

known as the "Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Science, Observation, Monitoring, and Technology Program", to be carried out by the Administrator.

(c) CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the Program, the Administrator, in consultation with other Federal agencies with expertise in the discipline of a center of excellence, shall make grants in accordance with paragraph (2) to establish and operate 5 centers of excellence, 1 of which shall be located in each of the States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.

(2) GRANTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall use the amounts made available to carry out this section to award competitive grants to nongovernmental entities and consortia in the Gulf Coast region (including public and private institutions of higher education) for the establishment of centers of excellence as described in paragraph (1).

(B) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this paragraph, an entity or consortium described in subparagraph (A) shall submit to the Administrator an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Administrator determines to be appropriate.

(C) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this paragraph, the Administrator shall give priority to entities and consortia that demonstrate the ability to establish the broadest cross-section of participants with interest and expertise in any discipline described in paragraph (3) on which the proposal of the center of excellence will be focused.

(3) DISCIPLINES.—Each center of excellence shall focus on science, technology, and monitoring in at least 1 of the following disciplines:

(A) Coastal and deltaic sustainability, restoration and protection; including solutions and technology that allow citizens to live safely and sustainably in a coastal delta.

(B) Coastal fisheries and wildlife ecosystem research and monitoring.

(C) Offshore energy development, including research and technology to improve the sustainable and safe development of energy resources.

(D) Sustainable and resilient growth, economic and commercial development in the Gulf Coast.

(E) Comprehensive observation, monitoring, and mapping of the Gulf of Mexico.

(4) COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—The Administrator shall develop a plan for the coordination of projects and activities between the Program and other existing Federal and State science and technology programs in the States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas, as well as between the centers of excellence.

(d) ESTABLISHMENT OF FISHERIES AND ECOSYSTEM ENDOWMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Council shall establish a fishery and ecosystem endowment to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, the long-term sustainability of the ecosystem, fish stocks, fish habitat and the recreational, commercial, and charter fishing industry in the Gulf of Mexico.

(2) EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS.—For each fiscal year, amounts made available to carry out this subsection may be expended for, with respect to the Gulf of Mexico—

(A) marine and estuarine research;

(B) marine and estuarine ecosystem monitoring and ocean observation;

(C) data collection and stock assessments;

(D) pilot programs for—

(i) fishery independent data; and

(ii) reduction of exploitation of spawning aggregations; and

(E) cooperative research.

(3) ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION.—The Fisheries and Ecosystem Endowment shall be administered by the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in consultation with the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, with guidance provided by the Regional Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

(4) SPECIES INCLUDED.—The Fisheries and Ecosystem Endowment will include all marine, estuarine, aquaculture, and fish and wildlife species in State and Federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico.

(5) RESEARCH PRIORITIES.—In distributing funding under this subsection, priority shall be given to integrated, long-term projects that—

(A) build on, or are coordinated with, related research activities; and

(B) address current or anticipated marine ecosystem, fishery, or wildlife management information needs.

(6) DUPLICATION AND COORDINATION.—In carrying out this subsection, the Administrator shall seek to avoid duplication of other research and monitoring activities and coordinate with existing research and monitoring programs, including the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.).

(e) FUNDING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (b)(4) of section 311 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1321), of the total amount made available for each fiscal year for the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund established under section 1602, 5 percent shall be allocated in equal portions to the Program and Fisheries and Ecosystem Endowment established by this section.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Of the amounts received by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry out this section, not more than 3 percent may be used for administrative expenses.

SEC. 1605. EFFECT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this subtitle or any amendment made by this subtitle—

(1) supersedes or otherwise affects any provision of Federal law, including, in particular, laws providing recovery for injury to natural resources under the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2701 et seq.) and laws for the protection of public health and the environment; or

(2) applies to any fine collected under section 311 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1321) for any incident other than the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Funds made available under this subtitle may be used only for eligible activities specifically authorized by this subtitle.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 15, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-G50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and

Forestry be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 15, 2011, at 9:30 a.m. in room SD-G50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled "Energy and Economic Growth for Rural America."

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 15, 2012, at 10:30 a.m., in room 215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "The President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2013."

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on February 15, 2012, at 10 a.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Protecting Those Who Protect Us: The Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program."

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on February 15, 2012, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled "Nominations."

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 15, 2012, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "Pay for Performance: Incentive Compensation at Large Financial Institutions."

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. BROWN of Ohio. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a fellow in my office, Nicole Smith, be allowed the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the day.

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

AUTHORIZING THE USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con.

Res. 99, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 99) authorizing the use of the Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony to unveil the marker which acknowledges the role that slave labor played in the construction of the United States Capitol.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to, the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 99) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

PROMOTING PERMANENT FAMILY CARE FOR CHILDREN

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 378, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 378) expressing the sense of the Senate that children should have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family and that it is the policy of the United States that family reunification, kinship care, or domestic and intercountry adoption promotes permanency and stability to a greater degree than long-term institutionalization and long-term, continually disrupted foster care.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I further ask that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements related to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 378) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 378

Whereas the family is the basic unit of society and contributes to the emotional, financial, and material support essential for the healthy growth and development of children;

Whereas children without a family or connections to siblings and relatives or a permanent relationship with a caring adult are at risk of being homeless, growing up in substandard institutional care, and are vulnerable to sexual and labor exploitation and abuse;

Whereas research has shown that children who are abandoned, abused, or severely neglected can face significant risks that are costly to society, including lower individual lifetime earnings, poorer educational achievement, and higher consumption of health services, which in turn could lead to a greater risk of criminal activity and greater risk of incarceration;

Whereas there is scientific evidence that children deprived of a family, including connections with siblings, often experience trauma, which can have a detrimental impact on the development of a child;

Whereas some estimates show that there are approximately 18 million children in the world who have lost both parents and at least 2 million children in the world who are in institutional care;

Whereas there are approximately 408,000 children in the United States foster-care system and 107,000 of them are awaiting adoption;

Whereas within the current foster-care system, many children are overmedicated, housed in inadequate group homes, denied the ability to engage in age-appropriate activities, such as afterschool activities, and often denied access to their siblings or placement with a relative guardian due to insufficient efforts to locate family members;

Whereas thousands of children who "age out" of the foster-care system in the United States every year lack the security or support of a biological or adoptive family, connections with siblings and relatives, or a permanent relationship with a caring adult and struggle to secure affordable housing, health insurance, higher education, and adequate employment;

Whereas current governmental efforts to assist these highly vulnerable children in the United States and around the world do not include an effective strategy for securing a protective family, connections with siblings and relatives, or a permanent relationship with a caring adult for every child; and

Whereas while there have been several bipartisan laws enacted in the past several years that have made progress on a number of needed child-welfare reforms, much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That—

(1) the Senate—

(A) affirms that all children in the world, including those with special needs, deserve a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, connections with siblings and relatives, or a permanent relationship with a caring adult;

(B) acknowledges that the United States Government can and should do more by working with the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and faith-based communities to implement cost effective strategies that connect children living outside of family care with a permanent, supportive family, or connections with siblings and relatives, or a permanent relationship with a caring adult;

(C) encourages States, counties, cities, and to the extent appropriate, other governments to invest resources in family preservation, reunification services, services to help older youth transition out of care with a connection to siblings, relatives or a caring adult, kinship adoption, domestic adoption,

and intercountry adoption and post adoption strategies to ensure that more children in the United States are provided with safe, loving, and permanent family placements or a permanent relationship with a caring adult; and

(D) recognizes the United States Agency for International Development and the Department of State for recent efforts to develop a strategy for meeting the unique needs of children living outside of family care;

(2) it is the sense of the Senate that children should have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family; and

(3) it is the policy of the United States that family reunification, kinship care, or domestic and intercountry adoption promotes permanency and stability to a greater degree than long-term institutionalization and long-term, continually disrupted foster care.

MEASURE READ THE 1ST TIME—S. 2111

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I understand S. 2111, introduced earlier today by Senator LEAHY, is at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the title of the bill for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2111) to enhance punishment for identity theft and other violations of data privacy and security.

Mr. MERKLEY. I now ask for its second reading and object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2012

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate adjourn until 10 a.m., on Thursday, February 16, 2012; that following the prayer and pledge, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half; that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of S. 1813, the surface transportation bill.

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