

S. 544

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 544, a bill to amend Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to modify the termination date for the Veterans Choice Program, and for other purposes.

S. 546

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 546, a bill to reduce temporarily the royalty required to be paid for sodium produced on Federal lands, and for other purposes.

S. 569

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 569, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the Land and Water Conservation Fund to maximize the effectiveness of the Fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 578

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide requirements for agency decision making based on science.

S. 579

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 579, a bill to require agencies to publish an advance notice of proposed rule making for major rules.

S. 582

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 582, a bill to reauthorize the Office of Special Counsel, and for other purposes.

S. 584

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 584, a bill to amend chapter 6 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Regulatory Flexibility Act), to ensure complete analysis of potential impacts on small entities of rules, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 27

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 27, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to "Clarification of Employer's Continuing Obligation to Make and Maintain an Accurate Record of Each Recordable Injury and Illness".

S.J. RES. 28

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of 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 Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to accidental release prevention requirements of risk management programs under the Clean Air Act.

S.J. RES. 32

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 32, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by States for non-governmental employees.

S.J. RES. 33

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 33, a joint resolution disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of Labor relating to savings arrangements established by qualified State political subdivisions for non-governmental employees.

S. CON. RES. 7

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 7, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that tax-exempt fraternal benefit societies have historically provided and continue to provide critical benefits to the people and communities of the United States.

S. RES. 83

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 83, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the trafficking of illicit fentanyl into the United States from Mexico and China.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BROWN, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. KING, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. WARNER, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 591. 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; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am once again delighted to join my colleague, Senator PATTY MURRAY, to introduce the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act of 2017. Our bill would greatly expand eligibility for VA caregiver support services by including veterans from all eras, allow veterans to transfer their post 9/11 GI bill benefits to their dependents, expand eligibility for the VA caregivers program to include a wider range of injuries that may have previously gone unrecognized, and provide crucial support for our Nation's caregivers themselves.

In 2014, my former colleague and friend, Senator Elizabeth Dole, commissioned a study by the RAND Corporation to learn more about the military caregiver population and explore common issues experienced by America's caregivers. The experts at RAND found that those caring for our servicemembers and veterans provide nearly \$14 billion worth of unpaid services every year—an incredible cost that would otherwise be passed on to the Nation.

There are more than 5.5 million military caregivers in the United States, and of those, 1.1 million are caring for post-9/11 veterans. These are spouses, parents, children, and other loved ones who have voluntarily put their lives on hold to provide our returning servicemembers with a trusted continuum of care that could not be replicated without them. Many of them will provide this care for years, if not decades, to come.

Tragically, caring for those suffering from the scars of war takes an enormous toll. According to the RAND study, military caregivers face increased instances of mental and physical health problems, chronic absenteeism from work, deteriorating personal relationships, legal and financial troubles, and feelings of isolation. These difficulties are often more pronounced for post-9/11 military caregivers.

Our Nation owes America's veterans our deepest gratitude. Their sacrifices are often very visible. In many cases our veterans have earned medals or awards for their bravery that they can wear proudly on their chest. But our military and veteran caregivers truly are hidden heroes, serving alongside our veterans to provide the love, care, and support they need. Despite their enormous sacrifice, these hidden heroes often do not receive the awards and admiration. That does not mean that they don't deserve it. We must honor our commitment to veterans by answering the call to better support those caring for our wounded, ill, and injured warriors.

Our legislation would help strengthen the services offered to caregivers.

The Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act is an important step in helping those who have assumed the mantle of caring for the men and women who have served our Nation so honorably. I urge all of my colleagues to join Senator MURRAY and me in honoring and supporting our Nation's military caregivers.

By Mr. Kaine (for himself, Mr. Rounds, and Mr. Perdue):

S. 592. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to support meeting the increasing needs of the United States for a cybersecurity and information assurance workforce by reinvigorating and modifying the Information Assurance Scholarship Program of the Department of Defense, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. Kaine. Mr. Presidents, a skilled workforce is essential to addressing the growing cyber security challenges in the United States. The Department of Defense, DOD, Cyber Strategy, issued in April 2015, cites building the cyber workforce among its objective's for achieving the essential strategic goal of maintaining ready forces and capabilities to conduct cyberspace operations. In Virginia, it is estimated that 36,000 cybersecurity jobs remain unfilled.

Beginning in 2001, DOD funded the Information Assurance Scholarship Program, IASP, which boosts the Nation's cyber workforce through scholarship and capacity-building grants to colleges and universities designated by the National Security Agency and the Department of Homeland Security as Centers of Academic Excellence, CAE. Scholarship recipients are required to fulfill a service obligation by working in a cyber security position at DOD upon graduation.

According to a DOD report from February 2015, the IASP Program had employed 593 students and awarded 180 capacity-building grants to CAEs. However, due to budget constraints, DOD reduced funding for the IASP beginning in 2013 and stopped recruiting new students. The IASP received its peak funding level of \$7.5 million in 2005—for fiscal year 2017, it received \$500,000.

Today, I am pleased to introduce with my colleague Senator Rounds, the DOD Cyber Scholarship Program Act of 2017. The DOD Cyber Scholarship Program Act of 2017 would reinvigorate the IASP to boost our Nation's cyber workforce. The bill would rename the IASP as the DOD Cyber Scholarship Program and express the Sense of Congress that the program is an important tool for boosting our cyber defense workforce.

The DOD Cyber Scholarship Program Act would also modify the program by expanding scholarships to students pursuing Associate's Degrees. There are currently 46 two-year institutions designated as CAEs, which would be eligible to apply for grants. Associate's degree programs could provide a valu-

able source of technical personnel, at a lower cost, to DOD. The bill would require that at least 5 percent of scholarship funds go to 2-year program students.

The DOD Cyber Scholarship Program Act would authorize the DOD Cyber Scholarship Program to receive \$10 million in fiscal year 2018. At its peak in 2005, the IASP received \$7.5 million. Since then, the cost of tuition has increased considerably and the need for skilled cyber professionals has never been greater. Ten million dollars is an appropriate funding level to reinvigorate the program, expand it to associate's degree recipients, and allow for manageable program execution from DOD and the National Security Agency.

The DOD Cyber Scholarship Program is a commonsense, bipartisan bill that would help students succeed in today's economy and strengthen our national security. There are good-paying jobs in Virginia and across the country in the cyber field that are going unfilled, and it is clear we must make it easier for students to access the programs that prepare them for these roles. Expanding scholarship funds so they're available to community college students will help put more of our nation's students on a path to success and support our national security needs.

By Mr. Cornyn (for himself, Mr. Cruz, and Mr. Leahy):

S. 594. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to work with cybersecurity consortia for training, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. Cornyn. 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. 594

*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 "National Cybersecurity Preparedness Consortium Act of 2017".

#### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act—

(1) the term "consortium" means a group primarily composed of non-profit entities, including academic institutions, that develop, update, and deliver cybersecurity training in support of homeland security;

(2) the terms "cybersecurity risk" and "incident" have the meanings given those terms in section 227(a) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148(a));

(3) the term "Department" means the Department of Homeland Security; and

(4) the term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Homeland Security.

#### SEC. 3. NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY PREPAREDNESS CONSORTIUM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may work with a consortium, including the National Cybersecurity Preparedness Consortium, to support efforts to address cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism.

(b) ASSISTANCE TO THE NCCIC.—The Secretary may work with a consortium to assist the national cybersecurity and communications integration center of the Department (established under section 227 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148)) to—

(1) provide training to State and local first responders and officials specifically for preparing for and responding to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism, in accordance with applicable law;

(2) develop and update a curriculum utilizing existing programs and models in accordance with such section 227, for State and local first responders and officials, related to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism;

(3) provide technical assistance services to build and sustain capabilities in support of preparedness for and response to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism, in accordance with such section 227;

(4) conduct cross-sector cybersecurity training and simulation exercises for entities, including State and local governments, critical infrastructure owners and operators, and private industry, to encourage community-wide coordination in defending against and responding to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism, in accordance with section 228(c) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 149(c));

(5) help States and communities develop cybersecurity information sharing programs, in accordance with section 227 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 148), for the dissemination of homeland security information related to cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism; and

(6) help incorporate cybersecurity risk and incident prevention and response (including related to threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism) into existing State and local emergency plans, including continuity of operations plans.

(c) PROHIBITION ON DUPLICATION.—In carrying out the functions under subsection (b), the Secretary shall, to the greatest extent practicable, seek to prevent unnecessary duplication of existing programs or efforts of the Department.

(d) CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING SELECTION OF A CONSORTIUM.—In selecting a consortium with which to work under this Act, the Secretary shall take into consideration the following:

(1) Any prior experience conducting cybersecurity training and exercises for State and local entities.

(2) Geographic diversity of the members of any such consortium so as to cover different regions throughout the United States.

(e) METRICS.—If the Secretary works with a consortium under subsection (a), the Secretary shall measure the effectiveness of the activities undertaken by the consortium under this Act.

(f) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall conduct outreach to universities and colleges, including historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and other minority-serving institutions, regarding opportunities to support efforts to address cybersecurity risks and incidents, including threats of terrorism and acts of terrorism, by working with the Secretary under subsection (a).

(g) TERMINATION.—The authority to carry out this Act shall terminate on the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 600. A bill to require rulemaking by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to address considerations in evaluating the need for public and individual disaster assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr President, I am proud to introduce the Fairness in Federal Disaster Declarations Act today, together with my colleague Senator DUCKWORTH, to try to bring some transparency and fairness into FEMA's disaster declaration process.

The inspiration for this bill was a tragic one. On February 29, 2012, a category F-4 tornado tore through southeastern Illinois, causing major damage in the towns of Harrisburg and Ridgway. Eight people in Harrisburg died in that event and 15 people were killed in total. Winds reached 175 miles per hour. It is not too much of a stretch to say these two small towns were almost wiped off the map.

And just last week, on February 28, 2017, another tragedy struck the small towns of Ottawa and Naplate after a category F-3 tornado tore through North Central Illinois. Two people in Ottawa died in last week's storm and at least 50 homes were damaged or destroyed.

Requests for Federal assistance after a disaster are made by the Governor of each State based on State emergency management damage assessments. In the case of the Harrisburg and Ridgway tornado, the Governor's request for a Federal emergency declaration for individual assistance was denied, as was the State's appeal of that decision. With that denial, individuals whose homes or properties were damaged were precluded from direct Federal help.

When I asked FEMA why it denied the Governor's request, I was told that the disaster did not meet or exceed the State's per capita figure. Currently, FEMA multiplies the number of people in a State by \$1.43 to determine a threshold of the amount of damage a State would incur to be considered for Federal assistance. In Illinois, that figure is more than \$18 million. In other words, because Illinois is a highly populous State, it is presumed it can absorb the costs of cleanup and recovery from disasters up to more than \$18 million.

From 2002 to 2012, Illinois was denied Federal disaster assistance seven times. Texas was denied 13 times. Florida was denied Federal disaster assistance eight times during that period, and California, New Jersey, and New York were each denied four times.

FEMA's formula does not work for large, populous States, particularly those with a concentrated urban area, like Illinois.

Illinois ran into this issue again in November 2013 when tornadoes swept through the State. That time, six peo-

ple were killed and whole neighborhoods were nearly destroyed. The cities of Washington, Gifford, and New Minden, Illinois, experienced some of the worst tornado damage I have ever seen. Their infrastructure was decimated, but because Illinois did not meet one of FEMA's criteria, we were denied Federal public assistance.

In the case of last week's tornado in Ottawa and Naplate, Illinois, may not even be able to request federal help because damage assessments are too low to reach anything close to FEMA's per capita requirement. But for these small towns, covering losses and cleaning up damage of this magnitude can put a real strain on the community.

The Fairness in Federal Disaster Declaration seeks to improve the disaster analysis by assigning a value to each of the factors FEMA must consider when determining whether Federal disaster assistance will be made available. When it comes to individual assistance—funding to help people repair and rebuild their homes—the breakdown would be as follows:

Concentration of damages—the density of damage in an individual community—would be considered 20 percent of the analysis. Trauma—the loss of life and injuries and the disruption of normal community functions—would be 20 percent. Special Populations—including the age and income of the residents, the amount of home ownership, etc.—would comprise 20 percent. Voluntary agency assistance—a consideration of what the volunteer and charitable groups are providing—would make up 5 percent. The amount of Insurance coverage—20 percent. And average amount of individual assistance by State, which includes the per capita analysis, would make up 5 percent of the analysis.

The bill also would add a seventh consideration to FEMA's metrics—the economics of the area, which will receive 10 percent consideration. This includes factors such as the local assessable tax base, the median income as it compares to that of the State, and the poverty rate as it compares to that of the State.

For Federal public assistance, the breakdown would be similar, with a greater emphasis placed on the localized impacts of the disaster, which would warrant 40 percent of the analysis.

It is reasonable that FEMA should take into consideration the size of the State requesting assistance, but current regulations penalize large States. Assigning values to the factors will help ensure that the damage to a specific community weighs more than a State's population.

Illinois is a geographically large State with a concentrated urban area. And downstate communities are being punished for it.

If the cities of Ottawa and Naplate, Washington and Gifford, and Harrisburg and Ridgway cannot qualify under FEMA's current criteria for Federal as-

sistance, something is wrong. The way FEMA evaluates whether to declare an area Federal disaster is not effective. It is working against small communities in States with large populations.

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. 600

*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 "Fairness in Federal Disaster Declarations Act of 2017".

#### SEC. 2. REGULATORY ACTION REQUIRED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (in this Act referred to as the "Administrator" and "FEMA", respectively) shall amend the rules of the Administrator under section 206.48 of title 44, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act, in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(b) NEW CRITERIA REQUIRED.—The amended rules issued under subsection (a) shall provide for the following:

(1) PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—Such rules shall provide that, with respect to the evaluation of the need for public assistance—

(A) specific weighted valuations shall be assigned to each criterion, as follows—

(i) estimated cost of the assistance, 10 percent;

(ii) localized impacts, 40 percent;

(iii) insurance coverage in force, 10 percent;

(iv) hazard mitigation, 10 percent;

(v) recent multiple disasters, 10 percent;

(vi) programs of other Federal assistance, 10 percent; and

(vii) economic circumstances described in subparagraph (B), 10 percent; and

(B) FEMA shall consider the economic circumstances of—

(i) the local economy of the affected area, including factors such as the local assessable tax base and local sales tax, the median income as it compares to that of the State, and the poverty rate as it compares to that of the State; and

(ii) the economy of the State, including factors such as the unemployment rate of the State, as compared to the national unemployment rate.

(2) INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—Such rules shall provide that, with respect to the evaluation of the severity, magnitude, and impact of the disaster and the evaluation of the need for assistance to individuals—

(A) specific weighted valuations shall be assigned to each criterion, as follows—

(i) concentration of damages, 20 percent;

(ii) trauma, 20 percent;

(iii) special populations, 20 percent;

(iv) voluntary agency assistance, 10 percent;

(v) insurance, 20 percent;

(vi) average amount of individual assistance by State, 5 percent; and

(vii) economic considerations described in subparagraph (B), 5 percent; and

(B) FEMA shall consider the economic circumstances of the affected area, including factors such as the local assessable tax base and local sales tax, the median income as it compares to that of the State, and the poverty rate as it compares to that of the State.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amended rules issued under subsection (a) shall apply to

any disaster for which a Governor requested a major disaster declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) and was denied on or after January 1, 2012.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. REED, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 601. A bill to ensure that significantly more students graduate college with the international knowledge and experience essential for success in today's global economy through the establishment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program in the Department of Education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today, Senator WICKER of Mississippi and I are reintroducing the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act. This bill, named for a mentor of mine—the late Senator from Illinois, embodies a vision Paul Simon believed in throughout his life: a vision centered on our country's need for a culturally aware, and globally knowledgeable population and workforce.

Senator Simon saw these characteristics as essential to our country's economy, society, and national security. He believed that by building meaningful relationships with people around the world, America would grow even stronger as a nation. In his words, "America's incompetence in foreign languages and cultural awareness jeopardizes our Nation's future in global affairs. This lack of global perspective damages America's ability to compete in world markets. The more our country becomes competent in foreign languages and cultures, the more enhanced our foreign policy decisions will become."

He also believed that to truly be educated, our students needed more than a minimal understanding of the world around them. To be truly educated, they need to immerse themselves in the beliefs, customs, language, and environment of a culture other than their own. I share these beliefs with Senator Simon and many Republicans in this Chamber share them as well.

At a time when there are calls from some to shut out immigrants and refugees and pull away from other parts of the world, these beliefs are more important than ever. We need to continue to give our young people the opportunity to interact with people from all over the world, so they can develop their own informed opinions and beliefs.

Undergraduate study abroad programs are a popular source for this type of engagement. Unfortunately, far too few students take advantage or have the means to take advantage of this opportunity. Annually, less than 2 percent of undergraduate students participate in study abroad.

Those who do study abroad don't reflect the incredible diversity of our postsecondary institutions. Minority

students, first-generation college students, community college students, and students with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in the study abroad population. These students miss out on the valuable personal and educational growth that comes from a study abroad experience, including interacting with other cultures, developing foreign language skills, and expanding international knowledge through firsthand experience.

We also know that those who currently study abroad do so mostly in highly developed countries. In fact, over 50 percent of students who study abroad each year do so in Europe. Increasing the diversity of study abroad destinations to include countries in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, South America, and Latin America will help American students develop a global perspective and build the insight and skills needed to better understand the global challenges of the 21st century.

In 2004, Congress took the first step towards expanding study abroad when it authorized the Commission on Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program to provide recommendations to Congress and the President on expanding study abroad programs.

The Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act combines the vision of Senator Simon with the recommendations of the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Commission. It establishes a competitive grant program for institutions of higher education to encourage the sustainable expansion of study abroad opportunities for students in the United States.

Over the next 10 years, this grant program aims to increase the number of undergraduate students studying abroad each year to one million students. It also emphasizes increasing opportunities for nontraditional students, minority students, and students with disabilities so that the demographics of students who study abroad more closely reflect the population of current undergraduate students.

This bill also focuses on getting students to study abroad in nontraditional destinations particularly in developing countries. We need to send more students to developing nations because these are the places that America needs to better understand. This legislation takes important steps toward expanding and diversifying participation in study abroad.

Senator WICKER and I are pleased to be joined today in introducing this bill by Senators REED, COCHRAN, MERKLEY, and BROWN. I am also pleased that several organizations have endorsed this bill including the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities, the Association of International Educators, the American Council on Education, the Association of American Universities, and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities.

In today's increasingly interconnected world, study abroad participation is an important element of a

meaningful undergraduate education. Expanded access to study abroad opportunities is necessary to prepare the next generation of Americans with the global knowledge and skills needed to succeed. I hope other colleagues will join us in that effort.

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. 601

*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 "Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act of 2017".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) To prepare students for success in the modern global economy, opportunities for study abroad should be included as part of a well-rounded education.

(2) Study abroad programs provide students with unparalleled access to international knowledge, an unmatched opportunity to learn foreign languages, and a unique environment for developing cultural understanding, all of which are knowledge and skills needed in today's global economy.

(3) Less than 2 percent of all enrolled postsecondary students in the United States study abroad for credit in any given year, and minority students, first generation college students, community college students, and students with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in study abroad participation.

(4) Congress authorized the establishment of the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program pursuant to section 104 of the Miscellaneous Appropriations and Offsets Act, 2004 (division H of Public Law 108-199). Pursuant to its mandate, the Lincoln Commission submitted to Congress and the President a report of its recommendations for greatly expanding the opportunity for students at institutions of higher education in the United States to study abroad, with special emphasis on studying in developing nations.

(5) According to the Lincoln Commission, "[e]xperience shows that leadership from administrators and faculty will drive the number of study abroad participants higher and improve the quality of programs. Such leadership is the only way that study abroad will become an integral part of the undergraduate experience." A competitive grant program is necessary to encourage and support such leadership.

#### SEC. 3. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to ensure that significantly more students have access to quality study abroad opportunities;

(2) to ensure that the diversity of students studying abroad reflects the diversity of students and institutions of higher education in the United States;

(3) to encourage greater diversity in study abroad destinations by increasing the portion of study abroad that takes place in nontraditional study abroad destinations, especially in developing countries; and

(4) to encourage a greater commitment by institutions of higher education to expand study abroad opportunities.

#### SEC. 4. SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM.

Section 741 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1138) is amended—



(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (12) and (13) as paragraphs (13) and (14), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (11) the following:

“(12) awarding grants under the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program described in subsection (g);”;

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(g) SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM.—

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ‘institution of higher education’ has the meaning given the term in section 101(a).

“(B) NATIONAL OF THE UNITED STATES.—The term ‘national of the United States’ means a national of the United States or an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence (as those terms are defined in section 101 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101)).

“(C) NONTRADITIONAL STUDY ABROAD DESTINATION.—The term ‘nontraditional study abroad destination’ means a location that is determined by the Secretary to be a less common destination for students who study abroad.

“(D) STUDENT.—The term ‘student’ means a national of the United States who is enrolled at an institution of higher education located within the United States.

“(E) STUDY ABROAD.—The term ‘study abroad’ means an educational program of study, work, research, internship, or combination thereof that is conducted outside the United States and that carries academic credit.

“(2) SENATOR PAUL SIMON STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM.—

“(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Department a program to be called the ‘Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program’.

“(B) OBJECTIVES.—The objectives of the program established under subparagraph (A) are, that not later than 10 years after the date of enactment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act of 2017—

“(i) not less than 1,000,000 undergraduate students will study abroad annually;

“(ii) the demographics of study abroad participation will reflect the demographics of the United States undergraduate population by increasing the participation of underrepresented groups; and

“(iii) an increasing portion of study abroad will take place in nontraditional study abroad destinations, with a substantial portion of such increases in developing countries.

“(C) COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—In order to accomplish the objectives set forth in subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall award grants on a competitive basis to institutions of higher education, individually or in a consortium, based on applications by the institutions that—

“(i) set forth detailed plans for using grant funds to further such objectives;

“(ii) include an institutional commitment to expanding access to study abroad;

“(iii) include plans for evaluating progress made in increasing access to study abroad;

“(iv) describe how increases in study abroad participation achieved through the grant will be sustained in subsequent years; and

“(v) demonstrate that the programs have established health and safety guidelines and procedures.

“(D) NONGOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS.—S consortia of institutions of higher education applying for grants described in subparagraph (C) may include nongovernmental in-

stitutions that provide and promote study abroad opportunities for students.

“(E) COMMISSION ON THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN STUDY ABROAD FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM.—In administering the program, the Secretary shall take fully into account the recommendations of the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program, established pursuant to section 104 of the Miscellaneous Appropriations and Offsets Act, 2004 (division H of Public Law 108–199).

“(F) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this paragraph, the Secretary shall consult with representatives of diverse institutions of higher education, educational policy organizations, and others with appropriate expertise.

“(3) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than December 31 of each year following the date of enactment of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Program Act of 2017, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives a report on the implementation of this subsection during the prior fiscal year.

“(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subsection such sums as may be necessary for fiscal year 2018 and each subsequent fiscal year.”.

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

S. 602. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as section 179 property and classify certain automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as 15-year property for purposes of depreciation; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise to introduce the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act. I am pleased to be joined by my colleague from Delaware, Senator CARPER, in introducing this bipartisan bill.

In the United States, the annual cost of fires is enormous. In 2015, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), fires resulted in approximately \$14 billion in direct property loss. In addition, more than 3,000 civilians were killed and more than 15,000 people were injured in fires. The NFPA also reports that a fire department responded to a structure fire every 63 seconds.

These statistics are of particular concern in Maine, which has some of the oldest housing stock in the country and which has experienced deadly apartment building fires. In 2014, an apartment fire resulted in the deaths of six people—Maine’s deadliest fire in nearly four decades.

Historically, Maine has also seen commercial property damaged by fires. In fact, much of the construction in the historic areas of Portland was done following a devastating fire in 1866. This fire destroyed a third of the city, including most of Portland’s commercial buildings, many of its churches, and countless homes.

The NFPA reports that when fire sprinklers are present during a large fire, they are effective 96 percent of the time, saving billions of dollars in property damage but more importantly, thousands of lives. Our bill would encourage commercial building owners to

invest in fire safety upgrades. While building codes require sprinklers in new commercial buildings, a great number of structures across the U.S. were built and put in service before sprinklers were required.

Small business building owners, however, may find it difficult to fund retrofit sprinklers. To help these owners, our bill would provide two tax incentives to encourage them to make this lifesaving investment.

Currently, commercial building owners must depreciate fire sprinkler retrofits over a lengthy 39-year period. The period for residential buildings is 7½ years. This bill reclassifies fire sprinkler retrofits as 15-year depreciable property, thus allowing building owners to write off their costs more quickly. The bill also provides an option for certain small businesses to deduct the cost of the fire system upgrades immediately under Section 179 of the tax code. Together, these proposals will provide a strong incentive for building owners to install fire sprinkler systems.

This bill was originally drafted in response to the deadly nightclub fire in West Warwick, RI, in 2003, which killed a staggering 100 people. That building did not have a fire sprinkler system. Let us work together to lessen the chances of another tragedy like this one. I invite my colleagues to join Senator CARPER and me in support of this bipartisan, common sense legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the letter of support was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
OF FIRE CHIEFS,  
*Fairfax, VA, March 6, 2017.*

Hon. SUSAN COLLINS,  
U.S. Senate,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR COLLINS: On behalf of the more than 12,000 chief fire and emergency service officers of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), thank you for introducing the Fire Sprinkler Incentive Act (FSIA). The IAFC appreciates your leadership in creating an incentive for property owners to retrofit their properties with automatic fire sprinkler systems. If passed, the FSIA will be an important tool to save lives in the future.

Fires continue to be a devastating problem in Maine and across the United States. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), in 2015 alone, there were more than 1.3 million fires in the United States which resulted in nearly 3,300 civilian deaths, 15,700 civilian injuries, and \$14.3 billion in property damage. Additionally, the U.S. Fire Administration reports that the relative risk of fire death in Maine is 1.5 times higher than the U.S. average. Fire sprinkler systems play a crucial role by significantly increasing the chances of surviving a fire and reducing property damages. The NFPA found that a fire sprinkler system decreases the likelihood of dying in a fire by 83%, reduces property damage by 74%, and confines a fire to its room of origin in 95% of instances. Incentivizing fire sprinkler systems simply makes sense from both life safety and public policy perspectives.

Despite the clear benefits of fire sprinkler systems, the current tax code fails to incentivize these lifesaving systems. Your legislation would fix this oversight by classifying fire sprinkler systems as Section 179 expenses and allowing property owners to deduct the cost of retrofitting their buildings. Additionally, the FSIA will allow high-rise building owners to depreciate the costs of these systems much faster than the current tax code allows. The FSIA provides a real incentive for building owners to protect not only their properties but the lives of those people inside them.

Thank you again for your strong support for the fire and emergency service. The IAFC looks forward to continuing to work with you to protect communities across Maine and the entire United States.

Sincerely,

FIRE CHIEF JOHN D. SINCLAIR,  
*President and Chairman of the Board.*

By Mr. DAINES (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 605. A bill to amend the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to discourage litigation against the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management relating to land management projects; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the Litigation Relief for Forest Management Projects Act 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. 605

*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 "Litigation Relief for Forest Management Projects Act".

#### SEC. 2. FOREST AND RANGELAND RENEWABLE RESOURCES PLANNING ACT OF 1974.

(a) CONSULTATION REGARDING LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS.—Section 6(d) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking "(d) The Secretary" and inserting the following:

"(d) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) NO ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION REQUIRED AFTER APPROVAL OF LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not be required to engage in consultation under this subsection or any other provision of law (including section 7 of Public Law 93-205 (16 U.S.C. 1536) and section 402.16 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation)) with respect to—

"(i) the listing of a species as threatened or endangered, or a designation of critical habitat pursuant to Public Law 93-205 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), if a land management plan has been adopted by the Secretary as of the date of listing or designation; or

"(ii) any provision of a land management plan adopted as described in clause (i).

"(B) EFFECT OF PARAGRAPH.—Nothing in this paragraph affects any applicable requirement of the Secretary to consult with the head of any other Federal department or agency—

"(i) regarding any project to implement a land management plan, including a project carried out, or proposed to be carried out, in an area designated as critical habitat pursuant to Public Law 93-205 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

"(ii) with respect to the development of a modification to a land management plan that would result in a significant change (within the meaning of subsection (f)(4)) in the land management plan."

(b) DEFINITION OF SECRETARY; CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) DEFINITION OF SECRETARY.—Section 3(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1601(a)) is amended, in the first sentence of the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting "(referred to in this Act as the 'Secretary')" after "Secretary of Agriculture".

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1600 et seq.) is amended, in sections 4 through 9, 12, 13, and 15, by striking "Secretary of Agriculture" each place it appears and inserting "Secretary".

#### SEC. 3. FEDERAL LAND POLICY AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976.

Section 202(f) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712(f)) is amended—

(1) by striking "(f) The Secretary" and inserting the following:

"(f) PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary"; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) NO ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION REQUIRED AFTER APPROVAL OF LAND USE PLANS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not be required to engage in consultation under this subsection or any other provision of law (including section 7 of Public Law 93-205 (16 U.S.C. 1536) and section 402.16 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation)), with respect to—

"(i) the listing of a species as threatened or endangered, or a designation of critical habitat, pursuant to Public Law 93-205 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), if a land use plan has been adopted by the Secretary as of the date of listing or designation; or

"(ii) any provision of a land use plan adopted as described in clause (i).

"(B) EFFECT OF PARAGRAPH.—

"(i) DEFINITION OF SIGNIFICANT CHANGE.—In this subparagraph, the term 'significant change' means a significant change within the meaning of section 219.13(b)(3) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this subparagraph), except that—

"(I) any reference contained in that section to a land management plan shall be deemed to be a reference to a land use plan;

"(II) any reference contained in that section to the Forest Service shall be deemed to be a reference to the Bureau of Land Management; and

"(III) any reference contained in that section to the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-588; 90 Stat. 2949) shall be deemed to be a reference to this Act.

"(ii) EFFECT.—Nothing in this paragraph affects any applicable requirement of the Secretary to consult with the head of any other Federal department or agency—

"(I) regarding a project carried out, or proposed to be carried out, with respect to a species listed as threatened or endangered, or in an area designated as critical habitat, pursuant to Public Law 93-205 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

"(II) with respect to the development of a new land use plan or the revision of or other significant change to an existing land use plan."

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 85—CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN TO FULFILL REPEATED PROMISES OF ASSISTANCE IN THE CASE OF ROBERT LEVINSON, THE LONGEST HELD UNITED STATES CIVILIAN IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY

Mr. NELSON (for himself and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 85

Whereas United States citizen Robert Levinson is a retired agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a resident of Coral Springs, Florida, the husband of Christine Levinson, father of their seven children, and grandfather of their six grandchildren;

Whereas Robert Levinson traveled from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to Kish Island, Iran, on March 8, 2007;

Whereas, after traveling to Kish Island and checking into the Hotel Maryam, Robert Levinson disappeared on March 9, 2007;

Whereas, in December 2007, Robert Levinson's wife, Christine, traveled to Kish Island to retrace Mr. Levinson's steps and met with officials of the Government of Iran who pledged to help in the investigation;

Whereas for 10 years, the United States Government has continually pressed the Government of Iran to provide any information on the whereabouts of Robert Levinson and to help ensure his prompt and safe return to his family;

Whereas officials of the Government of Iran promised their continued assistance to the relatives of Robert Levinson during the visit of the family to the Islamic Republic of Iran in December 2007;

Whereas, in November 2010, the Levinson family received a video of Mr. Levinson in captivity, representing the first proof of life since his disappearance and providing some initial indications that he was being held somewhere in southwest Asia;

Whereas, in April 2011, the Levinson family received a series of pictures of Mr. Levinson, which provided further indications that he was being held somewhere in southwest Asia;

Whereas Secretary of State John Kerry stated on August 28, 2013, "The United States respectfully asks the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to work cooperatively with us in our efforts to help U.S. citizen Robert Levinson.";

Whereas, on September 28, 2013, during the first direct phone conversation between the heads of governments of the United States and Iran since 1979, President Barack Obama raised the case of Robert Levinson to President of Iran Hassan Rouhani and urged the President of Iran to help locate Mr. Levinson and reunite him with his family;

Whereas, on August 29, 2014, Secretary of State Kerry again stated that the United States "respectfully request[s] the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran work cooperatively with us to find Mr. Levinson and bring him home";

Whereas, on January 16, 2016, the Government of Iran released five United States citizens detained in Iran;

Whereas, on January 17, 2016, President Obama stated that "even as we rejoice in the safe return of others, we will never forget about Bob," referring to Robert Levinson, and that "each and every day but especially today our hearts are with the Levinson family and we will never rest until their family is whole again";