

service; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. 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. 1619

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

**SECTION 1. INTEREST RATE LIMITATION ON DEBT ENTERED INTO DURING MILITARY SERVICE TO CONSOLIDATE OR REFINANCE STUDENT LOANS INCURRED BEFORE MILITARY SERVICE.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 207 of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (50 U.S.C. App. 527) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “ON DEBT INCURRED BEFORE SERVICE” after “LIMITATION TO 6 PERCENT”;

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (2) and (3) as paragraphs (3) and (4), respectively;

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph (2):

“(2) LIMITATION TO 6 PERCENT ON DEBT INCURRED DURING SERVICE TO CONSOLIDATE OR REFINANCE STUDENT LOANS INCURRED BEFORE SERVICE.—An obligation or liability bearing interest at a rate in excess of 6 percent per year that is incurred by a servicemember, or the servicemember and the servicemember's spouse jointly, during military service to consolidate or refinance one or more student loans incurred by the servicemember before such military service shall not bear an interest at a rate in excess of 6 percent during the period of military service.”;

(4) in paragraph (3), as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this subsection, by inserting “or (2)” after “paragraph (1)”;

(5) in paragraph (4), as so redesignated, by striking “paragraph (2)” and inserting “paragraph (3)”.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION OF LIMITATION.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “the interest rate limitation in subsection (a)” and inserting “an interest rate limitation in paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (a)”;

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the paragraph heading, by striking “EFFECTIVE AS OF DATE OF ORDER TO ACTIVE DUTY” and inserting “EFFECTIVE DATE”;

(B) by inserting before the period at the end the following: “in the case of an obligation or liability covered by subsection (a)(1), or as of the date the servicemember (or servicemember and spouse jointly) incurs the obligation or liability concerned under subsection (a)(2)”.

(c) STUDENT LOAN DEFINED.—Subsection (d) of such section is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(3) STUDENT LOAN.—The term ‘student loan’ means the following:

“(A) A Federal student loan made, insured, or guaranteed under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.).

“(B) A private student loan as that term is defined section 140(a) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1650(a)).”.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

**SENATE RESOLUTION 229—RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE MONTAGNARD INDIGENOUS TRIBESPEOPLE OF THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS OF VIETNAM TO THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, AND CONDEMNING THE ONGOING VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

Mr. BURR (for himself and Mr. TILLIS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

S. RES. 229

Whereas the Montagnards are an indigenous tribespeople living in Vietnam's Central Highlands region;

Whereas the Montagnards were driven into the mountains by invading Vietnamese and Cambodians in the 9th century;

Whereas French Roman Catholic missionaries converted many of the Montagnards in the 19th century and American Protestant missionaries subsequently converted many to various Protestant sects;

Whereas, during the 1960s, the United States Mission in Saigon, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and United States Army Special Forces, also known as the Green Berets, trained the Montagnards in unconventional warfare;

Whereas an estimated 61,000 Montagnards, out of an estimated population of 1,000,000, fought alongside the United States and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) forces against the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong;

Whereas the CIA, United States Special Forces, and the Montagnards cooperated on the Village Defense Program, a forerunner to the War's Strategic Hamlet Program, and an estimated 43,000 Montagnards were organized into Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDGs) to provide protection for the areas around the CIDGs' operational bases;

Whereas, at its peak, the CIDGs had approximately 50 operational bases, with each base containing a contingent of two United States Army officers and ten enlisted men, and an ARVN unit of the same size, and each base trained 200 to 700 Montagnards or “strikers”;

Whereas another 18,000 Montagnards were reportedly enlisted into mobile strike forces and various historical accounts describe a strong bond between the United States Special Forces and the Montagnards, in contrast to Vietnamese Special Forces and ARVN troops;

Whereas the lives of thousands of members of the United States Armed Forces were saved as a result of the heroic actions of the Montagnards, who fought loyally and bravely alongside United States Special Forces in the Vietnam War;

Whereas, after the fall of the Republic of Vietnam in 1975, thousands of Montagnards fled across the border into Cambodia to escape persecution;

Whereas the Government of the reunified Vietnamese nation, renamed the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, deeply distrusted the Montagnards who had sided with the United States and ARVN forces, and subjected them to imprisonment and various forms of discrimination and oppression after the Vietnam War ended;

Whereas, after the Vietnam War, the United States Government resettled large

numbers of Montagnards in several States and an estimated several thousand Montagnards currently reside in North Carolina, which is the largest population of Montagnards residing outside of Vietnam;

Whereas the Socialist Republic of Vietnam currently remains a one-party state, ruled and controlled by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), which continues to restrict freedom of religion, movement, land and property rights, and political expression;

Whereas some Montagnard-Americans have shared their personal stories about Vietnamese authorities either preventing them from visiting Vietnam or subjecting them to interrogation upon re-entering the country on visits;

Whereas the Department of State's 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices documents the Government of Vietnam's claim that Montagnards fleeing to Cambodia and Thailand are illegal migrants in pursuit of economic opportunities, and human rights groups assess that the Government has pressured Cambodian and Thai authorities to refuse Montagnards refugee or temporary asylum-seeker status and repatriate them to Vietnam;

Whereas the Department of State's 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices states that, although Vietnamese law prohibits discrimination against ethnic minorities and despite Vietnam's significant economic growth, the economic gap between many ethnic minority communities and ethnic Vietnamese (Kinh) communities persisted as a result of longstanding and persistent discrimination;

Whereas the Department of State's 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices further states that ethnic minority populations in Vietnam also experienced significant health challenges as maternal and child mortality rates were significantly higher in ethnic minority areas, in comparison with urban and coastal areas;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) in its 2016 Annual Report states that “Montagnards, many of whom are Protestant, face numerous restrictions” such as being prevented from holding religious ceremonies, harassed or punished, and “many are summoned to meet with local authorities and pressured to cease practicing their ‘poisonous’ faith”;

Whereas Montagnards have stated that this kind of ongoing social and religious persecution drove them to flee to Cambodia;

Whereas USCIRF reports that, since October 2014, “up to 300 Montagnards have fled Vietnam to Cambodia, many because of religious persecution” but “only13 have been granted refugee status with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as countless others are waiting for Cambodia to process their asylum claims, and dozens have been returned to Vietnam, often at great risk of reprisals”;

Whereas USCIRF recommends that Vietnam be designated a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) as a means to facilitating reforms: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the contributions of the Montagnards who fought loyally and bravely with United States Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and who continue to suffer persecution in Vietnam as a result of this relationship;

(2) condemns ongoing actions by the Government of Vietnam to suppress basic human rights and civil liberties of its citizens;

(3) calls on the Government of Vietnam to allow human rights groups access to all regions of the country and to end restrictions of basic human rights, including the right for Montagnards to practice their Christian

faith freely, the right to land and property, freedom of movement, the right to retain ethnic identity and culture, and access to an adequate standard of living;

(4) recognizes the importance of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) and that, where determined to be eligible, Montagnards should be provided access to USRAP for resettlement in the United States and in other countries; and

(5) urges the President and Congress to develop policies at every level, including trade, military, and economic policy, that support Montagnards and other marginalized ethnic minority and indigenous populations in Vietnam that reflect United States interests and commitment to upholding human rights and democracy abroad.

**SENATE RESOLUTION 230—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 16 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 23, 2017, AS “NATIONAL ESTUARIES WEEK”**

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. HASSAN, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. COONS, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. MURRAY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KING, Mr. BROWN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. WARNER, Mr. COCHRAN, Ms. HARRIS, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 230

Whereas the estuary regions of the United States constitute a significant share of the economy of the United States, with as much as 43 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States generated in shore adjacent counties;

Whereas the population of shore adjacent counties in the United States increased by 39 percent from 1970 to 2010 and is projected to continue to increase;

Whereas not fewer than 2,100,000 jobs in the United States were supported by marine tourism and recreation in 2013;

Whereas the commercial and recreational fishing industries support over 1,600,000 jobs in the United States;

Whereas, in 2015—

(1) commercial fish landings in the United States were valued at nearly \$5,300,000,000; and

(2) recreational anglers took nearly 61,000,000 saltwater fishing trips and spent \$28,700,000,000 on fishing trips and durable equipment;

Whereas estuaries provide vital habitats for countless species of fish and wildlife, including more than 68 percent of the commercial fish catch in the United States by value and 80 percent of the recreational fish catch in the United States by weight, as well as many species that are listed as threatened or endangered species;

Whereas estuaries provide critical ecosystem services that protect human health and public safety, including water filtration, flood control, shoreline stabilization, erosion prevention, and the protection of coastal communities during hurricanes and storms;

Whereas the United States had already lost more than 50 percent of the wetlands that existed in the 13 Colonies by the 1980s;

Whereas some bays in the United States that were once filled with fish and oysters

have become dead zones filled with excess nutrients, chemical wastes, harmful algae, and marine debris;

Whereas changes in sea level can affect estuarine water quality and estuarine habitats;

Whereas the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.) provides that the policy of the United States is to preserve, protect, develop, and, if possible, restore or enhance the resources of the coastal zone of the United States, including estuaries, for current and future generations;

Whereas 27 coastal and Great Lakes States and territories of the United States operate or contain a National Estuary Program or a National Estuarine Research Reserve;

Whereas scientific study leads to a better understanding of the benefits of estuaries to human and ecological communities;

Whereas the Federal Government, State, local, and tribal governments, national and community organizations, and individuals work together to effectively manage the estuaries of the United States;

Whereas estuary restoration efforts restore natural infrastructure in local communities in a cost-effective manner, helping to create jobs and reestablish the natural functions of estuaries that yield countless benefits; and

Whereas the week of September 16 through September 23, 2017, is recognized as “National Estuaries Week” to increase awareness among all people of the United States, including Federal Government and State, local, and tribal government officials, about the importance of healthy estuaries and the need to protect and restore estuaries: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of September 16 through September 23, 2017, as “National Estuaries Week”;

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Estuaries Week;

(3) acknowledges the importance of estuaries to sustaining employment in the United States and the economic well-being and prosperity of the United States;

(4) recognizes that persistent threats undermine the health of the estuaries of the United States;

(5) applauds the work of national and community organizations and public partners that promote public awareness, understanding, protection, and restoration of estuaries;

(6) reaffirms the support of the Senate for estuaries, including the scientific study, preservation, protection, and restoration of estuaries; and

(7) expresses the intent of the Senate to continue working to understand, protect, and restore the estuaries of the United States.

**PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR**

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Dee Williams, a fellow in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of today's session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to my second-session summer interns Kasey Casort, Hannah McCue, Jesse Oney, Ronald Meehan, Dawson Verley, Evan Ipock, Samantha Warner, Kobe Rizk, Brian Dusek, Madeline Ko, Aimee Bushnell, and Fatos Redzepi for the remainder of their session in August.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

**ORDERS FOR TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2017**

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 12 noon, Tuesday, July 25; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

**NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

HEALTHCARE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this week—perhaps as early as tomorrow—Majority Leader McCONNELL, who just left the floor, will ask the Senate to vote on a bill we have not seen. That is right. We will be voting this week on a bill we haven't seen. I think it is a first. I am going to do a little research to see if this has ever happened before in the Senate, where Members of the Senate were brought together to vote on a bill that has not been made public or printed for us to review.

This isn't an inconsequential bill. This is a bill about the healthcare system of the United States of America. There is not a single American living in our Nation today who will not be affected by our vote this week because we are in the process of deciding whether we will change healthcare in America, health insurance in America, and there is not a single one of us who doesn't have a health insurance plan, either private or public, or not affected by the health insurance industry in healthcare across the United States. In fact, healthcare itself represents one-sixth of the American economy.

So we are being asked to vote on a bill this week which has not been printed and given to us and which will change healthcare for every single American and affect one-sixth of the American economy.

We do know that some of the previous provisions that have been brought before us on the Republican side have an impact—a negative impact—and in my State of Illinois, a very personal negative impact.

We know that their effort to repeal ObamaCare, which has been a political slogan that has been used for 6 or 7 years, ran into a wall when the American people said: Well, if you repeal it, what is left? What will be there? What will replace it?

At that point, the Republican effort disassembled. They didn't have an alternative. They spent the last 6 years