

S.J. RES. 102

At the request of Mr. SCOTT of Florida, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mrs. MOODY) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 102, a joint resolution disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the D.C. Income and Franchise Tax Conformity and Revision Temporary Amendment Act of 2025.

S.J. RES. 103

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. ALSOBROOKS) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. OSSOFF) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 103, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Veterans Affairs relating to "Reproductive Health Services".

S. RES. 61

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the names of the Senator from California (Mr. PADILLA) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 61, a resolution expressing support for the continued value of arms control agreements and negotiated constraints on Russian and Chinese strategic nuclear forces.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KAINE, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. SMITH, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. LUJÁN, and Ms. DUCKWORTH):

S. 3777. A bill to provide for the long-term improvement of public school facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, among the many challenges to improving educational outcomes for students and recruiting and retaining educators for our public schools is the condition of school facilities. A 2020 Government Accountability Office, GAO, report found that over half, 54 percent, of school districts nationwide need to update or replace multiple systems in their schools, such as heating, ventilation, air conditioning, HVAC, or plumbing.

Now is the time to invest in school infrastructure. Doing so will improve the resilience of our schools, bolster student learning, reduce carbon emissions, and create jobs. That is why I am proud to partner with Representative BOBBY SCOTT, ranking member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, in introducing the Rebuild America's Schools Act. I would like to thank my Senate colleagues who are

joining in this effort, including Senators VAN HOLLEN, KAINE, BOOKER, ALSOBROOKS, CORTEZ MASTO, WHITEHOUSE, MERKLEY, HIRONO, SMITH, SHAHEEN, DURBIN, BLUMENTHAL, HEINRICH, PADILLA, WHITEHOUSE, MARKEY, and LUJÁN.

Public schools play a vital role in every community across the Nation. They play a central role in our democracy—educating the next generation, serving as polling places for our elections, hosting community meetings and events, and so much more. When there is a natural disaster or an emergency, people often gather at their public schools for shelter, information, and resources. Public schools are public infrastructure, and we should invest in them just as we invest in roads and bridges.

Safe, healthy, modern, well-equipped schools are also essential for advancing student achievement and ensuring that the next generation is prepared to meet the economic, social, environmental, and global challenges our Nation faces. Yet, too many of the approximately 56 million children and adults who learn and work in our public schools spend their days in facilities that fail to make the grade. The American Society of Civil Engineers gave school infrastructure a D-plus on its latest report card.

Nearly 40 percent of public school were built before 1970 and contain hazardous construction materials such as asbestos, lead, and PCBs. An analysis from the Center for Climate Integrity found that more than 13,700 public schools that did not need air-conditioning in 1970 need it today. These essential retrofits are estimated to cost \$40 billion. The 2025 State of Our Schools Report, a joint publication of the 21st Century School Fund, Inc., the National Council on School Facilities, and the International Well Building Institute, identified a nearly \$90 billion annual shortfall in school facilities investment. States and local communities cannot bridge this gap alone, especially when many struggle to simply keep teachers and staff on the payroll. And we know the budget shortfalls hit low-income and minority communities the hardest. The GAO noted that capital construction expenditures, on average, were about \$300 less per student in high-poverty districts compared to low-poverty districts. With inflation, interest rates, and extreme weather events on the rise, the gap between what is needed to maintain safe and modern schools and what communities can afford will only grow.

Addressing this need is the right thing to do for our students, and it will also create good jobs and grow the economy. According to an analysis by the Economic Policy Institute, every \$1 billion spent on construction generates 17,785 jobs.

The Rebuild America's Schools Act will create a Federal-State partnership

for school infrastructure. It will provide, over 10 years, a total of \$130 billion in direct grants and school construction bonds to help fill the annual gap in school facility capital needs, while creating nearly 2 million jobs.

Specifically, the Rebuild America's Schools Act will provide \$100 billion in formula funds to States for local competitive grants for school repair, renovation, and construction. States will focus assistance on communities with the greatest financial need, encourage green construction practices, and expand access to high-speed broadband to ensure that all students have access to digital learning. Our legislation would also provide \$30 billion for qualified school infrastructure bonds, QSIBs, \$10 billion each year from fiscal year 2027 through fiscal year 2029 and restore the qualified zone academy bonds, QZABs, that were eliminated in the Republican Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The legislation also eases the matching requirements and expands the authority and eligible purposes of QZABs to allow local education agencies to construct, rehabilitate, retrofit, or repair school facilities. The Rebuild America's Schools Act also supports American workers by ensuring that projects use American-made iron, steel, and manufactured products and meet labor standards.

I would like to thank the broad coalition of educators, community organizations, unions, civil rights advocates, and employers that have provided feedback and support for this legislation, including the 21st Century Schools Fund, AFT: Education, Healthcare, Public Services, American Library Association, BlueGreen Alliance, Build America's School Infrastructure Coalition, BASIC, Children and Nature Network, American Institute of Architects, AIA, American School Superintendents Association, AASA, Council of Great City Schools, Craven County Schools, Green Schoolyards America, Greenbank Associates, Healthy Schools Campaign, Heart of America, International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers, SMART, International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers, Kentucky School Plant Management Association, National Council on School Facilities, National Education Association, National School Plan Management Association, North American Association for Environmental Education, Rentokil Terminix, Safe Traces, the National Association of Federally Impacted Schools, UndauntedK12, and U.S. Green Building Council.

We have no time to waste in fixing our deteriorating school infrastructure. I urge our colleagues to support the Rebuild America's Schools Act and press for its passage.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

## SENATE RESOLUTION 596—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 2 THROUGH 6, 2026, AS “NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK”

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLINS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HASSAN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHIFF, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. SMITH, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 596

Whereas the American School Counselor Association has designated February 2 through 6, 2026, as “National School Counseling Week”;

Whereas school counselors have long advocated for all students;

Whereas school counselors help develop well-rounded students by guiding students through academic learning, social and emotional development, and career exploration;

Whereas personal and social growth can help lead to increased academic achievement;

Whereas school counselors play a vital role in ensuring that students are ready for both college and careers;

Whereas school counselors play a vital role in making students aware of opportunities for financial aid and college scholarships;

Whereas school counselors assist with and coordinate efforts to foster a positive school climate, resulting in a safer learning environment for all students;

Whereas school counselors have been instrumental in helping students, teachers, and parents deal with personal trauma as well as tragedies in their communities and in the United States;

Whereas students face a myriad of challenges every day, including peer pressure, bullying, mental health issues, the deployment of family members to serve in conflicts overseas, and school violence;

Whereas a school counselor is one of the few professionals in a school building who is trained in both education and social and emotional development;

Whereas the roles and responsibilities of school counselors are often misunderstood;

Whereas the school counselor position is often among the first to be eliminated to meet budgetary constraints;

Whereas the national average ratio of students to school counselors is 376 to 1, far exceeding the 250 to 1 ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, and other organizations; and

Whereas the celebration of National School Counseling Week will increase awareness of the important and necessary role school counselors play in the lives of students in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of February 2 through 6, 2026, as “National School Counseling Week”; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe National School Counseling Week with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the

role school counselors play in schools and the community at large in preparing students for fulfilling lives as contributing members of society.

## AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I have nine 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 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 COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

## COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 9:30 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, February 4, 2026, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a subcommittee hearing.

## 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 Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 10 a.m., to conduct a business meeting.

## COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Indian Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 2:15 p.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 Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 10:15 a.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, February 4, 2026, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

## COMMITTEE ON VETERANS’ AFFAIRS

The Committee on Veterans’ Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 4 p.m., to conduct a hearing.

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 3 p.m., to conduct a closed hearing.

Mr. BARASSO. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHMITT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

## TRIBUTE TO JOHN CONNELL

Mr. YOUNG. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to my longtime chief of staff John Connell during his last week of session in the U.S. Senate—or, as John fondly refers to it, the “House of Lords.”

Since I was first sworn into the House of Representatives in 2011, John has served as my chief of staff. But he is much more than that—a trusted adviser, a talented strategist, an effective leader of our team, and a confidant. John is also a friend.

John graduated from Indiana University already a fierce partisan, I have to say; but, in his case, it was as a proud member of Hoosier Nation—more on that later.

He then moved to Washington to start his career on Capitol Hill. Despite his family roots in Naperville, IL, and his college years in Bloomington, IN, John quickly learned the ropes of serving in the legislative branch while working for three Kentucky delegation Members of the U.S. House—Representatives Geoff Davis, Ron Lewis, and BRETT GUTHRIE—two of whom were West Point grads, I should add.

He also spent time on the campaign trail for multiple Members in Kentucky and Kansas, before we were first introduced in late 2010.

Along the way, John developed an amazing golf swing, he made tons of friends, and he started dating a lovely fellow congressional staffer by the name of Marjorie Dornette, who later became his wife.

I first met John through an introduction by Congressman Davis. I needed a chief of staff, and Geoff said that he trusted John.

And, candidly, I didn’t have the foggiest idea what attributes to look for. So I decided to resist everything I had learned in a decade of naval service by trusting the Army guy.

And, boy, I don’t regret it. From almost that very moment, I came to regard that as one of the best decisions of my life, professional and otherwise.

Suffice it to say, John has supported my time in Congress in every meaningful way. He has earned a stellar reputation of his own around this town and back home in the State of Indiana, and he has accrued a remarkable record of achievement, something I would like to unpack here today.

For starters, John has identified and hired amazing talent for our team. He has a knack for recruiting, thanks to his extensive network, his instincts, and an amazing eye for talent. He has