

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-81. A concurrent memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona urging the United States Congress to exclude federal reserved water rights from any future designation of federal lands in Arizona; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL NO. 2004

Whereas, states are the primary authority for allocating, administering, protecting and developing water resources, and are primarily responsible for water supply planning within their boundaries; and

Whereas, states have the ultimate say in managing their water resources and are best suited to speak to the unique nature of water law and hydrology, particularly in western states such as Arizona; and

Whereas, states have primary authority to issue and manage water rights and are responsible for controlling and managing surface water and groundwater located within their boundaries, subject to international treaties, interstate agreements and judicial decrees; and

Whereas, Congress recognized states as the sole authority over non-navigable waters, including groundwater, and the United States Supreme Court has upheld this authority; and

Whereas, federal reserved water rights apply to waters within various types of federal land designations, including national parks, national forests and wildlife refuges; and

Whereas, federal reserved water rights differ from state appropriated water rights and may take priority over the water rights of individuals whose application dates are established later than the date of the federal withdrawal, even if the individuals are using the water at the time of withdrawal; and

Whereas, the exclusion of federal reserved water rights on any new federal designations in this state would allow Arizona to integrate the federal reserved water rights with the state administratively adjudicated water rights so that water sources can be managed with greater certainty. Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

1. That the United States Congress take steps to require that any new federal areas designated within the State of Arizona not include any water right that prevents the State of Arizona from comprehensively managing its water resources.

2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies of this Memorial to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona.

POM-82. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico requesting the United States Congress pass H.R. 2360 which seeks to establish a Renewable Energy Grant Program within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the purpose of promoting renewable energy in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 1084

Congressman Ted W. Lieu, the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in Washington D.C., the Hon. Jennifer González-Colón, and Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett introduced

H. R. 2360 on April 25, 2019, which directs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a Renewable Energy Grant Program for the purpose of awarding funds to not-for-profit entities so they may develop and use renewable energy systems.

This legislation, which shall be known as the "Renewable Energy for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Act," seeks to promote investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy storage, and microgrid and smart grid projects. The organizations that are awarded these grants may receive technical assistance from the Department of Energy national laboratories. Furthermore, the measure appropriates funds for the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study regarding renewable energy and energy efficiency in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States not later than one hundred and eighty (180) days after the date of enactment of the Act. The study shall consider the potential to modify existing electric power systems, use renewable energy sources, expand the use of microgrids, and improve energy resiliency.

It is worth noting that H.R. 2360 is consistent with the recently approved Act No. 17-2019, known as the "Puerto Rico Energy Public Policy Act," which seeks to transform our electrical system into one that is robust, resilient, reliable, eco-friendly, and affordable, and that serves as the basis for the Island's economic development. Act No. 17, supra, directs the elimination of electric power generation from fossil fuels in Puerto Rico and, for such purpose, establishes a new and ambitious Renewable Portfolio Standard that requires that forty percent (40%) energy generation from renewable sources by 2025; sixty percent (60%) by 2040; and one hundred percent (100%) by 2050. In addition, it encourages the use of energy storage technology for all consumer levels, promotes the integration of distributed generation and microgrids, and seeks to attain thirty percent (30%) energy efficiency by 2040.

However, it is a fact that Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are exposed to suffering the consequences of catastrophic hurricanes such as Irma and Maria which left millions of U.S. citizens without electric power service for a long period of time. The passage of these two hurricanes in 2017 and the reality of climate change has once again raised awareness of the importance of having an electrical system that is resilient to weather events that have become stronger and more frequent.

H.R. 2360 complements the efforts made by the Government of Puerto Rico to transform our electrical system and contributes towards achieving one hundred percent (100%) energy generation from renewable sources by 2050, therefore, the Senate of Puerto Rico supports this important initiative.

Be it resolved by the Senate of Puerto Rico:

Section 1.—To express the support of the Senate of Puerto Rico to, and request the United States Congress to pass H.R. 2360 which seeks to establish a Renewable Energy Grant Program within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the purpose of promoting renewable energy in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States of America.

Section 2.—Upon its approval, a copy of this Resolution translated into English shall be delivered to the leadership of the United States Congress, congress members Ted W. Lieu and Stacey Plaskett, and the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in Washington D.C., Jennifer González-Colón.

Section 3.—This Resolution shall take effect upon its approval.

POM-83. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana

urging the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to review and consider eliminating provisions of federal law which reduce Social Security benefits for those receiving pension benefits from certain federal, state, or local government retirement or pension systems, plans, or funds; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 20

Whereas, the Congress of the United States of America has enacted both the Government Pension Offset (GPO), reducing the spousal and survivor Social Security benefit, and the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP), reducing the earned Social Security benefits payable to any person who also receives a public pension benefit; and

Whereas, the GPO negatively affects a spouse or survivor receiving a federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit who would also be entitled to a Social Security benefit earned by a spouse; and

Whereas, the GPO formula reduces the spousal or survivor Social Security benefit by two-thirds of the amount of the federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefit received by the spouse or survivor, in many cases completely eliminating the Social Security benefit even though their spouses paid Social Security taxes for many years; and

Whereas, the GPO has a harsh effect on hundreds of thousands of citizens and undermines the original purpose of the Social Security dependent/survivor benefit; and

Whereas, according to recent Social Security Administration figures, more than half a million individuals nationally are affected by the GPO; and

Whereas, the WEP applies to those persons who have earned federal, state, or local government retirement or pension benefits, in addition to working in employment covered under Social Security and paying into the Social Security system; and

Whereas, the WEP reduces the earned Social Security benefit using an averaged indexed monthly earnings formula and may reduce Social Security benefits for affected persons by as much as one-half of the retirement benefit earned as a public servant in employment not covered under Social Security; and

Whereas, the WEP causes hardworking individuals to lose a significant portion of the Social Security benefits that they earn themselves; and

Whereas, according to recent Social Security Administration figures, more than one and a half million individuals nationally are affected by the WEP; and

Whereas, in certain circumstances both the WEP and GPO can be applied to a qualifying survivor's benefit, each independently reducing the available benefit and in combination eliminating a large portion of the total Social Security benefit available to the survivor; and

Whereas, because of the calculation characteristics of the GPO and the WEP, they have a disproportionately negative effect on employees working in lower-wage government jobs, like policemen, firefighters, teachers, and state employees;

Whereas, Louisiana is making every effort to improve the quality of life of its citizens and to encourage them to live here lifelong, yet the current GPO and WEP provisions compromise their quality of life; and

Whereas, the number of people affected by GPO and WEP is growing every day as more and more people reach retirement age; and

Whereas, individuals drastically affected by the GPO or WEP may have no choice but to return to work after retirement in order to make ends meet, but the earnings accumulated during this return to work can further reduce the Social Security benefits the individual is entitled to; and

Whereas, the GPO and WEP are established in federal law, and repeal of the GPO and the WEP can only be enacted by congress: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to review the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision Social Security benefit reductions and to consider eliminating or reducing them; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-84. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Maine urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to support the reform of the Social Security offsets of the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision; to the Committee on Finance.

HOUSE PAPER NO. 1204

Whereas, under current federal law, individuals who receive a Social Security benefit and a public retirement benefit derived from employment not covered under Social Security are subject to a reduction in the Social Security benefits; and

Whereas, these laws, contained in the federal Social Security Act, 42 United States Code, Chapter 7, Subchapter II, Federal Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance Benefits, and known as the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision, greatly affect public employees, particularly women; and

Whereas, the Windfall Elimination Provision reduces by a formula the Social Security benefit of a person who is also receiving a pension from a public employer that does not participate in Social Security; and

Whereas, the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision are particularly burdensome on the finances of low-income and moderate-income public service workers, such as school teachers, clerical workers and school cafeteria employees, whose wages are low to start; and

Whereas, the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision both unfairly reduce benefits for those public employees and their spouses whose careers cross the line between the private and public sectors; and

Whereas, since many lower-paying public service jobs are held by women, both the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision have a disproportionately adverse effect on women; and

Whereas, in some cases, additional support in the form of income, housing, heating and prescription drug and other safety net assistance from state and local governments is needed to make up for the reductions imposed at the federal level; and

Whereas, other participants in Social Security do not have their benefits reduced in this manner; and

Whereas, to participate or not to participate in Social Security in public sector employment is a decision of employers, even though both the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision directly punish employees and their spouses; and

Whereas, although the Government Pension Offset was enacted in 1977 and the Windfall Elimination Provision was enacted in 1983, many of the benefits in dispute were paid into Social Security prior to that time; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That We, your Memorialists, respectfully urge and request that the President of the United States and the Congress of the United States work together to support reform proposals that include the following protections for low-income and moderate-income government retirees:

1. Protections permitting retention of a combined public pension and Social Security benefit with no applied reductions;

2. Protections permanently ensuring that level of benefit by indexing it to inflation; and

3. Protections ensuring that no current recipient's benefit is reduced by the reform legislation; and be it further

Resolved, That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President of the United States; the President of the United States Senate; the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States; and each Member of the Maine Congressional Delegation.

POM-85. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania designating May 2019 as "Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 122

Whereas, Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is better known as Lou Gehrig's disease; and

Whereas, ALS is a fatal neurodegenerative disease characterized by degeneration of cell bodies of the upper and lower motor neurons in the gray matter of the anterior horn of the spinal cord; and

Whereas, The initial symptom of ALS is weakness of the skeletal muscles, especially those of the extremities; and

Whereas, As ALS progresses, the patient experiences difficulty in swallowing, talking and breathing; and

Whereas, ALS eventually causes muscles to atrophy and the patient becomes a functional quadriplegic; and

Whereas, Patients with ALS typically remain alert and are aware of the loss of motor functions and the inevitable outcome of continued deterioration and death; and

Whereas, ALS affects military veterans at twice the rate of the general population; and

Whereas, ALS occurs in adulthood, most commonly between 40 and 70 years of age, peaking at approximately 55 years of age, and affects both men and women without bias; and

Whereas, More than 5,000 new ALS patients are diagnosed throughout the nation each year; and

Whereas, In Pennsylvania there are currently more than 1,000 individuals who have been formally diagnosed with ALS; and

Whereas, The \$750,000 in State funding appropriated by the General Assembly for ALS support services for 2018-2019 provided services to nearly 1,000 constituents and substantial savings to the State budget and taxpayers; and

Whereas, The ALS Association reports that on average, patients diagnosed with ALS only survive two to five years from the time of diagnosis; and

Whereas, ALS has no known cause, prevention or cure; and

Whereas, "Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month" increases the public's awareness of ALS patients' circumstances and acknowledges the negative impact this disease has on ALS patients and their families and recognizes the research being done to eradicate ALS: Now therefore be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania designate the month

of May 2019 as "Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month" in Pennsylvania; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the presiding officers of each house of Congress and to each member of Congress from Pennsylvania.

POM-86. A concurrent memorial adopted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona urging the United States Congress to enact legislation to provide medical treatment and other benefits for deported veterans of the United States Armed Forces; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL NO. 2001

Whereas, according to the American Civil Liberties Union, at least 239 veterans of the United States armed forces have been deported to at least 34 countries; and

Whereas, those who have honorably served our country have been denied medical treatment and other benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); and

Whereas, veterans who are deported and who were not seen by a VA doctor for evaluation are not allowed to claim their disabilities; and

Whereas, veterans who would otherwise seek treatment or post-traumatic stress disorder or other war-related injuries are denied approval unless they are about to die; and

Whereas, deported veterans have in fact died waiting for approval for medical treatment on the border; and

Whereas, these men and women have served in the United States armed forces and have earned the right to receive medical treatment and benefits.

Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

1. That the United States Congress enact legislation providing medical treatment and other benefits for all veterans of the United States armed forces, including those who have been deported.

2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit copies of this memorial to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives and each Member of Congress from the State of Arizona.

POM-87. A resolution adopted by the County Council of Prince George's County, Maryland memorializing its opposition to any expansion of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway and any proposal to transfer the Baltimore-Washington Parkway from the National Park Service; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

POM-88. A petition from a citizen of the State of Texas relative to pay increases for Members of Congress; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BURR, from the Select Committee on Intelligence:

Report to accompany S. 1589, An original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal years 2018, 2019, and 2020 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 116-47).

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Armed Services, without amendment: