

and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 2481. A bill to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to hire additional full-time non-supervisory import specialists of the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. KERRY):

S. 2482. A bill to authorize funding for State-administered bridge loan programs, to increase the access of small businesses to export assistance center services in areas in which the President declared a major disaster as a result of Hurricane Katrina of 2005, Hurricane Rita of 2005, or Hurricane Wilma of 2005, to authorize additional disaster loans, to require reporting regarding the administration of the disaster loan programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. ENSIGN (for himself, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2483. A bill to establish a Law Enforcement Assistance Force in the Department of Homeland Security to facilitate the contributions of retired law enforcement officers during major disasters; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. OBAMA (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. HARKIN, Mrs. CLINTON, and Mr. LIEBERMAN):

S. 2484. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prohibit the disclosure of tax return information by tax return preparers to third parties; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2485. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a source for payments to States and counties under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LAUTENBERG (for himself, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. KERRY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. BIDEN):

S. 2486. A bill to ensure that adequate actions are taken to detect, prevent, and minimize the consequences of chemical releases that result from terrorist attacks and other criminal activity that may cause substantial harm to public health and safety and the environment; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. ENSIGN:

S. Res. 415. A resolution expressing the continuing support of the Senate to the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC), and commending the efforts of that vital program as it carries out its mission of instilling the values of citizenship and service in the hearts and minds of the youth of the United States; to the Committee on Armed Services.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 185

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Florida, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 185, a bill to amend

title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for the reduction of certain Survivor Benefit Plan annuities by the amount of dependency and indemnity compensation and to modify the effective date for paid-up coverage under the Survivor Benefit Plan.

S. 513

At the request of Mr. GREGG, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 513, a bill to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivisions.

S. 811

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) were added as cosponsors of S. 811, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the bicentennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln.

S. 828

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 828, a bill to enhance and further research into paralysis and to improve rehabilitation and the quality of life for persons living with paralysis and other physical disabilities, and for other purposes.

S. 1440

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1440, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide coverage for cardiac rehabilitation and pulmonary rehabilitation services.

S. 1815

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. FRIST) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1815, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to prescribe the binding oath or affirmation of renunciation and allegiance required to be naturalized as a citizen of the United States, to encourage and support the efforts of prospective citizens of the United States to become citizens, and for other purposes.

S. 1865

At the request of Mrs. DOLE, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1865, a bill to establish the SouthEast Crescent Authority, and for other purposes.

S. 1952

At the request of Mr. COLEMAN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. DAYTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1952, a bill to provide grants for rural health information technology development activities.

S. 2025

At the request of Mr. BAYH, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. CLINTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2025, a bill to promote the national se-

curity and stability of the United States economy by reducing the dependence of the United States on oil through the use of alternative fuels and new technology, and for other purposes.

S. 2284

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2284, a bill to extend the termination date for the exemption of returning workers from the numerical limitations for temporary workers.

S. 2292

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. TALENT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2292, a bill to provide relief for the Federal judiciary from excessive rent charges.

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2292, *supra*.

S. 2321

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2321, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of Louis Braille.

S. 2370

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2370, a bill to promote the development of democratic institutions in areas under the administrative control of the Palestinian Authority, and for other purposes.

S. 2403

At the request of Mr. THOMAS, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2403, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to include in the boundaries of the Grand Teton National Park land and interests in land of the GT Park Subdivision, and for other purposes.

S. 2426

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2426, a bill to facilitate the protection of minors using the Internet from material that is harmful to minors, and for other purposes.

S. 2460

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2460, a bill to permit access to certain information in the Firearms Trace System database.

S. 2475

At the request of Mr. SALAZAR, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S.

2475, a bill to establish the Commission to Study the Potential Creation of a National Museum of the American Latino Community, to develop a plan of action for the establishment and maintenance of a National Museum of the American Latino Community in Washington, DC, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 65

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 65, a concurrent resolution recognizing the benefits and importance of Federally-qualified health centers and their Medicaid prospective payment system.

S. RES. 408

At the request of Mr. HAGEL, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 408, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the President should declare lung cancer a public health priority and should implement a comprehensive interagency program that will reduce lung cancer mortality by at least 50 percent by 2015.

S. RES. 409

At the request of Mr. FEINGOLD, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 409, a resolution supporting democracy, development, and stabilization in Haiti.

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 409, *supra*.

At the request of Mr. LIEBERMAN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 409, *supra*.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself and Mr. KERRY):

S. 2482. A bill to authorize funding for State-administered bridge loan programs, to increase the access of small businesses to export assistance center services in areas in which the President declared a major disaster as a result of Hurricane Katrina of 2005, Hurricane Rita of 2005, or Hurricane Wilma of 2005, to authorize additional disaster loans, to require reporting regarding the administration of the disaster loan programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor with my ranking member and leader on this issue, Senator JOHN KERRY of Massachusetts, to speak for a few moments about a bill the two of us are going to introduce today, the Gulf Coast Open for Business Act of 2006, by Senators LANDRIEU, KERRY and others. Let me first commend my colleague and thank him for joining me here today. He will be giving more details about the act, which he has worked with my staff and others to craft, so let me add some personal perspective.

I stand here again, on behalf of the people of Louisiana, and the whole gulf

coast, who have just been devastated by the two most powerful storms to ever hit the United States in recorded history, and as you yourself know, because you were down in the gulf and have been a frequent champion for our cause. It is still hard, though, to describe to our colleagues the current situation there. Not only were these two hurricanes quite powerful, at some point category 4 and 5, which are killer storms, but just as devastating was the flooding that ensued by the collapse of the Federal levee system—a collapse because of inadequate engineering. Both the hurricanes and the flooding have literally devastated a major metropolitan area which sits in the heart of America's only energy coast, the gulf coast, and has been devastating to large and small businesses alike. We are here today to talk about our small businesses and their struggle for survival. They are indeed the backbone of our economic recovery.

We have first focused on levees, appropriately, and gulf coast restoration efforts, without which no recovery will be possible. We have also tried to struggle keeping children in school, keeping families sheltered, literally from the elements in temporary housing, when we think 7 months on after Katrina and Rita, recovery is going to start with our small businesses.

As I mentioned, yesterday marked the seven month anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Katrina was the most destructive hurricane ever to hit the United States. The next month, in September, Hurricane Rita hit the Louisiana and Texas coast. It was the second most powerful hurricane ever to hit the United States, wreaking havoc on the southwestern part of my state and the east Texas coast. This one-two punch devastated Louisiana lives, communities and jobs, stretching from Cameron Parish in the west to Plaquemines Parish in the east.

We are now rebuilding our State and the wide variety of communities that were devastated by Rita and Katrina, areas representing a diverse mix of population, income and cultures. We hope to restore the region's uniqueness and its greatness. To do that, we need to rebuild our local economies for now and far into the future.

Before last year's storms, Louisiana had 86,000 small businesses, employing over 850,000 people. Their annual payroll was \$21.9 billion.

My State estimates that there were 71,000 businesses in the Katrina and Rita disaster zones. A total of 18,752 of these businesses catastrophically destroyed. However, on a wider scale, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, over 125,000 small and medium-sized businesses in the gulf region were disrupted by Katrina and Rita. As of this month, local chambers of commerce report that as many as two-thirds of their members had not resumed business operations. We will never succeed without these small businesses. They will be the key to the

revitalization. I am here with my colleague to say that the regular approach, the standard operation, the mousetrap that we created to handle past disasters is simply not sufficient.

Some of the people who work for the Small Business Administration and FEMA are terrific. You could not find better human beings on the face of the Earth. But it is not the individual human beings who are lacking here; it is the system that is insufficient and inadequate to the task.

Senator KERRY and I come to the floor today to speak about this bill that will create new models, create enhanced help from the Federal Government so that the businesses in Louisiana can at least be met halfway in their struggle to get their roofs back on, their inventories back in supply, and new markets opened up, since the markets around them have collapsed. The communities they served and hold to are in some cases destroyed, in others dispersed across the country. If we don't help them now, building a strong gulf coast will be all the more difficult without our small businesses.

After talking to the business leaders and small businesses in my State, there are three things that they need right now: technical assistance, contracting assistance, and assistance with SBA disaster loans. For example, many of our small businesses need help navigating the SBA assistance programs or, with much of their customer base in other States, others are now looking overseas for new markets. Our bill includes a provision to waive the \$100,000 cap on portability grants to SBDCs and allows SBDCs to receive these grants for disaster relief. Our bill also contains funds for the SBA to create a gulf coast international finance specialist, based in the gulf, who would provide essential technical assistance for small businesses looking for export financing.

It is vital to the economic recovery in Louisiana that our small businesses are given the opportunity to take part in the reconstruction of their State. Our businesses want to help rebuild their communities, but continue to have trouble getting Federal recovery contracts and keep getting mixed signals from FEMA.

With these facts in mind, our bill sets a small business prime contracting goal of 30 percent for Federal emergency contracts to rebuild the affected areas. This is to ensure that small businesses, particularly those located in the disaster area and that employ individuals in the affected areas, should receive a fair share of Federal contracting dollars. Our bill also makes the disaster areas eligible for HUBZones status to promote business growth.

Our businesses are struggling to deal with the SBA bureaucracy. Too often, when they get action on their loan application, it is a letter of rejection rather than a check.

The SBA has repeatedly touted how it has staffed up and increased its loan