S. 373

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) were added as cosponsors of S. 373, a bill to provide for the establishment of nationally uniform and environmentally sound standards governing discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel.

S. 375

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 375, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a reduced rate of excise tax on beer produced domestically by certain qualifying producers.

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 375, supra.

S. 402

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 402, a bill to establish a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Master Teacher Corps program.

S. 404

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 404, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit taking minors across State lines in circumvention of laws requiring the involvement of parents in abortion decisions.

S. RES. 52

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 52, a resolution calling for the release of Ukrainian fighter pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was captured by Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine and has been held illegally in a Russian prison since July 2014.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CRAPO (for himself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. RISCH, Mr. KING, Mr. ROBERTS, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. SANDERS):

S. 440. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I rise in support of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act that I am introducing today with Senator DEBBIE STABENOW of Michigan. This bipartisan legislation would address the shortage of veterinarians in many areas of this Nation by helping to increase the placement of more veterinarians in areas of the country where they are desperately needed.

Veterinarians are a critical part of ensuring our access to a safe and high-quality food supply. Americans depend on veterinarians to help ensure food safety and public health, improve animal health and welfare, promote sustainable economic development and safeguard our homeland from foreign animal disease. Unfortunately, nearly every state has a rural community that is suffering from a shortage in essential veterinary services.

To help address this concern, in 2003, Congress established the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program, VMLRP. This program assists selected food animal and public health veterinarians with student loan repayment for a three-year commitment to practice in areas of the country facing a veterinarian shortage. This program helps veterinarians with daunting student loan debt with making a living in a community where starting a practice may be otherwise financially impossible. Through the program, more than 280 veterinarians have been placed in communities throughout the country—a benefit for food safety, the communities, farmers and ranchers, the veterinarians and more.

The problem is the VMLRP is subject to a significant Federal withholding tax on the assistance provided to qualifying veterinarians. This affects the amount of limited resources that can go toward this worthy effort and the reach of its benefits. The legislation we are introducing will address this by providing an exemption from the Federal income withholding tax for payments received under the VMLRP and similar State programs. Thus, more veterinarians would have the opportunity to practice in small, rural communities where their services are so desperately needed and more communities will have much-needed veterinarian services.

To illustrate the need for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act, consider the following example. In October 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture announced more than $4.5 million was awarded to 51 veterinarians through the VMLRP. The awards announced in October will fill shortage needs in 22 States. However, estimates show that if this withholding tax were to be eliminated, an additional veterinarian could be placed in a shortage area for every three currently participating in the program. That means approximately 17 additional awards could have been issued last year had this tax been eliminated.

This legislation would also help bring the tax treatment of this program in line with the tax treatment of assistance for doctors and nurses who are serving areas of the country in need through the National Health Service Corps' loan repayment program. In 2004, Congress exempted the benefits available under the National Health Service Corps' loan repayment program from the federal withholding tax. Enactment of the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Enhancement Act would create tax parity for the counterpart program for veterinary medicine.

So far, 15 Senators—including Senators THAD COCHRAN, JOHNNY ISAKSON, JIM RISCH, PAT ROBERTS, MICHAEL BENNET, KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, AMY KLOBUCHAR, AL FRANKEN, MAZIE HIRONO, ANGUS KING, Jr., PAT LEAHY, BERNIE SANDERS, and TAMMY BALDWIN—from both sides of the aisle have cosponsored this important legislation and 152 national and local organizations support the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act. Congress can help ensure that every community across America has access to needed veterinary care. Please join us in this effort to place more veterinarians in areas of the country where they are desperately needed and support passage of this bipartisan, commonsense legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a letter of support be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE VETERINARY MEDICINE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM ENHANCEMENT ACT

The undersigned organizations urge Congress to pass the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) Enhancement Act to address the challenges rural areas face in accessing veterinary services for livestock medicine and public health and to maximize funding congress appropriates for VMLRP so that it can be stretched further to fill shortage areas across the country.

By exempting the loan repayment awards from a 39 percent withholding tax, Congress will make it possible for one additional veterinarian to be selected to participate for every three currently working in federally designated areas. Since 2010, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has selected 286 veterinarians to practice in nearly every state across the country. If the VMLRP program awards were exempt from withholding taxes, then roughly 100 additional veterinarians could have served rural communities during that same time period.

It is time for every American community to gain access to needed veterinary services. Congress can ensure that our nation's livestock are healthy, our food supply is safe and secure, and public health is protected by passing the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program Enhancement Act this session.

Sincerely,

American Veterinary Medical Association, Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, Academy of Rural Veterinarians, Alabama Veterinary Medical Association, Alaska Veterinary Medical Association, American Animal Hospital Association, American Academy of Veterinary Nutrition, American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, American Association of Avian

Pathologists, American Association of Bovine Practitioners, American Association of Corporate and Public Practice Veterinarians, American Association of Equine Practitioners, American Association of Feline Practitioners, American Association of Food Safety Veterinarians, American Association of Industry Veterinarians.

American Association of Mycobacterial Diseases, American Association of Public Health Veterinarians, American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners, American Association of Swine Veterinarians, American Association of Veterinary Clinicians, American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians, American Association of Zoo Veterinarians, American Board of Veterinary Practitioners, American Board of Veterinary Toxicology, American College of Laboratory Animal Medicine, American College of Poultry Veterinarians, American College of Theriogenologists, American College of Veterinary Dermatology, American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine, American College of Veterinary Pathologists.

American College of Veterinary Radiology, American Dairy Goat Association, American Dairy Science Association, American Farm Bureau Federation®, American Feed Industry Association, American Goat Federation, American Holistic Veterinary Medical Association, American Horse Council, American Rabbit Breeders Association, American Sheep Industry Association, American Society of Animal Science, American Society of Laboratory Animal Practitioners, American Veal Association, American Veterinary Medical Foundation, Animal Agriculture Alliance, Animal Health Institute, Animal Policy Group, Arizona Veterinary Medical Association.

Arkansas Veterinary Medical Association, Association for Women Veterinarians Foundation, Association of Avian Veterinarians, Association of Veterinary Biologics Companies, Association of Zoos & Aquariums, Bayer Animal Health, Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc., California Veterinary Medical Association, Center for Rural Affairs, Colorado Veterinary Medical Association, Connecticut Veterinary Medical Association, Delaware Veterinary Medical Association, District of Columbia Veterinary Medical Association, Elanco Animal Health (A Division of Eli Lilly & Company), Federation of Animal Science Societies, Florida Veterinary Medical Association, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia Veterinary Medical Association.

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce, Hawaii Veterinary Medical Association, Idaho Cattle Association, Idaho Veterinary Medical, Association, Kansas Bioscience Authority, Kansas City Animal Health Corridor, Kansas City Area Development Council, Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute, Kansas Veterinary Medical Association, Kentucky Veterinary Medical Association, Illinois State Veterinary Medical, Association, Indiana Veterinary Medical Association, Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, Lesbian and Gay Veterinary Medical Association, Livestock Marketing Association.

Louisiana Veterinary Medical Association, Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry, Maine Veterinary Medical Association, Maryland Veterinary Medical Association, Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association, Merck Animal Health, Michigan Veterinary Medical Association, Minnesota Board of Animal Health, Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association, Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association, Missouri Veterinary Medical Association, Montana Veterinary Medical Association, Mycobacterial Diseases of Animals Multistate Initiative, National Association of Federal Veterinarians, National Association of State Animal Health Officials, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America.

National Chicken Council, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, National Farmers Union, National Food Animal Veterinary Institute, National Grange, National Institute for Animal Agriculture, National Livestock Producers Association, National Milk Producers Federation, National Pork Producers Council, National Renderers Association, National Turkey Federation, Nebraska Veterinary Medical Association, Nevada Veterinary Medical Association, New England Veterinary Medical Association, New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association, New Jersey Veterinary Medical Association, New Mexico Veterinary Medical Association, New York State Veterinary Medical Society.

Northeast States Association for Agriculture Stewardship, North American Meat Institute, North Carolina Veterinary Medical Association, North Dakota Veterinary Medical Association, Ohio Veterinary Medical Association, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Animal Industry Division, Oklahoma Veterinary Medical Association, Oregon Veterinary Medical Association, Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association, Pet Food Institute, Poultry Science Association, Puerto Rico Veterinary Medical Association (Colegio de Medicos Veterinarios de Puerto Rico), R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America, Rhode Island Veterinary Medical Association, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union.

Rural & Agriculture Council of America, South Carolina Association of Veterinarians, South Dakota Veterinary Medical Association, Student American Veterinary Medical Association, Tennessee Veterinary Medical Association, Texas Animal Health Commission, Texas Veterinary Medical Association, United Egg Producers, United States Animal Health Association, US Cattlemen's Association, US Poultry & Egg Association, Utah Veterinary Medical Association, Vermont Veterinary Medical Association, Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association, West Virginia Veterinary Medical Association, Wisconsin State Veterinarian, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin Veterinary Medical Association, Wyoming Veterinary Medical Association, Zoetis.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 72—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE JANUARY 24, 2015, ATTACKS CARRIED OUT BY RUSSIAN-BACKED REBELS ON THE CIVILIAN PROPULATION IN MARIUPOL, UKRAINE, AND THE PROVISION OF LETHAL AND NON-LETHAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO UKRAINE

Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. CORKER, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. KIRK, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 72

Whereas Russian-backed rebels continue to expand their campaign in Ukraine, which has already claimed more than 5,000 lives and generated an estimated 1,500,000 refugees and internally displaced persons;

Whereas, on January 23, 2015, Russian-backed rebels pulled out of peace talks with Western leaders;

Whereas, on January 24, 2015, the Ukrainian port city of Mariupol received rocket fire from territory in the Donetsk region controlled by rebels;

Whereas, on January 24, 2015, Alexander Zakharchenko, leader of the Russian-backed rebel Donetsk People's Republic, publicly announced that his troops had launched an offensive against Mariupol;

Whereas Mariupol is strategically located on the Sea of Azov and is a sea link between Russian-occupied Crimea and Russia, and could be used to form part of a land bridge between Crimea and Russia;

Whereas the indiscriminate attack on Mariupol killed 30 people, including 2 children, and wounded 102 in markets, homes, and schools;

Whereas, on April 19, 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1296, reaffirming its strong condemnation of the deliberate targeting of civilians;

Whereas, even after the Russian Federation and the Russian-backed rebels signed a ceasefire agreement called the Minsk Protocol in September 2014, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, General Philip Breedlove, reported in November 2014 the movement of ''Russian troops, Russian artillery, Russian air defense systems, and Russian combat troops'' into Ukraine;

Whereas, on January 24, 2015, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated, ''For several months we have seen the presence of Russian forces in eastern Ukraine, as well as a substantial increase in Russian heavy equipment such as tanks, artillery, and advanced air defense systems. Russian troops in eastern Ukraine are supporting these offensive operations with command and control systems, air defense systems with advanced surface-to-air missiles, unmanned aerial systems, advanced multiple rocket launcher systems, and electronic warfare systems.'';

Whereas, on January 25, 2015, after Russian-backed rebels attacked Mariupol, European Council President Donald Tusk wrote, ''Once again appeasement encourages the aggressor to greater acts of violence; time to step up our policy based on cold facts, not illusions.'';

Whereas, on November 19, 2014, at a Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate confirmation hearing, Deputy National Security Adviser Anthony Blinken stated that the provision of defensive lethal assistance to the Government of Ukraine ''remains on the table. It's something we're looking at.'';

Whereas the Ukraine Freedom Support Act (Public Law 113-272), which was passed by Congress unanimously and signed into law by the President on December 18, 2014, states that it is the policy of the United States to further assist the Government of Ukraine in restoring its sovereignty and its territorial integrity to deter the Government of the Russian Federation from further destabilizing and invading Ukraine and other independent countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia; and

Whereas the Ukraine Freedom Support Act authorizes $350,000,000 in fiscal years 2015–