

By Mr. ALEXANDER for the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

* R. Alexander Acosta, of Florida, to be Secretary of Labor.

* 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. HATCH:

S. 775. A bill to streamline the R-1 religious worker visa petition process; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 776. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the taxation and regulation of marijuana products, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. BENNET, and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 777. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow deductions and credits relating to expenditures in connection with marijuana sales conducted in compliance with State law; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. KING):

S. 778. A bill to require the use of prescription drug monitoring programs and to facilitate information sharing among States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 779. A bill to enhance civil penalties under the Federal securities laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 780. A bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to reduce the gap between Federal and State marijuana policy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. KING, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 781. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to limit the liability of health care professionals who volunteer to provide health care services in response to a disaster; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HELLER, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 782. A bill to reauthorize the National Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 783. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to distribute maternity care health professionals to health professional shortage areas identified as in need of maternity care health services; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. TESTER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SULLIVAN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 784. A bill to provide for an increase, effective December 1, 2017, in the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

S. 785. A bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to provide for equitable allotment of land to Alaska Native veterans; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 786. A bill to establish a grant program relating to the prevention of student and student athlete opioid misuse; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 787. A bill to require the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation to test the effect of including telehealth services in Medicare health care delivery reform models; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 788. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to conduct an independent review of the deaths of certain veterans by suicide, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COTTON, and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 789. A bill to exempt from the Lacey Act and the Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 certain water transfers between any of the States of Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

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

S. 790. A bill to amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 to encourage innovation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself and Mr. RISCH):

S. 791. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to expand intellectual property education and training for small businesses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. KING, Mr. THUNE, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 792. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to establish an H-2B temporary non-agricultural work visa program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 793. A bill to prohibit sale of shark fins, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 794. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act in order to improve the process whereby Medicare administrative contractors issue local coverage determinations under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 795. A bill to amend the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 regarding dual or concurrent enrollment and

early college high schools; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. THUNE, and Mr. KING):

S. 796. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the exclusion for employer-provided education assistance to employer payments of student loans; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 797. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance matching grant program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CASSIDY (for himself, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 798. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program to apply to individuals pursuing programs of education while on active duty, to recipients of the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry scholarship, and to programs of education pursued on half-time basis or less, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 799. A bill to simplify and improve the Federal student loan program through income-contingent repayment to provide stronger protections for borrowers, encourage responsible borrowing, and save money for taxpayers; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 800. A bill to protect taxpayers from liability associated with the reclamation of surface coal mining operations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S.J. Res. 39. A joint resolution proposing a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. UDALL, and Ms. WARREN):

S. Res. 104. A resolution honoring the accomplishments and legacy of Cesar Estrada Chavez; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. Res. 105. A resolution recognizing 2017 as the 100th anniversary of the creation of the 41st Division; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. Res. 106. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to support the territorial integrity of Georgia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. Res. 107. A resolution congratulating the rifle team of West Virginia University on winning the 2017 National Collegiate Athletic Association Rifle Championship; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 96

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. McCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 96, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the integrity of voice communications and to prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of such communications.

S. 129

At the request of Mr. NELSON, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 129, a bill to reauthorize and amend the National Sea Grant College Program Act, and for other purposes.

S. 130

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 130, a bill to require enforcement against misbranded milk alternatives.

S. 200

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 200, a bill to prohibit the conduct of a first-use nuclear strike absent a declaration of war by Congress.

S. 253

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 253, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 382, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a voluntary registry to collect data on cancer incidence among firefighters.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) were added as cosponsors of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 431

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 431, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand the use of telehealth for individuals with stroke.

S. 464

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. CASSIDY) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 464, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a permanent Independence at Home medical practice program under the Medicare program.

S. 512

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 512, a bill to modernize the regulation of nuclear energy.

S. 693

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) and the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) were added as cosponsors of S. 693, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to increase the number of permanent faculty in palliative care at accredited allopathic and osteopathic medical schools, nursing schools, social work schools, and other programs, including physician assistant education programs, to promote education and research in palliative care and hospice, and to support the development of faculty careers in academic palliative medicine.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 720, a bill to amend the Export Administration Act of 1979 to include in the prohibitions on boycotts against allies of the United States boycotts fostered by international governmental organizations against Israel and to direct the Export-Import Bank of the United States to oppose boycotts against Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 722

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 722, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes.

S. 733

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) were added as cosponsors of S. 733, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 2

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 2, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to limiting the number of terms that a Member of Congress may serve.

S. RES. 92

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 92, a resolution expressing concern over the disappearance of David Sneddon, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 100

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr.

KAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 100, a resolution condemning illegal Russian aggression in Ukraine on the three year anniversary of the annexation of Crimea.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 779. A bill to enhance civil penalties under the Federal securities laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, the Stronger Enforcement of Civil Penalties Act, which I reintroduce today with Senator GRASSLEY, Senator HEITKAMP, and Senator LEAHY, will enhance the ability of securities regulators to protect investors and demand greater accountability from market players. Even after the financial crisis that crippled the economy, we continue to see calculated wrongdoing by some on Wall Street, and without the consequence of meaningful penalties to serve as an effective deterrent, I fear this disturbing culture of misconduct will persist.

Today, the amount of penalties the Securities and Exchange Commission, or SEC can fine an institution or individual is limited by statute. During hearings I held in 2011 in the Securities, Insurance, and Investment Banking Subcommittee, I learned how this limitation significantly interferes with the SEC's ability to perform its enforcement duties. At that time, the agency had been criticized by a Federal judge for not obtaining a larger settlement against Citigroup, a major player in the financial crisis that settled with the SEC in an amount that was a fraction of the cost the bank had inflicted on investors. The SEC explained that the reason for the low settlement amount was a statutory prohibition against levying a larger penalty. Indeed, then SEC Chairman Mary L. Schapiro in 2011 also explained that "the Commission's statutory authority to obtain civil monetary penalties with appropriate deterrent effect is limited in many circumstances."

The bipartisan bill Senator GRASSLEY and I are reintroducing finally updates the SEC's civil penalties statute. This bill strives to make potential and current offenders think twice before engaging in misconduct by increasing the maximum civil monetary penalties permitted by statute, directly linking the size of the maximum penalties to the amount of losses suffered by victims of a violation and substantially raising the financial stakes for repeat offenders of our Nation's securities laws.

Specifically, our bill would give the SEC more options to tailor penalties to the specific circumstances of a given violation. In addition to raising the per violation caps for severe, or "tier