

from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 859 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 867

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 867 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 879

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 879 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 892

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 892 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 915

At the request of Mr. KAINE, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 915 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 942

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 942 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 984

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 984 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 990

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 990 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 993

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 993 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. KAINE, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 993 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 996

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 996 intended to be proposed to H.R. 2810, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2018 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. COONS, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 1803. A bill to improve medical research on marijuana; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, today, I am introducing a proposal that could substantially improve America's healthcare. Despite what some of my colleagues believe, it does not take a sweeping overhaul of ObamaCare to do this. Sometimes, even small changes can have a huge impact on people's lives.

That is why, throughout my four decades of public service, I have worked to shine a light on the need for innovative treatments to help those who suffer from debilitating illness and rare diseases. In that same spirit, I am joining Senator SCHATZ today to introduce the Marijuana Effective Drug Studies Act, or MEDS Act, which has the potential to benefit millions of Americans who are suffering from a wide range of conditions, including cancer, severe epilepsy, post-traumatic stress disorder, residual effects after a stroke, or chronic pain.

It is high time to address research into medical marijuana. Our country has experimented with a variety of State solutions without properly delving into the weeds on the effectiveness, safety, dosing, administration, and quality of medical marijuana.

Now, all puns aside, it will surprise no one that I am strongly against the use of recreational marijuana. I worry, however, that in our zeal to enforce the law, we too often blind ourselves to the medicinal benefits of natural substances, like cannabis. While I certainly do not support the use of marijuana for recreational purposes, the evidence shows that cannabis possesses medicinal properties that can truly change people's lives for the better, and I believe we would be remiss if we threw out the baby with the bath water.

In many cases, the compounds found in cannabis are the only hope for Americans who suffer from chronic medical conditions, such as severe epilepsy. Take the difficult case of a young man from Eagle Mountain, UT, who suffers from a number of different epileptic disorders and developmental ailments. My friend regularly takes 17 pills on a daily basis. Yet he continues to have seizures regularly. The current treatment for his condition, with no guarantee of success, would be invasive brain surgery.

This poor family is seeking help, yearning for a way for their child to live a safe and healthy life. Compounds found in marijuana could significantly mitigate the severity of my friend's seizures and even help him lead a normal life, but current regulations prevent the development of any such treatment from going forward. So this young man is left to suffer. Luckily,

the MEDS Act changes that. It updates the law for the 21st century, allowing for groundbreaking research on the potentially lifesaving benefits of medical marijuana.

Compounds found in marijuana have shown promise for treating a wide range of diseases and disorders, but because of bureaucratic redtape and fear, there is a lack of sufficient evidence about the safety and efficacy of these compounds. As a result, millions of Americans are using marijuana for medicinal purposes without there being the rigorous scientific evidence that we require all medications to have before we allow them to be prescribed in this country. There are currently no Federal quality control measures for marijuana grown for medicinal purposes, nor is there any quality control for the marijuana-based medications that patients eventually use.

Prescribers do not have guidance on appropriate doses, routes of administration, or even the safety of this medication for populations such as children or the elderly. This lack of oversight creates a dangerous environment that puts American lives at risk. As we continue to encourage the development of new therapies for those with severe medical problems, we must be unrelenting in our insistence on scientific rigor. Using only anecdotal information poses a significant public health risk.

We lack the science to support the use of medical marijuana products like CBD oils, not because researchers are unwilling to do the work but because of bureaucratic redtape and overregulation. Under current law, those who want to complete research on the benefits of medical marijuana must engage in a complex application process and interact with several Federal agencies. These regulatory acrobatics can take researchers over a year, if not more, to complete, and the longer researchers have to wait, the longer patients have to suffer.

Currently, the FDA estimates that a drug takes a minimum of 7 years to move from initial studies to FDA approval. The regulatory hoops that researchers have to jump through significantly delay the production of potentially life-changing medications that Americans need.

To develop more information about marijuana's therapeutic potential, we need robust basic and clinical research. The MEDS Act would encourage this research through reduced regulatory interference, and it would expand sources of research-grade marijuana with the assurance of a quality-controlled product. My proposal would also allow for the commercial production of drugs developed from marijuana once they have been approved by the FDA.

I am pleased with the legislation that Senator SCHATZ and I have been able to craft surrounding CBO oil and medical research. We are committed to seeing that this bill becomes law.

Before I yield the floor, I would like to take a moment to share my perspective on the broader discussion of medical marijuana and its implications in my home State of Utah. In Utah and across the Nation, opioid abuse continues to ravage good, hard-working families who have fallen captive to the tyranny of addiction. While some people are using these prescription drugs appropriately, others are abusing them at alarming rates. Because Utahns have watched their family members, friends, and neighbors grapple with this epidemic, many are seeking non-narcotic alternatives that can help with pain. Medical marijuana is just one such alternative, and after careful, deliberative thought, I have concluded that it is an alternative worth pursuing.

Now let me be clear. My support for medical marijuana research does not mean that I believe that marijuana is a harmless substance. Much to the contrary, I continue to believe that marijuana can lead to broader drug abuse, and I am deeply concerned by the cottage industries that are springing up in States in which marijuana has been legalized both for medical and recreational use.

So let me be clear. I am still very much opposed to the legalization of recreational marijuana, but I strongly support research into the medicinal benefits of marijuana, and I remain committed to helping patients find the help they need, whether they suffer from cancer, severe seizures, or any other chronic disorder.

In crafting a new regulatory framework to harvest the medicinal benefits of marijuana while also mitigating its harmful effects, we must ensure that any marijuana-derived medications are prescribed by qualified physicians or other healthcare providers. Also, if we make medical marijuana accessible to those who really need it, we should not increase access to recreational marijuana, nor should we do anything to promote the industry that has developed around marijuana dispensaries.

The recreational marijuana industry has its fair share of budding entrepreneurs, but these men and women are in no way qualified to issue prescriptions or give any medical advice whatsoever to people who are suffering from chronic conditions. Only experienced medical professionals who have undergone years of education and formal training are qualified to consult patients who are seeking a marijuana-derived treatment. Only licensed professionals know how to accurately diagnose illnesses and use approved medical treatments to safely treat disease.

Our purpose in advancing medical marijuana research should be to help doctors help patients, not to help dispensaries turn a profit. To that end, I also believe that treatment options should focus on noncombustive forms of marijuana. Our ability to isolate helpful compounds is advanced enough to make this plan a reality.

I understand that medical marijuana is a difficult issue. I understand that it is not an issue without controversy, but we cannot shrink from our duties simply because they require us to make hard choices. At present, we have a duty to help the thousands of Americans who are suffering from debilitating seizures and chronic pain, who desperately want help but do not know where to find it. Passing the MEDS Act is the first step in giving these men and women the reprieve they need.

I hope my colleagues will not shy away from making the hard choices that will improve people's lives. The bill Senator SCHATZ and I introduce today represents what our two parties can accomplish when we work together in good faith. I hope my colleagues will join us in supporting this commonsense proposal.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 251—AMENDING RULE XXXI OF THE STANDING RULES FOR THE SENATE, TO PROVIDE FOR TIMELY CONSIDERATION OF NOMINATIONS

Mr. GARDNER submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 251

Resolved,

SECTION 1. TIMELY CONSIDERATION OF NOMINATIONS.

Rule XXXI of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs 3 through 7 as paragraphs 4 through 8, respectively; and

(2) by inserting after paragraph 2 the following:

“3.(a) In this paragraph, the term ‘basic requirements’ means—

“(1) an agreement with the Office of Government Ethics;

“(2) a financial disclosure form;

“(3) a background check conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

“(4) a questionnaire of each relevant committee;

“(5) tax forms, if required by a relevant committee; and

“(6) any other requirements of a relevant committee.

“(b) If a nomination has not been confirmed or rejected not later than 180 days after the day on which the nominee completes the basic requirements, the appropriate committees shall be automatically discharged and the nomination shall be eligible for expedited consideration in accordance with subparagraph (c).

“(c)(1) The majority leader may provide notice that a nomination that is eligible for expedited consideration in accordance with this subparagraph shall be considered on an expedited basis.

“(2) Notwithstanding rule XXII, expedited consideration of a covered nomination under this subparagraph, including consideration of any debatable motion or appeal in connection therewith shall be limited to 2 hours, evenly divided in the usual form.”.