

COMMITTEE ON AGING

The Special Committee on Aging is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 to conduct a hearing entitled “The Arc of Alzheimer’s” in room 106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building at 2:30 p.m.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the U.S. Senate on Wednesday, March 29, 2017 from 12 p.m., in room SH-219 of the Senate Hart Office Building.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

The Subcommittee on Airland of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, at 3:30 p.m.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGING THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

The Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, at 10 a.m. in open session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

The Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, at 2:15 p.m., in open session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL SPENDING OVERSIGHT AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency Management of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled “The Effect of Borrowing on Federal Spending.”

SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND INTERNATIONAL CYBERSECURITY

The Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, The Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, at 2:15 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled “American Leadership in the Asia-Pacific, Part 1: Security Issues.”

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE

The Committee on Foreign Relations subcommittee on Western Hemisphere is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 29, 2017, at 10:15 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled “The U.S.-Mexico Relationship: Advancing Security and Prosperity on Both Sides of the Border.”

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dara Greene, my intern, be granted privileges of the floor for the balance of the day.

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

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to Public Law 101-509, the reappointment of the following individual to serve as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress: Deborah Skaggs Speth of Kentucky.

NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 98 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 98) designating the first week of April 2017 as “National Asbestos Awareness Week.”

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

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

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

The resolution (S. Res. 98) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 27, 2017, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 103, submitted earlier today.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 103) designating March 29, 2017, as “Vietnam Veterans Day.”

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

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

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

The resolution (S. Res. 103) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today’s RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

WEATHER RESEARCH AND FORECASTING INNOVATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 353, 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. 353) to improve the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s weather research through a focused program of investment on affordable and attainable advances in observational, computing, and modeling capabilities to support substantial improvement in weather forecasting and prediction of high impact weather events, to expand commercial opportunities for the provision of weather data, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, for years, I have been working to make sure that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has reliable tools to forecast hurricanes. Today the Senate will come together on legislation to get us closer to that goal. In May 2016, just before the start of hurricane season, the Commerce Committee held a hearing on preparedness. At that hearing, I asked the then-Director of the National Hurricane Center, Dr. Rick Knabb, about the fact that NOAA has two P3 propeller aircraft that fly into the storm, but only the one Gulfstream jet that can fly high enough and long enough to get above the storm. Flying above the storm is critical because the scientists drop sondes out of the belly of the aircraft that fall through the storm sending measurements of the entire vertical profile. This is vital to telling us where the storm is headed and whether it is weakening or strengthening.

Having only one Gulfstream is a single point of failure because, if the plane is out of commission, we do not have a backup ready to go. Unfortunately, my fears were realized a few short months later. During a Hurricane Hermine reconnaissance mission, NOAA had to ground the Gulfstream for emergency corrosion repairs. Luckily, a plane owned by the National Science Foundation and the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research was not on a mission at the time and was able to fill in for the NOAA Gulfstream, but you can imagine that this will not always be the case. While the hurricane season seems to be getting longer, the NOAA plane is getting older. We must have a reliable backup. So, in January, I filed S. 153, legislation to require NOAA to acquire sufficient backup capability for our hurricane hunter aircraft. I am pleased today that the Senate will unanimously pass this measure as part of a broader weather bill.

I take comfort that even in times of great divisiveness, the Senate can come together on matters of public

safety. The power of Mother Nature must be taken seriously. Consider the flooding in California or the devastating tornadoes that hit Louisiana, Georgia, and Florida early this year. In 2016, Hurricane Matthew took 46 lives in the United States alone. In addition to requiring backup capability for the hurricane hunters, the broader bill we will pass tonight, the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act, will improve NOAA's ability to understand, predict, and—most importantly—to warn people about all kinds of weather events that dramatically affect the economy and people's daily lives. It also includes a reauthorization of the Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act. These provisions will give NOAA the tools to protect life and property and to support continued economic growth. It is my hope that the House follows suit.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Thune substitute amendment at the desk be considered; the Cantwell amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to; the Thune substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be considered 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 amendment (No. 204) in the nature of a substitute was considered.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The amendment (No. 205) was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Text of Amendments.")

The amendment (No. 204), as amended, was agreed to.

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

The bill was read the third time.

The bill (H.R. 353), as amended, was passed.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator MURKOWSKI.

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

The Senator from Alaska.

ALASKA'S SESQUICENTENNIAL

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I have come to the floor this evening in celebration of an important milestone, but speaking about it actually presents a little bit of a challenge. In our current environment, how do you give a statement about a Secretary of State, a Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, a Russian Ambassador, and an exchange of millions of dollars without making sensational headlines? Well, my answer to that is you tell the story of Alaska and the Treaty of Cession that brought Alaska into our Nation on March 30, 1867, exactly 150 years ago tomorrow.

If we are going to be fair, this story actually begins years before 1867. The United States and Russia had been in discussions over Russia's territorial claims since 1856, but the domestic turmoil and the Civil War in the United States stymied progress. So it wasn't until March 11, 1867, when Edouard de Stoeckl, Russia's Foreign Minister to the United States, met with then-Secretary of State William Seward that discussions really began in earnest.

From that time on, things really picked up speed. Just a few weeks later, on March 29, 1867—150 years ago today—Stoeckl received a cable from Czar Alexander II, approving a deal—a deal that would transfer Russia's interests in North America to the United States. In my office, I actually have a copy, a replica of the deal that was written, along with the note for \$7.2 million. That was the deal, but closing it in time was far from certain.

With work in this Congress rapidly wrapping up ahead of its April adjournment—can you imagine that, actually having an adjournment around this body in April? But that was the way it was 150 years ago. There was little time to complete an agreement and see it ratified, but Secretary Seward was determined, and despite some rather lackluster interest from President Andrew Johnson, he pressed forward with this.

When Ambassador Stoeckl received the cable, he went to Seward's house on Lafayette Square to deliver the news to him. According to the National Archives, Mr. Stoeckl said: "Tomorrow, if you like, I will come to the department, and we can enter upon the treaty." To which Seward replied: "Why wait until tomorrow, Mr. Stoeckl? Let us make the treaty tonight."

Secretary Seward was not merely a determined man; he was really a very

canny man—canny because before he met Ambassador Stoeckl, he consulted with the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who at the time was Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. He did this to ensure smooth action by the U.S. Senate in approving a treaty. In other words—and this is a lesson that all good members of the executive branch should perhaps take to heart—the Secretary consulted with the Congress before taking action.

Conveniently, Senator Sumner and Secretary Seward lived on opposite sides of Lafayette Square from each other, and, according to the National Archives, they were able to meet at Secretary Seward's home. While Senator Sumner made no commitments about the passage of the treaty, he did send a note to Secretary Seward later that evening saying that following its adjournment at noon on Saturday, March 30, "the Senate would be glad to proceed at once with Executive business" and consider the treaty. With that, Ambassador Stoeckl and Secretary Seward went to work, crafting the treaty that night and long into the morning, finally putting their signatures to it at 4 a.m. on Saturday, March 30, 1867.

By 10 a.m. that same day, Secretary Seward had met with the Cabinet and with President Johnson to execute a proclamation calling the Senate into special session on Monday, April 1.

It was in Senator Sumner's famous speech to the Senate that day that the word "Alaska" was first officially used to describe the new territory. The word "Alaska" is Aleut in origin. Traditionally translated as "mainland," it literally means, "the object toward which the action of the sea is directed."

It is important that I pause in reciting how Alaska came into the United States, first as a territory and later as a full member of our Union, by recognizing that while Western nations made deals about who "owned" the lands and the waters of Alaska, a diverse and vibrant Native people had already lived there for at least 14,000 years. While explorers, scientists, trappers, and settlers had come to Alaska from all over the world, the vast majority of our population were Alaska Natives.

Thankfully, after years of wrongful and misguided policies of assimilation, we in Congress now appreciate the incredible history and cultures of Alaska's indigenous peoples and have worked diligently to fulfill our trust responsibilities to them. Today, major landmarks like Denali, which is the highest mountain in North America, are again known by their rightful Native names. Today, Tribes are empowered to provide healthcare and other services to their people, and Federal agencies are required to consult with Alaskan Native Tribes on issues that impact their daily lives.

While we can all wrestle with the inherent challenge created for many by words like "purchase" and recognize

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2017

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 30; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate resume consideration of H.J. Res. 67, with all debate time being expired; finally, that the joint resolution be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the joint resolution with no intervening action or debate.

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