

SEC's ability to levy tough penalties against repeat offenders.

Our constituents deserve a strong regulator that has the necessary tools to go after fraudsters and pursue the difficult cases arising from our increasingly complex financial markets. The Stronger Enforcement of Civil Penalties Act will enhance the SEC's ability to demand meaningful accountability from Wall Street, which in turn will increase transparency, deter bad actor, and maintain confidence in our financial system. I urge our colleagues to support this important bipartisan legislation.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. CURTIS, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 2922. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to extend the authorization for certain alternative fuel and clean vehicles to use HOV facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the HOV Lane Exemption Reauthorization Act, which I introduced today.

The HOV toll lane authority for alternative fuel vehicles, in place since 1998, gives States the ability to allow alternative fuel and low-emission vehicles to use high-occupancy vehicle lanes. This authority provides flexibility for State departments of transportation to manage congestion, encourage cleaner cars on the road, and give drivers more options. It is now in use in more than 10 states, including California, Utah, and New York, and has been renewed on a bipartisan basis in each subsequent surface transportation reauthorization bill.

However, due to a drafting error in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the extension expires in September 2025 rather than September 2026 as originally intended. Without congressional action, these programs lapse at the end of this month, creating uncertainty for motorists, consumers, and State transportation officials. It also deprives States of the ability to make their own choices about how best to manage HOV lane access in ways that fit their unique transportation needs.

Our bipartisan bill corrects this oversight and extends the authority through the next fiscal year. This is not a sweeping change or a new mandate; it is a straightforward, common-sense fix that ensures States can continue a longstanding program that encourages the adoption of low-emission and alternative fuel vehicles and helps ease congestion on our busiest roads. By extending the program, we provide clarity for drivers, predictability for States, and continuity for a policy with bipartisan support.

I want to thank Senator CURTIS and Senator GILLIBRAND for co-leading this bill with me, and I urge our colleagues to join us in ensuring that States like ours are not unfairly penalized for a simple Federal oversight.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 414—DESIGNATING SEPTEMBER 2025 AS “NATIONAL CHILD AWARENESS MONTH” TO PROMOTE AWARENESS OF CHARITIES THAT BENEFIT CHILDREN AS WELL AS YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND RECOGNIZING THE EFFORTS MADE BY THOSE CHARITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS CRITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. LANKFORD (for himself and Ms. HASSAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 414

Whereas the millions of children and youth in the United States represent the hopes and the future of the United States;

Whereas numerous individuals, charities benefitting children, and youth-serving organizations that work with children and youth collaborate to provide invaluable services to enrich and better the lives of children and youth throughout the United States;

Whereas raising awareness of and increasing support for organizations that provide access to health care, social services, education, the arts, sports, and other services will result in the development of character in, and the future success of, the children and youth of the United States;

Whereas the month of September, as the school year begins, is a time when parents, families, teachers, school administrators, and communities increase the focus on children and youth throughout the United States;

Whereas the month of September is a time for the people of the United States to highlight and be mindful of the needs of children and youth;

Whereas private corporations and businesses have joined with hundreds of national and local charitable organizations throughout the United States in support of a month-long focus on children and youth; and

Whereas a long-term commitment to children and youth is in the public interest and will encourage widespread support for charities and organizations that seek to provide a better future for the children and youth of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate designates September 2025 as “National Child Awareness Month”—

(1) to promote awareness of—

(A) charities that benefit children; and

(B) youth-serving organizations throughout the United States;

(2) to recognize the efforts made by the charities and organizations described in paragraph (1) on behalf of children and youth as critical contributions to the future of the United States; and

(3) to recognize the importance of meeting the needs of children and youth, including children and youth who—

(A) have experienced homelessness;

(B) are in the foster care system;

(C) have been victims, or are at risk of becoming victims, of child sex trafficking;

(D) have been impacted by violence;

(E) have experienced trauma; and

(F) have serious physical and mental health needs.

SENATE RESOLUTION 415—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 21 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 27, 2025, AS “GOLD STAR FAMILIES REMEMBRANCE WEEK”

Mrs. HYDE-SMITH (for herself and Mr. WARNOCK) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 415

Whereas the last Sunday in September—

(1) is designated as “Gold Star Mother's Day” under section 111 of title 36, United States Code; and

(2) was first designated as “Gold Star Mother's Day” under the Joint Resolution entitled “Joint Resolution designating the last Sunday in September as ‘Gold Star Mother's Day’, and for other purposes”, approved June 23, 1936 (49 Stat. 1895);

Whereas there is no date dedicated to families affected by the loss of a loved one who died in service to the United States;

Whereas a gold star symbolizes a family member who died in the line of duty while serving in the Armed Forces;

Whereas the members and veterans of the Armed Forces, through their service, bear the burden of protecting the freedom of the people of the United States;

Whereas the selfless example of the service of the members and veterans of the Armed Forces, as well as the sacrifices made by the families of those individuals, inspires all individuals in the United States to sacrifice and work diligently for the good of the United States; and

Whereas the sacrifices of the families of the fallen members of the Armed Forces and the families of veterans of the Armed Forces should never be forgotten: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of September 21 through September 27, 2025, as “Gold Star Families Remembrance Week”;:

(2) honors and recognizes the sacrifices made by—

(A) the families of members of the Armed Forces who made the ultimate sacrifice in order to defend freedom and protect the United States; and

(B) the families of veterans of the Armed Forces; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe Gold Star Families Remembrance Week by—

(A) performing acts of service and good will in their communities; and

(B) celebrating families in which loved ones made the ultimate sacrifice so that others could continue to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

SENATE RESOLUTION 416—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF SEPTEMBER 2025 AS “SICKLE CELL DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH” IN ORDER TO EDUCATE COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE UNITED STATES ABOUT SICKLE CELL DISEASE AND THE NEED FOR RESEARCH, EARLY DETECTION METHODS, EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS, AND PREVENTATIVE CARE PROGRAMS WITH RESPECT TO COMPLICATIONS FROM SICKLE CELL DISEASE AND CONDITIONS RELATED TO SICKLE CELL DISEASE

Mr. THUNE (for Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. PADILLA, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. WARNOCK)) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 416

Whereas sickle cell disease (referred to in this preamble as “SCD”) is an inherited blood disorder that is a major health problem in the United States and worldwide;

Whereas SCD can result in multiple medical complications, including anemia, jaundice, gallstones, strokes, restricted blood flow, damaged tissue in the liver, spleen, and kidneys, and death;

Whereas SCD causes acute and chronic episodes of severe pain;

Whereas SCD affects an estimated 100,000 individuals in the United States;

Whereas approximately 2,000 babies are born with SCD each year in the United States, with the disease occurring in approximately 1 in 365 newborn Black or African American infants and 1 in 16,300 newborn Hispanic-American infants, and can be found in individuals of Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Asian, and Indian origin;

Whereas more than 2,000,000 individuals in the United States have the sickle cell trait and 1 in 13 Black or African Americans carries the trait;

Whereas there is a 1 in 4 chance that a child born to parents who both have the sickle cell trait will have the disease;

Whereas the life expectancy of an individual with SCD in the United States is often severely limited, with some estimates showing a shortened life expectancy by 20 years;

Whereas sickle cell anemia is a common cause of childhood stroke, and in 2019, fewer than half of children with sickle cell anemia who were 2 to 16 years old received the recommended screening for stroke;

Whereas, in 2019, only 2 in 5 children with sickle cell anemia who were 2 to 9 years old used recommended medication that can prevent sickle cell anemia complications;

Whereas, in 2020, the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine developed a comprehensive strategic plan and blueprint for action to address sickle cell disease, which, among other things, cited the need for new innovative therapies and promoting widespread patient access to approved treatments;

Whereas, in 2023, hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (commonly known as “HSCT”) was the only cure for SCD, and the Food and Drug Administration has since approved 2 gene therapies that have been demonstrated to cure SCD;

Whereas more research is needed to find more treatments and cures to help individuals with SCD;

Whereas the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has introduced an innovative cell and gene therapy access model for interested States and United States territories, where it will support administration and outcomes-based contracts with drug manufacturers for Medicaid beneficiaries to receive these life-saving breakthroughs; and

Whereas September 2025 has been designated as “Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month” in order to educate communities across the United States about SCD, including early detection methods, effective treatments, and preventative care programs with respect to complications from SCD and conditions related to SCD: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to hold appropriate programs, events, and activities during Sickle Cell Disease Awareness Month to raise public awareness of the sickle cell trait, preventative care programs, treatments, and other patient services for those suffering from sickle cell disease, complications from sickle cell disease, and conditions related to sickle cell disease.

SENATE RESOLUTION 417—SUPPORTING THE DESIGNATION OF THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 14 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 20, 2025, AS “TELEHEALTH AWARENESS WEEK”

Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. WARNER, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 417

Whereas telehealth allows a health care practitioner to furnish health care services to a patient or a practitioner at a different physical location than the health care practitioner;

Whereas telehealth plays a significant role in supporting access to quality health care services for millions of patients;

Whereas health care workforce shortages are a significant problem in many areas and for many types of health care clinicians;

Whereas telehealth increases access to health care in areas with workforce shortages and for individuals who live far away from health care facilities, have limited mobility or access to transportation, or have other barriers to accessing care;

Whereas, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the utilization of telehealth services in the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) was low, accounting for approximately 0.1 percent of visits of patients receiving health care services under Medicare part B in 2019;

Whereas 25 percent of Medicare beneficiaries received at least 1 telehealth service in 2024;

Whereas, in 2023, approximately 90 percent of Medicare beneficiaries who received a telehealth service were satisfied with their experience;

Whereas, in 2024, telehealth was a routine health care modality with 13 percent of all Medicare beneficiaries and 23 percent of dually eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries using telehealth in the last quarter of the calendar year;

Whereas telehealth is a common care modality for Medicare beneficiaries to receive behavioral health services, with half of common psychotherapy services furnished under the original Medicare fee-for-service program delivered by telehealth in 2022;

Whereas federally qualified health centers and rural health clinics use telehealth to deliver services to rural and underserved populations;

Whereas telehealth now represents a critical component of health care delivery;

Whereas any lapse in Medicare coverage for telehealth services could adversely impact patient access to care;

Whereas legislative efforts to increase telehealth access have received bipartisan support in the Senate and the House of Representatives;

Whereas the United States has an opportunity to help improve access to health services for all individuals, including members of rural and underserved communities; and

Whereas “Telehealth Awareness Week” unites the efforts of patients, caregivers, health care providers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to advance the role of telehealth in health care: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of September 14 through September 20, 2025, as “Telehealth Awareness Week”;

(2) recognizes the impact of telehealth in delivering health care services for patients across the United States; and

(3) urges that steps should be taken to—

(A) raise awareness about the benefits of telehealth;

(B) highlight resources for health care providers and patients regarding telehealth;

(C) collect and analyze data on the impacts of telehealth; and

(D) promote continuous access to telehealth for all communities and across settings.

SENATE RESOLUTION 418—EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 20 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 27, 2025, AS “NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK”

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. HYDE-SMITH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KIM, Mr. KING, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. REED, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. WARNER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works:

S. RES. 418

Whereas estuary regions cover only 13 percent of the land area in the continental United States but contain nearly 40 percent of the population, 39 percent of the jobs, and 47 percent of the economic output of the United States;

Whereas the oceans, estuaries, and Great Lakes of the United States continue to fuel economic growth across the United States, with employment from the estuarine and ocean economy growing at 4.5 percent in 2023, compared to the national average employment growth of 2 percent;

Whereas the estuary, ocean, and Great Lakes economic sectors created 111,000 new jobs between 2022 and 2023, employed 2,600,000 people, and contributed \$511,000,000,000 to the 2023 gross domestic product;