

Whereas the commercial and recreational fishing industries support over 2,300,000 jobs in the United States;

Whereas, in 2022—

(1) commercial and recreational saltwater fishing in the United States generated \$321,000,000,000 in sales;

(2) angler trip expenditures totaled nearly \$13,412,000,000; and

(3) saltwater recreational fishing supported at least 691,693 jobs, generated \$138,000,000,000 in sales impacts across the economy of the United States, and contributed \$45,100,000,000 in income impacts and \$74,900,000,000 in value-added impacts to the United States;

Whereas estuaries provide vital habitats, nurseries, and migration stopovers for—

(1) countless species of fish and wildlife, including more than 68 percent of the commercial fish catch in the United States by value and 80 percent of the recreational fish catch in the United States by weight; and

(2) many species that are listed as threatened or endangered, including birds integral to the health of estuaries, such as the Snowy Plover and Saltmarsh Sparrow;

Whereas estuaries provide critical ecosystem services that protect human health and public safety, including water filtration, flood control, shoreline stabilization, erosion prevention, and the protection of coastal communities during hurricanes, storms, and other extreme weather events;

Whereas, restored wetlands in the United States have been shown to remove up to 80 percent of nitrogen and 70 percent of phosphorus from runoff water;

Whereas, in 2017, mangrove ecosystems in Florida prevented \$1,500,000,000 in direct flood damage during Hurricane Maria;

Whereas, coastal wetlands from Maine to North Carolina prevented \$625,000,000 in property damage during Hurricane Sandy;

Whereas, in New Jersey, areas with salt marshes experience 16 percent lower annual flood losses than areas without salt marshes;

Whereas, by the 1980s, the United States had already lost more than 50 percent of the wetlands that existed in the Thirteen Original Colonies;

Whereas the degradation and loss of estuaries has led to the collapse of some bays in the United States that were once filled with fish and oysters and have now become dead zones filled with excess nutrients, chemical waste, and marine debris;

Whereas harmful algal blooms are hurting fish, wildlife, and human health and are causing serious ecological and economic harm to many estuaries;

Whereas changes in sea level can affect estuarine water quality and estuarine habitats;

Whereas section 320 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1330) (commonly known as the “Clean Water Act”) authorizes the development of comprehensive conservation and management plans to ensure that the designated uses of estuaries are protected and to restore and maintain—

(1) chemical, physical, and biological integrity;

(2) water quality;

(3) the balanced indigenous population of shellfish, fish, and wildlife; and

(4) recreational activity;

Whereas the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.) provides that the policy of the United States is to preserve, protect, develop, and, if possible, restore or enhance the resources of the coastal zones of the United States, including estuaries, for current and future generations;

Whereas 34 coastal and Great Lakes States and territories of the United States operate or contain a National Estuary Program or a National Estuarine Research Reserve;

Whereas scientific study leads to a better understanding of the benefits of estuaries to human and ecological communities;

Whereas the Federal Government, State, local, and Tribal governments, national and community organizations, and individuals work together to effectively manage the estuaries of the United States;

Whereas coastal and marine habitat restoration efforts restore natural infrastructure in local communities in a cost-effective manner, generating an average of 17 jobs for every \$1,000,000 invested and helping to reestablish the natural functions of estuaries that yield countless benefits; and

Whereas the week of September 20 through September 27, 2025, is recognized as “National Estuaries Week” to increase awareness among all people of the United States, including Federal Government and State, local, and Tribal government officials, of the importance of healthy estuaries and the need to protect and restore estuaries: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses support for the designation of “National Estuaries Week”;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Estuaries Week;

(3) acknowledges the importance of estuaries to sustaining employment in the United States and to the economic well-being and prosperity of the United States;

(4) recognizes that persistent threats undermine the health of estuaries;

(5) applauds the work of national and community organizations and public partners that promote public awareness, understanding, protection, and restoration of estuaries;

(6) supports the scientific study, preservation, protection, and restoration of estuaries; and

(7) expresses the intent of the Senate to continue working to understand, protect, and restore the estuaries of the United States.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3909. Mr. BOOKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3748 proposed by Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. REED) to the bill S. 2296, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2026 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3910. Mr. BOOKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3748 proposed by Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. REED) to the bill S. 2296, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3911. Mr. BOOKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3748 proposed by Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. REED) to the bill S. 2296, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3912. Mr. THUNE (for Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. WYDEN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 269, to improve coordination between Federal and State agencies and the Do Not Pay working system.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3909. Mr. BOOKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3748 proposed by Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. REED) to

the bill S. 2296, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2026 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title X, insert the following:

SEC. 10. ADDITIONAL ENTITLEMENT TO POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS AND MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO REQUIRE EXTRA TIME TO COMPLETE REMEDIAL COURSES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 3320A. Additional assistance

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The number of months of educational assistance under section 3313 of this title an eligible individual is entitled to under section 3312 of this title is hereby increased by the lesser of—

“(1) 15 months; or

“(2) in the case of an eligible individual who attempted or completed remedial and deficiency courses as described in subsection (b)(4), the full-time equivalent number of months of educational assistance used under this chapter to complete such remedial and deficiency courses.

“(b) ELIGIBILITY.—For purposes of this section, an eligible individual is an individual—

“(1) who is or was entitled to educational assistance under section 3311 of this title;

“(2) has received educational assistance under this chapter at any time during the most recent six month period;

“(3) who has used all of the educational assistance to which the individual is entitled under this chapter; and

“(4) who has attempted or completed remedial and deficiency courses in pursuit of completing a program of education at an institution of higher learning and in doing so requires more than the standard 120 semester (or 180 quarter) credit hours for completion of a program of education at an institution of higher learning.

“(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) The term ‘institution of higher learning’ has the meaning given such term in section 3452 of this title.

“(2) The term ‘remedial and deficiency course’ means a course offered by an institution of higher learning that is designed to overcome a deficiency.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 3320 the following new item:

“3320A. Additional assistance.”.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3695 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) In the case of an individual who receives additional educational assistance under section 3320A of this title, the number of months specified in subsection (a) shall instead be construed to specify the number of months that is equal to the sum of—

“(1) such number of months; and

“(2) the amount of the increase in number of months of educational assistance to which the individual is entitled pursuant to section 3320A(a) of such title.”.

SEC. 10. INCREASED FLEXIBILITY IN TRANSFERRING ENTITLEMENT TO POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

Section 3319 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (e)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively, and indenting such subparagraphs appropriately;

(B) in the matter before subparagraph (A), as redesignated by subparagraph (A), by striking “An” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—An”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following new paragraph (2):

“(2) TIMING OF DESIGNATION.—In the case of an individual who elects to transfer entitlement under subsection (a) but who at the time of the election does not have any eligible dependents, the individual may carry out the designations required by paragraph (1) when the individual comes to have an eligible dependent to whom the individual would like to transfer entitlement under this section.”; and

(2) in subsection (f)—

(A) by striking paragraph (1);

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (1) and (2), respectively; and

(C) in paragraph (1)(A), as redesignated by subparagraph (B), by inserting “, including by designating a new dependent or dependents to receive the unused entitlement” before the period.

SA 3910. Mr. BOOKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3748 proposed by Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. REED) to the bill S. 2296, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2026 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle F of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1067. STUDY ON HEALTH CONDITIONS AMONG SPOUSES AND DEPENDENTS OF VIETNAM-ERA HERBICIDE-EXPOSED VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Toxic Exposure Research Working Group established under section 501 of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 (Public Law 117-168; 136 Stat. 1785) (in this section referred to as the “Working Group”) shall conduct a study on the diagnoses of health conditions among spouses and dependents of Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed veterans.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The study required under subsection (a) shall include an assessment and comprehensive review of diagnoses of health conditions among spouses and dependents of Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed veterans, including—

(1) cancers;

(2) gynecological conditions, including infertility;

(3) birth defects; and

(4) birth and pregnancy-related complications, including miscarriages.

(c) REPORTS.—

(1) REPORT ON STUDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Following the completion of the study under subsection (a), the Working Group shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs a report on the results of the study.

(B) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) a summary of the research and other activities carried out as part of the study; and

(ii) recommendations to improve early screening, detection, prevention, and treat-

ment of health conditions of spouses and dependents of Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed veterans.

(2) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than December 31, 2027, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans Affairs of the House of Representatives—

(A) an unaltered version of the report required under paragraph (1); and

(B) an assessment by the Secretary of the findings and recommendations of the study required under subsection (a), including a plan for implementing the recommendations.

(d) VIETNAM-ERA HERBICIDE-EXPOSED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section, the term “Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed veteran” has the meaning given that term in section 1710(e)(4)(A) of title 38, United States Code.

SA 3911. Mr. BOOKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3748 proposed by Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. REED) to the bill S. 2296, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2026 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle F of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1067. EXPANSION OF SUPPORTIVE SERVICES FOR VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILIES TO INCLUDE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY.—Section 2044 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in the section heading, by striking “veteran” and inserting “eligible”;

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “veteran families” and inserting “eligible families”;

(B) in paragraph (4), by striking “veteran families” and inserting “eligible families”; and

(C) in paragraph (6), by striking “veteran family” and inserting “eligible family”;

(3) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “veteran families” and inserting “eligible families”; and

(ii) in subparagraph (D)(vii), by striking “veteran family” and inserting “eligible family”;

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking “veteran families” and inserting “eligible families”; and

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking “veteran families” and inserting “eligible families”;

(4) in subsection (c)(2), by striking “veteran families” each place it appears and inserting “eligible families”;

(5) in subsection (d)(1), by striking “veteran families” and inserting “eligible families”; and

(6) in subsection (f)—

(A) in paragraph (6)(A)—

(i) by striking “very low-income veteran family” and inserting “very low-income eligible family”; and

(ii) by striking “a veteran family” and inserting “an eligible family”; and

(B) by striking paragraph (7) and inserting the following:

“(7) The term ‘eligible family’ includes—

“(A) a veteran who is a single person;

“(B) a family in which the head of household or the spouse of the head of household is a veteran;

“(C) a former member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who has retired or separated from service after having served a term of enlistment and is a single person; and

“(D) a family in which the head of household or spouse of the head of household is a former member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces who has retired or separated from service after having served a term of enlistment.”.

(b) FUNDING.—Subsection (e) of such section is amended—

(1) in paragraph (8), by striking “through 2025” and inserting “through 2026”;

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (8) as subparagraphs (A) through (H), respectively;

(3) by inserting “(1)” before “From amounts”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2)(A) Of amounts available under paragraph (1)(H) for fiscal year 2026, \$50,000,000 shall be available to carry out subsections (a), (b), and (c) with respect to eligible families described in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of subsection (f)(7).

“(B) Any amounts made available under subparagraph (A) to carry out subsections (a), (b), and (c) with respect to eligible families described in subparagraphs (C) and (D) of subsection (f)(7) that remain available after supportive services have been provided to such families under this section shall be available during fiscal year 2026 to carry out subsections (a), (b), and (c) with respect to eligible families described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of such subsection.”.

SEC. 1068. STUDY ON FOOD AND HOUSING INSECURITY EXPERIENCED BY MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) REPORT ON ESTABLISHMENT OF STUDY.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report detailing plans to establish a study to analyze food and housing insecurity experienced by members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces.

(b) CONDUCT OF STUDY.—Not later than 120 days after the date on which the report required by subsection (a) is submitted, the Secretary of Defense shall begin conducting the study described in such subsection.

(c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date on which the report required by subsection (a) is submitted, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report including the findings of the study conducted pursuant to subsection (b).

(d) RESERVE COMPONENT DEFINED.—In this section, the term “reserve component” has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

SA 3912. Mr. THUNE (for Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mr. PETERS, and Mr. WYDEN)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 269, to improve coordination between Federal and State agencies and the Do Not Pay working system; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Ending Improper Payments to Deceased People Act”.

SEC. 2. IMPROVING COORDINATION BETWEEN FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES AND THE DO NOT PAY WORKING SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 205(r) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(r)), as amended by section 801(a)(7) of title VIII of division FF of the Consolidated Appropriations Act,

2021 (Public Law 116-260), is amended by striking paragraph (11) and inserting the following:

“(11) The Commissioner of Social Security shall, to the extent feasible, provide information furnished to the Commissioner under paragraph (1) to the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system described in section 3354(c) of title 31, United States Code, for the authorized uses of the Do Not Pay working system to help prevent improper payments of, and support the recovery of improperly paid, benefits or other payments through a cooperative arrangement with such agency, provided that the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (3) are met with respect to such arrangement with such agency. The Commissioner of Social Security and the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system shall, while the data described in the preceding sentence is being provided to the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system, enter into an agreement based upon an agreed upon methodology, which covers the proportional share of State death data costs, which the Commissioner of Social Security and the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system may periodically review.

“(12) The Commissioner of Social Security may not record a death to a record that may be provided under this section for any individual unless the Commissioner of Social Security has found it has clear and convincing evidence to support that the individual should be presumed to be deceased.”.

(b) IMPROVING COORDINATION REGARDING INDIVIDUALS INCORRECTLY IDENTIFIED AS DECEASED.—Section 205(r)(7) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(r)(7)), as added by section 801(a)(4) of title VIII of division FF of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260), is amended by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (A), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting “; and”, and by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) notify any agency that has a cooperative arrangement with the Commissioner of Social Security under paragraph (3) or (11) of the error.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on December 27, 2026.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that floor privileges be granted to Anel Galvez, Radhika Prabhu, and Jacob Baldus for the duration of their legislative fellowships.

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

ENDING IMPROPER PAYMENTS TO DECEASED PEOPLE ACT

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 269 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 269) to improve coordination between Federal and State agencies and the Do Not Pay working system.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the Kennedy-Peters-Wyden substitute amendment at the desk be considered and 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 amendment (No. 3912), in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Ending Improper Payments to Deceased People Act”.

SEC. 2. IMPROVING COORDINATION BETWEEN FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES AND THE DO NOT PAY WORKING SYSTEM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 205(r) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(r)), as amended by section 801(a)(7) of title VIII of division FF of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260), is amended by striking paragraph (11) and inserting the following:

“(11) The Commissioner of Social Security shall, to the extent feasible, provide information furnished to the Commissioner under paragraph (1) to the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system described in section 3354(c) of title 31, United States Code, for the authorized uses of the Do Not Pay working system to help prevent improper payments of, and support the recovery of improperly paid, benefits or other payments through a cooperative arrangement with such agency, provided that the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (3) are met with respect to such arrangement with such agency. The Commissioner of Social Security and the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system shall, while the data described in the preceding sentence is being provided to the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system, enter into an agreement based upon an agreed upon methodology, which covers the proportional share of State death data costs, which the Commissioner of Social Security and the agency operating the Do Not Pay working system may periodically review.

“(12) The Commissioner of Social Security may not record a death to a record that may be provided under this section for any individual unless the Commissioner of Social Security has found it has clear and convincing evidence to support that the individual should be presumed to be deceased.”.

(b) IMPROVING COORDINATION REGARDING INDIVIDUALS INCORRECTLY IDENTIFIED AS DECEASED.—Section 205(r)(7) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 405(r)(7)), as added by section 801(a)(4) of title VIII of division FF of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260), is amended by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (A), by striking the period at the end of subparagraph (B) and inserting “; and”, and by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

“(C) notify any agency that has a cooperative arrangement with the Commissioner of Social Security under paragraph (3) or (11) of the error.”.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on December 27, 2026.

The bill (S. 269), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third read-

ing, was read the third time, and passed.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following resolutions, which are at the desk: S. Res. 414, S. Res. 415, and S. Res. 416.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD (Legislative Day of September 16, 2025) under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

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

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 417, which is at the desk.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 417) supporting the designation of the week of September 14 through September 20, 2025, as “Telehealth Awareness Week”.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I know of no further debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

Hearing no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 417) was agreed to.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD (Legislative Day of September 16, 2025) under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

NATIONAL TRUCK DRIVER APPRECIATION WEEK

Mr. THUNE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged