

the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3820. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (11); Amdt. No. 3774" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3821. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (171); Amdt. No. 3767" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3822. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (3); Amdt. No. 3768" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3823. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (110); Amdt. No. 3770" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3824. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Take-off Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (52); Amdt. No. 3769" (RIN2120-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3825. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Part 95 Instrument Flight Rules; Miscellaneous Amendments; Amendment No. 536" (RIN2120-AA63) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3826. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of the Outer Coastal Plain Viticultural Area" (RIN1513-AC32) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3827. A communication from the Federal Register Liaison Officer, Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, Department

of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Establishment of the Petaluma Viticultural Area and Modification of the North Coast Viticultural Area" (RIN1513-AC19) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3828. A communication from the Regulations Officer, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform" (RIN2125-AF75) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 14, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3829. A communication from the Acting Chairman of the Office of Proceedings, Surface Transportation Board, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Expediting Rate Cases" (RIN2140-AB33) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 15, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3830. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Authorizing Permissive Use of the 'Next Generation' Broadcast Television Standard" (FCC 17-158) (GN Docket No. 16-142) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-3831. A communication from the Impact Analyst, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Extra-Schedular Evaluations for Individual Disabilities" (RIN2900-AP48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on December 13, 2017; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

#### PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-145. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to direct the Department of Defense to relocate the United States Africa Command to Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston; to the Committee on Armed Services.

##### SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 41

Whereas, The Pentagon could realize significant savings by relocating the United States Africa Command from Germany to Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston; and

Whereas, When AFRICOM was created in 2007, the Department of Defense chose a temporary location in Stuttgart; it intended to select a permanent headquarters in Africa, but set this plan aside due to cost projections, security, and the sensitivities of African nations; and

Whereas, The Department of Defense conducted a study in 2012 that found maintaining AFRICOM headquarters stateside would cost \$60 million to \$70 million less per year, and now those savings would be even greater due to significant increases in Overseas Cost of Living Allowances rates; although relocation would involve expense, this expense could be recouped within two to six years; moreover, the relocation would repatriate about 1,400 direct jobs and create as many as

4,300 additional jobs for United States residents, and it would have an annual impact on the local economy ranging from \$400 million to \$500 million; and

Whereas, Should the defense department decide to relocate AFRICOM, Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston would be an ideal home for the headquarters; the base features strong joint service military value of active duty, reserve, and guard units from all five United States armed services, some of which presently conduct training and operational missions for AFRICOM; it is also equipped to handle large military aircraft, and the city boasts one of the nation's most vibrant ports, which handles 40 percent of all United States trade with Africa; moreover, the community is exceptionally supportive of the military, and the Greater Houston area has strong cultural, educational, medical, and diplomatic ties with Africa; and

Whereas, The Government Accountability Office has concluded that the relocation of AFRICOM to the United States would generate tremendous cost savings and economic benefits, and Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base offers advantages that would enhance the effectiveness of the headquarters; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to direct the Department of Defense to relocate the United States Africa Command to Ellington Field Joint Reserve Base in Houston; and, be it further

*Resolved*, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the secretary of the Department of Defense, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-146. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to review federal regulation on the oil and gas industry in Texas; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

##### SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 26

Whereas, the Texas Legislature recognizes that this period in our nation's history represents an opportunity for Texas to work with the leadership of the federal government to transcend partisan politics and correct misuses of federal regulatory power that have threatened the Texas oil and gas industry, the jobs it creates, and the economy of the state; and

Whereas, Texas oil and gas fields have provided a pathway toward American energy independence from foreign powers, have afforded financial security to hundreds of thousands of individuals in Texas, and have delivered safe and reliable energy to fuel our nation's economy; and

Whereas, during the past eight years, the federal government has promulgated regulations that jeopardize the productivity of the oil and gas fields of Texas; and

Whereas, new federal regulations have been proposed and implemented despite the protests of Texas and many other oil and gas producing states, resulting in overregulation that prioritizes minor environmental gains over major productive losses; and

Whereas, the State of Texas has joined many other oil and gas producing states to file more than 20 lawsuits against federal overreach; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the

executive branch and the Congress of the United States to work in conjunction with the State of Texas to identify federal regulations promulgated during the last eight years, especially those promulgated under the authority of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the United States Department of the Interior, and the United States Department of Energy, and determine whether they should be revised, delegated to state agencies, or eliminated in order to ease the overly burdensome regulatory patchwork on the oil and gas industry in Texas; and, be it further

*Resolved*, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM—147. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to increase appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to ensure that the nation's ship channels are maintained and safe, to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 37

Whereas, Seaport activities generate more than \$4 trillion in economic activity each year, representing more than a quarter of United States gross domestic product and yielding more than \$41 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue; and

Whereas, To support this critical component of international trade, the United States Congress established the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) on shippers in 1986 as a means of funding the maintenance and improvement of vital harbor infrastructure; and

Whereas, HMT revenues deposited into the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund now total about \$1.6 billion annually, but in recent years, Congress has appropriated less than half of those funds for the intended purpose, leading to a decline in dredging and maintenance by the United States Army Corps of Engineers; the consequence is an accumulation of sediment that leaves navigation channels narrower and shallower, and when silted channels constrain vessels from carrying full loads or force them to wait for high tide, the costs of imports and exports rise, as does the risk of vessel grounding and associated oil spills; the Corps of Engineers has estimated that the full depth and width of our coastal ports is available less than 35 percent of the time, costing the economy billions of dollars annually; and

Whereas, Each year, the HMT provides an amount sufficient to meet all of the nation's authorized harbor maintenance needs, but as a result of lagging appropriations, the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund had a balance of more than \$9 billion at the start of 2016; in Texas alone, less than 25 percent of the HMT revenue collected in the state has been appropriated for harbor maintenance; and

Whereas, Our nation's ports are vital to our economic prosperity and global competitiveness, and these funds, which were collected for the express purpose of the maintenance and improvement of the ports, should be put to work; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to increase appropriations from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to ensure that the nation's ship channels are appropriately maintained and safe; and, be it further

*Resolved*, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to

the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-148. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to direct the Bureau of Land Management to affirm the provisions of the Red River Boundary Compact and to acknowledge that the vegetation line on the south bank of the Red River forms the boundary between Oklahoma and Texas; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 30

Whereas, The Red River Boundary Compact of 2000 set the boundary between Texas and Oklahoma at the vegetation line on the south bank of the Red River, with the exception of the Texoma area, where the boundary is established pursuant to procedures outlined in the agreement; and

Whereas, In 2013, the United States Bureau of Land Management began developing a resource management plan for the use of land along a 116-mile stretch of the Red River; it claims that as many as 90,000 acres in Texas may actually be part of federal lands and would therefore be public land under a 1923 Supreme Court ruling; and

Whereas, Many Texas residents have held title to this land for generations, and they have been paying property taxes on the land while cultivating and maintaining it; the boundary between the states was settled in 2000 for legal jurisdiction, when the U.S. Congress ratified the compact, but now, confusion over the boundary threatens the value of this privately owned land and makes it difficult for property owners to make informed decisions concerning its disposition and their livelihoods; and

Whereas, Private property rights are the bedrock of a free society, and the actions of the Bureau of Land Management with regard to land covered by the Red River Boundary Compact are an egregious example of federal overreach; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to direct the Bureau of Land Management to affirm the provisions of the Red River Boundary Compact and to acknowledge that the vegetation line on the south bank of the Red River forms the boundary between Oklahoma and Texas; and, be it further.

*Resolved*, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, to the director of the United States Bureau of Land Management, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-149. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to enact legislation to ensure that all veterans receive, in a timely manner, the level of medical care that they have earned and that they so richly deserve, to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 52

Whereas, The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is charged with ensuring the health and well-being of the nation's veterans, but in recent years, its failure to adequately perform its mission has been the source of scandal; and

Whereas, in 2014, the United States Congress responded to unconscionable delays and denials of care at VA facilities by passing the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act, which allows access to private medical care providers for veterans who have been waiting more than 30 days for an appointment or who live more than 40 miles from a VA facility; this law is set to expire in 2017; and

Whereas, by expanding the reforms of the Veterans Choice Act, Congress can improve the VA system, broadening access to timely health care while offering greater choice and flexibility to every eligible veteran; experts have proposed allowing access to walk-in clinics without preauthorization or copayment, expanding VA pharmacy hours and telemedicine, and extending the Veterans Choice Card program to permit all qualified veterans to see the doctor of their choice; in addition, those who have studied the system carefully encourage best-practices peer review for VA facilities; and

Whereas, our nation's veterans have made enormous sacrifices to guarantee our freedoms, and although the nation can never fully repay its debt of gratitude, it can and should ensure timely access to the highest quality of medical care: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to enact legislation to ensure that all veterans receive in a timely manner the level of medical care that they have earned and that they so richly deserve; and, be it further

*Resolved*, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-150. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to pass a budget; to the Committee on the Budget.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 59

Whereas, For too long, Congress has proven itself fiscally irresponsible and has created a crushing national debt through improvident and imprudent spending; and

Whereas, The deleterious effect of this fiscal mismanagement on our economy and the strength of our nation is ongoing and the consequences of inaction are severe; and

Whereas, Setting a federal budget is an essential aspect of governing, and Congress must accept its responsibility to regularly pass a budget bill; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the 85th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby respectfully urge the Congress of the United States to pass a budget; and, be it further

*Resolved*, That the Texas secretary of state forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered into the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first