AMENDMENT NO. 923

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 923 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 950

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 950 proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 954

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 954 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 958

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, his name was withdrawn as a cosponsor of amendment No. 958 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

At the request of Mr. BROWN, his name was withdrawn as a cosponsor of amendment No. 958 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 1078

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1078 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1097

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1097 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1099

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was withdrawn as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1099 proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

AMENDMENT NO. 1101

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was withdrawn as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1101 proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1101 proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 1105

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1105 proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1105 proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 1112

At the request of Mr. MANCHIN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1112 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, an original concurrent resolution setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1112 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, supra.

At the request of Mr. BROWN, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1112 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, supra.

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1112 intended to be proposed to S. Con. Res. 11, supra.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. KIRK):

S. 870. A bill to require rulemaking by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to address considerations in evaluating the need for public and individual disaster assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am proud to introduce today a bill to try to bring some transparency and fairness into FEMA's disaster declaration process. It is the Fairness in Federal Disaster Declarations Act.

The inspiration for the bill was a tragic one. On February 29, 2012, leap day, a category F–4 tornado tore through southeastern Illinois, causing damage in 11 Illinois counties and causing major damage in the small towns of Harrisburg and Ridgway. Eight people in Harrisburg, alone, died in the event and 15 people were killed in total. Winds reached 175-miles per hour. It is not too much of a stretch to say these two small towns were almost wiped off the map.

Requests for Federal assistance after a disaster are made by the Governor of each State. The state emergency management agency typically does a preliminary damage assessment and then the Governor decides whether State resources are adequate to absorb the costs of clean up and recovery. In the case of the Harrisburg and Ridgway tornado, the Governor's request for federal emergency designation for Individual Assistance was denied, as was the State's appeal of that decision. With that denial, individuals whose homes or properties were damaged were precluded from direct federal help.

I asked FEMA why it denied the Governor's request—which was supported by my colleague Senator KIRK and me, along with the entire Illinois delegation—and we were told it was because the disaster did not meet or exceed the State's per capita. In other words, because Illinois is a highly populous state, it is presumed it can absorb the costs of cleanup and recovery from disasters up to a certain level. FEMA said the deadly tornado event did not exceed the state's presumed capacity.

Currently, FEMA multiplies the number of people in a state by $1.35 to determine a threshold of the amount of damage a state would have to have incurred to be considered for Assistance. In Illinois, that figure is about $18 million. Well, Harrisburg, Ridgway, and the surrounding communities had about $5.5 million in Public Assistance damages. $5.5 million is a lot of loss, particularly in a rural area—but not enough to qualify for Federal assistance under FEMA' s rules.

From 2002 to 2015, Illinois was denied federal disaster assistance seven times. Texas was denied thirteen times—for damage caused by everything from

wildfires to tropical storms. Florida was denied Federal disaster assistance eight times during that 13-year period, and California, New Jersey, and New York were each denied four times. FEMA's formula does not work for large, populous states, particularly those with a concentrated urban area, like Illinois.

Although the ultimate decision whether to award Federal assistance is made by the President, by statute, under the Stafford Act, FEMA is required to consider six factors when determining whether assistance is warranted. After the Harrisburg and Ridgway tornado, we pushed FEMA a little harder and asked what else, in addition to the per capita, was considered in the denial. After all, 15-people died in the event and the damage was startling. We were told that specifics of FEMA's analysis is not public and wouldn't be disclosed.

Illinois ran into the same issue in November 2013 when, once again, tornadoes swept through the State. This time six people were killed and whole neighborhoods were nearly destroyed. The Cities of Washington, Gifford, and New Minden, Illinois, experienced the worst tornado damage I have ever seen. Public infrastructure was decimated, but because Illinois did not meet one of FEMA's criteria, we were denied Federal Public Assistance. These events inspired my colleague, Senator Kirk, and me to introduce a bill to try to build in a bit more transparency and fairness into FEMA's process.

The Fairness in Federal Disaster Declaration seeks to improve the disaster analysis by assigning a value to each of the factors FEMA must consider when determining whether Federal disaster assistance will be made available. When it comes to Individual Assistance—funding to help people repair and rebuild their homes—the breakdown would be as follows:

Concentration damages—the density of damage in an individual community—would be considered 20 percent, Trauma—the loss of life and injuries and the disruption of normal community functions—would be 20 percent of the analysis, Special Populations—including the age income of the residents, the amount of home ownership, etc.—would comprise 20 percent, Voluntary agency assistance—a consideration of what the volunteer and charitable groups are providing—would make up 5 percent, the amount of Insurance coverage—20 percent, and the average amount of individual assistance by State, which includes the per capita analysis—would make up 5 percent of the analysis.

The bill also would add a seventh consideration to FEMA's metrics—the economics of the area, which will receive 10 percent consideration. This includes factors such as the local assessable tax base, the median income as it compares to that of the state, and the poverty rate as it compares to that of the state.

For Federal Public Assistance, the breakdown would be similar, with a greater emphasis placed on the Localized Impacts of the disaster, which would warrant 40 percent of the analysis.

It is reasonable that FEMA should take into consideration the size of the state requesting assistance, but as the regulations stand, large states are being penalized. Assigning values to the factors will help ensure that the damage to the specific community weighs more than the state's population. Illinois is a relatively large State, geographically, and has a concentrated urban area. The State—particularly downstate—is being punished for this fact.

If the Cities of Washington and Gifford, and Harrisburg and Ridgway, do not qualify under FEMA's current criteria for federal assistance, something is wrong. This legislation is necessary because the way FEMA evaluates whether to declare an area a Federal disaster is not working. It is done behind closed doors and it works against states with large populations.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 870

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Fairness in Federal Disaster Declarations Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REGULATORY ACTION REQUIRED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (in this Act referred to as the ''Administrator'' and ''FEMA'', respectively) shall amend the rules of the Administrator under section 206.48 of title 44, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act, in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(b) NEW CRITERIA REQUIRED.—The amended rules issued under subsection (a) shall provide for the following:

(1) PUBLIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—Such rules shall provide that, with respect to the evaluation of the need for public assistance—

(A) specific weighted valuations shall be assigned to each criterion, as follows—

(i) estimated cost of the assistance, 10 percent;

(ii) localized impacts, 40 percent;

(iii) insurance coverage in force, 10 percent;

(iv) hazard mitigation, 10 percent;

(v) recent multiple disasters, 10 percent;

(vi) programs of other Federal assistance, 10 percent; and

(vii) economic circumstances described in subparagraph (B), 10 percent; and

(B) FEMA shall consider the economic circumstances of—

(i) the local economy of the affected area, including factors such as the local assessable tax base and local sales tax, the median income as it compares to that of the State, and the poverty rate as it compares to that of the State; and

(ii) the economy of the State, including factors such as the unemployment rate of the State, as compared to the national unemployment rate.

(2) INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.—Such rules shall provide that, with respect to the evaluation of the severity, magnitude, and impact of the disaster and the evaluation of the need for assistance to individuals—

(A) specific weighted valuations shall be assigned to each criterion, as follows—

(i) concentration of damages, 20 percent;

(ii) trauma, 20 percent;

(iii) special populations, 20 percent;

(iv) voluntary agency assistance, 10 percent;

(v) insurance, 20 percent;

(vi) average amount of individual assistance by State, 5 percent; and

(vii) economic considerations described in subparagraph (B), 5 percent; and

(B) FEMA shall consider the economic circumstances of the affected area, including factors such as the local assessable tax base and local sales tax, the median income as it compares to that of the State, and the poverty rate as it compares to that of the State.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amended rules issued under subsection (a) shall apply to any disaster for which a Governor requested a major disaster declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) and was denied on or after January 1, 2012.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. HELLER, Mrs. CAPITO, and Mr. PAUL):

S. 871. A bill to provide for an application process for interested parties to apply for an area to be designated as a rural area, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 871

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Helping Expand Lending Practices in Rural Communities Act of 2015'' or the ''HELP Rural Communities Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. DESIGNATION OF RURAL AREA.

(a) APPLICATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection shall establish an application process under which a person who lives or does business in a State may, with respect to an area identified by the person in such State that has not been designated by the Bureau as a rural area for purposes of a Federal consumer financial law (as defined under section 1002 of the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010), apply for such area to be so designated.

(b) EVALUATION CRITERIA.—When evaluating an application submitted under subsection (a), the Bureau shall take into consideration the following factors:

(1) Criteria used by the Director of the Bureau of the Census for classifying geographical areas as rural or urban.

(2) Criteria used by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget to designate counties as metropolitan or micropolitan or neither.

(3) Criteria used by the Secretary of Agriculture to determine property eligibility for rural development programs.

(4) The Department of Agriculture rural-urban commuting area codes.

(5) A written opinion provided by the State's bank supervisor, as defined under section 3(r) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1813(r)).

(6) Population density.

(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—If, at any time prior to the submission of an application under subsection (a), the area subject to review has been designated as non rural by any Federal agency described under subsection (b) using any of the criteria described under subsection (b), the Bureau shall not be required to consider such designation in its evaluation.

(d) PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after receiving an application submitted under subsection (a), the Bureau shall—

(A) publish such application in the Federal Register; and

(B) make such application available for public comment for not fewer than 90 days.

(2) LIMITATION ON ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the Bureau, during the public comment period with respect to an application submitted under subsection (a), to accept an additional application with respect to the area that is the subject of the initial application.

(e) DECISION ON DESIGNATION.—Not later than 90 days after the end of the public comment period under subsection (d)(1) for an application, the Bureau shall—

(1) grant or deny such application, in whole or in part; and

(2) publish such grant or denial in the Federal Register, along with an explanation of what factors the Bureau relied on in making such determination.

(f) SUBSEQUENT APPLICATIONS.—A decision by the Bureau under subsection (e) to deny an application for an area to be designated as a rural area shall not preclude the Bureau from accepting a subsequent application submitted under subsection (a) for such area to be so designated, so long as such subsequent application is made after the end of the 90-day period beginning on the date that the Bureau denies the application under subsection (e).

(g) SUNSET.—This section shall cease to have any force or effect after the end of the 2-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. OPERATIONS IN RURAL AREAS.

The Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 129C(b)(2)(E)(iv)(I), by striking ''predominantly''; and

(2) in section 129D(c)(1), by striking ''predominantly''.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 872. A bill to provide for the recognition of certain Native communities and the settlement of certain claims under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise to introduce a bill to allow five Southeast Alaska communities to finally be allowed to form urban corporations under the terms of 1971's Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the Unrecognized Southeast Alaska Native Communities Recognition and Compensation Act. I am joined in sponsoring this bill by my Alaska colleague, Senator DAN SULLIVAN.

At the very beginning of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 there are a series of findings and declarations of congressional policy that explain the underpinnings of this landmark legislation. The first clause reads: ''There is an immediate need for a fair and just settlement of all claims by Natives and Native groups of Alaska, based on aboriginal land claims.'' The second clause states: ''The settlement should be accomplished rapidly, with certainty, in conformity with the real economic and social needs of Natives.''

Unfortunately 44 years have passed since the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act became law and still the Native peoples of five communities in Southeast Alaska: Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Tenakee and Haines—the five ''landless communities''—are still waiting for their fair and just settlement.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act originally awarded $966 million and 44 million acres of land to Alaska Natives and provided for the establishment of Native Corporations to receive and manage such funds and lands. The beneficiaries of the settlement were issued stock in one of 13 regional Alaska Native corporations—12 based in Alaska. Most beneficiaries also had the option to enroll and receive stock in a village or urban corporation or group.

For reasons that still defy explanation, the native peoples of the ''landless communities,'' were not permitted by the Act to form village or urban corporations. These communities were excluded from this benefit even though they did not differ significantly from other communities in Southeast Alaska that were permitted to form village or urban corporations under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. For example, the Ketchikan area had more Native residents in 1970, than Juneau, which was permitted to form the Goldbelt urban corporation, or Sitka that formed the Shee Atika urban corporation. This finding was confirmed in a February 1994 report submitted to the Secretary of the Interior at the 1993 direction of Congress. That study was conducted by the Institute of Social and Economic Research at the University of Alaska.

The native people of Southeast Alaska have recognized the injustice of this oversight for more than four decades. An independent study issued two decades ago confirms that the grievance of the landless communities is legitimate. Legislation has been introduced in the past sessions of Congress to remedy this injustice. Hearings have been held and reports written. Yet legislation to right the wrong has inevitably stalled out.

I am convinced that this cause is just, it is right, and it is about time that the Native peoples of the five landless communities receive what has been denied to them for so long.

The legislation that I am introducing today would enable the Native peoples of the five ''landless communities'' to organize five ''urban corporations,'' one for each unrecognized community. These newly formed corporations would be offered and could accept the surface estate to 23,040 acres of land—one township as granted all other village corporations in Southeast. Sealaska Corporation, the regional Alaska Native Corporation for Southeast Alaska, would receive title to the subsurface estate to the designated lands. This version of the legislation has been modified to guarantee that the lands to be conveyed may include subsistence sites, aquaculture sites, hydroelectric sites, tidelands, eco-tourism sites and surplus federal properties to help satisfy any compensation requirement.

It is long past time that we return to the Native peoples of Southeast Alaska a small slice of the aboriginal lands that were once theirs alone.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. SULLIVAN):

S. 873. A bill to designate the wilderness within the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve in the State of Alaska as the Jay S. Hammond Wilderness Area; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise to introduce legislation to rename a wilderness area in my home state of Alaska in honor of Alaska's fourth Governor, Jay S. Hammond. I am pleased that I am joined in sponsoring this bill by my Alaska colleague, Senator DAN SULLIVAN.

Jay Hammond is truly one of the unique figures in Alaska history. In a state with many unique statesmen, Hammond is truly worthy of honor. A New Yorker who first studied petroleum engineering at Penn State, he became a Marine fighter pilot who fought in World War II in the Pacific/China with the famed Black Sheep Squadron. After the war he found life on the East Coast too confining and flew an old plane to Alaska in 1946, never looking back. Initially a pilot to ''Bush'', remote rural parts of Alaska, he worked as a trapper, wildlife guide and laborer before heading back to college to gain a degree in biological sciences in 1949 from the University of Alaska.

He then went to work as a wildlife biologist and hunter for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. By 1950 after conducting some of the first swan studies in northern Alaska, Jay Hammond was transferred to Southwest Alaska where he conducted predator/prey studies on Alaska Peninsula caribou, flew fisheries enforcement flights out of Dillingham Alaska, and fell in love with Lake Clark and its surrounding wilderness, a 45–mile lake on the west side of Aleutian Range that he would call home, besides a setnet salmon site at Naknek, for nearly 55 years.

Mr. Hammond, upon Alaska entering the Union in 1959 ran and won election to the Alaska State House of Representatives as an independent, serving

three terms before redeclaring himself as a Republican and serving two terms in the state Senate. He then served as mayor of the Bristol Bay Borough from 1972 to 1974, after serving as the borough's manager in the 1960s and 1970s.

Mr. Hammond then was drafted to run for Governor of Alaska in 1974, defeating the state's second Governor and former Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel in the Republican Primary before defeating the state's first Governor William A Egan in the general election. It was an election dominated by Hammond's opposition to oil leasing in Southcentral's Kachemak Bay, concern over the State of Alaska's salmon fisheries and fear over the state over spending soon after the discovery of oil on Alaska's North Slope.

Governor Hammond during his two terms oversaw construction of the Trans-Alaska oil Pipeline System, TAPS, championed creation of the Alaska Permanent Fund savings account, and was the author of the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend program, which provides Alaskans a yearly dividend check from the interest earnings of the savings from a quarter of the State's petroleum revenues. He also won approval of a constitutional budget reserve that was intended to reduce State spending, and championed agricultural development in Interior Alaska. He also oversaw the state's purchase of the Alaska Railroad from the federal government.

Hammond on environmental issues opposed construction of a proposed Ramparts hydroelectric dam on the Yukon River, supported the congressional creation of a 200-miles fisheries zone off the State's coast that improved state fishery stocks, oversaw creation of a state limited entry fisheries regime, oversaw the creation of the Nation's largest State park, the Wood Tikchik State Park in Southwest Alaska, which contains 1.6 million acres of wilderness, and worked with Congress and observed congressional passage of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act in 1980 that replaced the designation of 120 million acres of Alaska into protected status under the federal Antiquities Act, while placing 104 million acres of new lands into national parks, preserves, refuges, monuments, wilderness and wild and scenic river classifications. The law added 5.5 million acres of wilderness in 14 units in national forests, added more than 40 million acres in 10 new units to national parks, including the 3.86 million-acre Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, bringing to 54 million acres the total size of Federal park holdings in Alaska; added a number of new wildlife refuges in Alaska, bringing to 19 the number of refuges covering 76.8 million acres in the State; and created 13 wild and scenic rivers running 3,131 miles. The act created 57.9 million acres of formal wilderness in the State, Alaska containing about 60 percent of the nation's total formal wilderness.

Mr. Hammond was also a talented and prolific writer and poet, presenting to the University of Alaska Library Archives an impressive collection of speeches, testimony, notebooks and papers. He also wrote several books on life in Alaska, led by his first book, ''Tales of Alaska's Bush Rat Governor.'' He died on Aug. 2, 2005, at age 83 in his sleep at his homestead near Port Alsworth, Alaska, having survived five plane crashes and innumerable close calls during his first flight to Alaska and in fighting a fire at his home at Lake Clark, and over the following 59 years in the State. He was survived by his wife, Bella and daughters Heidi and Dana.

Jay Hammond was well-respected for reaching across the aisle to forge bipartisan alliances and enjoyed many close friendships with colleagues in both political parties and with his staff, who were deeply loyal to him. The designation of the 2.6 million acres of already created wilderness in Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, where his homestead lies, will honor Jay Hammond and will be a fitting tribute to his honorable life and legacy, a man that the Anchorage Municipal Assembly on August 7, 2005, called, ''the finest example of a true public servant. There are few men who have influence through their quiet articulation of what is right and fair in the way of Jay Hammond.''

I hope for quick passage of this bill prior to the anniversary of either his birthday or the date of the tenth anniversary of this death. He was creative, funny, thoughtful, respectful, wise and courageous and truly deserves this honor.

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

S. 882. A bill to amend part A of title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, we rely on our public schools to prepare the next generation for success as citizens, workers, and innovators. We have asked educators to raise the bar and educate all students to internationally competitive college and career-ready standards. To achieve these goals, we need to establish a comprehensive system of educator preparation and support that ensures that new educators are profession-ready and that provides for their growth and development over the course of their careers.

Today, I am pleased to join Senator CASEY in introducing the Better Education Support and Training, BEST Act to reform induction, professional development, and systems for professional growth and improvement for teachers, librarians, and principals currently on the job, updating the Effective Teaching and Leading Act that I introduced last Congress. The BEST Act will strengthen Title II, Part A, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to ensure that formula grant funds support the goal of all students having equitable access to profession-ready and effective educators. The BEST Act will ensure that all educators on the instructional team—teachers, principals, counselors, librarians, and other specialized instructional support personnel—collaborate and are prepared and supported in helping students achieve and grow. It will offer induction and mentoring programs for new educators; personalized, job-embedded professional development, and career pathways and leadership roles for teachers and other educators.

In the coming weeks, I will be reintroducing legislation to address the front end of the educator pipeline—the Educator Preparation Reform Act. This legislation builds on the success of the Teacher Quality Partnership Program, which I helped author in the 1998 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

Together, these two bills will modernize Federal policy for education preparation and development to create a continuum of support for professional educators throughout their careers. They provide a blueprint for reauthorizing Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and Title II of the Higher Education Act. Over the years, I have been fortunate to work with many stakeholders on these bills, including the Coalition for Teaching Quality, representing over 100 national, State, and local organizations.

I look forward to working to incorporate these bills into the upcoming reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Higher Education Act, and I urge our colleagues to join in this effort.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 116—PROVIDING FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS IN BURMA

Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 116

Whereas the Union Election Commission of Burma announced that the country will hold general elections in the final quarter of calendar year 2015;

Whereas Burma's history with general elections has been characterized by controversy, conflict, and interference instigated by the military of Burma (the Tatmadaw), including in May 1990 and November 2010, and in the April 2012 by-elections;

Whereas the Tatmadaw refused to transfer power to the National League for Democracy (NLD), an opposition political party led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, following the May 1990 elections in which the NLD won 392 of 492 seats, and used the flawed 2008 Constitution of Burma to undermine elections in November 2010;

Whereas stated intentions of the Government of Burma to negotiate a Federal union