

changes that States must make in their laws to qualify for Federal funds. Our bill rejects this approach. Instead, we provide the States with Federal support to improve their criminal justice identification, information and communication systems without prescribing new Federal mandates.

Mr. President, I am also pleased we are passing, as title II of this bill, the Federal-State "III" Compact for exchange of criminal history records for noncriminal justice purposes. This Compact is the product of a decade-long effort by federal and state law enforcement officials to establish a legal framework for the exchange of criminal history records for authorized noncriminal justice purposes, such as security clearances, employment or licensing background checks.

Since 1924, the FBI has collected and maintained duplicate state and local fingerprint cards, along with arrest and disposition records. Today, the FBI has over 200 million fingerprint cards in its system. These FBI records are accessible to authorized government entities for both criminal and authorized noncriminal justice purposes.

Maintaining duplicate files at the FBI is costly and leads to inaccuracies in the criminal history records, since follow-up disposition information from the States is often incomplete. Such a large central database of routinely incomplete criminal history records raises significant privacy concerns.

In addition, the FBI releases these records for noncriminal justice purposes (as authorized by Federal law), to State agencies upon request, even if the State from which the records originated or the receiving State more narrowly restricts the dissemination of such records for noncriminal justice purposes.

The Compact is an effort to get the FBI out of the business of holding a duplicate copy of every State and local criminal history record, and instead to keep those records at the State level. Once fully implemented, the FBI will only need to hold the Interstate Identification Index (III), consisting of the national fingerprint file and a pointer index to direct the requestor to the correct State records repository. The Compact would eliminate the necessity for duplicate records at the FBI for those States participating in the Compact.

Eventually, when all the States become full participants in the Compact, the FBI's centralized files of state offender records will be discontinued and users of such records will obtain those records from the appropriate State's central repository (or from the FBI if the offender has a Federal record).

The Compact would establish both a framework for this cooperative exchange of criminal history records for noncriminal justice purposes, and create a Compact Council with representatives from the FBI and the States to monitor system operations and issue necessary rules and procedures for the

integrity and accuracy of the records and compliance with privacy standards. Importantly, this Compact would not in any way expand or diminish noncriminal justice purposes for which criminal history records may be used under existing State or Federal law.

Overall, I believe that the Compact would increase the accuracy, completeness and privacy protection for criminal history records.

In addition, the Compact would result in important cost savings from establishing a decentralized system. Under the system envisioned by the Compact, the FBI would hold only an "index and pointer" to the records maintained at the originating State. The FBI would no longer have to maintain duplicate State records. Moreover, States would no longer have the burden and costs of submitting arrest fingerprints and charge/disposition data to the FBI for all arrests. Instead, the State would only have to submit to the FBI the fingerprints and textual identification data for a person's first arrest.

With this system, criminal history records would be more up-to-date, or complete, because a decentralized system will keep the records closer to their point of origin in State repositories, eliminating the need for the States to keep sending updated disposition information to the FBI. To ensure further accuracy, the Compact would require requests for criminal history checks for noncriminal justice purposes to be submitted with fingerprints or some other form of positive identification, to avoid mistaken release of records.

Furthermore, under the Compact, the newly-created Council must establish procedures to require that the most current records are requested and that when a new need arises, a new record check is conducted.

Significantly, the newly-created Council must establish privacy enhancing procedures to ensure that requested criminal history records are only used by authorized officials for authorized purposes. Furthermore, the Compact makes clear that only the FBI and authorized representatives from the State repository may have direct access to the FBI index.

The Council must also ensure that only legally appropriate information is released and, specifically, that record entries that may not be used for noncriminal justice purposes are deleted from the response.

Thus, while the Compact would require the release of arrest records to a requesting State, the Compact would also ensure that if disposition records are available that the complete record be released. Also, the Compact would require States receiving records under the Compact to ensure that the records are disseminated in compliance with the authorized uses in that State. Consequently, under the Compact, a State that receives arrest-only information would have to give effect to disposition-only policies in that State and not

release that information for noncriminal justice purposes. Thus, in my view, the impact of the Compact for the privacy and accuracy of the records would be positive.

I am pleased to have joined with Senators HATCH and DEWINE to make a number of refinements to the Compact as transmitted by to us by the Administration. Specifically, we have worked to clarify that (1) the work of the Council includes establishing standards to protect the privacy of the records; (2) sealed criminal history records are not covered or subject to release for noncriminal justice purposes under the Compact; (3) the meetings of the Council are open to the public, and (4) the Council's decisions, rules and procedures are available for public inspection and copying and published in the Federal Register.

Commissioner Walton of the Vermont Department of Public Safety supports this Compact. He hopes that passage of the Compact will encourage Vermont to become a full participant in III for both criminal and noncriminal justice purposes, so that Vermont can "reap the benefits of cost savings and improved data quality." The Compact is also strongly supported by the FBI and SEARCH.

We all have an interest in making sure that the criminal history records maintained by our law enforcement agencies at the local, State and Federal levels, are complete, accurate and accessible only to authorized personnel for legally authorized purposes. This Compact is a significant step in the process of achieving that goal.

I know that the Justice Department, under Attorney General Reno's leadership, has made it a priority to modernize and automate criminal history records. Our legislation will continue that leadership by providing each State with the necessary resources to continue to make important efforts to bring their criminal justice systems up to date.

Mr. President, the Crime Identification Technology Act will ensure that each State has the resources to capture the power of emerging information, communications and record-keeping technologies to serve and protect all of our citizens.

Mr. JEFFORDS. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate agree to the amendment of the House.

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

COMMEMORATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar 476, S. Res. 207.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:
A resolution (S. Res. 207) commemorating the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the resolution?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I was proud to submit S. Res. 207 on April 2nd of this year, and I am very pleased to mark its adoption tonight.

Tonight's action by the Senate is but one small step to redress the very reason why the founders of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) felt compelled to take action 20 years ago. In 1978, Vietnam Veterans were suffering under the wave of anti-Vietnam sentiment that had swept the nation. Little recognition was given to their sacrifices during the war. And in fact, there was even a great deal of official denial about the extent of the price that had been paid by these veterans, both physical and emotional. For instance, it would be years before Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder was a recognized condition for many veterans and before the Federal Government admitted that our use of Agent Orange had left a terrible legacy of continued suffering for our veterans. The founders of the VVA felt that they needed an organization to speak directly to those needs. The outpouring of enthusiasm from the veterans themselves demonstrated the depth of these feelings.

I am also very proud that Chapter One was founded in my home town of Rutland, Vermont. Vermonters have maintained a prominent voice in the organization, and are active in defining its future direction.

The VVA is not focused just on the three decades behind us. It continues to look to the large challenges ahead both for veterans as a group and Vietnam Veterans in particular. Just as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial is a permanent reminder of the sacrifices of the past, the VVA will be a continual voice for pragmatism and commitment to the needs of the veteran.

I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, a motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and a statement of explanation appear in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 207) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 207

Whereas the year 1998 marks the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Vietnam Veterans of America;

Whereas the history of the Vietnam Veterans of America organization is a story of America's gradual recognition of the tremendous sacrifices of its Vietnam-era veterans and their families;

Whereas the Vietnam Veterans of America is dedicated to serving its membership through advocacy for its membership;

Whereas the Vietnam Veterans of America provides public and member awareness of critical issues affecting Vietnam-era veterans and their families;

Whereas the local grassroots efforts of Vietnam Veterans of America chapters like Chapter One in Rutland, Vermont, which was founded 18 years ago in April 1980, have greatly contributed to the quality of lives of veterans in our Nation's communities;

Whereas the Vietnam Veterans of America promotes its principles through volunteerism, professional advocacy, and claims work; and

Whereas the future of the Vietnam Veterans of America relies not only on its past accomplishments, but on future accomplishments of its membership that will ensure the Vietnam Veterans of America remains a leader among veterans advocacy organizations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) commemorates the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Vietnam Veterans of America and commends it for its advancement of veterans rights which set the standard for other veterans organizations around the country;

(2) asks all Americans to join in the celebration of the 20th birthday of the Vietnam Veterans of America and 20 years of advocacy for Vietnam veterans; and

(3) encourages the Vietnam Veterans of America to continue into the next millennium to represent and promote the goals of its organization in the veterans community and on Capitol Hill, and to continue organizing to keep its national membership of 51,000 members and 500 chapters strong.

TORTURE VICTIMS RELIEF ACT OF 1998

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4309, which is at the desk.

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

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4309) to provide a comprehensive program of support for victims of torture.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 3792

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I send an amendment to the desk and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Vermont [Mr. JEFFORDS], for Mr. GRAMS, proposes an amendment numbered 3792.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

Substitute language in Sec. 5 (b)(1) and (2) with the following:

(b) FUNDING.—

(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Of the amounts authorized to be appropriated for the Department of Health and Human Services for fiscal years 1999 and 2000, there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out subsection (a) (relating to assistance for domestic centers and programs for the treatment of victims of torture) \$5,000,000 for fis-

cal year 1999, and \$7,500,000 for fiscal year 2000.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Amounts appropriated pursuant to this subsection shall remain available until expended.

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to, that the bill be considered read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill appear at this point in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 3792) was agreed to.

The bill (H.R. 4309), as amended, was considered read the third time, and passed.

PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS ACT OF 1998

Mr. JEFFORDS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of calendar No. 686, S. 2358.

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

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2358) to provide for the establishment of a service-connection for illnesses associated with service in the Persian Gulf war, to extend and enhance certain health care authorities relating to such service, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Veteran's Affairs, with amendments, as follows:

(The parts of the bill intended to be stricken are shown in boldface brackets and the parts of the bill intended to be inserted are shown in italic.)

S. 2358

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the "Persian Gulf War Veterans Act of 1998".

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—SERVICE CONNECTION FOR PERSIAN GULF WAR ILLNESSES

Sec. 101. Presumption of service connection for illnesses associated with service in the Persian Gulf during the Persian Gulf War.

Sec. 102. Agreement with National Academy of Sciences.

Sec. 103. Monitoring of health status and health care of Persian Gulf War veterans.

Sec. 104. Reports on recommendations for additional scientific research.

Sec. 105. Outreach.

Sec. 106. Definitions.

TITLE II—EXTENSION AND ENHANCEMENT OF PERSIAN GULF WAR HEALTH CARE AUTHORITIES

Sec. 201. Extension of authority to provide health care for Persian Gulf War veterans.