

(6) activities that provide children with the support they need to develop skills and confidence, and find the inner strength—the will and fire of the human spirit—to make their dreams come true.

WAIVING CERTAIN ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to House Joint Resolution 131 received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 131) waiving certain enrollment requirements for the remainder of the One Hundred Fifth Congress with respect to any bill or joint resolution making general or continuing appropriations for fiscal year 1999.

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

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

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The joint resolution (H.J. Res. 131) was considered read the third time and passed.

AUTHORIZING TESTIMONY AND REPRESENTATION BY SENATE LEGAL COUNSEL

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 297 submitted earlier by Senators LOTT and DASCHLE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 297) to authorize testimony and representation of former and current Senate employees and representation of Senator CRAIG in *Student Loan Fund of Idaho, Inc. v. Riley, et al.*

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. LOTT. Mr. President, this resolution concerns a request for testimony in a civil action set for trial in the U.S. District Court for District of Idaho. This case arises out of a dispute between the plaintiff, a private corporation, and the Department of Education concerning the status of certain student loan guaranty reserve funds. Counsel for the plaintiff wishes to question a former member of Senator CRAIG's staff about her recollection of meetings with representatives from the Department of Education during a time period in which she served as a legislative aid to the Senator.

This resolution would authorize testimony by the former staff member,

and any other former or current employees of the Senate, except where a privilege should be asserted, with representation by the Senate Legal Counsel. The resolution would also authorize the Senate Legal Counsel to represent Senator CRAIG and his employees in connection with this matter in order to protect the Senator's privileges.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the resolution appear at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 297) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 297

Whereas, in the case of *Student Loan Fund of Idaho, Inc. v. Riley, et al.*, Case No. CV 94-0413-S-LMB, pending in the United States District Court for the District of Idaho, testimony has been requested from Elizabeth Criner, a former employee of Senator Larry Craig;

Whereas, pursuant to sections 703(a) and 704(a)(2) of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978, 2 U.S.C. §§288b(a) and 288c(a)(2), the Senate may direct its counsel to represent Senators and employees of the Senate with respect to any subpoena, order, or request for testimony relating to their official responsibilities;

Whereas, by the privileges of the Senate of the United States and Rule XI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, no evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may, by the judicial process, be taken from such control or possession but by permission of the Senate;

Whereas, when it appears that evidence under the control or in the possession of the Senate may promote the administration of justice, the Senate will take such action as will promote the ends of justice consistently with the privileges of the Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That Elizabeth Criner, and any other former or current Senate employee from whom testimony may be required, are authorized to testify in the case of *Student Loan Fund of Idaho, Inc. v. Riley, et al.*, except concerning matters for which a privilege should be asserted.

SEC. 2. The Senate Legal Counsel is authorized to represent Senator Larry Craig, Elizabeth Criner, and any other Member or employee of the Senate in connection with the testimony authorized in section one of this resolution.

AUTHORIZING THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE STATE OF MARYLAND

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4337 received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

A bill (H.R. 4337) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial as-

sistance to the State of Maryland for a pilot program to develop measures to eradicate or control nutria and restore marshland damaged by nutria.

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

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

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, this legislation authorizes the Secretary of Interior to provide assistance to the State of Maryland in controlling a non-native rodent—nutria—which is destroying wetlands and valuable habitat at and around Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Sponsored by my colleague Representative GILCHREST, the legislation establishes a three year demonstration program of methods of manage nutria populations and to restore marshlands damaged by the destructive creature.

Mr. President, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge is one of the real treasures and showplaces of our National Wildlife Refuge system. Established in the early 1930s to help preserve migratory waterfowl, the 20,000 acre refuge has become one of the chief wintering areas for Canada geese along the Atlantic Flyway. It is also home for the endangered Delmarva Fox Squirrel and more than 200 species of birds. As all who visit the refuge quickly discover, Blackwater is a very special place: a haven for fish and wildlife, a land of exceptional beauty, and a vital part of the natural heritage and quality of life that we enjoy in Maryland.

Unfortunately the Refuge and surrounding wetlands are being threatened by the prolific and highly invasive nonindigenous species nutria which are destroying the tidal marshes and even displacing other native species. Over the past three decades, the population of nutria in Maryland has grown exponentially from about 150 to as many as 150,000—a thousand fold increase. During that same period, Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge has lost more than 40 percent of its marshes—approximately 7,000 of 17,000 acres—due, in large part, to nutria. As nutria population densities continue to increase, so does the range of the creature and its associated ecological damage.

In order to respond to this threat, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, the University of Maryland and more than a dozen other partners have joined together to develop a plan to address marsh loss and control of nutria. The goal of this three year pilot program is to develop methods for intensive control of the nutria populations and to restore damaged marsh habitats. This legislation authorizes the Federal funds necessary to carry out the program. I urge adoption of the legislation.

Mr. COATS. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third