

meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(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 Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing on nominations.

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 10 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 Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a briefing.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 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 Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a closed briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

The Subcommittee on Airland of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR, CLIMATE, AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

The Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Safety of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Subcommittee on Intellectual Property of the Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

The Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed

Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, April 18, 2023, at 4:45 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CARPER. Madam President, before I begin my floor remarks, let me just ask unanimous consent that several individuals who serve in my personal office and on the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works majority staff be granted privileges of the floor for the remainder of this Congress. Their names are Daniel Kim, Victoria Carle, Linnea Saby, Nicole Comisky, and Matthew Marzano.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to my fellows for the rest of the year: Abbie Lyons, Aaron Stuvland, Doson Nguyen, and Robert Bruce.

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

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2023

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I further ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it stand adjourned until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, April 19; 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; that following the conclusion of morning business, the Senate resume consideration of Calendar No. 28, S. 870; further, at 11:30 a.m., the Senate vote on the Paul and Hagerty amendments as provided under the previous order; that following the disposition of the Hagerty amendment, Senator TUBERVILLE or his designee be recognized to make a motion to proceed to Calendar No. 35, S.J. Res. 10; that the time until 4:15 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees and with the final 15 minutes equally divided in the same form; that the Senate recess from 3 p.m. until 4 p.m. to allow for the all-Senators briefing, with the time counting equally to both sides.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator MURKOWSKI, to whom I express gratitude for her courtesy.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Alaska.

S. 870

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I am pleased that we are at this point in the Senate calendar when we are talking about legislation on the floor. We have S. 870, which is the Fire Grants and Safety Act. I am a sponsor, a proud cosponsor of this measure.

My State of Alaska routinely faces severe fire seasons every year. As co-chair of the Senate Fire Caucus, I follow these issues very carefully. Whether they are wildland fires or fires in our urban centers, I believe we have a bill in front of us, a measure in front of us, that deserves all of our support.

The Fire Grants and Safety Act is a pretty simple bill. It is not very often that we actually have things that are simple and short, and this one is just a few pages long. It reauthorizes the U.S. Fire Administration, the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program, as well as the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program. That is the SAFER Program. It reauthorizes all of these through 2030, instead of allowing them to expire next year. The Fire Administration's authorization is increased slightly, but the rest are basically straight extensions here.

As I mentioned, it is a pretty simple bill, but I think it is important to appreciate and understand the importance because sometimes I think these programs are underappreciated. They help our local fire departments recruit personnel—pretty important, we have got to get those firefighters to us—but not only to recruit them but to retain them as well. It also helps allow them to purchase updated vehicles and equipment.

We also help our fire stations by providing for safety and rescue training as well as health screenings.

The Fire Grants and Safety Act is also a very timely measure and not just because we are looking at these programs nearing their expiration date, but our U.S. Fire Administrator has reminded us that "America is still burning." That is the quote. Last year, fires destroyed over 1 million structures and over 7.5 million acres of land across the country.

Again, in the State of Alaska, it is not unusual that we have 1 million-plus acres burn each season, and in many seasons, well more than a million.

But in addition to dealing with the impact to the land and to structures that are on them, it is a safety issue that comes with fighting fires. Approximately, 2,500 people, including 96 firefighters, have died because of these fires. Again, as we are seeing wildfires become larger and more catastrophic, the danger that it presents from a health-safety perspective but also the devastation and impact to the land becomes that much greater.

In our State in Alaska, our geography and really our lack of core infrastructure oftentimes makes it harder to respond, sometimes really not possible at all. But you have got wildfires

that can start hundreds of miles from a road system. It is difficult to deal with. But then you have house fires in one village off where road travel—there is no connection between the two villages and an inability to help address a local fire, as we have seen, unfortunately, on far too many occasions.

Just last month, the Kennicott McCarthy Volunteer Fire Department received \$77,950. It doesn't sound like a lot in terms of dollars that we talk about here on this floor, but it was \$77,000-plus to support recruitment and retention of firefighters. They were able to utilize FEMA's SAFER Grant Program. Again, this is a program that is going to sunset this year. But let me put the Kennicott McCarthy Volunteer Fire Department into context. This fire department is over 300 miles from Anchorage, the large city there. That is about a 7-hour drive in good weather. And I would challenge people—most times getting into McCarthy, it doesn't make any difference what the weather is, the road is tough enough that it is going to take you well more than 7 hours. There are about 42 people who live in the McCarthy-Kennicott area year-round, but in the summertime, you have got a growth in population when tourists come into the area and when folks who have cabins and properties like to spend the summers out there. So it can grow to over 1,000, 1,200 people in the summer. It serves as the gateway to the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park. So it is an important tourist destination for us.

This little town hosted over 65,000 visitors last year. So it kind of causes you to ask the question: How can a town of 42 year-round residents support this influx of outside traffic without the assistance of the Federal Government here? That is exactly what these SAFER grants have allowed them to do. So believe me. That \$77,000 is going to go a long way for that volunteer fire department in Kennicott-McCarthy.

I mentioned that we face unique challenges in Alaska, but I would wager to say that every Member of this Chamber or one of your family members or your friends or your neighbors—every one of us has benefited from the emergency services that are

provided by our local fire departments. So, as they have helped us, it is our turn to be helping them.

I am hopeful that we will be able to move through this process. It was good to have a vote on an amendment this afternoon. We will have the opportunity for more tomorrow and, hopefully, be able to wrap this bill up soon, this week.

But I do hope that this measure will garner the same level of bipartisan support as its predecessors. Back in 2017, we passed a fire grant reauthorization by unanimous consent. I think that that reflects how every State recognizes the benefit from this act, and I think that this year's effort should, really, be no different.

The Fire Grants and Safety Act has garnered widespread support. We have got organizations and groups, like the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Volunteer Fire Council, the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation, the International Society of Fire Service Instructors, as well as the International Association of Fire Fighters. So we have great, great support from these very important organizations.

One of my friends and a real leader in Alaska is the president of the Alaska Professional Fire Fighters Association, Dominic Lozano. He has shared his endorsement of this measure.

He explains and says:

Over the last few years, Alaska has faced record fire seasons across the state, making our firefighters, rescuers, and emergency medical workers as vital as ever. And whether the fires take place in urban or rural Alaska, our rugged terrain and harsh climate can make emergency response far more difficult. This bill will assist Alaska Fire Departments with hiring new firefighters to attain proper staffing levels as well as provide valuable equipment to agencies across the state.

I really appreciate Dominic's support for this measure.

I will tell you that I think we know that our firefighters have an extraordinarily difficult job, a dangerous job, a job that tasks them every day. I had an opportunity to participate in a VIP day, where we all donned the turnout suits and had the hats and had the op-

portunity to see how the "jaws of life" actually work.

We had the opportunity to go into a training facility that was built out to be a burning apartment building and to haul the hose from the truck, up the stairs, and into a burning room to put out the fire. I can tell you that those who went in to literally take the heat got a very, very, very small, small glimpse of what our firefighters go through every day.

I thank all of our firefighters. I thank our Alaska firefighters and all of those around the country for the tremendous and selfless work that they do in putting themselves in harm's way to protect our lives, our lands, and our communities. I am certainly committed to making sure that they have the resources to get home safely every single day.

I appreciate the leadership from Senator PETERS, Senator COLLINS, and Senator CARPER that they have put into this Fire Grants and Safety Act. Again, I am glad to cosponsor it with them and am glad to be able to give some short comments in support.

Our firefighters deserve this bill, and our communities need this bill. That should be enough for all of us to support it.

I yield the floor.

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ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.  
TOMORROW

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:20 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at 10 a.m.

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CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate April 18, 2023:

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

RADHA IYENGAR PLUMB, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

AMY LEFKOWITZ SOLOMON, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL.