

SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 352, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Master Sergeant Rodrick "Roddie" Edmonds in recognition of his heroic actions during World War II.

S. 568

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 568, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to count a period of receipt of outpatient observation services in a hospital toward satisfying the 3-day inpatient hospital requirement for coverage of skilled nursing facility services under Medicare.

S. 693

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN), the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) 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. 1503

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1503, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

S. 1906

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 1906, a bill to posthumously award the Congressional Gold Medal to each of Glen Doherty, Tyrone Woods, J. Christopher Stevens, and Sean Smith in recognition of their contributions to the Nation.

S. 3215

At the request of Mr. VAN HOLLEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3215, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require the development of a bus operations safety risk reduction program, and for other purposes.

S. 3332

At the request of Mr. LANKFORD, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3332, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the inclusion of certain fringe benefit expenses for which a deduction is disallowed in unrelated business taxable income.

S. 3611

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 3611, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 to facilitate the disclosure of tax return information to carry out the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 3622

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3622, a bill to condemn gross human rights violations of ethnic Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, and calling for an end to arbitrary detention, torture, and harassment of these communities inside and outside China.

S.J. RES. 64

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 64, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of the Treasury relating to "Returns by Exempt Organizations and Returns by Certain Non-Exempt Organizations".

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

S. 3739. A bill to amend the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 to modify the membership of the Arctic Research Commission, to establish an Arctic Executive Steering Committee, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, there has been a lot of discussion this evening by my colleague from New Jersey and by my colleague from Rhode Island about the issue of climate

change and its impact. I come from a part of the country where climate change is there; it is with us; it is real. It is something that we look to as Alaskans with a reality of this world view.

I spend a lot of my time here in the Senate focused on not only the U.S. Arctic but the Arctic as a whole, the eight Arctic nations that we intersect with. So I would like to take a few minutes this evening to speak about the happenings in the Arctic—our new reality—as we are seeing greater opportunities but also greater challenges in an area that I find to be an extraordinary place on our globe.

It was maybe a little more than 150 years ago when Massachusetts Senator and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the time, Charles Sumner, argued the geostrategic importance of Alaska to our young Nation at the time. Senator Sumner spoke about how the Aleutians represented this gateway to Asia. This was a maritime route to the west coast that was roughly 1,000 miles shorter than the southern route through the Sandwich Isles, which was popular at the time.

It was about 70 years later that Gen. Billy Mitchell, who was the father of the Air Force, testified before Congress and said that he believed that in the future, whoever controls Alaska controls the world. He thought it was the most strategic place in the world.

Then we had World War II, the Japanese, who also recognized the strategic importance of the Aleutians, and they briefly seized and occupied the islands of Attu and Kiska.

While the war in the Aleutians may be forgotten by many here at home, the world continues to remember the strategic significance of the North.

Although General Mitchell saw the strategic geographic location of Alaska, he could not have imagined the environmental changes that would make sea routes accessible to commerce year-round, nor could he have imagined the rich mineral wealth beneath the Arctic. He might have been able to have imagined that Russia would take a major interest in the Arctic. Given its proximity from the Bering Strait region of Alaska, one can indeed see Russia from one's window. There are not too many people on Little Diomedede, but I have been there. Big Diomedede sits just about 2½ miles across the water, but I doubt that General Mitchell would ever have been able to have imagined that nations like China or India would have taken an interest in the very remote and often forbidding North, less that they would be fielding icebreakers in 2019 and 2020, as China and India are. He might also wonder why Singapore would take such an interest to justify observer status on the Arctic Council.

While places like Singapore seek observer status, the United States has passed the chairmanship of the Arctic Council and, with it, most of our diplomatic efforts towards the Arctic. The

Arctic Executive Steering Committee and other institutions within the executive branch that are focused on the Arctic have, in my view, just kind of wasted away just when the rest of the world has redoubled its focus on the Arctic.

The Department of Defense clearly gets it. It is starting to recognize what General Mitchell did back in 1935. Before the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee back in May 2016, I asked Secretary Carter whether we were doing what we needed to do from a defense standpoint to address changes in the Arctic. His response was pretty frank and, I think, very revealing. He told me that the Arctic is going to be a major area of importance to the United States strategically and economically in the future.

I think it is fair to say that we are late to the recognition of that, but I think we have the recognition. Now you are asking what comes in behind that recognition. I think a plan that is more than aspirational is needed, and I would be happy to work with you toward that end.

At that time, Secretary Carter's candor was refreshing, if not long overdue, but I have to tell you that we are still waiting for a plan that is more aspirational in the Arctic—not just a plan but a plan that is fully resourced. As an appropriator, I know full well how difficult that is to achieve.

Sometimes around here, like a tree that falls in the forest when there is nobody there to listen, it seems like official Washington doesn't recognize that something new and very real is occurring until it reads about it in the New York Times or perhaps in the Washington Post. Well, on Thanksgiving Day of this year, the Washington Post really laid it out. It had a special section—some 16 pages—which is entitled "The New Arctic Frontier." I would like to quote from the cover of this special section.

It reads:

As the Arctic slowly thaws, the United States, Canada, Russia, China and other interested nations are reconsidering how they strategically approach the region. Corporations have launched new missions to search for oil. Commercial fishing continues to evolve. Shipping and luxury cruise lines alike are planning to send more vessels north. Coastal erosion has prompted questions about how some Alaskan villages will survive and how the U.S. government should react. Against this backdrop, militaries are increasingly preparing for potential conflict in the Arctic. The United States is shifting forces to the north, planning to build a new class of icebreaker ships and cultivating stronger relationships with Nordic militaries. Russia, meanwhile, is investing in ice-capable vessels and infrastructure improvements, and China has declared itself a "near Arctic state."

This really sums up where we are today.

Truth be told, General Mitchell has been proven to be correct in ways that he probably could not have imagined when he said Alaska was the most strategic place in the world. For example,

right now, here today, Anchorage has the fifth busiest cargo airport in the world—not in the country but in the world. So we are sitting here in Anchorage, AK. We are less than 9½ hours from 90 percent of the industrialized world. So whether you are going to Singapore, London, Mexico City, we are less than 9½ hours from 90 percent of the industrialized world. So many carriers, such as FedEx, UPS, Alaska Airlines, Atlas Air, and others, are already using Anchorage as a cargo hub because of this very, very central location and these very real opportunities for commerce. We are also looking to regain the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport position as a hub for international passenger travel.

Now we are getting ready for the holiday season, for Christmas. I think Santa had this figured out a long time ago. He knew that the shortest way to get around the globe, whether you were going to Fiji or to London or to Los Angeles or to Seoul, was over the Pole. Even Santa understood the geostrategic position of the Arctic. But it is Alaska. It really is Alaska, sitting right up there, which is the gateway to America's Arctic, that is at the center of all of this. That is not just bragging, not just my being parochial about it as Alaska's Senator. It is real, it is compelling, and it is demanding of attention and action. I know it is not easy.

The Washington Post's editors observed that the Arctic portends great opportunities and great challenges, so let's get to work on this. That is my central message today. It is time that we get to work and move ahead with a plan that fits the challenge that the Arctic represents for America. We talk a lot about aspiration. The time for aspiration is over—it is time for action. That starts by fully funding the first of the Coast Guard's Polar Security Cutters, whose purpose is to provide assured, year-round access to our polar regions. These are platforms that can project sea power anywhere, at any time, and are fully interoperable with interagency and international stakeholders to carry out national defense operations. These cutters will include sufficient space, weight, and power to conduct multimission activities that support our Nation's current and future needs in the Arctic.

The Polar Security Cutter will allow us to continue to engage with our fellow Arctic nations and our allies and our strategic competitors.

I share with you a picture of our existing Polar icebreaker, but when you look around the world at the various flags, here we are sitting in the United States—one of eight Arctic nations—and we have two icebreakers. I say two—maybe that is all we need. One of them is currently in dry dock in the Seattle-Tacoma area. She is never going to see activity again. The other one, *Polar Star*, is on her second life. She is working hard, but she is down in Antarctica, and she will be in Antarctica until she, too, is retired. Then

where does that leave us? Where does that put us?

We have a medium-strength vessel, the *Healy*. She does great work, but that is what the United States has.

Canada has nine government-owned, either operating or under construction. China has four—China, which has just determined they should be a "Near-Arctic State." Russia has 34, and when you count those that are nongovernment-owned, it is well over 40.

Here we are, the United States of America, an Arctic nation, and we are down to about one icebreaker. We have some work to do here.

Over the past several years, funds have been secured through the Navy to get started on building a new Polar Security Cutter. This year, the administration wisely decided—and I thank them for working with us—that it is time to lock in the project by budgeting the remaining funds necessary to complete the project. It is about \$750 million. That is a lot of money. That is a lot of money, but I would submit that this investment in the Polar Security Cutter is a small price to pay for the ability to project U.S. sea power in the Arctic.

The question of whether we follow through on this very important step is going to be determined this week, or perhaps next week, as we complete the fiscal year 2019 appropriations project. I would dare to suggest that our competitors in the Arctic are watching very, very closely whether we have the resolve to follow through on the first of these Polar Security Cutters.

Bringing the Polar Security Cutter online will give us capacity—we appreciate that—but the next and perhaps even more difficult challenge is to build the infrastructure to support the next phase of U.S. sea power in the Arctic. Most critical for that is the development of a deepwater port in the Bering Sea.

Our reality right now is that the Alaska deepwater port nearest to the Arctic is located in the Bering Sea. Dutch Harbor is almost 1,000 miles away from the Arctic. I am looking at my imaginary Alaska map here, but when you are down in the Aleutians—that is the nearest deepwater port—it is 1,000 miles to get to Point Hope, to Barrow, and that area.

A port is a critical piece of infrastructure that is needed, and it will serve many, many uses. It can support the Navy, the Coast Guard, and NOAA's research missions. It will support search and rescue activities that may be necessitated by increasing commercial vessel traffic in the Arctic, and it will provide a platform for the United States to harvest some of the economic upside of the vessel transits. RADM Jon White, U.S. Navy, retired, is President and CEO of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership. At a recent event, which was sponsored by the Wilson Center, he characterized the requirement for a deepwater port in the Arctic as a "no-brainer." He went on to

say: “Unfortunately, it’s not a no-coster.”

Last summer, Navy Secretary Spencer looked at various sites, potential sites for a deepwater port. He is very engaged in seeing how we can work together to bring the funding partners to make this happen. We look forward to working with him toward this endeavor. His engagement is so greatly—greatly—appreciated. He clearly understands the potential here.

All of these developments are very, positive, far more positive than we have seen in recent years. I am grateful for that. They are building blocks.

The race to protect America’s strategic interest in the Arctic demands attention on more than just defense; it will take coordination. That is why I am going to introduce today two pieces of legislation that are designed to reinvigorate America’s national and commercial strategic efforts.

For well over a decade now, you have heard me talk about how the diminishing Arctic sea ice presents both opportunities and concerns. If you look at this map here, you are looking at planet Earth from the perspective that most of us in Alaska view, which is from the top on down. You have the U.S. Arctic here with Alaska. You have the Canadian Arctic here. Here is Russia coming all the way around to Iceland, and Greenland is down in this area.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my comments, we recognize the impact that climate change is having on the Arctic—rapid impacts, clearly—more so than in any other part of the United States.

The latest report from the U.S. Global Change Research Program underscored this fact. Since the early eighties, the annual Arctic sea ice extent has gone down by about 4 percent per decade. The decrease for September sea ice extent—this is the time of year where we have had the least amount of ice. This time period has been even more pronounced at somewhere between 10.7 and 15.9 percent per decade in terms of the decrease in the sea ice.

What does all of this mean? According to that report, it means we are likely to experience a sea ice-free Arctic summer before this century is out.

Again, when you are looking at the top of the globe, looking at the Arctic here, all of the area in the light blue—you can’t see the red around it—was all of the extent of the September sea ice back in 1979. In 2015—3 years ago—the extent of that September ice is here in the pink. As you can appreciate, as you are losing this throughout more parts of the year, it does point to a reality that we are likely to see in the not too terribly distant future—a sea ice-free Arctic summer.

Loss of sea ice in the Arctic, of course, goes hand in hand with overall temperature warming. Over the last several years, it has been somewhat common to refer to the Arctic and include the fact that it is warming at

twice the rate of the rest of the country. This latest climate report shows us that this is not exactly right.

In fact, the North Slope of Alaska—this corner right there—is warming at 2.6 times the rate of the continental United States. Much of the rest of Alaska is warming at more than twice the continental U.S. rate as well. So it is not just twice as fast; it is more than twice as fast. Again, we are paying attention.

I face this reality. I hear about this reality every time I step off an airplane in a rural community. I listen to the people there, particularly the elders, as they share their knowledge. Record low extent of Arctic sea ice threatens many of our indigenous communities because of threats of coastal erosion. With less ice, waves build up, beat against the shore, and erode it. It is more than just coastal erosion; it is the impact on their traditional ways of life—food security issues, hunting, access to resources to basically exist.

We are very in tune. It is not just through the eyes of the people who are living there; this is abundantly clear in both the scientific data that is collected by our State and our Federal Agencies, as well as the experience of rural Alaska Natives.

According to this most recent report, the cost of infrastructure damaged from a warming climate in Alaska alone—we had our own chapter in the report—could range from \$110 to \$270 million per year. So changes to our air, our water, our soil, our food security, our disease ecology directly and directly resulting from our warming climate are going to impact the lives and the health of every Alaskan.

On the one hand, the future in the Arctic looks increasingly challenging for our rural communities. Then, on the other hand, the future also represents a new frontier. There are opportunities out there, whether they are in construction, in tourism, in energy, in minerals, in shipping, or in community development. You have challenges, and you have opportunities.

For some time now, my team and I have been working on two pieces of Arctic legislation to support responsible investment and development in the U.S. Arctic. It hasn’t been easy to meet the expectations and the needs of rural and indigenous communities that are most impacted by climate change in the U.S. Arctic, while, at the same time, focusing on economic development, environmental stewardship, human security, but we have really been trying to mesh these all together. I believe these two bills that I am introducing, along with Senator SULLIVAN—the Arctic Policy Act of 2018 and the Shipping and Environmental Arctic Leadership Act of 2018; that is, the SEAL Act—I think are steps in the right direction, helping us move closer to meeting these objectives.

The first bill, the Arctic Policy Act of 2018, will statutorily establish the Arctic Executive Steering Committee

under the Department of Homeland Security and provide the coordination necessary to advance a truly integrated plan for the Arctic.

By reinvigorating the central coordinating body for Arctic issues, the legislation will provide a venue to deliver the type of plan America needs and, more importantly, a place to work that plan into action across Agencies.

As it stands now, everybody has a little bit of a piece of something when it comes to the Arctic, but it doesn’t really seem as though there is any coordinating entity. When you don’t have anybody who ultimately has that responsibility, oftentimes, it is hard to see the progress.

We know Federal policy does not exist in a vacuum, so in addition to establishing the Arctic Executive Steering Committee, the legislation would also establish an Arctic Advisory Committee to ensure that residents of the Arctic and Alaska Native people have a seat at the table for the development of policy. They don’t want to be sitting back and being told what is happening; they want a seat at the table. As the indigenous peoples of the region, they fully have that right.

Further, the legislation calls for the establishment of regional Tribal advisory groups, starting with the Bering Sea Regional Tribal Advisory Group to advise the Federal Government as it shapes national priorities within the region. These Tribal advisory groups will be empowered to provide advice on specific challenges or regionally important issues.

I would like to say that if you go to rural Alaska, if you go to a small village, you are not going to find a lot of Ph.D.s out there, but what they do have is a Ph.D. in Arctic living. They know what is going on. Their very lives and survival depend on understanding and appreciating the world around them.

In the Arctic, we have an opportunity to show the world how to integrate indigenous knowledge and voices into policy and science. That is why the legislation will also update the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984. This was legislation my father introduced when he was here in the Senate. We will update this to include more Native voices at the Arctic Research Commission and thereby push to include traditional knowledge and community coordination in our Nation’s scientific efforts in the Arctic, especially our efforts to study and understand climate change.

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

S. 3740. A bill to establish a congressionally chartered seaway development corporation in the Arctic, consistent with customary international law, with the intention of uniting Arctic nations in a cooperative Arctic shipping union, where voluntary collective maritime shipping fees will help fund the infrastructural and environmental

demands of safe and reliable shipping in the region; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, the second piece of legislation I am introducing is the Shipping and Environmental Arctic Leadership Act of 2018—the SEAL Act—which establishes a congressionally chartered seaway development corporation in the Arctic.

So this Arctic Corporation will work with representatives from NOAA, from the State Department, from the Coast Guard, and from DOT, as well as representatives from the State of Alaska, the Alaska business community, Alaska coastal and subsistence communities, and the Alaskan Maritime Labor Organization to help to develop an Arctic shipping union whose leadership will advocate for safe, secure, and reliable Arctic seaway development and further ensure that the Arctic becomes a place of international cooperation rather than competition or conflict.

The capacity to get maritime and shipping services funded by means of international cooperation is not a new concept. We have seen it done, and it exists with the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation in the United States. This is one example where countries that share a large maritime border—the United States and Canada—are able to develop a seaway system—one that is safe, secure, and reliable for its users.

I have people stop me and say: Well, this is so many years off from when we are going to see levels of commercial activity in the Arctic. There is no real need to move on this, is there?

Well, again, I will just remind you of some of the charts we have seen. The multiyear ice that once made the Arctic impassable and shielded our northernmost border year-round is diminishing, again, due to climate change. Because of this, shipping in and around the Arctic traffic will increase. So when you appreciate where we are with the Northwest Passage here, the Northwest Passage, by 2025, is intermittently open, but the for pathway, if you are going from the Bering Strait, right off of Alaska here and through Rotterdam, you are going to have an opportunity to basically be cutting through there.

For the northern sea route, following through Russia, by 2025, they anticipate that this sea lane will be open for a full 6 weeks.

The transpolar route, going more directly over the pole, by 2025 will have 2 weeks of open shipping.

So, yes, shipping is going to increase. When you can figure out a quicker way to get from Asia to Europe, when you can shave off days, when you can use less fuel, you are saving money. So this is, from a trade perspective, hugely significant.

But this looming increase in commercial vessel traffic also translates to greater demand for services and processes necessary to ensure that Arctic

shipping can be reliable and safe for shippers that need to transport goods from one place to another on a timetable.

This last chart that I am going to share is just a reminder of not today's reality, but this is the number of vessels that were tracked between year 2014 and 2015. So this is the Aleutians right down here. This is where the Great Circle route ships come through. It is so black here that you can't even tell that these are lines, but this demonstrates the level of existing traffic that we have here. Even 3 years ago, the number of vessels that transited up to the Arctic, whether it was to go over into the Beaufort or the Chukchi in the Arctic Ocean or to go through the northern sea route in that direction—this is here, and this is now. This is what is happening in the Arctic.

So what we are seeking to do with this SEAL legislation is to help to fund a system of Arctic ports—not just one port but a system of Arctic ports—ports of refuge for ships in trouble and ports to send, receive, and transship goods and people, private aids to navigation, all-weather tugs that can help ships that may have lost power or steerage, and to provide a commercial architecture to support the private sector investments in and use of icebreakers that can help ships that may be boxed in because of the ice. That happens.

So as we talk about this proposal that we are laying down in this legislation, I have likened it to Uber for icebreakers. It helps people kind of understand what it is that we are looking at here.

Port infrastructure will also benefit rural Arctic communities and bring down costs for delivering fuel, groceries, and other necessities which, in my State at this time, are just extraordinarily high. I think this legislation can help the United States to organize and attract investment opportunities for ports and icebreakers, for our own safety and for that of commercial vessels that are venturing into the Arctic, as well as, again, for those who live there.

So these two bills, building on the strategic efforts of the Department of Defense and the strides that have been made in the NDAA, can provide the legislative direction needed to help to develop that aspirational plan that Secretary Carter recognized that we need.

While I will be introducing these now, I am also going to be reintroducing them in the next Congress, and I certainly look forward to working with any and all of my colleagues and interested parties, as well as the executive branch, to refine them in the hopes that we can truly reclaim America's leadership role in the Arctic in this next Congress.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

### SENATE RESOLUTION 719—DESIGNATING DECEMBER 15, 2018, AS “WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY”

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. KING) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

#### S. RES. 719

Whereas, in 1992, the Wreaths Across America project began an annual tradition of donating and transporting Maine balsam fir veterans' wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery each December and placing those wreaths on the graves of the fallen heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas 5,000 donated veterans' wreaths were transported from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery during the first year of the Wreaths Across America project and placed on the graves of the fallen heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas, during the 27 years preceding the date of adoption of this resolution, more than 6,082,300 wreaths have been sent to locations, including national cemeteries and veterans memorials, in every State and overseas;

Whereas the mission of the Wreaths Across America project, to “Remember, Honor, Teach”, is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies in all 50 States and overseas, including at—

- (1) Arlington National Cemetery;
- (2) veterans cemeteries; and
- (3) other memorial locations;

Whereas the Wreaths Across America project carries out a week-long veterans parade between the State of Maine and the Commonwealth of Virginia, stopping along the way to spread a message about the importance of—

- (1) remembering the fallen heroes of the United States;
- (2) honoring those who serve; and
- (3) teaching the next generation of children about—

(A) the service of veterans; and

(B) the sacrifices made by veterans and the families of veterans to preserve the freedoms enjoyed by the people of the United States;

Whereas, in 2017, approximately 1,565,300 veterans' wreaths were delivered to more than 1,422 locations across the United States and overseas, an increase of more than 200 locations compared to the previous year;

Whereas, in December 2018, the tradition of escorting tractor-trailers filled with donated wreaths from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery will be continued by—

- (1) the Patriot Guard Riders; and
  - (2) other patriotic escort units, including—
- (A) motorcycle units;
  - (B) law enforcement units; and
  - (C) first responder units;

Whereas hundreds of thousands of individuals volunteer each December to help lay veterans' wreaths;

Whereas, in 2018, the trucking industry in the United States will continue to support the Wreaths Across America project by providing drivers, equipment, and related services to assist in the transportation of wreaths across the United States to more than 1,500 locations;

Whereas the Senate designated December 16, 2017, as “Wreaths Across America Day”; and

Whereas, on December 15, 2018, the Wreaths Across America project will continue the proud legacy of bringing veterans' wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery: Now, therefore, be it