

I want to thank the sixteen Senators who cosponsored this bill, as well as Representative CLAY SHAW, who spearheaded House passage of the House version of this bill earlier this year. I also want to thank the Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith International, the Conference on Jewish Material Claims, the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, the American Jewish Committee, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, and the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors—the largest organization of Holocaust survivors in America. The support of these groups was critical in shepherding this legislation through the Senate.

After more than 50 years of injustice, Holocaust survivors and their families are reclaiming what is rightfully theirs. In passing this legislation today, Congress has done its part to protect the proceeds—and make that protection permanent.

REPEALING THE SUNSET OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TAX RELIEF RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2001

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Finance Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 2577 and that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 2577 and H.R. 4823 en bloc.

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

The clerk will read the bills by title en bloc.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2577) to repeal the sunset of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 with respect to the exclusion from Federal income tax for restitution received by victims of the Nazi Regime;

A bill (H.R. 4823) to repeal the sunset of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 with respect to the exclusion from Federal income tax for restitution received by victims of the Nazi Regime.

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

Mr. FITZGERALD. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bills be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, with no intervening action or debate, that any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD, and that the consideration of these items appear separately in the RECORD.

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

The bill (S. 2577) was read the third time and passed, as follows:

S. 2577

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 "Holocaust Restitution Tax Fairness Act of 2002".

SEC. 2. REPEAL OF APPLICABILITY OF SUNSET OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TAX RELIEF RECONCILIATION ACT OF 2001 WITH RESPECT TO EXCLUSION FROM FEDERAL INCOME TAX FOR RESTITUTION RECEIVED BY VICTIMS OF NAZI REGIME.

Section 901 of the Economic Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2001 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

"(c) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply to section 803 (relating to no federal income tax on restitution received by victims of the Nazi regime or their heirs or estates)."

The bill (H.R. 4823) was read the third time and passed.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I congratulate my friend on the passage of this legislation. I appreciate the Senator's persistence. It is very important legislation. There are a lot of happy old people today who have been waiting for a continuation of these benefits for a long time. So I thank the Senator very much for his work.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the staff of Senator THURMOND be granted floor privileges for the next half hour.

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

HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACT AMENDMENTS OF 2002

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4883, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4883) to reauthorize the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998, and for other purposes.

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

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today to comment on H.R. 4883, a bill to reauthorize the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998. This legislation authorizes programs supporting NOAA's strategic missions to promote safe navigation and sustain healthy coasts. I am especially supportive of this bill because it improves the hydrographic services around our Nation and authorizes the activities of the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA Corps.

Last week Congress approved the conference report on the Maritime Transportation Security Act, which will enhance security in our Nation's ports. H.R. 4883 authorizes some key provisions to support that effort by authorizing and increasing the number of officers in our NOAA Corps and supporting establishment of real time hydrographic monitoring systems to enhance navigation and safety. NOAA's hydrographic programs share data and

work closely with the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy, and such collaborations have increased since September 11, 2001. Accurate navigation information supports safe and efficient military deployment and seaport evacuation. About 90 percent of all military equipment and supplies for overseas operations are shipped out of U.S. ports.

Seaports have always been an integral part of our Nation's commerce. Today, more than 95 percent of foreign trade by weight moves by sea, and trade is projected to double by 2020. Vessels are twice as large as they were 50 years ago, testing the capabilities of many ports. Increased ferry, cruise line, and recreational boating activities contribute a rise in seaport congestion. Each year there are about 3,500 commercial and 7,000 recreational boating accidents.

The safe and efficient movement of products depends upon the marine transportation system. Advanced, highly accurate hydrographic, oceanographic and related data improve mariners' situational, three-dimensional awareness, which increases efficiency, reduces risk, and safeguards the marine environment. Such advanced data and services are an integral part of implementing an internationally compliant electronic chart display and information system.

I am especially supportive and pleased that this bill includes language to reauthorize the NOAA Corps. The NOAA Corps, the smallest of the seven uniformed services of the United States, plays a very important role at NOAA and for the Nation. The service, consisting of approximately 265 commissioned officers, provides NOAA with professionals trained in engineering, earth sciences, oceanography, meteorology, fisheries, science, and other related disciplines. The officers serve in assignments within the five major line offices of NOAA: National Ocean Service, NOS; National Weather Service, NWS; National Marine Fisheries Service, NMFS; Oceanic and Atmospheric Research OAR; and National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, NESDIS. Officers operate ships, fly aircraft into hurricanes, lead mobile field parties, manage research projects, conduct diving operations, and serve in staff positions throughout NOAA. In addition they conduct hydrographic surveys along our Nation's coast in order to make our waters safe for marine commerce.

The NOAA Corps is essential to NOAA's coverage of our seas and our skies; in hours of crisis, NOAA employees have been found issuing the tornado warnings that saved hundreds of lives from a deadly storm, flying into the eyes of hurricanes to gather information about possible landfall, fighting to free three gray whales trapped in the ice, fielding a massive scientific operation to guide the recovery from an oil spill, and monitoring via satellites the movement of hurricanes and other severe storms, volcanic ash and wildfires that threaten communities.