

withdrawn. For employers, plan disqualification could result in limited deductions and a higher tax burden. Our bill would address this uncertainty, and protect members of a MEP from the failure of one bad apple to meet its obligations.

Third, our bill would reduce the cost of maintaining a retirement plan. Current law requires that participants in a retirement plan receive a variety of notices. Our bill would direct Treasury to simplify, clarify, and consolidate these required notices to lessen costs.

Fourth, the Retirement Security Act would encourage those still in the workforce to save more for retirement. Retirement plans are often designed to comply with existing safe harbors to prevent the IRS from challenging the tax benefits that flow to employees and employers. The existing safe harbor for so-called “automatic enrollment” plans effectively caps employee contributions at ten percent of annual pay, with the employer contributing a “matching” amount of up to six percent. Our bill would create an additional safe harbor for these plans that would allow employees to receive an employer match on contributions of up to ten percent of their pay. Employees would be able to contribute more than ten percent, albeit without an employer match for contributions above ten percent.

I recognize that businesses that choose to adopt a plan with this new optional safe harbor may face additional costs due to the increased employer match. That is why our bill would also help the smallest businesses—those with fewer than 100 employees—offset this cost by providing a new tax credit equal to the increased match.

I should note that the new retirement plan options for businesses included in our bill are just that—options. No business, large or small, would be required to offer its employees a retirement plan under the Retirement Security Act.

Finally, our bill would ensure that current measures to encourage savings are functioning as they were intended. One such measure is the so-called “saver’s credit,” which reduces the tax burden on low- and middle-income individuals who contribute to retirement plans, including IRAs and 401(k) plans. Yet the credit cannot be claimed on a Form 1040EZ, which is frequently used by these individuals. A 2013 Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies survey found that only 23 percent of people with household incomes of less than \$50,000 per year, the group most likely to qualify, were aware of the saver’s credit. To address this, our bill directs Treasury to make the credit available on Form 1040EZ.

Mr. President, during my time as chairman of the Senate Aging Committee, I have heard countless stories of retirees whose savings did not go as far as they anticipated. Adequate savings reduce poverty among our seniors.

As the HELP Committee noted in a July 2012 report, poverty among our seniors also increases Medicare and Medicaid costs and strains our social safety net. Giving those not yet at retirement age more opportunities to save, and to save more, would help ease this additional burden on entitlement programs that already are projected to be unsustainable.

In light of the positive effects this bill would have in strengthening retirement security for millions of Americans, I urge my colleagues to join Senator NELSON and me in supporting the Retirement Security Act of 2017.

Thank you, Mr. President.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1385. A bill to provide for a general capital increase for the North American Development Bank, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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. 1385

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 “North American Development Bank Improvement Act of 2017”.

SEC. 2. GENERAL CAPITAL INCREASE.

Part 2 of subtitle D of title V of Public Law 103-182 (22 U.S.C. 290m et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 547. FIRST CAPITAL INCREASE.

“(a) SUBSCRIPTION AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized to subscribe on behalf of the United States to, and make payment for, 150,000 additional shares of the capital stock of the Bank.

“(b) LIMITATION.—Any subscription by the United States to the capital stock of the Bank shall be effective only to such extent and in such amounts as are provided in advance in appropriations Acts.”.

SEC. 3. POLICY GOALS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In addition to projects within the mission and scope of the North American Development Bank on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act and pursuant to section 2 of article II of the Charter, the Secretary of the Treasury shall direct the representatives of the United States to the Board of Directors of the Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to support the financing of projects related to—

(1) environmental infrastructure relating to water pollution, wastewater treatment, water conservation, municipal solid waste, and related matters;

(2) natural gas, including natural gas pipelines and combined cycle power plants, with major emphasis on cross-border energy distribution and consumption and the energy security of the United States and Mexico; and

(3) the expansion or new construction of international land border crossings to help facilitate the flow of goods and people across the international land border between the United States and Mexico while reducing wait times at border crossings and improving air quality by reducing pollution related to vehicular and commercial traffic.

(b) CHARTER DEFINED.—In this section, the term “Charter” means the Agreement Concerning the Establishment of a Border Environment Cooperation Commission and a North American Development Bank, signed at Washington and Mexico November 16 and 18, 1993, and entered into force January 1, 1994 (TIAS 12516), between the United States and Mexico.

SEC. 4. EFFICIENCIES AND STREAMLINING.

The Secretary of the Treasury shall direct the representatives of the United States to the Board of Directors of the North American Development Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to seek to require the Bank to develop and implement efficiency improvements to streamline and accelerate the project certification and financing process, including through initiatives such as single certifications for revolving facilities, programmatic certification of similar groups of small projects, expansion of internal authority to approve qualified projects below certain monetary thresholds, and expedited certification for public sector projects subject to lender bidding processes.

SEC. 5. PERFORMANCE MEASURES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall direct the representatives of the United States to the Board of Directors of the North American Development Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to seek to require the Bank to develop performance measures that—

(1) demonstrate how projects and financing approved by the Bank are meeting the Bank’s mission and providing added value to the region near the international land border between the United States and Mexico; and

(2) are reviewed and updated not less frequently than annually.

(b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary of the Treasury shall submit to Congress, with the submission to Congress of the budget of the President for a fiscal year under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, a report on progress in imposing the performance measures described in subsection (a).

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 195—RECOGNIZING JUNE 20, 2017, AS “WORLD REFUGEE DAY”

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. COONS, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. BROWN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a resolution to mark World Refugee Day, and to address the ongoing displacement crisis across the globe. War, conflict and persecution have forced millions of people to leave their homes, creating more refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people than at any other time in history. Today, there are more than 65 million displaced men, women, and children worldwide, the highest level ever recorded in history. To put this number into perspective—if the global displaced population were a country, it would be the 21st largest country, more populated than the United Kingdom.

The global displacement trends we are witnessing now, due to conflict, severe human rights abuses, and climate change, are not going away. U.S. leadership in responding to these crises, whether it is the immense suffering of refugees from South Sudan or the plight of the internally-displaced in Syria and Iraq, is critical. How we respond—or whether we respond at all—will undoubtedly shape the landscape and the lives of future generations for years to come.

The United States has a long and proud history of providing safe harbor to the world's most vulnerable refugees—women and children, survivors of torture and other violence, and those with severe medical conditions. This included after World War II and after the fall of Saigon, when we resettled hundreds of thousands of refugees.

At the same time, we take the security of our citizens seriously. That is the reason the United States has the most rigorous refugee screening process in the world, involving the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and National Counter Terrorism Center. The process includes biometric checks, medical screenings, forensic testing of documents, DNA testing for family reunification cases, and in-person interviews with highly trained homeland security officials.

The U.S. Refugee Resettlement program has been and should remain open to those of all nationalities and religions who face persecution. The Trump Administration's proposals that would have the U.S. State Department disqualify refugees from protection based on their nationality or religion fly in the face of the very principles this Nation was built upon. They also contradict the legacy of leadership our country has historically demonstrated, and dishonor our shared humanity.

It is clear, however, that the Trump Administration is determined to undermine longstanding American tradition and values, and in doing so they weaken our National security. As we all know, one of President Trump's first executive orders sought to drastically reduce the number of refugees entering the United States and turn away refugees from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. This un-American policy, rooted in fear not fact, cannot be tolerated. We collectively must reject the misplaced notion that some refugees are more deserving of protection than others.

Again and again, the Federal courts are signaling to the White House a real need for the President to immediately rescind his discriminatory executive order targeting Muslim refugees and travelers. Even while stayed by the courts, President Trump's executive orders have made America less safe, damaged our relationships with our allies, and harmed countless numbers of law-abiding citizens, travelers, and their families. America is a compas-

sionate nation steeped with a history of welcoming immigrants and refugees.

I was proud to join Members of Congress who filed legal briefs in opposition to the President's discriminatory executive orders, along with HIAS in Silver Spring, Maryland, whose motto is to "welcome the stranger" and "protect the refugee." Recently the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit provided a valuable check and balance on the President's authority. The court correctly pointed out that the President's most recent Executive Order "speaks with vague words of national security, but in context drips with religious intolerance, animus, and discrimination" which violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. No American president is above the law.

Turning away refugees—whether they are from Syria or Somalia, Burma or Iraq, whether they are Muslims or Christians, Hindus or Jews—means turning our backs on the international humanitarian system and the mechanisms of stability and security that are the bedrocks of international order. Refugees remain powerful ambassadors of the American Dream and our Nation's founding principles of equal opportunity, religious freedom, and liberty and justice for all.

The Trump Administration again revealed its determination to erode American leadership with the release of its Fiscal Year 2018 Budget request. Their FY18 budget represents a wholesale repudiation of U.S. global leadership on virtually every critical matter, including humanitarian assistance and protection of the most vulnerable populations. The President's budget called for a 44 percent cut in humanitarian assistance—a truly horrifying reduction made even more appalling given the level of global need. According to a group of leading NGOs, the human cost of these cuts could be staggering. The proposed 18 percent cut to the Migration and Refugee Assistance account could result in over 3.5 million refugees and internally displaced persons not receiving assistance globally, including about 1 million in the Middle East and 1.1 million in Africa.

The United States has been a beacon of hope for so many around the world for centuries, and it is imperative that we remain so for others in this century, and beyond. We need to be unified on this and the United States must lead by example. It is a universal human desire to live in peace and security and to create a better life for our families and loved ones. We must do our part to facilitate that. We need to keep our doors—and our hearts—open to those who so desperately need safe harbor.

S. RES. 195

Whereas World Refugee Day is an opportunity to acknowledge the courage, strength, and determination of women, men, and children forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, and persecution;

Whereas according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (referred to in this Resolution as "UNHCR")—

(1) there are more than 65,600,000 displaced people worldwide, the highest level ever recorded, including nearly 22,500,000 refugees, more than 40,300,000 internally displaced people, and 2,800,000 people seeking asylum;

(2) children account for 51 percent of the global refugee population, millions of whom are unable to access basic services, including education;

(3) 10,300,000 people were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution in 2016;

(4) more than 5,500,000 refugees have fled Syria since the start of the conflict, and more than 6,300,000 people are displaced inside Syria;

(5) since January 2014, more than 3,000,000 Iraqis fleeing violence have been internally displaced, and 257,000 refugees have fled to neighboring countries;

(6) South Sudan has the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis, which is now the largest refugee crisis in Africa, with more than 1,800,000 refugees, including 1,000,000 children;

(7) increasing violence in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras has led to a growing number of unaccompanied child refugees, who are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, human trafficking, and kidnapping; and

(8) ongoing conflict, violence, and persecution have resulted in the displacement of millions in Ukraine, Colombia, and the Central African Republic;

Whereas 84 percent of the world's refugees are hosted in developing regions, with more than 28 percent hosted in the world's least developed countries;

Whereas refugees who are women and children are often at greater risk of violence, human trafficking, exploitation, and gender-based violence;

Whereas the United States resettlement program is a life-saving solution critical to global humanitarian efforts, which reflects American values, strengthens global security, and alleviates the burden placed on front-line host countries;

Whereas refugees are the most vetted travelers to enter the United States and are subject to extensive screening checks, including in person interviews, biometric data checks, and multiple interagency checks;

Whereas refugees contribute to their communities by starting businesses, paying taxes, and sharing their cultural traditions; and

Whereas refugees contribute more than they consume in state-funded services, including schooling and health care:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms the bipartisan commitment of the United States to promote the safety, health, and well-being of the millions of refugees;

(2) recognizes those individuals who have risked their lives working individually and for nongovernmental organizations and international agencies, such as UNHCR, to provide life-saving assistance and protection for people displaced by conflict around the world;

(3) underscores the importance of the United States Refugee Resettlement Program as a critical tool for United States global leadership;

(4) calls upon the United States Government—

(A) to continue providing robust funding for refugee protection overseas and resettlement in the United States;

(B) to uphold its international leadership role in responding to displacement crises with humanitarian assistance and protection of the most vulnerable populations; and

(C) to alleviate the burden on refugee host countries through humanitarian and development support while maintaining the

United States' long-standing tradition of resettling the most vulnerable refugees regardless of their country of origin or religious beliefs;

(5) reaffirms the goals of World Refugee Day; and

(6) reiterates the strong commitment of the United States to seek to protect the millions of refugees who live without material, social, or legal protections.

NOTICE OF INTENT TO OBJECT TO PROCEEDING

I, Senator CHUCK GRASSLEY, intend to object to proceeding to the nomination of Steven Andrew Engel, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Attorney General for the Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel, dated June 20, 2017.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Wednesday, June 21; further, 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 proceed to executive session and resume consideration of the Mandelker nomination postcloture; finally, that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postcloture on the Mandelker nomination.

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

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

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 WICKER and Senator HASSAN.

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

The Senator from Mississippi.

BUILDING AND SUSTAINING A LARGER NAVY

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, let's talk about the size of our Navy's fleet.

The current fleet has 276 ships, but the Navy's requirement is now for 355 ships—a figure supported by congressionally mandated future fleet architecture studies.

Last week, I spoke on the floor about the national imperative to build a larger Navy. I outlined the critical missions that our Navy performs every day to help secure the country's vital interests. I also described an intense naval competition with our real and potential adversaries. This is a competition America cannot afford to lose.

America needs a bigger Navy. How do we get there? Related to that question

is when we get to a 355-ship fleet. According to the Chief of Naval Operations, ADM John Richardson, we should reach our 355-ship objective in the mid-2020s. To do that, we should have started yesterday. Building and sustaining technologically advanced ships is a long-term national project. It cannot happen overnight. It takes years.

As chairman of the Seapower Subcommittee, I intend to lay a firm foundation this year to help support a buildup. Based on my subcommittee's work, I am convinced that Congress has a critical role to play in determining how we get to 355. All options should be on the table. Here are four ideas to consider.

No. 1, ramp up hot production lines.

The Navy's accelerated fleet plan states that over the next 7 years, the shipbuilding industrial base can support building more ships than are currently planned. The Navy plans to build 59, but the shipbuilders can actually complete 88. We should do this. Many hot production lines have excess capacity. Congress should authorize the Navy to "buy in bulk," using multiyear and block buy contracts. These contracts would help solidify the skilled workforce, stimulate suppliers, and drive down costs. We can also authorize advance procurement funding to buy long-lead-time pieces and parts.

No. 2, extend the service life of ships in the fleet.

A quarter century ago, the Navy had 450 ships and deployments that averaged 167 days. Now the average deployment exceeds 200 days. In other words, the Navy is smaller, but the tempo of its operations has accelerated. An extra month of deployment puts additional wear and tear on ships, and this can force early retirement and ultimately squander taxpayer dollars.

Better maintenance can extend ships' service lives, delay retirement, and help us reach the 355-ship goal faster. I applaud the President's budget request for fully funding ship depot maintenance. We must build new ships and maintain the current fleet better.

In a recent speech to the Naval War College, the CNO, Admiral Richardson, noted that extending the lives of *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyers could help the Navy reach the 355-ship objective 10 to 15 years earlier. The commander of Navy Sea Systems Command, VADM Thomas Moore, agreed with the CNO in a recent speech in which he stated that proper maintenance would extend service lives and help grow the fleet more rapidly.

No. 3, reactivate ships in the Ready Reserve fleet.

During the Reagan buildup, the Navy brought ships out of mothballs, including battleships with massive guns, to help grow the fleet size. The Navy should look at the Reserve fleet ship by ship to determine if any can be restored to operational status.

In his Naval War College speech, the CNO revealed that he is considering

bringing some retired *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class frigates out of mothballs. Vice Admiral Moore also suggested examining the merits of returning some logistics ships to the force.

Reactivating retired ships does not simply mean bringing back less capable ships. Jerry Hendrix and Robert C. O'Brien wrote in *POLITICO* in April that reactivated ships could be outfitted with modern missile systems and potentially cutting-edge electromagnetic railguns and directed energy weapons. In other words, reactivated ships could perform completely different and relevant missions at a fraction of the cost of new construction.

No. 4, develop and deploy unmanned maritime systems.

The fleet of the future will include new types of ships. Again, according to the CNO, "There is no question that unmanned systems must also be an integral part of the future fleet." Unmanned undersea and surface ships can offer significant advantages, such as the ability to conduct persistent operations. We have seen drones revolutionize combat from the skies. The same is possible on the seas.

I believe the Navy needs a dedicated range to test unmanned systems with other manned and unmanned platforms, while also training new operators and maintainers. I applaud the Navy for including substantial R&D funding for unmanned underwater vehicles, UUVs, in its unfunded priorities list. I am hopeful that Congress will provide the resources that are necessary to rapidly develop and deploy new unmanned systems.

To conclude, we should be considering all options for building up our naval capacity. I do not dismiss the fact that these options cost money and some are controversial, but they deserve to be explored. It would be irresponsible for Congress not to do the work now to ensure that the Navy of the future has what it needs to respond to challenges and fulfill its missions. That means 355 ships, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to set this imperative national project into motion.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Mississippi for his remarks about the brave men and women in the Navy and their need for support.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. President, I rise today to join my Democratic colleagues in speaking out against the dangerous TrumpCare bill which is currently being drafted behind closed doors by our Republican colleagues.

The secrecy around this bill shows that Senate Republicans know they cannot defend it to their constituents. That is why Senate Republicans are refusing to even hold a single hearing on the bill. In my State of New Hampshire, you can't pass a bill if it has not