

S. RES. 185

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 185, a resolution recognizing and expressing support for the goals and ideals of National Water Safety Month.

AMENDMENT NO. 230

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 230 intended to be proposed to 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 232

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT), the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 232 proposed to 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.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 1352. A bill to establish a tax credit for on-site apprenticeship programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon with my colleague from Maine to talk about an important issue, as well, something we had long planned to introduce today and did so this morning—the reintroduction of a Senate bill focusing on apprenticeship programs.

My colleague Senator COLLINS and I, in the past Congress, wanted to make sure people understood how important we thought the apprentice program was, and we introduced legislation then to create a Federal incentive for apprentice programs. We are coming back now in this Congress and reintroducing this legislation.

I know there has been a lot of talk about apprentices this week. We just had a roundtable discussion this morning with some of our business and labor leaders talking about the skills gap and the need for more apprentice investing as it relates to manufacturing. I know the President is doing some discussion of the apprentice program too. Obviously, it is no surprise to anybody in America that the President knows—

or at least has used—the word “apprentice” in a pretty aggressive way throughout his career. So I hope he will tune in and listen to what my colleague from Maine and I have to say about this.

We are saying that it is time in America to have a Federal priority on apprentices; that is, the first-ever tax incentive for hiring an apprentice. Why do we want a Federal priority? Because we know that in America we need to skill and train a workforce for tomorrow, and so many people in America aren't training and aren't skilling for those jobs.

In the downturn of our economy, a lot of people lost faith. What should they invest their time and money in? There was so much transition in the economy that people weren't sure where they should skill themselves. As we see a transitioning economy now in various sectors, as they continue to modernize, and as technology continues to change, people also say to themselves: What should I skill myself in? What should I get trained in? Because they are not sure that, at the end of that period, they will be right there with what the job market wants. That is why apprenticeship is so important today.

By giving a Federal incentive for the apprentice program, we are saying: Hire and train. We are actually saying: The apprentice program is earning while you learn, and it will help so many Americans take that issue off the table where they weren't sure whether or how they should skill themselves. They actually are hired and trained on the job.

This is something we have known as a country for a long time. We know the apprentice program has worked. We have seen it across many sectors, in building trades and construction. We have seen it in other areas. In aviation, for example, in the Pacific Northwest, the Boeing Company has taken great advantage of the apprentice program. There are so many other sectors. The maritime sector has taken advantage of the apprentice programs. What we are saying today is that we need to make this a national priority in a more aggressive way. The Department of Labor and registered apprentice programs are part of what we make an investment in here in the Federal budget. But what we are not doing is putting it on steroids, and that is what we need to do now.

Our legislation would create enough incentives for 500,000 new apprentice program individuals over the next 10 years. We think this is critically important because we know how much the U.S. economy needs these skilled workers. According to the National Skills Coalition, 53 percent of U.S. jobs are middle-skilled, meaning that they require some postsecondary education. Yet only 43 percent of U.S. workers are trained at that level. According to the National Association of Manufacturers, 67 percent of their members report a

shortage of available, qualified workers. We are going to need 3.5 million manufacturing jobs over the next decade, and this leaves us with a shortage of about 2 million.

So we need to give our businesses the skill levels they are looking for so they can be competitive, so they can meet their market needs, and so they can make profits and help grow our economy. We can't let them be deterred by the fact that they have the opening and they have the jobs, but they just don't have the skill level. By doing an incentive program, we can help get a national message out: The apprentice program is a key part of our economic strategy, and skilling a workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow is the best recipe for growing our economy.

There has been an overall decline in employer-provided training over the last two decades. By making this investment now, we are going to help U.S. businesses with the investment that should be made and, further, as I said, expedite getting people into the programs we need to get them into. If we are going to be competitive and our businesses are going to compete in this global economy and they are going to continue to innovate, they need the workforce to do it.

I think about the chip fabrication industry. Before Intel came along, probably no one knew how to do chip fabrication. But there was a sector of our economy that taught and educated people on chip manufacturing. That will not be the last innovation our economy sees. In aerospace, we have been able to, with composite manufacturing, make lighter weight planes. That composite was a huge shift from the aluminum that dominated aerospace. But composite manufacturing is a whole new skill level in which we are still training and educating the workforce. We need to compete in that sector, which is so important to manufacturing jobs.

I would say that every aspect of our economy needs apprentices. But what does the apprentice get out of it? Not only do they get a job and they get to be skilled on the job, but they also earn more. Over the course of their career, a registered apprentice earns about \$300,000 more than a non-apprentice working in the same field. A study done by our State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board found that completing apprentices earned \$13,000 more per year just as they started.

So apprentices are a win-win for us and our economy. They give the employer the skills they are seeking to make their companies successful, and the individual worker gets trained and hired in a field that takes away this uncertainty about our economy, which has so plagued us over the last decade or two, and the community gets a more successful employment base and successful companies that add to the economy of a region and to our country.

I am so glad to be here with my colleague Senator COLLINS, who has

known that this apprentice program has been a success, and that is why she and I have partnered for years on this program. We hope now that by reintroducing it and getting more of our colleagues to join in, they, too, will talk about why apprentices are so important today.

We hope there is a guy down the street in the White House, who had a program called “Apprentice,” who takes seriously the bipartisan effort of two Senators who have been at this for a few years, and says: This is where we should be spending our money and making an investment to skill, educate, and employ Americans right now, for today.

I yield to my colleague from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to speak in support of the Apprenticeship and Jobs Training Act, which Senator CANTWELL and I are reintroducing today.

Few issues are as important to the American people as the availability of good jobs in our communities. It is crucial that we continue to improve job training initiatives to help people find jobs in fields with open positions. Many business owners in Maine have told me that they do, in fact, have jobs available, but they cannot find qualified workers to fill these highly skilled vacant positions. In fact, I cannot visit a machine shop in the State of Maine, no matter where it is located, and find that they are not looking for skilled machinists. There is such a shortage. And those are good jobs. They are jobs with good benefits and job security.

One way for employees to acquire the skills needed to succeed in these in-demand fields is through apprenticeship programs. Apprentices gain hands-on experience that is invaluable to them and to their employers. These programs help workers secure good-paying jobs.

According to the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration, more than 49,000 participants graduated from an apprenticeship program in fiscal year 2016. In Maine, we have some innovative job-training apprenticeship programs at places like Bath Iron Works, which builds naval destroyers, and the Portsmouth Naval Ship Yard, which has an extraordinary program. Partnering with employers like these and others, more than 2,220 individuals in Maine worked actively on industry-recognized skill certifications in just the last year. That number—impressive as it is—remains insufficient to meet the needs of employers statewide.

We must do all we can to ensure that an adequate pool of skilled workers is available. Our legislation would help achieve this goal by giving a \$5,000 tax credit to businesses that hire apprentices full time in high-demand mechanical, technical, healthcare, or technology professions. In order for a business to claim the credit, the apprentice must be employed for at least 7 months. What we find is that the peo-

ple who go through these apprenticeship programs stay in these jobs, thus benefiting both the worker and the employer.

Our bill also provides incentives for experienced workers who spend at least 20 percent of their time passing their hard-earned knowledge on to the next generation. These workers would be allowed to receive some retirement income early without facing tax penalties. That is a way we can ensure that the experienced older worker is passing knowledge on to the next generation.

Finally, our bill would ensure that the brave men and women who defend our country are given credit for the skills they learned in the military while wearing our Nation’s uniform. Training received while serving in the Armed Forces would count toward an apprentice’s training requirement.

This bill would help to better align the needs of our Nation’s employers with potential employees. It would promote hiring and the creation of new jobs. It would enhance the skills that the people of our country need to obtain good-paying, secure employment. The Presiding Officer and I were talking about this very issue at lunch today and the need to bridge that skills gap.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support our bill, and I want to salute Senator CANTWELL for her leadership over many years in working on this issue. This is something that should unite us all—Democrats, Republicans, Independents. It is not a partisan issue; it is looking at ways that we can help more Americans secure good-paying jobs that will last them for a lifetime.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1353. A bill to require States to automatically register eligible voters to vote in elections for Federal offices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the right to vote is among the most sacred rights guaranteed by our Constitution. It forms the foundation for our democracy and inspires countless people across the world still striving for a meaningful opportunity to engage in the political process and shape their futures.

My friend JOHN LEWIS has often said that “the right to vote is the most powerful nonviolent tool we have in a democracy.” I could not agree more with him. America is a stronger and greater country when more Americans participate in our democracy. We are better when our citizens hold their elected representatives accountable and voice their opinions on the critical issues facing our Nation. We can take a historic step to foster even greater participation in our democracy simply by modernizing the way Americans register to vote.

Today, I am proud to introduce the Automatic Voter Registration Act of

2017. This bill would require States to automatically register citizens who are eligible to vote when they interact with State and Federal agencies. Americans would have the option of declining automatic registration, but this bill would provide for a registration process that is easier for our citizens and one that is more efficient and accurate.

The bill I introduce today streamlines the voter registration process by providing for online registration and greater portability of registration when an individual moves to a different location in the same State. Under this bill, no one can be unfairly penalized for inadvertent registration, and punishment is limited to cases of intentional registration fraud or illegal voting. This bill also includes important privacy protections and makes clear that the information used to automatically register individuals will remain secure. These are commonsense reforms that would not only help Americans vote but also help maintain accurate and up-to-date voter registration rolls.

Last year, Vermont became one of the States leading the country on improving our citizens’ access to the ballot by becoming one of just eight States to approve automatic voter registration. I want to commend Vermont secretary of state Jim Condos for his outstanding work on this issue and for the people of Vermont.

State election officials estimate that tens of thousands of Vermonters will now be registered to vote because of this new law. Implementing these types of reforms nationwide will make America stronger and increase participation of a broader electorate. A recent study by the Center for American Progress on Oregon’s automatic voter registration law that went into effect in January 2016 found that more than 272,000 people were added to voter rolls, and 98,000 of them were new voters in the November 2016 Presidential election. That is a remarkable success story, and hopefully other State legislatures will take notice. The Brennan Center for Justice, which has been a leading voice protecting Americans’ right to vote, concluded in a 2015 report that a comprehensive, nationwide automatic voter registration plan has the potential to increase voter registration by 50 million eligible voters. This would not only save money and increase accuracy, but it would also reduce the potential for fraud and protect the integrity of our elections.

I would like to thank the Brennan Center for Justice for its work on this issue and for working with me on this bill. I would also like to thank Senators DURBIN and KLOBUCHAR for joining me as original cosponsors. Congressman BRADY of Pennsylvania, the ranking member on the House Committee on House Administration, has been a leader on this issue and has introduced a House companion bill.

All members of Congress should support this legislation. We should all

strive to make sure that our constituents have access to the ballot box and are able to have their voices heard. This is of course just one reform we must make to ensure that our citizens' voting rights are protected. In the coming weeks, I intend to reintroduce legislation to restore the full protections of the Voting Rights Act. It has now been almost 4 years since the Supreme Court's devastating decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, and we have seen the effect of that disastrous ruling as States have attempted to enact discriminatory voter ID laws and other measures intended to prevent minority voters from going to the polls. That is disgraceful, and we must do better. Congress must act to ensure that millions of Americans are not disenfranchised.

The right to vote should not be a partisan issue. It is a right that forms the basis of our democracy, and it is incumbent on all Americans, Democratic and Republican, to ensure that no American's right to vote is infringed. Modernizing our voter registration system is one significant step forward.

By Mr. DAINES (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. RUBIO):

S.J. Res. 46. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. DAINES. 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:

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today, June 14, 2017 marks the 240th observance of "Flag Day," a day which commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States by a resolution of the Second Continental Congress in 1777. Deeply symbolic, our flag honors the sovereignty of each of our Nation's 50 States and the great sacrifices many Americans have made to uphold its bedrock principles of freedom and liberty. The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that over one million military service members have given their lives in the line of duty under our flag. Title 4 of United States Code, "The Flag Code" sets specific requirements for the handling and display of the flag, as a sign of respect to the symbol of our Nation.

In 1989, with a disappointing 5-4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court held in *Texas v. Johnson* that the desecration of the United States flag was a form of free speech under the First Amendment to the Constitution. Here, Chief Justice Rehnquist rightly observed in his dissent that "the flag is not simply another 'idea' or 'point of view' competing for recognition in the market-

place of ideas." Justice Kennedy, in his majority concurrence, recognized that many would be dismayed by the court's decision, and himself called the result distasteful. Yet, he explained that the court was bound to its decision according to the provisions of the Constitution. The Supreme Court reaffirmed this decision in *United States v. Eichman* in 1990. It ruled, again by 5-4 vote, that as Constitutional free speech, desecration of the flag cannot be prohibited by Federal or State statute. At the time of the Supreme Court's ruling, 48 of the 50 States had enacted statutes prohibiting desecration of the United States Flag.

My resolution proposes an amendment to the Constitution, establishing Congressional authority to prohibit the desecration of the flag of the United States. This resolution initiates the process to amend the Constitution, which must be agreed to by two-thirds of both houses of Congress, and ratified by three-fourths of the States. A high bar to meet, similar legislation passed the House of Representatives in 2006, and fell short of passage in the Senate by only one vote.

My resolution provides Congress with the authority that the Supreme Court decided it lacked in *Texas v. Johnson* and *United States v. Eichman*. This should remove any doubt in the mind of the Supreme Court on the Constitutionality of acts of flag desecration. A matter which has been long settled in the Court of public opinion.

S.J. RES. 46

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), That the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within 7 years after the date of its submission by the Congress:

"ARTICLE—

"The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States."

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 235. Mr. COTTON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, 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; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 236. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 237. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 238. Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. NELSON, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COONS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. MORAN, and Mr. HELLER) submitted an amendment intended to be pro-

posed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 239. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 240. Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. REED, Mr. TILLIS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. COONS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. CORKER, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BARRASSO, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. WARNER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra.

SA 241. Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, and Mr. RUBIO) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 242. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 243. Mr. SULLIVAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 244. Mr. SULLIVAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 245. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 246. Mr. TOOMEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 247. Mr. GARDNER (for himself, Mr. COONS, and Mr. WARNER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 248. Mr. PERDUE (for himself and Mr. CASEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 249. Mr. GARDNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 232 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. CARDIN)) to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 250. Mr. GARDNER (for himself, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. STRANGE, Mr. NELSON, Mr. WARNER, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. KAINE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra.

SA 251. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 252. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 232 proposed by Mr. MCCONNELL (for Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. CARDIN)) to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 253. Mr. LANKFORD submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 254. Mr. MORAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 722, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 235. Mr. COTTON submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by