

MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2434, a bill to establish the National Criminal Justice Commission.

S. 2461

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2461, a bill to designate a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge as wilderness.

S. 2485

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2485, a bill to prohibit Federal agencies from using Government funds to pay for expenses at lodging establishments that are owned by or employ certain public officials or their relatives.

S. 2539

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2539, a bill to modify and reauthorize the Tibetan Policy Act of 2002, and for other purposes.

S. 2546

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2546, a bill to amend the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 to require a group health plan or health insurance coverage offered in connection with such a plan to provide an exceptions process for any medication step therapy protocol, and for other purposes.

S. 2570

At the request of Ms. SINEMA, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2570, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to Greg LeMond in recognition of his service to the United States as an athlete, activist, role model, and community leader.

S. 2610

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2610, a bill to reauthorize certain programs under the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs of the Department of Energy, and for other purposes.

S. 2618

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2618, a bill to strengthen employee cost savings suggestions programs within the Federal Government.

S. 2625

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as

cosponsors of S. 2625, a bill to authorize the admission of a limited number of Kurdish Syrians and other Syrian partners as special immigrants, and for other purposes.

S. 2641

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2641, a bill to promote United States national security and prevent the resurgence of ISIS, and for other purposes.

S. 2654

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2654, a bill to prohibit the obligation or expenditure of Federal funds for certain agreements relating to the 46th G7 Summit, and for other purposes.

S.J. RES. 56

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 56, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to "Borrower Defense Institutional Accountability".

S. RES. 274

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 274, a resolution expressing solidarity with Falun Gong practitioners who have lost lives, freedoms, and other rights for adhering to their beliefs and practices, and condemning the practice of non-consenting organ harvesting, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 297

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 297, a resolution commending the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) on the occasion of its 50th anniversary for its significant accomplishments and contributions to the economic and social development of the Americas.

S. RES. 318

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. ROSEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 318, a resolution to support the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and the Sixth Replenishment.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. JONES, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Ms. CORTEZ MASTO):

S. 2659. A bill to address the needs of workers in industries likely to be impacted by rapidly evolving tech-

nologies; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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. 2659

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Investing in Tomorrow's Workforce Act of 2019".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) In 2014, the United States spent just 0.1 percent of the Nation's Gross Domestic Product on labor market policies, less than half of what the United States spent on labor market policies 30 years ago.

(2) The number of workers receiving federally supported training has declined in the past 3 decades as advances in technology have simultaneously shifted labor market demand over time.

(3) As much as 47 percent of all jobs in the United States are at risk of being replaced by automation technology, and job losses from automation are more likely to impact workers making less than \$40,000 annually.

(4) Strong Federal investment in expanding training services for workers whose jobs may be lost due to automation could prepare the United States workforce to better adapt to changes in the labor market and enter into skilled positions in technologically-oriented occupations and industries.

(5) A focus on preparing the workforce of the United States for jobs that utilize advanced technologies could grow wages, increase economic productivity, and boost the competitiveness of the United States.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) AUTOMATION.—The term "automation" means a device, process, or system that functions without continuous input from an operator, including—

(A) advanced technologies, such as—

(i) data collection, classification processing, and analytics; and

(ii) 3-D printing, digital design and simulation, and digital manufacturing;

(B) robotics, including collaborative robotics, and worker augmentation technology;

(C) autonomous vehicle technology; or

(D) autonomous machinery technology.

(2) DISLOCATED WORKER.—The term "dislocated worker" has the meaning given the term in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

(3) IN-DEMAND INDUSTRY SECTOR OR OCCUPATION.—The term "in-demand industry sector or occupation" has the meaning given the term in section 3 of that Act.

(4) INTEGRATED EDUCATION AND TRAINING.—The term "integrated education and training" has the meaning given the term in section 203 of that Act (29 U.S.C. 3272).

(5) ELIGIBLE PARTNERSHIP.—The term "eligible partnership" means an industry or sector partnership, as defined in section 3 of that Act, except that—

(A) for purposes of applying paragraph (26)(A)(iii) of that section, the term "institution of higher education" has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001); and

(B) the partnership shall include, in addition to the representatives described in clauses (i) through (iii) of paragraph (26)(A) of that section, representatives of—

(i) a State workforce development board or a local workforce development board; and

(ii) an economic development organization.

(6) LOCAL AND STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS.—The terms “local workforce development board” and “State workforce development board” have the meanings given the terms “local board” and “State board”, respectively, in section 3 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102).

(7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Labor.

(8) TRAINING SERVICES.—The term “training services” means training services described in section 134(c)(3)(D) of that Act (29 U.S.C. 3174(c)(3)(D)).

SEC. 4. GAO STUDY ON BARRIERS TO AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETRAINING WORKERS.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States, in coordination with the Secretary of Labor, shall conduct a study of the barriers to providing, and opportunities for improving, training for workers in industries that have, or are likely to have, high rates of job loss due to automation.

(2) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study, the Comptroller General shall study—

(A) considerations impacting, and strategies to improve data collection with respect to, the workforce in industries with high rates of job loss or a high likelihood of automation in the United States, including considerations and data collection strategies concerning—

(i) industries and occupations most likely to be impacted by automation, including—

(I) the geographical location of those industries and occupations;

(II) the annual average wages of those occupations; and

(III) demographic data on the race, gender, and age of workers in those industries and occupations;

(ii) employer-based training practices in those industries and occupations;

(iii) the frequency with which employers provide worker training to address skills needs and react to changes in the labor market;

(iv) projected job losses; and

(v) labor organization membership rates in those industries and occupations;

(B) considerations impacting, and strategies to improve data collection with respect to, the workforce in in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the United States, such as advanced manufacturing, information technology, and health care, including considerations and data collection strategies concerning—

(i) industry sectors and occupations that may emerge or become in-demand industry sectors or occupations as a result of automation, including—

(I) the geographical location of those industry sectors and occupations;

(II) the average annual wages of those occupations; and

(III) demographic data on the race, gender, and age of workers in those occupations;

(ii) the skills and education needed to fill the positions in those industry sectors;

(iii) employer-based training practices in those industry sectors;

(iv) projected job gains; and

(v) labor organization membership rates in those industries and occupations;

(C) barriers to, and opportunities for, retraining workers in industries that have a high likelihood of being impacted by automation;

(D) the impact of the geographical location of workers and their access to transportation on the ability of the workers to access job training and related higher-skilled positions;

(E) the impact of workers’ access to other benefits and services, including child care,

paid sick leave, paid family and medical leave, or a retirement plan, on the ability of the workers to access job training and related higher-skilled positions; and

(F) how reduced Federal funding for job training programs has impacted the ability of State and local governments, employers, labor organizations, and communities to respond to changes in the labor market, including rapidly evolving technologies.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall prepare and submit to the Secretary of Labor and the appropriate committees of Congress a report concerning the results of the study.

SEC. 5. GRANTS TO IMPROVE TRAINING FOR WORKERS IMPACTED BY AUTOMATION.

(a) GRANTS AUTHORIZED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—From the amounts appropriated under subsection (g) and beginning not later than 1 year after receiving the report by the Comptroller General of the United States under section 4(b), the Secretary of Labor shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible partnerships to support demonstration and pilot projects relating to the training needs of workers who are, or are likely to become, dislocated workers as a result of automation.

(2) DURATION.—A grant awarded under this section shall be for a period not to exceed 4 years.

(3) USE OF REPORT.—The Secretary shall use the report prepared the Comptroller General under section 4(b) to inform the grant program carried out under this section.

(b) APPLICATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an eligible partnership shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary shall reasonably require.

(2) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include a description of the demonstration or pilot project to be completed with the grant funds, which description shall include—

(A) a description of the members of the eligible partnership who will be involved in the demonstration or pilot program and the services each member will provide;

(B) a description of the training services that will be available to individuals participating in the demonstration or pilot project, which may include—

(i) a plan to train dislocated workers from industries likely to be impacted by automation and transition the workers into regionally in-demand industry sectors or occupations; and

(ii) a plan to partner with local businesses to retrain, upskill, and re-deploy workers within an industry as an alternative to layoffs;

(C) a plan to provide workers with technology-based skills training, which may include training to provide skills related to coding, systems engineering, or information technology security, in addition to other skills; and

(D) a description of the goals that the eligible partnership intends to achieve to upskill workers and prepare them for in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

(c) PRIORITIES.—In awarding grants under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to—

(1) eligible partnerships that are located in an area with a high concentration of—

(A) industries with a higher likelihood of being impacted by automation; or

(B) industries included in in-demand industry sectors, as determined under subparagraphs (A)(i) and (B) of section 3(23) of the

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3102(23));

(2) eligible partnerships—

(A) with a plan to provide incumbent worker training—

(i) to assist workers in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment or avert layoffs; or

(ii) that allows a worker working for an employer to acquire new skills that allow the worker to obtain a higher-skilled or higher-paid position with such employer; and

(B) that partner with local employers that intend to backfill the pre-training positions of the incumbent workers by hiring new workers to fill those positions;

(3) eligible partnerships that will provide workers with a transportation stipend, paid sick leave, paid family and medical leave, access to child care services, or other employment benefits; or

(4) eligible partnerships with a plan to develop a shared training curriculum that can be used across local and regional networks of employers and training providers.

(d) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible partnership that receives a grant under this section shall use the grant funds for 1 or more of the following:

(1) Providing training services under the demonstration or pilot project, which may include training services that prepare workers for in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

(2) Providing assistance for employers in developing a staff position for an individual who will be responsible for supporting training services provided under the grant.

(3) Purchasing equipment or technology necessary for training services provided under paragraph (1).

(4) Providing job search and other transitional assistance to workers in industries with high rates of job loss.

(5) Providing a training stipend to workers for training services.

(6) Providing integrated education and training.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after an eligible partnership’s completion of a demonstration or pilot project supported under this section, the eligible partnership shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a report regarding—

(1) the number of workers who received training services through the demonstration or pilot project, disaggregated by type of training service and the age, gender, and race of the workers;

(2) the number of such workers who successfully transitioned into a new position following completion of the training services;

(3) the number of individuals who successfully transitioned into an in-demand industry sector or occupation following completion of the training services;

(4) annual earnings data for individuals who have completed training services through the demonstration or pilot project;

(5) the percentage of individuals described in paragraph (4) who are in education or training activities, or in employment, during the second quarter after exit from the training services;

(6) the percentage of individuals described in paragraph (4) who are in education or training activities, or in employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the training services; and

(7) any practices used by the partnership that should be considered best practices with respect to training workers in industries that have, or are expected to have, high rates of job loss as a result of automation.

(f) GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.—An eligible partnership that receives a grant under this section shall use the grant funds in a manner

that is consistent with the labor standards and protections described in section 181 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3241) and nondiscrimination provisions described in section 188 of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3248).

(g) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section such sums as may be necessary for the first 5 full fiscal years after the date of submittal of the report under section 4(b).

SEC. 6. EXPANSION OF WORKER TRAINING SERVICES.

(a) **ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING.**—Section 134(d)(1)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3174(d)(1)(A)) is amended—

(1) in clause (xi), by striking “and” at the end;

(2) in clause (xii), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(xiii) training programs for individuals who are, or are likely to become, dislocated workers as a result of automation, including activities that prepare the individuals for occupations in the technology sector.”.

(b) **NATIONAL DISLOCATED WORKER GRANTS.**—Section 170 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3225) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1)(A), by inserting “advances in automation technology,” before “plant closures,”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(e) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—In addition to any funds reserved under section 132(a)(2)(A) to carry out this section, there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$40,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2024.”.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. JONES):

S. 2667. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make it easier to apply for Federal student aid, to make that aid predictable, to amend the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, the Senator from Alabama will be here shortly. I will go ahead and make my remarks, and then he can add his.

I ask unanimous consent that I may be able to use a piece of demonstrative evidence as a part of my remarks.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, about 20 million Americans know what this is. This is the FAFSA. This is the form that about 20 million Americans fill out every year in order to qualify for the Pell grant and the student loan they might use to go to college—20 million Americans.

About 400,000 Tennesseans fill this out every year, and what Senator JONES and I propose to do is to reduce the 108 questions that are filled out online to between 17 and 30 as a way of making it simpler and easier for 20 million American families and their children to go to college.

Last month, I received a letter from Janet who volunteers with low-income students in Nashville and has seen the challenges students and their families

face to apply for college and financial aid.

She describes the FAFSA as “being a huge impediment . . . to students raised in poverty to even attend college.”

Janet continued, saying: “But a few years ago, a different hurdle became evident.” She was referring to something called verification.

She told the story of an excellent student who began classes at Middle Tennessee State University, but 6 weeks into her fall semester, her FAFSA was flagged for verification—a complicated process that stops Pell grant payments while a student and their families scramble to submit their Federal tax information or prove they didn’t have to file taxes.

“Our student had to drop out of school as she lost funding,” Janet said. “There has to be a better way.”

Well, today Senator JONES and I are suggesting a better way. We call it the FAFSA Simplification Act, to give students a better, simpler way to apply for financial aid.

Every year, nearly 20 million families, as I said, fill out the FAFSA to apply for Federal student aid, including 400,000 families in Tennessee.

A volunteer mentor with Tennessee Promise, which is our State’s program that provides 2 years of free community college, told me that the FAFSA has a “chilling effect” on students and on parents.

Former Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam told me that Tennessee has the highest rate for filling out the FAFSA—more students fill it out than in any other State by percentage—but it is still the single biggest impediment to more students enrolling in Tennessee Promise, which gives them a free community college tuition.

The FAFSA Simplification Act will make it easier for families to apply for Federal student aid by doing three things.

First, it reduces the number of questions on the FAFSA from 108 to 17 to 30 questions.

Second, it will greatly reduce the need for the burdensome verification I discussed, the process that caused Janet’s student to drop out of school.

East Tennessee State University said that one-third of its applicants, approximately 10,000 students, are selected each year for verification.

Third, this legislation will allow students to find out as early as eighth grade how much Pell grant funding they may be eligible for so students can start to plan for college sooner.

This result has been 5 years in the making.

In 2014, at a hearing before our Senate Education Committee, witnesses testified that the vast majority of questions on the FAFSA are unnecessary.

I asked if the four witnesses, who came from many different directions, would each write a letter to the committee recommending how they would

simplify the FAFSA. The witnesses stopped for a moment, they looked at one another, and said: We don’t have to write you four letters because we all agree on how to fix the FAFSA. We can write you one letter, and they did.

So Senator MICHAEL BENNET, a Democratic member who was on the committee at the time, said: Well, if that is true and if there is that much agreement, then why don’t we do what you recommend?

I mean, how many times do we go home to Tennessee or Arizona and Alabama and explain something and people say: Well, then why don’t you do it?

This is a case of, well, then why don’t we do it, and Senator JONES and I are here to ask that question and recommend that we do.

So we started talking with other Senators, students, college administrators, other experts about how to simplify the FAFSA.

In 2015, Senator BENNET and I—now, listen to this list—along with Senator BOOKER, Senator BURR, Senator KING, Senators ENZI, WARNER, and ISAKSON, introduced bipartisan legislation that would reduce the number of FAFSA questions to two questions.

After discussions with college administrators and States, we realized we needed to keep some questions or States and schools would have to create their own additional forms that students would need to fill out.

Over the last 4 years, we have improved that legislation. We now believe that what Senator JONES and I are proposing will permit us to move forward with bipartisan legislation that would reduce the FAFSA to between 18 and 30 questions. That is the legislation we have introduced today. This is one more step to make it easier for families to fill out the FAFSA.

In President Obama’s administration, with the encouragement of our committee, families were allowed to use the tax information from the previous year so they could apply to colleges in the fall rather than have to wait until the spring.

Second, the Trump administration has put the FAFSA application on a phone app. I was at Sevier County High School last November, and I saw students zipping through the FAFSA on their iPhones.

Third, last year’s Senate passed bipartisan legislation that Senator MURRAY of Washington and I introduced that allows students to answer up to 22 questions on the current FAFSA with just 1 click, and that will stop requiring students to give the same information to the Federal Government twice.

I can’t tell you the number of parents and grandparents who said to me: Why do I have to give the same information to the Federal Government twice in order to apply for a student loan or a Pell grant?

The answer is, you shouldn’t have to. This would dramatically decrease the number of students selected for verification.

In conclusion, that third step, along with the bill Senator JONES and I have introduced today, is part of the package I introduced last month to permanently fund historically Black colleges and universities and other minority-serving institutions, provide Pell grants for prisoners, and allow Pell grants to be used for short-term programs.

This legislation, which includes our bill to simplify the FAFSA, can and should pass the Senate and the House this year so it can be signed into law by the President.

By reducing the number of questions on the FAFSA, reducing the need for verification, and allowing students to learn earlier how much aid they may qualify for, the FAFSA Simplification Act will make it simpler and easier for students and families to apply for financial aid.

I have some statements of support which I would like to read into the RECORD, but I will pause at this moment and give Senator JONES a chance to speak, and then I will come back after he has finished and ask for the floor and discuss these statements of support.

Mr. JONES. Madam President, first of all, I want to thank deeply my colleague from Tennessee for the work he has done not just with me on this bill but over the years.

This has been such an incredible work in progress, and I am appreciative of all of that work that has gone on. I am honored today to be part of this bill we are introducing that I believe is so important to so many families around the country and particularly in our States of Tennessee and Alabama.

Anyone who has applied to college or helped someone through the process is all too familiar with that dreaded FAFSA form.

As a father with three kids who have gone off to college, I can tell you it just doesn't get any easier. In fact, the free application for Federal student aid hasn't gotten any easier for nearly the 30 years it has been in existence.

Despite the headaches it can cause, it is so important for students to fill out that FAFSA. It is so important for families to have that FAFSA form. It is a key to accessing grants, scholarships, and loans that can put a college education within reach.

Far too often, as Senator ALEXANDER said, it can intimidate people from even starting it. Also, once they get the letter asking for an audit, they just stop.

Currently, the FAFSA is over 10 pages long. Often when I am back in Alabama, I say it is almost like filling out tax returns for Apple Computer or IBM or one of the big corporations. It has 108 questions. That is why I have been very fortunate and honored to partner with Senator ALEXANDER to simplify this FAFSA form to between 17 to 30 questions.

As he said just a moment ago, this has been 5 years in the making, but

this is a first great step in this Congress to really have honed this down over the years. We are now going to ease the burden. We are going to reduce the number and ease the burden for verification and make it easier for folks to start looking at it ahead of time.

I appreciate Senator ALEXANDER's comments about the fact that this ought to be able to be done this year. This bill is a wonderful first step in a process that hopefully we can get across that finish line by the end of the year.

Graduating with debt—especially significant debt—can force graduates to put off other major life steps, like buying a house or a car, having children, getting married, or investing in a business as an entrepreneur. The burden of debt can literally change the course of a young person's life and guide their decisions for decades.

Nationwide, only 62 percent of high school seniors completed the FAFSA in 2018. Senator ALEXANDER's State of Tennessee, along with Louisiana, Mississippi, and Delaware, had the highest FAFSA completion rate. Alabama ranked right in the middle, about 26th.

The site called NerdWallet—which I find to be a fascinating name for a site—estimates that the high school class of 2018, across this country, left \$2.6 billion in Pell grants on the table—that is billion with a B—\$2.6 billion that was available to put kids through school, and it was left on the table.

Form Your Future reports that students missed out on \$24 billion in total aid annually. It also reports that 92 percent of low-income households will receive grants and 85 percent of students have a chance to receive financial aid.

The Department of Education's Federal Student Aid staff shared that, from October 1, 2018, through May 31 of 2019, there were nearly half a million fewer total FAFSA submissions—not just high school seniors—in the same timeframe the year before—a half a million fewer. I think there is a reason for that. I think people start, they look at it, they see the cumbersome nature of it, and they just walk away and do something else.

In Alabama, high school seniors, according to the information I have, left \$57.5 million in grant monies on the table—grant monies, not loan and debt, but grant monies on the table, \$57 million, and only 49.9 percent of the State's seniors filled out the form.

Alabama students might be surprised to learn that they could be eligible for Federal financial aid, including Pell grants that can provide up to \$6,100 a year. Not only does the FAFSA help identify what Federal loans and grants a student could receive, but it can also lead to college specific or Statewide scholarships.

The student loan debt that today's graduates face is profound. According to The Institute for College Access and Success, college student seniors who

graduated in 2018 in my home State of Alabama's 4-year public and private colleges had an average of just under \$30,000 in student loan debt. It also found that more than half of our college seniors are graduating with debt.

Simplifying this FAFSA form can get money in their hands. It can get money that is badly needed. As I go around my State, I talk to people all the time, and they know that not every kid is going to college, not every kid needs a 4-year college degree to do well to become part of that middle class. But for those who want to go, for those who have the aptitude to go, for those who desire to go and get that 4-year or even 2-year college degree, college aid and financial aid is often vital.

Alabama is a relatively poor State. People want their kids to succeed, and to do so often means a college degree. The bill that Senator ALEXANDER and I have filed today will help do just that.

I hope we can get this across the finish line. I believe it is going to help millions and millions of kids, and I know it will help so many families in my State and the great State of Tennessee.

I thank Senator ALEXANDER for working with me on this. I look forward to working with colleagues to get this across the finish line.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, Senator JONES made a very important point, not only about Alabama, but really about every State.

The Pell grant that we are talking about is money you don't have to pay back. This is not a student loan that you lay awake at night worrying about.

Forty percent of our college students in this country go to community colleges, 2-year colleges. The average tuition at community colleges in America is \$3,600. The average Pell grant is \$3,600. Just those few facts show that basically 40 percent of those who go to college in America can go tuition-free or close to tuition-free because of the availability of the Pell grant. Now, it is higher in some States and lower in other States, but that is a fact. These are not loans that you have to pay back. These are grants that basically say that, if you want 2 years of college past high school, you can have it.

In States like Tennessee and an increasing number of other States, the State government is stepping up to say: Well, if the Pell grant doesn't quite cover your tuition, we will cover the rest of it, so it is tuition-free.

It is important for us to say to the American people—to parents, grandparents, and students—that: If you want to go to college, you can; and tuition is probably free or about free, but first, you have to fill out this 108 question FAFSA. That is the problem.

A president of a community college in Memphis that has almost all African-American students told me he

thinks he loses 1,500 students a semester because of the complexity of the FAFSA. At the other end of the State, the President of East Tennessee State University says that 10,000 of his students get their classes interrupted by the so-called verification process. We would fix almost all those problems with this bill.

I am glad that Senator JONES has stepped up and so many other Senators are agreeable to this. I hope we can answer the question that people ask me when I go home: Okay. Why don't you do it?

We should do it. We have been working on it for 5 years—whether it is Senator BENNET who introduced the first bill with me and a number of others or whether it is Senator MURRAY who introduced with me the bill that passed the Senate last year that said that, in one click, you can answer the tax questions and you don't have to give that information to the government twice. We can do that this year, and 20 million American families will be grateful.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that statements of support be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

I will just summarize some of them quickly.

Justin Draeger, president of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, said: "In short, this bill makes the process of applying for student aid much easier for all students, but the biggest positive impact will be for our nation's neediest students." I would like to thank Justin and his association of financial aid experts for working with us because the first bill we introduced didn't take into consideration a number of points that it should have. The administrators pointed them out to us, and so we believe we have come up with a set of solutions that meets those needs and has their support.

The National College Access Network Executive Director Kim Cook said: "[Our organization] has long advocated for a streamlined FAFSA to lessen one of the barriers faced by many first-generation students going to college. By combining this simpler FAFSA with a Pell Grant look-up table, we can show students, early in their decision-making process, that there is money to help them complete college."

Stacey Lightfoot testified before our committee. She is vice president of college and career success at the Public Education Foundation of Chattanooga: "The FAFSA is even more complex for families, especially those from underserved backgrounds, who get lost answering over 100 questions on the form. [This] proposal to simplify the FAFSA is long overdue and has been thoughtfully created to ensure better access to college by eliminating unnecessary and irrelevant questions. The new bill takes the most intimidating aspect of the college process away from students."

Why would we cause 20 million families to answer unnecessary and intimi-

dating questions, and discourage their students from going to college? Why would we do that? We shouldn't.

Executive director of Alabama Possible, Kristina Scott, said: "With the FAFSA Simplification Act implementation of simple, clear Pell Grant look up tables, we will be able to talk with students beginning in middle school about what aid for which they should be eligible and how to access it by completing a shorter, simplified FAFSA. These two changes can shift the conversation about postsecondary education from 'if' to 'when' for low-income and first-generation college-going students and their families."

How many times do we hear it said that—particularly in low-income families—parents, grandparents, and others discourage the students from going to college because they are afraid it will mean a lot of debt that they will never be able to pay back. They can't imagine how they can handle this. This bill and all that goes with it will allow conversations to begin with middle school students, including low-income students, and say: You may be in the eighth grade or the seventh grade or a freshman in high school, but you can begin thinking now about at least 2 more years of college after high school that are essentially tuition free, and it is simple to do because of the simpler FAFSA.

Mike Krause, director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, said: "For Tennessee, the complexity of the FAFSA presents a barrier for students attempting to enroll in Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Reconnect, and other financial aid programs like the HOPE Access Grant. . . . Simplifying the FAFSA would improve college access for students in Tennessee by allowing the federal government and our state to better target financial aid to the neediest students."

Now, what he is saying is that this complicated form is a barrier to free college for students of all ages in Tennessee. They have to fill this out first. If they are discouraged from doing it, they don't go to college.

Barbara Duffield, executive director of School House Connection, which helps homeless and foster care children, had this to say: "The FAFSA Simplification Act removes barriers to financial aid for some of our Nation's most vulnerable youth—those who experience homelessness or foster care."

This has been a good exercise in the United States Senate. We have had testimony before our committee. Our witnesses told us what to do. Senator BENNET and I, and a group of others who were on the committee at that time, said: Okay. Let's do it.

We got advice from the financial aid officers who said: Wait a minute. You didn't think about this and that. For example, if you cut it down to two questions, then Arizona and Tennessee are going to have to ask more questions in order to do the State grant programs that they have. So we recog-

nized that, and we adjusted our position. Then Senator JONES, who is a new member of our committee, stepped up and said he wanted to be a part of it, so now, we are ready to go.

Chairman BOBBY SCOTT, chairman of the House Education Committee, introduced a bill that would simplify the FAFSA just last week. It is not the same as our bill, but it heads in the same direction.

I think every single Member of this body wants to help students, especially low-income students, have an opportunity to attend college if they want to. We have everything in place for them to do it, yet we have created this single barrier—this 108-question form—with unnecessary, needless questions and a verification process in the middle of the semester that would yank your money and cause you to drop out of school. We can change that this year. If we will do it, we have bipartisan support in the Senate, and the President will sign it. I hope it is law by the beginning of next year.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

STATE OF TENNESSEE, HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION, STUDENT ASSISTANCE CORPORATION,

Nashville, TN, October 21, 2019.

Hon. LAMAR ALEXANDER,
Chairman, Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee.

Hon. DOUG JONES,
Member, Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee.

DEAR CHAIRMAN ALEXANDER AND SENATOR JONES: The Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation write to express appreciation and strong support for the FAFSA Simplification Act of 2019.

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the way nearly 20 million Americans access federal, state, and institution based financial aid to attend college each year. However, the complexity of the form and chilling effect of the verification process is one of the biggest barriers for our most vulnerable students to enter a postsecondary institution.

For Tennessee, the complexity of the FAFSA presents a barrier for students attempting to enroll in Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Reconnect, and other financial aid programs like the HOPE Access Grant. In the 2018-19 school year, over 400,000 Tennesseans submitted a FAFSA, and that information was the cornerstone to access both state and federal aid. Simplifying the FAFSA would improve college access for students in Tennessee by allowing the federal government and our state to better target financial aid to the neediest students. In particular, Tennessee sees great value for our State in the FAFSA Simplification Act based on four key aspects:

1. Statewide efforts to promote FAFSA completion and college enrollment thrive on simple messages. The new simple Pell Grant formula will allow statewide college access messaging campaigns to inform students and families about how much Pell Grant they will likely be eligible to receive based on a table or simple calculator.

2. Tennessee and its public institutions depend on the Needs Analysis formula to annually award over \$400 million in State appropriated student financial aid. By continuing the availability of this calculation and most

of the variables behind it, our State will have the to continue awarding state and institutional aid without disruption.

3. FAFSA filing can quickly become challenging for applicants when sorting through difficult financial questions. By relying on tax information the federal government already has on file, students and families do not have to find additional information and are unlikely to be selected for burdensome verification processes.

4. The flexibility provided to financial aid administrators regarding professional judgement and applicants to file provisionally independent will be transformative for our State's most vulnerable students.

Thank you both for your strong commitment to this issue. It is important to enact this reform which will help us reach our State's goals.

Sincerely,

MIKE KRAUSE.

SUPPORT STATEMENTS

Justin Dragger, president of the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators said: "In short, this bill makes the process of applying for student aid much easier for all students, but the biggest positive impact will be for our nation's neediest students."

National College Access Network Executive Director Kim Cook said: "NCAN has long advocated for a streamlined FAFSA to lessen one of the barriers faced by many first-generation students going to college. By combining this simpler FAFSA with a Pell Grant look-up table, we can show students, early in their decision-making process, that there is money to help them complete college."

Stacy Lightfoot, vice president of college and career success at the Public Education Foundation of Chattanooga-Hamilton County, said: "The FAFSA is even more complex for families, especially those from underserved backgrounds, who get lost answering over 100 questions on the form. [This] proposal to simplify the FAFSA is long overdue and has been thoughtfully created to ensure better access to college by eliminating unnecessary and irrelevant questions. The new bill takes the most intimidating aspect of the college process away for students."

Executive director of Alabama Possible, Kristina Scott, said: "With the FAFSA Simplification Act implementation of simple, clear Pell Grant look up tables, we will be able to talk with students beginning in middle school about what aid for which they should be eligible and how to access it by completing a shorter, simplified FAFSA. These two changes can shift the conversation about postsecondary education from 'if' to 'when' for low-income and first-generation college-going students and their families."

Mike Krause, director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission: "For Tennessee, the complexity of the FAFSA presents a barrier for students attempting to enroll in Tennessee Promise, Tennessee Reconnect, and other financial aid programs like the HOPE Access Grant . . . Simplifying the FAFSA would improve college access for students in Tennessee by allowing the federal government and our state to better target financial aid to the neediest students."

Barbara Duffield, Executive Director of School House Connection, said: "The FAFSA Simplification Act removes barriers to financial aid for some of our nation's most vulnerable youth—those who experience homelessness or foster care."

NASFAA, NATIONAL COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK RELEASE STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR BIPARTISAN FAFSA SIMPLIFICATION ACT

Sens. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Doug Jones (D-Ala.) today introduced the

FAFSA Simplification Act of 2019, a bill that would create a streamlined financial aid application process, while still giving schools, states, and scholarship providers enough information to offer financial aid to today's diverse college-going population. Under this proposal, all students would be able to determine their Pell Grant eligibility through Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and household size.

For far too long, thousands of students who have every intention of attending college never enroll, or end up leaving millions of financial aid dollars on the table—including \$2.3 billion in Pell Grant dollars annually—in large part due to the overly complex nature of applying for and receiving federal financial aid. While we have made significant progress toward simplifying the process in recent years—through the addition of skip logic to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and allowing some income data to be imported via the Internal Revenue Service's Data Retrieval Tool, for example—we can do better.

The FAFSA Simplification Act would significantly reduce the number of questions on the FAFSA—including irrelevant and unnecessary questions, such as the Selective Service and drug offense-related questions—and require students to only answer questions based on their family income.

"Taking into account feedback from financial aid professionals nationwide, this bill takes a commonsense approach to shorten the FAFSA application to an extent that would not deprive institutions of crucial information needed to appropriately disburse billions of dollars of financial aid to eligible students," said NASFAA President Justin Draeger. "In short, this bill makes the process of applying for student aid much easier for all students, but the biggest positive impact will be for our nation's neediest students."

"NCAN has long advocated for a streamlined FAFSA to lessen one of the barriers faced by many first-generation students going to college. By combining this simpler FAFSA with a Pell Grant look-up table, we can show students, early in their decision-making process, that there is money to help them complete college," said NCAN Executive Director Kim Cook. "We thank Senators Alexander and Jones for championing this issue and the students we serve."

A few NASFAA and NCAN members also weighed in on the bill and what it would mean for students:

"Legislation that makes the process for accessing financial aid simpler for our students and families is a win," said Brenda Hicks, director of financial aid at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas. "Condensing eligibility for the Federal Pell Grant to a look-up table places pivotal information directly in students' hands in a concise and accessible way. This kind of knowledge could make the difference between a student who feels a college education is out of reach financially and a student who suddenly has hope for their future."

"One of the biggest reasons students and families don't complete the FAFSA is that they don't think they will be eligible for any financial aid. This is true even for Pell-eligible families," said Kristina Scott, executive director of Alabama Possible. "With the FAFSA Simplification Act implementation of simple, clear Pell Grant look up tables, we will be able to talk with students beginning in middle school about what aid for which they should be eligible and how to access it by completing a shorter, simplified FAFSA. These two changes can shift the conversation about postsecondary education from 'if' to 'when' for low-income and first-generation college-going students and their families."

"FAFSA simplification is an important step in the right direction to make the financial aid process more transparent for students and their families," said Lori Vedder, director of the office of financial aid at the University of Michigan-Flint. "Allowing our neediest students to avoid answering unnecessary questions when applying for financial aid would remove barriers that often keep many students from matriculating. Having an earlier and upfront indication of their eligibility to receive crucial need-based aid, such as the federal Pell Grant, will help these students realize they have the ability to attend and afford college."

"Completing the FAFSA, for as long as I can remember, is a daunting process—one that my mother needed help with over 20 years ago for my sister and me," shared Stacy Lightfoot, vice president of college and career success at the Public Education Foundation of Chattanooga-Hamilton County. "Now, the FAFSA is even more complex for families, especially those from underserved backgrounds, who get lost answering over 100 questions on the form. Senator Alexander's proposal to simplify the FAFSA is long overdue and has been thoughtfully created to ensure better access to college by eliminating unnecessary and irrelevant questions. The new bill takes the most intimidating aspect of the college process away for students."

NASFAA and NCAN look forward to working with lawmakers as this bill moves through the legislative process. To request an interview with a NASFAA spokesperson, please email Director of Communications Erin Powers or call (202) 785-6959. To request an interview with an NCAN spokesperson, please email Communications Manager Kelly Mae Ross or call (202) 347-4848 x210.

ABOUT NCAN

The mission of the National College Access Network is to build, strengthen, and empower communities and stakeholders to close equity gaps in postsecondary attainment for all students. Based in Washington, D.C., NCAN is a nonprofit membership organization serving over 500 members that touch the lives of more than 2 million students each year. Our members include college access programs, school districts, institutions of higher education, and other nonprofits that are committed to the vision that all students have an equitable opportunity to achieve social and economic mobility through higher education. For more information, please visit www.collegeaccess.org.

ABOUT NASFAA

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) is a nonprofit membership organization that represents more than 28,000 financial aid professionals at nearly 3,000 colleges, universities, and career schools across the country. NASFAA member institutions serve nine out of every 10 undergraduates in the United States. Based in Washington, D.C., NASFAA is the only national association with a primary focus on student aid legislation, regulatory analysis, and training for financial aid administrators. For more information, visit www.nasfaa.org.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. BURR, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. RISCH, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. WICKER):

S.J. Res. 59. A joint resolution expressing the sense of Congress on the precipitous withdrawal of United States Armed Forces from Syria and

Afghanistan, and Turkey's unprovoked incursion into Syria; read the first time.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. J. RES. 59

Whereas the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham, better known by its acronym ISIS, flourished in the chaos unleashed by the civil war in Syria and at one point controlled extensive territory in Iraq and Syria;

Whereas ISIS murdered thousands of innocent civilians, including Americans, and sought to ethnically cleanse the territory it controlled of religious minorities;

Whereas the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, which is composed of Kurdish and Arab fighters, remains an essential United States partner in the successful campaign to destroy ISIS' so-called "caliphate";

Whereas, backed by the United States and United States allies, the Syrian Democratic Forces liberated millions of Syrians from ISIS' terrorist regime, and sustained approximately 11,000 casualties in the fight;

Whereas ISIS, al Qaeda, and their affiliates have proven resilient and have regrouped when the United States and its partners have withdrawn from the fight against them;

Whereas Turkey's unprovoked incursion into northeastern Syria, which began on October 9, 2019, has displaced more than 166,000 civilians, according to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees, and dozens of civilians have been killed on both sides;

Whereas, as a result of Turkey's incursion into northeastern Syria and the withdrawal of United States Armed Forces, the Syrian Democratic Forces have turned to Russia and the brutal Assad regime for support, while more than a hundred ISIS-affiliated detainees have escaped from detention facilities; and

Whereas the Assad regime is responsible for murdering at least 500,000 civilians and displacing at least 12,000,000 Syrians, or roughly half the country's population at the time that the civil war began in 2011, and the regime's return to northeastern Syria through its new partnership with the Syrian Democratic Forces will allow the regime to extend its murderous campaign and again subjugate the Kurdish, Sunni Arab, and religious minorities of northeastern Syria: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress—

(1) condemns in the strongest terms the Government of Turkey's escalating hostilities against Kurdish partners of the United States in Syria, while recognizing the Government of Turkey's legitimate humanitarian, economic, and security concerns emanating from the conflict in Syria;

(2) calls upon the United States Government to pressure the Government of Turkey, including through sanctions, to act with restraint, provide accountability for human rights abuses conducted by militias acting in support of Turkish military operations, and curtail its hostilities against United States partner forces in Syria;

(3) reiterates United States opposition to the forced repatriation of refugees from third countries into Syria, and calls upon all refugee returns to be safe, dignified, and voluntary;

(4) urges the President to rescind his invitation to the White House to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan until a more enduring cease-fire has been established be-

tween Turkish and Kurdish forces in northeastern Syria;

(5) calls upon the United States Government to continue supporting liberated Syrian Kurdish and Arab communities in northeastern Syria through humanitarian support, including those displaced or otherwise affected by ongoing violence in Syria, and calls upon other nations to increase support to stabilization efforts in northeastern Syria;

(6) strongly opposes any abandonment of our Kurdish and Arab partners in Syria;

(7) calls for a halt to the withdrawal of United States Armed Forces from Syria where practical, and calls for the continued use of air power to target ISIS and provide protection of ethnic and religious minorities in northeastern Syria;

(8) expresses support for a continued United States military presence in Iraq, along with efforts to help Iraqi forces control their border, protect their sovereignty, and counter ISIS;

(9) recognizes the continuing threat to United States and United States allies posed by al Qaeda and ISIS, which maintain an ability to operate in Syria and Afghanistan;

(10) warns that a precipitous withdrawal of United States forces from the ongoing fight against these groups, without effective, countervailing efforts to secure gains in Syria and Afghanistan, could allow terrorists to regroup, destabilize critical regions, and create vacuums that could be filled by Iran or Russia, to the detriment of United States interests and those of our allies;

(11) recognizes that an unbroken chain of Iranian-controlled territory across Syria poses a significant threat to Israel;

(12) reiterates support for international diplomatic efforts to facilitate peaceful, negotiated resolutions to the ongoing conflicts in Syria and Afghanistan on terms that respect the rights of innocent civilians and deny safe havens to terrorists;

(13) encourages close collaboration between the executive branch and the legislative branch to ensure continuing strong, bipartisan support for United States military operations in Syria and Afghanistan; and

(14) calls upon the President to certify whether conditions have been met for the enduring defeat of al Qaeda and ISIS before initiating any further significant withdrawal of United States forces from the region.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 369—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. 369

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 Central Intelligence Agency, 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, mostly in North Carolina, 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 officials of the Government of Vietnam have forced Montagnards to publicly denounce their religion, arrested and imprisoned Montagnards who organized public demonstrations, and mistreated Montagnards in detention;

Whereas some Montagnard Americans have complained that Vietnamese authorities either have prevented them from visiting Vietnam or have subjected them to interrogation upon re-entering the country on visits;

Whereas the Department of State's 2018 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices ("2018 Human Rights Report") documents that, despite Vietnam's significant economic