

letter to United States Secretary of Energy Rick Perry warned that “premature retirements of fuel-secure baseload generating stations reduces resilience to fuel supply disruptions”; and

Whereas, The recent United States Department of Energy Staff Report to the Secretary on Electricity Markets and Reliability made clear that resiliency must be addressed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and there is an “urgent need for clear definitions of reliability- and resilience-enhancing attributes and should quickly establish the market means to value or the regulatory means to provide them”; and

Whereas, The 2014 polar vortex exposed problems with the resiliency of the electric grid when PJM Interconnection struggled to meet demand for electricity because a significant amount of generation was not available to run due to weather-related outages; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania’s fuel-secure baseload generation plants employ thousands of workers in high-paying jobs and contribute significantly to State and local economics; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania’s coal industry, including coal power plants, is a vital contributor to the State’s economy, providing support through direct, indirect and induced impacts, including approximately 36,100 full and part-time jobs, and \$4.1 billion in total value added to the Commonwealth’s economy; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania’s nuclear industry, including nuclear power plants, is a vital contributor to the State’s economy, providing support through direct, indirect and induced impacts, including approximately 15,900 in-State full time jobs and \$2 billion to the Commonwealth’s gross domestic product, and \$69 million in net State tax revenues annually; and

Whereas, In addition to the reliability, security, grid resilience and economic attributes, Pennsylvania’s fuel-secure baseload coal plants have made significant investments to meet increased environmental standards, helping to improve air and water quality in the Commonwealth; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania is also home to unique fuel-secure coal generation sources that use waste coal as a fuel-source, employing 3,800 Pennsylvania residents and producing 1,500 megawatts of renewable energy, also helping to remove approximately 200 million tons of refuse coal from mine scarred land in Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, In addition to the reliability, security, grid resilience and economic attributes, Pennsylvania’s fuel-secure baseload nuclear power plants also provide more than 93% of this Commonwealth’s emissions-free electricity and are the only emissions-free, predictable and reliable electric generation source; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania’s diverse portfolio of fuel-secure baseload generation resources are vital to our Commonwealth’s economic competitiveness, natural environment and public health and safety; and

Whereas, It is in the public interest that fuel-secure baseload generation resources be properly compensated for providing these positive attributes and under the current design of the wholesale electric markets, prices are set in a manner that undervalues fuel-secure generation resources; and

Whereas, The Secretary of Energy has proposed, for consideration by FERC, a Grid Resiliency Pricing Rule with the goal of ensuring our nation’s energy security; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania acknowledge the grid resilience and reliability benefits that fuel-

secure baseload electricity generation resources provide to the residents, business and economy of this Commonwealth and assert that fuel-secure baseload generation resources receive proper compensation for these positive attributes; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agree with the goals of the United States Department of Energy’s proposed Grid Resiliency Pricing Rule and urge the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to swiftly implement policies and approve tariff provisions to ensure fuel-secure baseload electricity generation resources receive proper compensation for all of the positive attributes they provide our nation’s and this Commonwealth’s electric system; and be it further

Resolved, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, while expressing support for FERC’s swift action to ensure the positive attributes provided by fuel-secure baseload generation resources receive proper compensation in the wholesale market, will continue to exercise the General Assembly’s authority to make energy policy consistent with the health, safety and welfare of our residents; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, United States Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, FERC Commissioners, the presiding officers of each house of Congress, each member of Congress from Pennsylvania and the Board of Managers of PJM Interconnection.

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. TILLIS (for himself and Mr. PETERS):

S. 2126. A bill to amend the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 to provide a temporary exemption for low-revenue issuers from certain auditor attestation requirements; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. COCHRAN):

S. 2127. A bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States merchant mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. HELLER, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2128. A bill to improve the coordination and use of geospatial data; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. HARRIS, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2129. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to establish a punitive article in the Uniform Code of Military Justice on domestic violence, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. TESTER:

S. 2130. A bill to establish within the Department of the Interior the Outdoor Recreation Advisory Committee; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2131. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to furnish medically necessary transportation for newborn children of certain women veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. COONS, Mr. BROWN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. KING, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KAINE, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2132. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that working families have access to affordable health insurance coverage; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. UDALL (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 2133. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into alternative funding arrangements with certain community irrigation associations and community land grants; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. MORAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2134. A bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish processes to ensure that non-Department of Veterans Affairs health care providers are using safe practices in prescribing opioids to veterans under the laws administered by the Secretary, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs.

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HELLER, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2135. A bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System; 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. MANCHIN (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. Res. 332. A resolution commemorating the christening of the USNS Hershel “Woody” Williams; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 333. A resolution permitting the collection of clothing, toys, food, and housewares during the holiday season for charitable purposes in Senate buildings; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. Res. 334. A resolution authorizing the taking of a photograph in the Senate Chamber; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 16

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 16, a bill to require a full audit of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System and the Federal reserve banks by the Comptroller General of

the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) 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. 374

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 374, a bill to enable concrete masonry products manufacturers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for concrete masonry products.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) were added as cosponsors of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 537

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 537, a bill to amend title 9 of the United States Code with respect to arbitration.

S. 693

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) 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. 925

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 925, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the ability of health care professionals to treat veterans through the use of telemedicine, and for other purposes.

S. 1169

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1169, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide States with an option to provide medical assistance to individuals between the

ages of 22 and 64 for inpatient services to treat substance use disorders at certain facilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1361

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1361, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 1539

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1539, a bill to protect victims of stalking from gun violence.

S. 1693

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1693, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to clarify that section 230 of that Act does not prohibit the enforcement against providers and users of interactive computer services of Federal and State criminal and civil law relating to sex trafficking.

S. 1718

At the request of Mr. KENNEDY, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1718, a bill to authorize the minting of a coin in honor of the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, and for other purposes.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a home infusion therapy services temporary transitional payment under the Medicare program.

S. 1901

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1901, a bill to require global economic and political pressure to support diplomatic denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including through the imposition of sanctions with respect to the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and any enablers of the activities of that Government, and to reauthorize the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, and for other purposes.

S. 2088

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2088, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for the issuance of the Gold Star Installation Access Card to the surviving

spouse, dependent children, and other next of kin of a member of the Armed Forces who dies while serving on certain active or reserve duty, to ensure that a remarried surviving spouse with dependent children of the deceased member remains eligible for installation benefits to which the surviving spouse was previously eligible, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 49

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 49, a resolution declaring that achieving the primary goal of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease of the Department of Health and Human Services to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's disease by 2025 is an urgent national priority.

S. RES. 168

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 168, a resolution supporting respect for human rights and encouraging inclusive governance in Ethiopia.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CORNYN (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. HELLER, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2135. A bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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. 2135

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 "Fix NICS Act of 2017".

SEC. 2. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES.

Section 103 of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (34 U.S.C. 40901) is amended—

(1) in subsection (e)(1), by adding at the end the following:

“(F) SEMI-ANNUAL CERTIFICATION AND REPORTING.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The head of each Federal department or agency shall submit a semi-annual written certification to the Attorney General indicating whether the department or agency is in compliance with the record submission requirements under subparagraph (C).

“(ii) SUBMISSION DATES.—The head of a Federal department or agency shall submit a certification to the Attorney General under clause (i)—

“(I) not later than July 31 of each year, which shall address all relevant records, including those that have not been transmitted to the Attorney General, in possession of the department or agency during the period beginning on January 1 of the year and ending on June 30 of the year; and