

Report to accompany S. 2193, An original bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve health care for veterans, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 115-212).

From the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 2434. A bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to reauthorize user fee programs relating to new animal drugs and generic new animal drugs.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MORAN, and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. 2506. A bill to establish an aviation maintenance workforce development pilot program; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BARRASSO:

S. 2507. A bill to require short-term limited duration insurance issuers to renew or continue in force such coverage at the option of the enrollees; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. LEAHY, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SANDERS, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. KING, and Ms. HASSAN):

S. 2508. A bill to amend title 40, United States Code, to promote regional economic and infrastructure development, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KING, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 2509. A bill to establish the National Park Restoration Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 2510. A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure Internet openness, to prohibit blocking of lawful content, applications, services, and non-harmful devices, to prohibit impairment or degradation of lawful Internet traffic, to limit the authority of the Federal Communications Commission and to preempt State law with respect to Internet openness obligations, to provide that broadband Internet access service shall be considered to be an information service, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2511. A bill to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to carry out a program on coordinating the assessment and acquisition by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of unmanned maritime systems, to make available to the public data collected by the Administration using such systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. FLAKE:

S. 2512. A bill to amend the Agricultural Act of 2014 to require producers to elect to receive price loss coverage or agriculture risk coverage under that Act or Federal crop insurance under the Federal Crop Insurance Act; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. YOUNG, Mr. RUBIO, Mr.

CORKER, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2513. A bill to improve school safety and mental health services; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. COTTON (for himself, Mrs. McCASKILL, Mr. PERDUE, Mrs. ERNST, and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 2514. A bill to amend title 35, United States Code, to provide that a patent owner may not assert sovereign immunity as a defense in certain actions before the United States Patent and Trademark Office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself, Mr. UDALL, Mr. BARRASSO, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2515. A bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian Tribes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. BENNET, and Mr. GARDNER):

S. 2516. A bill to direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to conduct a demonstration program to test alternative pain management protocols to limit the use of opioids in emergency departments; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SASSE (for himself, Mr. SCOTT, and Mr. LEE):

S. 2517. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to allow parents of eligible military dependent children to establish Military Education Savings Accounts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2518. A bill to amend title 11, United States Code, to improve protections for employees and retirees in business bankruptcies; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. Res. 425. A resolution supporting the designation of March 2018 as "National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month"; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 188

At the request of Mr. HELLER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 188, a bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government.

S. 207

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 207, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act relating to controlled substance analogues.

S. 223

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 223, a bill to provide immunity

from suit for certain individuals who disclose potential examples of financial exploitation of senior citizens, and for other purposes.

S. 292

At the request of Mr. REED, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 292, a bill to maximize discovery, and accelerate development and availability, of promising childhood cancer treatments, and for other purposes.

S. 382

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 382, a bill to require the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop a voluntary registry to collect data on cancer incidence among firefighters.

S. 477

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 477, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to coordinate Federal congenital heart disease research and surveillance efforts and to improve public education and awareness of congenital heart disease, and for other purposes.

S. 497

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HETTKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 497, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for Medicare coverage of certain lymphedema compression treatment items as items of durable medical equipment.

S. 677

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 677, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, and for other purposes.

S. 915

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 915, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to repeal the Government pension offset and windfall elimination provisions.

S. 1050

At the request of Ms. DUCKWORTH, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1050, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Chinese-American Veterans of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.

S. 1091

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1091, a bill to establish a Federal Task Force to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren.

S. 1730

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1730, a bill to implement policies to end preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths globally.

S. 1764

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1764, a bill to extend the principle of federalism to State drug policy, provide access to medical marijuana, and enable research into the medicinal properties of marijuana.

S. 1767

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1767, a bill to reauthorize the farm to school program, and for other purposes.

S. 1864

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1864, a bill to expand the use of open textbooks in order to achieve savings for students.

S. 1916

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1916, a bill to prohibit the possession or transfer of certain firearm accessories, and for other purposes.

S. 2127

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2127, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the United States merchant mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service during World War II.

S. 2135

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2135, a bill to enforce current law regarding the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.

S. 2146

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2146, a bill to extend the full Federal medical assistance percentage to urban Indian organizations.

S. 2235

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2235, a bill to establish a

tiered hiring preference for members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces.

S. 2278

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2278, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide grants to improve health care in rural areas.

S. 2374

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2374, a bill to amend the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012, including making changes to the Do Not Pay Initiative, for improved detection, prevention, and recovery of improper payments to deceased individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 2378

At the request of Mr. ROUNDS, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2378, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exclusion from gross income for interest on certain small business loans.

S. 2421

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 2421, a bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to provide an exemption from certain notice requirements and penalties for releases of hazardous substances from animal waste at farms.

S. 2470

At the request of Mr. NELSON, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2470, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prohibit the purchase of certain firearms by individuals under 21 years of age, and for other purposes.

S. 2471

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the names of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2471, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to improve the compassionate release process of the Bureau of Prisons, and for other purposes.

S. 2490

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2490, a bill to amend the Real Estate Settlement Procedures Act of 1974 to modify requirements related to mortgage disclosures.

S. 2495

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2495, a bill to reauthorize the grant program for school secu-

rity in the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968.

S. 2497

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN), and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 2497, a bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 and the Arms Export Control Act to make improvements to certain defense and security assistance provisions and to authorize the appropriations of funds to Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 2498

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the names of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. JONES), and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2498, a bill to reduce identity fraud.

S. CON. RES. 6

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 6, a concurrent resolution supporting the Local Radio Freedom Act.

S. RES. 407

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 407, a resolution recognizing the critical work of human rights defenders in promoting human rights, the rule of law, democracy, and good governance.

AMENDMENT NO. 2045

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2045 intended to be proposed to S. 2155, a bill to promote economic growth, provide tailored regulatory relief, and enhance consumer protections, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2046

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2046 intended to be proposed to S. 2155, a bill to promote economic growth, provide tailored regulatory relief, and enhance consumer protections, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2047

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2047 intended to be proposed to S. 2155, a bill to promote economic growth, provide tailored regulatory relief, and enhance consumer protections, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2065

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2065 intended to be proposed to S. 2155, a bill to promote economic growth, provide tailored regulatory relief, and enhance consumer protections, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED
BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BARRASSO:

S. 2507. A bill to require short-term limited duration insurance issuers to renew or continue in force such coverage at the option of the enrollees; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, over the next couple of weeks, Congress is going to need to finalize government appropriations for the remainder of this year. Among the things that some people are talking about is including money for a couple of ObamaCare programs. One of them is money for the so-called cost-sharing reduction payments. Funding for these payments was never appropriated by Congress. The Obama administration paid the insurance companies anyway. President Trump stopped these illegal payments last October. Now, some people in Congress are talking about funding them again.

We all know that ObamaCare has been a disaster for millions and millions of families all across the country. We know that for the people who live in States that use the Federal healthcare.gov exchange, average premiums have doubled since the law took effect. Certainly Wyoming is one of those States that experienced it; I heard about it in Clark County just last week. We know it. We hear about it in letters from the people who write to us. No matter where they are from in the State of Wyoming, we continue to hear about the costs going up. I am sure there is a similar situation in the State of Arkansas, the Presiding Officer's State, as well.

According to Gallup, the number of uninsured people actually increased last year by 3 million. Many people are finding that they just can't afford to have ObamaCare insurance. It is especially hard for hard-working families who don't qualify for subsidies under the healthcare law. So we know there is a problem, and we know we have to do something to help people who are struggling in ObamaCare markets.

If people are going to discuss using this government spending law to spend more money on the collapsing ObamaCare markets, there are other things we should be discussing as well. We should discuss finding a real solution to rising healthcare costs—one that doesn't just continue the unworkable, unaffordable, and, frankly, unfair system that ObamaCare created. We should discuss actually giving people more freedom and more flexibility to choose a healthcare plan that is right for them.

I am introducing a bill today to do just that. My legislation will build on a step that President Trump and the Trump administration took last month. The administration reversed a last-minute Obama-era policy that had all but killed short-term health plans. These are less expensive health plans that are free from the expensive and in-

trusive and burdensome regulations that ObamaCare placed on other insurers, so they are a much more affordable option for many Americans who have been priced out of ObamaCare.

President Trump is on the right path with this new rule. It is absolutely the right decision. He is giving people back an option so they can decide for themselves if it is a right choice for them. I think we should go a step further, and that is why I am introducing this legislation. We should go a step further in the omnibus spending bill. We should make this more affordable choice permanent. Making it permanent protects people. It protects people so a future administration doesn't do what President Obama did and try to wipe out choices for Americans.

This legislation I am introducing today gives people a choice to have these plans for not just 90 days—which was allowed at the end of the Obama administration—but for a full 364 days. So it is up to a year.

It also makes sure people can then renew these plans, if they want to, so it can become their permanent insurance, free from the mandates of the Obama healthcare law. It protects them from being dropped if they are sick. Remember, that was one of the biggest promises of ObamaCare that was broken. President Obama said: If you like your plan, you can keep your plan. Almost immediately, people found out it wasn't true at all. In fact, it was called by some of the press the "Lie of the Year."

In 2013 alone, there were 4.7 million Americans who got letters from their insurance companies telling them that their insurance plan had been canceled. Under my proposal, people with these short-term plans wouldn't have to worry about getting a cancellation letter. They would be protected from their insurance company, and they would be protected from Washington, DC.

States are much better suited than Washington to regulate their insurance markets in ways that work best for the citizens of their State. These simple changes in my legislation will help give people back—help give to them—the freedom ObamaCare took away. That is what we are looking at, the need for freedom for the American people. We can essentially give people an escape hatch to get out of the ObamaCare plan entirely. We can give them the freedom to choose the coverage that works for them and works best for their families.

That is the right way to bring down healthcare costs for Americans: Give them options, give them choices, give them freedom, not make them buy a one-size-fits-all government plan.

People living in more than half of America's counties have only one choice of insurance in the ObamaCare exchange—only one—half of the counties in the country. It is not a choice. They don't have options. It is a monopoly.

The left-leaning Urban Institute estimates that 4.2 million Americans would enroll in short-term plans next year if we just let them keep their plan as long as a year. That is the kind of pent-up demand that is out there for these more affordable, more flexible plans with much more freedom.

Just the one change could make a difference in the lives of 4 million Americans. My legislation does just that, and it has other benefits as well.

I think it would be an attractive option for many more Americans, but a lot of Democrats in Washington don't want to talk about options. No. They know ObamaCare markets are collapsing; they don't seem to care. They know costs are soaring out of control; it doesn't seem to concern as many as it should. They know middle-class families are being squeezed the hardest by these rising ObamaCare premiums. Their answer? We have heard it. We have heard it on the floor of the Senate: Try to push everyone—everyone in America, want it or not, everyone in America—into a single, government-run insurance plan that looks a lot like Medicaid. That is exactly the opposite of what we should be doing and what I am proposing today.

What the Democrats are proposing is more of the same failed idea that caused Americans so many problems under ObamaCare: government control.

If there is going to be talk of propping up the ObamaCare markets during the omnibus spending bill, then we should also be talking about helping people get out of the ObamaCare markets. Give them the freedom, give them the escape hatch.

We should protect people who want health insurance but who don't want ObamaCare health insurance. They know what works best for them and their families, and we should trust the American people to know what is best for them and their families. We should give people the freedom and the flexibility to make those decisions for themselves, and we should give them more opportunities to escape from the disastrous, destructive, and extremely expensive ObamaCare markets.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. DAINES, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. KING, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 2509. A bill to establish the National Park Restoration Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, probably every single one of us in the Senate would agree that it is hard to get here, it is hard to stay here, and it is wonderful to be able to accomplish something worthwhile while you are here. That is why I am here today—because I want to call attention to an announcement that was made this morning by a bipartisan group of U.S. Senators and the Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, which could take away