

CARDIN, BLUMENTHAL, BEGICH, ROCKEFELLER, and LANDRIEU as original co-sponsors of this bill. I ask all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 611—DESIGNATING DECEMBER 15, 2012, AS “WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY”

Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. SNOWE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 611

Whereas, 21 years ago, the Wreaths Across America project began an annual tradition, during the month of December, of donating, transporting, and placing Maine balsam fir holiday wreaths on the graves of the fallen heroes buried at Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas, since that tradition began, through the hard work and generosity of the individuals involved in the Wreaths Across America project, more than 350,000 wreaths have been sent to more than 800 locations, including national cemeteries and veterans memorials in every State, and to locations overseas;

Whereas the mission of the Wreaths Across America project to “Remember, Honor, Teach” is carried out in part by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery as well as veterans cemeteries and other locations in all 50 States;

Whereas the Wreaths Across America project carries out a week-long veterans parade between Maine and Virginia, stopping along the way to spread a message about the importance of remembering the fallen heroes of the United States, honoring those who serve, and teaching the people of the United States about the sacrifices made by veterans and their families to preserve our freedoms;

Whereas, in 2011, wreaths were sent to more than 700 locations across the United States and overseas, 180 more locations than the previous year;

Whereas, in December 2012, the Patriot Guard Riders, a motorcycle and motor vehicle group that is dedicated to patriotic events and includes more than 250,000 members nationwide, will continue their tradition of escorting a tractor-trailer filled with donated wreaths from Harrington, Maine, to Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas thousands of individuals volunteer each December to escort and lay the wreaths;

Whereas December 10, 2011, was previously designated by the Senate as “Wreaths Across America Day”; and

Whereas the Wreaths Across America project will continue its proud legacy on December 15, 2012, bringing approximately 125,000 wreaths to Arlington National Cemetery on that day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates December 15, 2012, as “Wreaths Across America Day”;

(2) honors the Wreaths Across America project, the Patriot Guard Riders, and all of the volunteers and donors involved in this worthy tradition; and

(3) recognizes the sacrifices our veterans, members of the Armed Forces, and their families have made, and continue to make, for our great Nation.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 61—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT A CARBON TAX IS NOT IN THE ECONOMIC INTEREST OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. VITTER (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COATS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. HELLER, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHANNIS, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. LEE, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. MORAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. THUNE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. WICKER) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. CON. RES. 61

Whereas a carbon tax is regressive in nature and would unfairly burden those vulnerable individuals and families in the United States that are already struggling under a stagnating economy;

Whereas a carbon tax would increase the cost of every good manufactured in the United States;

Whereas a carbon tax would harm the entire United States manufacturing sector;

Whereas the increase in production of domestic energy resources on private and State-owned land has created significant job growth and private capital investment; and

Whereas affordable and reliable energy sources are critical to maintaining the United States’ global competitiveness: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that a carbon tax would be detrimental to American families and businesses, and is not in the interest of the United States.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 62—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS THAT OUR CURRENT TAX INCENTIVES FOR RETIREMENT SAVINGS PROVIDE IMPORTANT BENEFITS TO AMERICANS TO HELP PLAN FOR A FINANCIALLY SECURE RETIREMENT

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mrs. HAGAN, and Mr. BOOZMAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

S. CON. RES. 62

Whereas private retirement plans in the United States paid out over \$3,824,000,000,000 in benefits from 2000 through 2009, while public sector retirement plans paid out \$2,651,000,000,000 during the same period, with both playing an essential role in providing retirement income for millions of our Nation’s senior citizens;

Whereas there are approximately 670,000 private-sector defined contribution plans that are currently covering 67,000,000 participants, and over 48,000 private-sector defined benefit plans covering 19,000,000 participants;

Whereas \$4,700,000,000,000 is held in 401(k), 403(b), 457 and similar defined contribution plans, \$2,300,000,000,000 is held in private defined benefit plans, and another \$4,900,000,000,000 is held in Individual Retirement Accounts, largely consisting of funds rolled over from employer-based retirement plans;

Whereas from 2000 through 2009, employers have contributed almost \$3,500,000,000,000 to public and private retirement plans;

Whereas tax incentives are an important impetus for individuals to save for retirement and for employers to offer plans under our voluntary system;

Whereas generally, the taxation of amounts contributed to pension and retirement plans is simply deferred, not lost;

Whereas more than 70 percent of American workers making between \$30,000 and \$50,000 a year contribute to their own retirement when covered by a retirement plan at work;

Whereas under current law, if business owners and managers sponsor a retirement plan, they also must cover and provide benefits to lower-income and middle-income employees;

Whereas 401(k) and similar defined contribution plans have been enhanced over the years by Congress on a bipartisan basis;

Whereas the private retirement system in the United States is voluntary and is dependent on the willingness of business owners and corporations to adopt and maintain retirement plans; and

Whereas the United States system of employer-based retirement savings is designed to work together with other personal savings and the Social Security program to provide meaningful income replacement upon retirement: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) tax incentives for retirement savings play an important role in encouraging employers to sponsor and maintain retirement plans and encouraging participants to contribute to such plans;

(2) existing tax incentives have increased the number of Americans who are covered by a retirement plan; and

(3) a reformed and simplified Federal tax code should include properly structured tax incentives to maintain and contribute to such plans and to strengthen retirement security for all Americans.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 6, 2012, at 10 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled “Oversight of FHA: Examining HUD’s Response to Fiscal Challenges.”

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 6, 2012, at 10 a.m., in SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AND MERCHANT MARINE INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Surface Transportation

and Merchant Marine Infrastructure, Safety, and Security of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 6, 2012, at 10:30 a.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a hearing entitled, "Superstorm Sandy: The Devastating Impact on the Nation's Largest Transportation Systems."

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

AMERICAN ENERGY MANUFACTURING TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT

Mrs. HAGAN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 6582, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6582) to allow for innovations and alternative technologies that meet or exceed the desired energy efficient goals, and to make technical corrections to existing Federal energy efficiency laws to allow American manufacturers to remain competitive.

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

Mrs. HAGAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 6582) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

AMENDING THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT

Mrs. HAGAN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. 3666, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3666) to amend the Animal Welfare Act to modify the definition of "exhibitor."

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

Mrs. HAGAN. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (S. 3666) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 3666

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. ANIMAL WELFARE.

Section 2(h) of the Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2132(h)) is amended by adding "an owner of a common, domesticated household pet who derives less than a substantial portion of income from a nonprimary source (as determined by the Secretary) for exhibiting an animal that exclusively resides at the residence of the pet owner," after "stores."

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY

Mrs. HAGAN. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 611, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. 611) designating December 15, 2012, as "Wreaths Across America Day."

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

Mrs. HAGAN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 611) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 611

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Whereas, since that tradition began, through the hard work and generosity of the individuals involved in the Wreaths Across America project, more than 350,000 wreaths have been sent to more than 800 locations, including national cemeteries and veterans memorials in every State, and to locations overseas;

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MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 3664

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I understand that S. 3664, introduced earlier today by Senator REID, is at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3664) to provide for debt limit extensions.

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I now ask for its second reading and object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be read for a second time on the next legislative day.

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that from Thursday, December 6, through Monday, December 10, the majority leader be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2012

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m. on Monday, December 10, 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 leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; and that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 3637, the TAG extension legislation, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; further, that the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to S. 3637 occur at 5:30 p.m. Monday.

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

PROGRAM

Mrs. HAGAN. Mr. President, at 5:30 p.m. on Monday there will be a cloture