

By Mr. BENNET:

S. 979. A bill for the relief of Arturo Hernandez-Garcia; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 980. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for payments for certain rural health clinic and Federally qualified health center services furnished to hospice patients under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 981. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to establish an energy efficiency materials pilot program; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CASEY:

S. 982. A bill to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to require mandatory reporting of incidents of child abuse or neglect, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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

S. 983. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the work opportunity credit for certain youth employees, and to extend empowerment zones; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 984. A bill to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to provide funding, on a competitive basis, for summer and year-round employment opportunities for youth ages 14 through 24; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. HASSAN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. NELSON, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HARRIS, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 985. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of the Interior from revising the approved oil and gas leasing program for fiscal years 2017 through 2022; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. COONS):

S. 986. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to permit hospitals in all-urban States to be considered Medicare dependent hospitals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 987. A bill to transition away from fossil fuel sources of energy to 100 percent clean and renewable energy by 2050, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 988. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make qualified biogas property and qualified manure resource recovery property eligible for the energy credit and to permit new clean renewable energy bonds to finance qualified biogas property, 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. TILLIS:

S. Res. 144. A resolution designating May 1, 2017, as "National Purebred Dog Day"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. CARPER, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. COONS, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. Res. 145. A resolution designating April 2017 as "Financial Literacy Month"; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. FLAKE, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. CRAPO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REED, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. Res. 146. A resolution designating April 30, 2017, as El Dia de Los Ninos-Celebrating Young Americans; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Ms. HARRIS):

S. Res. 147. A resolution commemorating the 25th anniversary of the 1992 Los Angeles civil unrest; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. Con. Res. 14. A concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha I; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 104

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 104, a bill to provide for the vacating of certain convictions and expungement of certain arrests of victims of human trafficking.

S. 109

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 109, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 203

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 203, a bill to reaffirm that the Environmental Protection Agency may not regulate vehicles used solely for competition, and for other purposes.

S. 223

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. 223, a bill to provide immunity from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes.

S. 236

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Mis-

sissippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 236, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reform taxation of alcoholic beverages.

S. 251

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 251, a bill to repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board in order to ensure that it cannot be used to undermine the Medicare entitlement for beneficiaries.

S. 260

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 260, a bill to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board.

S. 319

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 319, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish within the Department of Veterans Affairs a center of excellence in the prevention, diagnosis, mitigation, treatment, and rehabilitation of health conditions relating to exposure to burn pits.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 322, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 339

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) were added as cosponsors of S. 339, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 372

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 372, a bill to amend the Tariff Act of 1930 to ensure that merchandise arriving through the mail shall be subject to review by U.S. Customs and Border Protection and to require the provision of advance electronic information on shipments of mail to U.S. Customs and Border Protection and for other purposes.

S. 379

At the request of Mr. COTTON, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 379, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the five month waiting period for disability insurance benefits under such title for individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

S. 384

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 384, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the new markets tax credit, and for other purposes.

S. 393

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 393, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax for employees who participate in qualified apprenticeship programs.

S. 404

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 404, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to improve the process for inspections of device establishments for granting export certifications.

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 404, *supra*.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 428

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 428, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to authorize States to provide coordinated care to children with complex medical conditions through enhanced pediatric health homes, and for other purposes.

S. 445

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 445, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 486

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 486, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the non-application of Medicare competitive acquisition rates to complex rehabilitative wheelchairs and accessories.

S. 538

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 538, a bill to clarify research and development for wood products, and for other purposes.

S. 540

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 540, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 623

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 623, a bill to enhance the transparency and accelerate the impact of assistance provided under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to promote quality basic education in developing countries, to better enable such countries to achieve universal access to quality basic education and improved learning outcomes, to eliminate duplication and waste, and for other purposes.

S. 652

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 652, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children.

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 652, *supra*.

S. 708

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. 708, a bill to improve the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection to interdict fentanyl, other synthetic opioids, and other narcotics and psychoactive substances that are illegally imported into the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 736

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 736, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for collegiate housing and infrastructure grants.

S. 750

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 750, a bill to prohibit drilling in the outer Continental Shelf, to prohibit coal leases on Federal land, and for other purposes.

S. 751

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from West Vir-

ginia (Mr. MANCHIN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 751, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to establish, fund, and provide for the use of amounts in a National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund to address the maintenance backlog of the National Park Service, and for other purposes.

S. 794

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 829

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 829, a bill to reauthorize the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 849

At the request of Mr. KING, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) were added as cosponsors of S. 849, a bill to support programs for mosquito-borne and other vector-borne disease surveillance and control.

S. 856

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) were added as cosponsors of S. 856, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act to combat campus sexual assault, and for other purposes.

S. 858

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 858, a bill to provide protection for survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault under the Fair Housing Act.

S. 900

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 900, a bill to improve the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 914

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 914, a bill to improve and coordinate interagency Federal actions

and provide assistance to States for responding to public health challenges posed by emerging contaminants, and for other purposes.

S. 916

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 916, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act with regard to the provision of emergency medical services.

S. 918

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 918, a bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for automatic continuing resolutions.

S.J. RES. 16

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 16, a joint resolution approving the discontinuation of the process for consideration and automatic implementation of the annual proposal of the Independent Medicare Advisory Board under section 1899A of the Social Security Act.

S. CON. RES. 12

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 12, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that those who served in the bays, harbors, and territorial seas of the Republic of Vietnam during the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975, should be presumed to have served in the Republic of Vietnam for all purposes under the Agent Orange Act of 1991.

S. RES. 60

At the request of Mr. DAINES, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 60, a resolution designating May 5, 2017, as the "National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls".

S. RES. 106

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 106, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to support the territorial integrity of Georgia.

S. RES. 108

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 108, a resolution reaffirming the commitment of the United States to the United States-Egypt partnership.

S. RES. 136

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER), the Senator from Oregon

(Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 136, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 102nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 959. A bill to restore protections for Social Security, Railroad retirement, and Black Lung benefits from administrative offset; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President. Every day, Social Security provides vital benefits to millions of Americans who worked and paid into the system. To ensure workers would receive full access to these fundamental lifeline benefits, for many years, the law protected these earned benefits from attempts to recover debts. However, 20 years ago, Congress suddenly reversed course, and made a change to the law that allowed the government to cut Social Security and other hard-earned benefit payments in order to collect student loan and other federal debts, like home loans owed to the Veterans Administration, and food stamp overpayments. Now, more and more seniors are finding themselves subject to government garnishment of their already modest Social Security benefits in order to recoup student loan debts. In fact, the New York Times published an editorial recently titled, "Haunted by Student Debt Past Age 50" that highlighted the worsening struggle that seniors face with student debt.

Student loan debt is becoming an increasingly serious problem in Oregon and across the Nation, with students and their families burdened by crushing student loan debt. Even in the best circumstances, many families will struggle to pay off crippling loans for years to come. However, for people who rely on benefits like Social Security after retirement, disability, or the death of a family member, making payments on student loans or other Federal debts can become an insurmountable hardship.

Because of the lifeline nature of these earned benefits, for more than 40 years the law prevented all creditors from collecting hard-earned Social Security, railroad retirement, and black lung benefits to recoup debts. The only exceptions included unpaid Federal taxes, child support or alimony payments, and court-ordered victim restitution. These protections helped ensure that our social safety net programs were functioning as intended—something I think we can all agree is essential to preserving Social Security and other earned benefits.

Astonishingly, when the law changed as part of a 1996 omnibus budget bill, these changes were never fully debated in Congress. This means Members of Congress never had the chance to really explore how this policy would affect beneficiaries. The legislation ultimately included some protections for the most vulnerable, but even those protections have not been updated in 20 years.

We now realize what a profound effect the loss of these protections has had on retirees and individuals with disabilities, who often live on fixed incomes. More and more seniors and people with disabilities are having their Social Security and other lifeline benefits taken away to pay federal debts. For example, according to a GAO report, in 2004, about 8,000 seniors were living in poverty after having their benefits garnished to recover a student debt. In 2015, over 67,000 seniors were subject to garnishment for a student debt and living in poverty. Congress should restore sanity to the system, and reestablish the protections that these beneficiaries deserve.

That is why I, along with Senators BROWN, MERKLEY, FEINSTEIN, HIRONO, SCHATZ, LEAHY, NELSON, WHITEHOUSE, GILLIBRAND, SANDERS, and WARREN are reintroducing the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act. The bill would restore the strong protections in the law that prevented the government from taking away earned benefits to pay federal debts, and guarantee beneficiaries will be able to maintain a basic standard of living by receiving the benefits they have earned. The bill is supported by Social Security Works, the Arc of the United States, Latinos for a Secure Retirement, Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action, PSARA, AFL-CIO, the Economic Opportunity Institute, the National Organization for Women, Justice in Aging, Gray Panthers NYC, Alliance for Retired Americans, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, Global Policy Solutions, AARP, the American Federation of Government Employees, and the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace & Agricultural Implement Workers of America, UAW.

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. 959

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 "Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act".

SEC. 2. PROTECTING SOCIAL SECURITY, RAILROAD RETIREMENT, AND BLACK LUNG BENEFITS FROM ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET.

(a) PROHIBITION ON ADMINISTRATIVE OFFSET AUTHORITY.—

(1) ASSIGNMENT UNDER SOCIAL SECURITY ACT.—Section 207 of the Social Security Act