

from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNIS) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 333, a resolution strongly recommending that the United States renegotiate the return of the Iraqi Jewish Archive to Iraq.

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 333, *supra*.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 2603

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2603 intended to be proposed to S. 1845, a bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

#### AMENDMENT NO. 2712

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 2712 intended to be proposed to S. 1845, a bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself and Mr. REED):

S. 1999. A bill to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to require the consent of parties to contracts for the use of arbitration to resolve controversies arising under the contracts and subject to provisions of such Act and to preserve the rights of servicemembers to bring class actions under such Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, our Nation has a strong tradition of ensuring that our service members are protected while they serve To keep us safe. As the challenges facing our service members change, we must work to ensure that our laws continue to keep pace. In this regard, I have worked with my colleagues over the years to strengthen the protections for service members and their families under the Servicemember Civil Relief Act, SCRA.

One such effort, the Servicemember Housing Protection Act, which I authored and was recently reported out of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, would enhance protections relating to the housing needs of our service members. I am pleased that these provisions have also been included in legislation the Senate will hopefully soon take up, Senator SANDERS's Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act, which I have cosponsored. I urge my colleagues to support this critical legislation.

Today, I am joining Senator GRAHAM in introducing on a bipartisan basis legislation to further enhance SCRA protections. The SCRA Rights Protec-

tion Act seeks to protect service members from being forced to accept mandatory arbitration clauses as part of everyday transactions, such as those relating to mortgage origination, automobile leases, and student loans. Often service members sign contracts that include arbitration clauses buried in the fine print, and this eliminates their access to the courts, which can limit their ability to assert their rights and reach a fair resolution. In disputes involving SCRA rights, this bill would make arbitration clauses unenforceable unless all parties consent to arbitration after the dispute arises, and would also ensure that service members retain their right to join with other service members to file a case together as a class.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting these improvements to the SCRA that will better protect our military families while the men and women of our Armed Forces protect our Nation.

### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

#### SENATE RESOLUTION 345—STRONGLY SUPPORTING THE RESTORATION AND PROTECTION OF STATE AUTHORITY AND FLEXIBILITY IN ESTABLISHING AND DEFINING CHALLENGING STUDENT ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND ASSESSMENTS, AND STRONGLY DENOUNCING THE PRESIDENT'S COERCION OF STATES INTO ADOPTING THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS BY CONFERRING PREFERENCES IN FEDERAL GRANTS AND FLEXIBILITY WAIVERS

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. LEE, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. ENZI) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

#### S. RES. 345

Whereas education belongs in the hands of our parents, local officials, local educational agencies, and States;

Whereas the development of the common education standards known as the Common Core State Standards was originally led by national organizations, but has transformed into an incentives-based mandate from the Federal Government;

Whereas, in 2009, the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), both of which are private trade associations, began developing common education standards for kindergarten through grade 12 (referred to in this preamble as the "Common Core State Standards");

Whereas, sections 9527, 9529, 9530, and 9531 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7907, 7909, 7910, and 7911) prohibit the establishment of a national curriculum, national testing, mandatory national teacher certification, and a national student database;

Whereas Federal law makes clear that the Department of Education may not be in-

involved in setting specific content standards or determining the content of State assessments in elementary and secondary education;

Whereas President Barack Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced competitive grants through the Race to the Top program under sections 14005 and 14006 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 111-5; 123 Stat. 282) (referred to in this preamble as the "Race to the Top program") in July 2009;

Whereas, on July 24, 2009, Secretary Duncan stated, "The \$4,350,000,000 Race to the Top program that we are unveiling today is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Federal Government to create incentives for far-reaching improvement in our Nation's schools.";

Whereas, on July 24, 2009, Secretary Duncan also stated, "But I want to be clear that Race to the Top is also a reform competition, one where States can increase or decrease their odds of winning Federal support.";

Whereas, under the Race to the Top program guidelines, States seeking funds were pressed to implement 4 core, interconnected reforms, and the first of these reforms was to adopt "internationally benchmarked standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace";

Whereas, on July 24, 2009, President Obama outlined the connection between common education standards and Race to the Top program funds, stating, "I am issuing a challenge to our [N]ation's governors and school boards, principals and teachers, businesses and non-profits, parents and students: if you set and enforce rigorous and challenging standards and assessments; if you put outstanding teachers at the front of the classroom; if you turn around failing schools—your State can win a Race to the Top grant that will not only help students outcompete workers around the world, but let them fulfill their God-given potential.";

Whereas the selection criteria designed by the Department of Education for the Race to the Top program provided that for a State to have any chance to compete for funding, it must commit to adopting a "common set of K-12 standards";

Whereas Common Core State Standards establish a single set of education standards for kindergarten through grade 12 in English language arts and mathematics that States adopt;

Whereas Common Core State Standards were, during the initial application period for the Race to the Top program, and remain, as of the date of the adoption of this resolution, the only common set of kindergarten through grade 12 standards in the United States;

Whereas, on July 24, 2009, Secretary Duncan stated, "To speed this process, the Race to the Top program is going to set aside \$350,000,000 to competitively fund the development of rigorous, common State assessments.";

Whereas, since the Race to the Top program's inception, States have been incentivized by Federal money to adopt common education standards;

Whereas States began adopting Common Core State Standards in 2010;

Whereas States that adopted Common Core State Standards before August 2, 2010, were awarded 40 additional points out of 500 points for their Race to the Top program applications;

Whereas 45 States have adopted Common Core State Standards;

Whereas 31 States, of the 45 total, adopted Common Core State Standards before August 2, 2010;