

652, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize a program for early detection, diagnosis, and treatment regarding deaf and hard-of-hearing newborns, infants, and young children.

S. 765

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 765, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide for penalties for the sale of any Purple Heart awarded to a member of the Armed Forces.

S. 976

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 976, a bill to restore States' sovereign rights to enforce State and local sales and use tax laws, and for other purposes.

S. 1002

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1002, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 1085

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1085, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide enhanced penalties for convicted murderers who kill or target America's public safety officers.

S. 1094

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1094, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1114

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1114, a bill to nullify the effect of the recent Executive order laying a foundation for discrimination against LGBTQ individuals, women, religious minorities, and others under the pretext of religious freedom.

S. 1135

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1135, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to clarify the Federal Pell Grant duration limits of borrowers who attend an institution of higher education that closes or commits fraud or other misconduct, and for other purposes.

S. 1155

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Vermont

(Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1155, a bill to amend title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 in order to increase the amount of financial support available for working students.

S. 1163

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1163, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure compliance of medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs with requirements relating to the scheduling of appointments, to require appointment by the President and confirmation by the Senate of certain health care officials of the Department, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LEAHY:

S. 1174. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that a deduction equal to fair market value shall be allowed for charitable contributions of literary, musical, artistic, or scholarly compositions created by the donor; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in celebration of Museum Day on May 18, we reintroduce the "Artist-Museum Partnership Act." This legislation would enable our country to keep cherished art works in the United States and to preserve them in our public institutions. At the same time, this legislation will erase an inequity in our Tax Code that currently serves as a disincentive for artists to donate their works to museums and libraries. Since 2000 I have introduced this same bill in each Congress. It was also included in the Senate-passed version of the 2001 tax reconciliation bill, the Senate-passed version of the 2003 Charity Aid, Recovery, and Empowerment, CARE, Act, and the Senate-passed version of the 2005 tax reconciliation bill.

This legislation would preserve cherished art works for the public by allowing artists to take a fair market deduction for works they donate to museums, libraries, colleges and other public institutions. Under current law, artists who donate their created work may only deduct the cost of supplies, while a collector of the same work who donates it to qualified charitable institutions is allowed to take a tax deduction equal to the fair market value of the donated work.

In my State of Vermont, we are incredibly proud of the great works produced by hundreds of local artists who choose to live and work in the Green Mountain State. Displaying their creations in museums and libraries helps develop a sense of pride among Vermonters and strengthens a bond with Vermont, its landscape, its beauty, and its cultural heritage. Anyone who has contemplated a painting in a museum or examined an original

manuscript or composition and has gained a greater understanding of both the artist and the subject as a result, knows the tremendous value of these works. I would like to see more of them, not fewer, preserved in Vermont and across the country.

Prior to 1969, artists and collectors alike were able to take a deduction equivalent to the fair market value of a work. Congress changed the law for artists in response to the perception that some taxpayers were taking advantage of the law by inflating the market value of self-created works. Much has changed in the United States since 1969 when the tax law was amended. There has been an explosion of artistic and literary creativity in the country that is valued throughout the world. Yet, since the law was changed, artists now give far less frequently than before, harming the public by denying it the opportunity to see museum-quality contemporary art. The current tax law discriminates against those who choose to make their living as artists and writers. It also undermines the ability of public and cultural institutions, especially those in small and midsized cities and towns, to collect and preserve our Nation's cultural patrimony. With no or meager acquisition budgets, it is impossible for them to compete in the global art market.

A letter from the distinguished Librarian of Congress Emeritus James Billington stated that "restoration of this tax deduction would vastly benefit their institution's manuscript and music holdings, and remove the single major impediment to developing the Library's graphic arts holdings. The Artist-Museum Partnership Act would once again allow artists who donate their own paintings, manuscripts, compositions, or scholarly compositions to be subject to the same new rules that all taxpayers or collectors who donate such works follow."

This legislation is vital because it reminds us that artists have an important role in the process of engaging communities, and artists are a cultural necessity in the fabric of any community in Vermont or around the world.

The Artist-Museum Partnership Act is supported by such organizations as the Vermont Arts Council, Shelburne Museum, Association of Art Museum Directors, American Alliance of Museums, Americans for the Arts, Dance/USA, League of American Orchestras, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, National Council for the Traditional Arts, OPERA America, Theatre Communications Group, Local Learning, Artists Rights Society, National Humanities Alliance, College Art Association, and Fractured Atlas.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 1185. A bill to increase public safety by punishing and deterring firearms trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for too long, criminals have exploited loopholes in our gun laws. Congress's failure to properly address this issue has had devastating consequences for families and communities across the country. We have allowed criminals to readily obtain firearms through straw purchasers, trafficking networks, and unregulated gun markets. It is past time for this body to take action.

Today, I am reintroducing bipartisan legislation to close loopholes that allow criminals to obtain firearms through straw purchases and illegal trafficking. I am proud to be joined once again by Senators COLLINS and DURBIN. The Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act would make it a Federal crime to act as a straw purchaser of firearms or to illegally traffic in firearms. It sets forth tough penalties for anyone who transfers a firearm with reasonable cause to believe that the gun will be used in a drug crime, crime of violence, or act of terrorism, or for anyone who smuggles firearms out of the United States. This legislation would help keep guns out of the hands of those who seek to do us harm.

As the opioid crisis reached epidemic levels throughout the United States—and in Northeastern states like Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine in particular—gun traffickers stood ready to profit. Dealers who cannot pass background checks take advantage of addicts by forcing them to make straw purchases. Passing this gun trafficking bill and closing these loopholes will be a key piece of our response to the opioid crisis in so many of our communities.

This legislation will also be an important tool in preventing terrorist attacks on American soil. Terrorists have increasingly turned to guns to carry out domestic attacks, as they did in San Bernardino, Orlando, and Charleston. In the case of San Bernardino, the shooters relied on straw purchasing to acquire their deadly weapons. But because straw purchasing is not a Federal crime, prosecutors only charged the straw purchaser with making a false statement—a so called “paperwork” offense. I have often heard from law enforcement that current law does not do enough to deter gun traffickers. This legislation answers that call.

I also want to take note of National Police Week. This is a time when we pause to thank our Nation's law enforcement officers for their important work and many sacrifices. Earlier this week, thousands of officers gathered for a candlelight memorial. The names of 143 officers killed in the line of duty during 2016 were added to the walls of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial. It is not enough to merely pay tribute to these men and women. They deserve action. A year ago during Police Week, President Obama signed into law my legislation reauthorizing the life-saving Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program. That law will

ensure that more than 200,000 officers receive protective vests over the next five years.

The legislation that Senator COLLINS and I introduce today will also help keep our officers and our neighborhoods safe. We must not wait for another national tragedy to address this problem. Only Congress can close these loopholes. I recognize that one piece of legislation cannot prevent all gun violence, but this bill would provide a critical tool to investigate and deter straw purchasers and gun traffickers. That is why it has strong support from groups representing law enforcement officers and prosecutors around the nation, including the Fraternal Order of Police, Major Cities Chiefs Association, Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, National Tactical Officers Association, and National District Attorneys Association.

Like so many Vermonters, I am proud to be a responsible gun owner; and I know that Senator COLLINS shares my commitment to protecting our Second Amendment rights. But we also share a desire to keep guns out of the hands of violent criminals, drug traffickers, and terrorists. There is broad agreement in Congress that our existing gun laws do too little to prevent gun violence in our communities. The legislation we introduce today is an important part of the solution, and I call on all Senators to support this bill and make our communities safer.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, each May we recognize National Police Week to honor the service and sacrifice of U.S. law enforcement officers and to pay tribute to those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. One meaningful way for us to honor our police officers and other law enforcement officials this week is to give them the tools they need to stop the illegal firearms traffickers who threaten their lives and the lives of those they protect.

Today, I rise to join Senator LEAHY in introducing the Stop Illegal Trafficking and Firearms Act. Our bill would strengthen Federal law by making it easier for prosecutors to go after gun traffickers, while fully protecting the rights of the vast majority of gun owners who are law-abiding citizens.

Straw purchasing is intended to achieve only one result, and that is to put a gun in the hands of a criminal who cannot legally obtain one. Today, traffickers exploit weaknesses in our laws by targeting individuals who can lawfully purchase guns, which are then used to commit crimes once they are transferred to the criminal, who would be unable to pass the background check. Right now, a straw purchaser can only be prosecuted for lying on a Federal form, and that is treated as a paperwork violation. Our bill would create new criminal offenses for straw purchasing, which would help our law enforcement officials take down these criminal enterprises.

The illegal guns that we are targeting in our bill are frequently sold,

resold, and trafficked across State lines, resulting in the proliferation of the illegal firearms in our communities. This practice has fueled the violence across our southern border associated with the Mexican drug cartels, as well as gang violence in our cities and, tragically, the heroin crisis that is ravaging so many families and communities and undermining public health and safety in States like Maine.

Police officers tell me they have seen a major influx of drug dealers coming from out of State, straight up I-95's iron pipeline and other interstate highways, with direct ties to gangs in major cities. They are ready to sell or trade prescription opioids and heroin for illegal guns.

Heroin flooding into our communities is reaching crisis levels. In 2016, there were 376 drug-induced overdose deaths in my State, the State of Maine. That is more than car crashes and suicides put together. It is 104 more deaths than the year before. So this crisis with opioids and heroin is getting worse, not better. The vast majority of these overdoses were caused by at least one opioid, whether pharmaceutical or illicit.

Often, drug dealers and gang members follow a similar pattern: They target addicts who have no criminal records, and then they trade or sell them drugs in exchange for guns. These gang members with criminal records cross into Maine and link up with drug addicts to be their straw buyers. These addicts are people with clean records who may legally purchase firearms. The addict then exchanges the gun for heroin to support his or her drug dependency, and the cycle is repeated time and again.

Last year I had a deeply disturbing briefing from Federal law enforcement officials about a case in Maine that fit this exact pattern. Gang members trafficked crack cocaine and heroin between New Haven, CT, and Bangor, ME. They committed acts of violence, including assaults, armed robberies, attempted murder, and murder. They traded narcotics for firearms and then distributed them to other gang members back in Connecticut. This is exactly the type of criminal activity our bill aims to prevent, and it complements existing laws that target criminals who are profiting from firearms and drug trafficking.

Current Federal law makes preventing and prosecuting straw purchasing offenses very difficult for law enforcement officials, since a straw purchaser can be prosecuted only for lying on a Federal form, a relatively minor offense.

The Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act would create new, specific criminal offenses for straw purchasing and trafficking in firearms. Instead of a slap on the wrist, these crimes would be punishable by up to 15 years in prison. For those straw purchasers who knew or have reasonable cause to believe that the firearm would be used to

commit a crime of violence, that crime would be punishable by up to 25 years in prison.

Our bill would also strengthen existing laws that prohibit gun smuggling. Right now, it is illegal for someone to smuggle a firearm into the United States with the intent to engage in drug trafficking or violent crime. To combat the drug cartels operating on our southern border, however, we must also prohibit firearms and ammunition from being trafficked out of the United States for those illegal purposes. In so doing, our bill would provide an important tool to combat trafficking organizations that are exporting firearms and ammunition from the United States and into Mexico where they are used by the drug cartels that are in turn fueling the heroin crisis here at home.

In a recent investigation along our southern border, ATF agents seized nearly 40,000 rounds of illegal ammunition from suspects who were attempting to smuggle both firearms and ammunition across the border and into Mexico. Similarly, a large percentage of the guns used in crimes in our largest cities were trafficked across State lines.

I want to emphasize that our bill fully protects the Second Amendment rights of our law-abiding citizens. It protects legitimate private gun sales and is drafted to avoid sweeping in innocent transactions and placing unnecessary burdens on lawful private sales. It expressly exempts certain transactions that are permitted under current laws, such as gifts, raffles, and auctions. Furthermore, the bill expressly prohibits any authority provided by this act from being used to establish a Federal firearms registry—something I am strongly opposed to.

I started my remarks by reminding us all that this is National Police Week. Let's honor our police officers and other law enforcement by giving them this much needed tool to crack down on illegal firearm traffickers who are exploiting our addicts in so many ways in order to obtain guns that they are not legally able to purchase. I urge my colleagues to support this much needed legislation.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 172—DESIGNATING MAY 2017 AS “OLDER AMERICANS MONTH”

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. NELSON, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. WARREN, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. BURR, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 172

Whereas President John F. Kennedy first designated May as “Senior Citizens Month” in 1963;

Whereas, in 1963, only approximately 17,000,000 individuals living in the United States were age 65 or older, approximately 1/3 of those individuals lived in poverty, and few programs existed to meet the needs of older individuals in the United States;

Whereas, in 2017, there are more than 47,800,000 individuals age 65 or older in the United States, and those individuals account for 14.9 percent of the total population of the United States;

Whereas approximately 10,000 individuals in the United States turn age 65 each day;

Whereas, in 2015, more than 9,300,000 veterans of the Armed Forces were age 65 or older;

Whereas older individuals in the United States rely on Federal programs, such as programs under the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 301 et seq.) (including the Medicare program under title XVIII of that Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) and the Medicaid program under title XIX of that Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)), for financial security and high-quality affordable health care;

Whereas the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) provides supportive services to help individuals of the United States who are age 60 or older maintain maximum independence in the homes and communities of those individuals;

Whereas that Act provides funding for programs, including nutrition services, transportation, and care management, to assist more than 11,000,000 older individuals in the United States each year;

Whereas compared to older individuals in the United States in past generations, older individuals in the United States in 2017 are working longer, living longer, and enjoying healthier, more active, and more independent lifestyles;

Whereas more than 5,300,000 individuals in the United States age 65 or older continue to work as full-time, year-round employees;

Whereas older individuals in the United States play an important role in society by continuing to contribute their experience, knowledge, wisdom, and accomplishments;

Whereas older individuals in the United States play vital roles in their communities and remain involved in volunteer work, mentoring activities, the arts, cultural activities, and civic engagement; and

Whereas a society that recognizes the success of older individuals and continues to enhance their access to quality and affordable health care will encourage the ongoing participation and heightened independence of those individuals and will ensure the continued safety and well-being of those individuals: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates May 2017 as “Older Americans Month”; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to provide opportunities for older individuals to continue to flourish by—

(A) emphasizing the importance and leadership of older individuals through public recognition of the ongoing achievements of the older individuals;

(B) presenting opportunities for older individuals to share their wisdom, experience, and skills with younger generations; and

(C) recognizing older individuals as valuable assets in strengthening communities across the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 173—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF MAY 15 THROUGH MAY 21, 2017, AS “NATIONAL POLICE WEEK”

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. LEAHY,

Mr. WICKER, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CARPER, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HATCH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. STRANGE, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. KING, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. NELSON, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. PETERS, Mr. COONS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. BURR, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DAINES, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. YOUNG, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SCOTT, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. COTTON, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CASEY, Mr. TOOMEY, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. ENZI, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. CORKER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LEE, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. HELLER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 173

Whereas, in 1962, John Fitzgerald Kennedy signed the Joint Resolution entitled “Joint Resolution to authorize the President to proclaim May 15 of each year as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the calendar week of each year during which such May 15 occurs as Police Week” (36 U.S.C. 136);

Whereas the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, dedicated on October 15, 1991, is the national monument to honor law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty;

Whereas Federal, State, local, and tribal police officers, sheriffs, and other law enforcement officers across the United States serve with valor, dignity and integrity;

Whereas law enforcement officers are charged with pursuing justice for all individuals and performing their duties with fidelity to the constitutional and civil rights of the individuals that the law enforcement officers serve;

Whereas the resolve of law enforcement officers in the service of their communities is unyielding, despite inherent dangers in the performance of their duties;

Whereas the vigilance, compassion, and decency of law enforcement officers are the best defense of society against individuals who seek to do harm;

Whereas Peace Officers Memorial Day, 2017, honors the 143 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty during 2016, including Amir Abdul-Khaliq, Lorne Bradley Aherns, Sean Lewis Allred, Manuel Alejandro Alvarez, Scott Alfred Ballantyne, Robert Aaron Barker, Gregory Eugene Barney, Douglas Scott Barney, II, Jose Daniel Barraza, Scott Leslie Bashoum, Stacey Allen Baumgartner, Brian Pecson Beliso, Anthony David Beminiio, Kenneth Levella Bettis, Timothy James Brackeen, Allen David Brandt, James Irwin Brockmeyer, Cody James Brotherson, Shannon Matthew Brown, Patrick Thomas Carothers, Nathaniel Alan Carrigan, Jose Ismael Chavez, Aaron Jackson Christian, Thomas L. Clardy, Paul Allen Clark, Brandon Scott Collins, Jacai David Colson, Adam Scott Conrad, William Pressley Cooper, Clint E. Corvinus, Thomas Wayne Cottrell, Jr., Sean Eamonn Cullen, Patrick Bryan Dailey, Jonathan Matias DeGuzman, Chad Phillip Dermeyer, Cody James Donahue, Endy Nddiobong Ekpanya, David Kyle Elahi, Eric Dale Ellsworth, Susan Louise Farrell, William George Fearon, Scot Fitzgerald, Leander Frank,