bridges, aqueducts and roads have already begun to crack.

Mr. President, 50 million large trees are dead or likely will die from lack of water, and another 888 million trees experienced loss of canopy cover since 2011.

These are just some of the many examples of the dreadful effect the drought is having on California.

The bill I am introducing today includes a wide range of provisions to address two key needs:

First, long-term solutions. In addition to helping the many communities that are running out of water, we must create a new water infrastructure that is not as dependent on annual levels of rain or snow. That is why the bill includes many programs to promote long-term drought resiliency.

California is now home to 40 million people, but is relying on State and Federal water infrastructure first constructed in the 1960s when California's population was just 16 million.

The Central Valley Project and the State Water Project were completed in the 1970s, and neither have kept pace with the rapid growth in California's population or economy.

Put another way, California's major water infrastructure has remained largely unchanged for the past 40 years while California's population has more than doubled.

To address this, we must come up with long-term solutions to address these water infrastructure gaps.

This must include investments in water storage projects, desalination plants and water recycling projects, as well as programs to assist vulnerable communities, fund research and support ecosystem restoration.

In addition to those long-term solutions, the bill would also provide short-term, temporary solutions which are limited to the duration of the Governor's drought declaration or two years, whichever is longer.

These provisions will help make the water-delivery system more efficient during this current drought, and they will do so without any mandated pumping levels.

Under this bill State and Federal officials will continue to determine appropriate pumping levels, and all short-term operations must comply with existing applicable laws.

Let me repeat: there are no mandated levels of pumping in this bill.

Let me briefly discuss how this bill will help California and the positive impacts it will have west-wide.

Over the past 2 years, my staff and I have gone through an extensive consultation process with both State and Federal agencies.

We have worked through every proposal or suggestion we received from