

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