

the Interior, and Cuba's National Revolutionary Police Force to refrain from violently repressing peaceful protesters and committing other human rights violations; and

(6) urges democratic governments and legislatures in Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean—

(A) to pledge their support for freedom and democracy in Cuba; and

(B) to speak out against the repression of demonstrators in Cuba.

SENATE RESOLUTION 311—CONGRATULATING THE 2021 SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING BEE CHAMPION ZAILA AVANT-GARDE

Mr. CASSIDY (for himself and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 311

Whereas Miss Zaila Avant-garde is a 14-year-old from Harvey, Louisiana;

Whereas Miss Avant-garde is the first winner of the Scripps National Spelling Bee from the State of Louisiana;

Whereas the Scripps National Spelling Bee is the largest and longest-running educational promotion in the United States and is administered by the E.W. Scripps Company and local sponsors, most of whom publish daily and weekly newspapers;

Whereas the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee began with competitors from across the United States, American Samoa, the Bahamas, Canada, Europe, Guam, Jamaica, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, and each competitor had qualified for the contest by winning locally sponsored spelling bees;

Whereas Miss Avant-garde is the first African American to win the Scripps National Spelling Bee;

Whereas Miss Avant-garde has spent most of her days spelling around 13,000 words per day, yet has still found time to become an accomplished basketball player and holds 3 Guinness World Records;

Whereas Miss Avant-garde survived several rounds of fierce competition this year and won the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee by correctly spelling “murraya”; and

Whereas the achievement of Miss Avant-garde brings an immense sense of pride to her hometown of Harvey and the entire State of Louisiana: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate congratulates the 2021 Scripps National Spelling Bee champion Zaila Avant-garde.

SENATE RESOLUTION 312—CONGRATULATING THE TAMPA BAY LIGHTNING ON WINNING THE 2021 STANLEY CUP FINAL

Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. SCOTT of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 312

Whereas, on July 7, 2021, the Tampa Bay Lightning (referred to in this preamble as the “Lightning”) won the 2021 National Hockey League Stanley Cup Final;

Whereas the 2021 Stanley Cup Final is the third Stanley Cup Final won by the Lightning in the 30 years that the franchise has competed in the National Hockey League;

Whereas the 2021 Stanley Cup Final directly follows the victory of the Lightning in the 2020 Stanley Cup Final;

Whereas, en route to the 2021 Stanley Cup Final, the Lightning won the Prince of Wales

Trophy for the fourth time in franchise history by defeating the Florida Panthers, the Carolina Hurricanes, and the New York Islanders;

Whereas the Lightning defeated the 2021 Clarence S. Campbell Bowl champions, the Montreal Canadiens, in the Stanley Cup Final, clinching the series with 4 wins and only 1 loss;

Whereas millions of fans watched the Lightning during the 2021 Stanley Cup playoffs as the franchise won the Stanley Cup Final for the third time;

Whereas Lightning goaltender Andrei Vasilevsky—

(1) led all goaltenders in the 2021 Stanley Cup playoffs with 5 shutouts; and

(2) won the Conn Smythe Trophy, awarded to the most valuable player in the Stanley Cup playoffs;

Whereas Lightning right winger Nikita Kucherov was the leader in points and assists in the 2021 Stanley Cup playoffs; and

Whereas the following entire Lightning roster contributed to the Stanley Cup victory: Alex Barre-Boulet, Erik Cernak, Anthony Cirelli, Fredrik Claesson, Blake Coleman, Ross Colton, Callan Foote, Christopher Gibson, Barclay Goodrow, Yanni Gourde, Victor Hedman, Tyler Johnson, Mathieu Joseph, Boris Katchouk, Alex Killorn, Nikita Kucherov, Patrick Maroon, Ryan McDonagh, Curtis McElhinney, Ondrej Palat, Brayden Point, Jan Rutta, David Savard, Luke Schenn, Mikhail Sergachev, Gemel Smith, Steven Stamkos, Mitchell Stephens, Ben Thomas, Andrei Vasilevsky, and Daniel Walcott: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Tampa Bay Lightning (referred to in this resolution as the “Lightning”), and the loyal fans of the Lightning, on becoming the 2021 National Hockey League Stanley Cup champions; and

(2) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the Chairman and Governor of the Lightning, Jeff Vinik;

(B) the Vice President and General Manager of the Lightning, Julien BriseBois; and

(C) the head coach of the Lightning, Jon Cooper.

SENATE RESOLUTION 313—COMMEMORATING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOURIS RIVER FLOOD IN MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA

Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Mr. CRAMER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 313

Whereas, in late June 2011, the city of Minot, North Dakota, and surrounding communities were inundated by widespread flooding;

Whereas high soil moisture content, above-average snow pack, and persistent spring and summer precipitation produced record-level flooding throughout the Souris River Basin;

Whereas, in June 2011, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority informed communities downstream that “reservoirs [had] no capacity to store further inflows”;

Whereas, on June 22, 2011, following continued releases from upstream reservoirs, water began to overtop levees in the city of Minot, resulting in a mandatory evacuation and the displacement of 11,000 Minot residents;

Whereas nearly 11,500 acres in Ward County were covered in 2 to 15 feet of water, impacting nearly 4,800 structures;

Whereas the river's flow peaked at 27,000 cubic feet per second, resulting in almost as

much water moving through Minot in June 2011 as in the entire year of 1976, which was the previous all-time annual flow record;

Whereas, on June 26, 2011, the river crested at 1,561.72 feet above sea level, a Minot record;

Whereas the floodwater destroyed 4,100 homes, 250 businesses, and numerous schools, parks, churches, and other public infrastructure at a cost of as much as \$1,000,000,000;

Whereas floodwater created national security concerns by temporarily blocking access to some intercontinental ballistic missile facilities operated by personnel at Minot Air Force Base;

Whereas the Federal Emergency Management Agency provided more than 1,500 temporary housing units to address the agency's third largest housing mission in its history to date;

Whereas the people of Minot and surrounding communities demonstrated resilience and worked together to help their fellow neighbors in a time of need;

Whereas Federal, State, and local officials and agencies coordinated to provide immediate recovery assistance;

Whereas Congress provided hundreds of millions of dollars in disaster relief and recovery funding to assist the city of Minot and the surrounding region;

Whereas the people of Minot and surrounding communities continue to deal with the effects of the flood, including efforts to construct permanent flood protection in the Minot area; and

Whereas 2021 marks the tenth anniversary of the Souris River flood in Minot, North Dakota: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commemorates the tenth anniversary of the Souris River flood in Minot, North Dakota;

(2) expresses sympathy to people in the Souris River Basin and condolences to the families who lost their homes or businesses;

(3) commends the resilience of the people in the Souris River Basin and their commitment to recovery and rebuilding; and

(4) expresses gratitude and appreciation to State and local leaders, first responders, and the North Dakota National Guard for protecting the people of the Souris River Basin.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have 9 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph S(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

The Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July

21, 2021, at 11:15 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 12 p.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, July 21, 2021, at 3 p.m., to conduct a closed hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Ashley Roberts, an intern in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the day.

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

ENSURING SURVIVOR BENEFITS DURING COVID-19 ACT OF 2021

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 83, S. 89.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 89) to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to secure medical opinions for veterans with service-connected disabilities who die from COVID-19 to determine whether their service-connected disabilities were the principal or contributory causes of death, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

S. 89

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 "Ensuring Survivor Benefits during COVID-19 Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. MEDICAL OPINIONS FOR CERTAIN VETERANS WITH SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITIES WHO DIE OF COVID-19.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall secure a medical opinion to determine if a service-connected disability was the principal or contributory cause of death before notifying the survivor of the final decision in any case in which all of the following factors are met:

(1) A claim for compensation is filed under chapter 13 of title 38, United States Code, with respect to a veteran with one or more service-connected disabilities who dies.

(2) The death certificate for the veteran identifies Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as the principal or contributory cause of death.

(3) The death certificate does not clearly identify any of the service-connected disabilities of the veteran as the principal or contributory cause of death.

(4) A service-connected disability of the veteran includes a condition more likely to cause severe illness from COVID-19 as determined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(5) The claimant is not entitled to benefits under section 1318 of such title.

(6) The evidence to support the claim does not result in a preliminary finding in favor of the claimant.

(b) *OUTREACH.*—The Secretary shall provide information to veterans, dependents, and veterans service organizations about applying to dependency and indemnity compensation when a veteran dies from COVID-19. The Secretary shall provide such information through the website of the Department of Veterans Affairs and via other outreach mechanisms.

Ms. SMITH. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 89), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2021

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 84, S. 189.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 189) to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for annual cost-of-living adjustments to be made automatically by law each year in the rates of disability compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors of certain service-connected disabled veterans, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting

clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) *RATE ADJUSTMENT.*—Effective on December 1, 2021, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2021, for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

(b) *AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.*—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) *WARTIME DISABILITY COMPENSATION.*—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) *ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.*—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) *CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.*—The dollar amount under section 1162 of such title.

(4) *DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.*—Each of the dollar amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) *DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO CHILDREN.*—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) *DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.*—Each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2021, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(d) *SPECIAL RULE.*—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons under section 10 of Public Law 85-857 (72 Stat. 1263) who have not received compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in section 2(b), as increased under that section, not later than the date on which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2022.

Ms. SMITH. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; that the committee-reported amendment to the title be agreed to; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The committee-reported amendment, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 189), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The committee-reported amendment to the title was agreed to as follows:

Amend the title so as to read: "A bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2021, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for