

for funding with a broad array of other teacher and administrator professional development and training funds.

Another provision that has been added are instructions that States and schools districts allocate their funding in a manner that creates a continuum of small classes for students as they progress from kindergarten to third grade and beyond. Research has shown that the benefits of attending small classes are the greatest for students in kindergarten through third grade, with further benefits accruing to those students for each additional year spent in small classes. The ultimate goal is that a student in the kindergarten grade matriculates through first, second, and third grades—each with an average class size of 18 students or less.

The bill also establishes a Web-based National Clearinghouse on Class Size that would provide research, best practices, and resources for small classroom instruction. This information needs to be broadly available and easily accessible to the education community as well as the public.

Additionally, the legislation requires an independent evaluation to be conducted to determine the impact and effectiveness of the initiative and the National Center for Education Statistics to report on average class size data. It is imperative that we understand, objectively, how these funds are spent, and what outcomes are achieved.

Mr. President, the ultimate success of our education system depends on teachers. Ask any teacher if it matters whether they are teaching a class of 18 students or 25 students and you will get the same answer every time: absolutely. Smaller classes will provide teachers with the resources they need to create the opportunities for learning that our students deserve.

By Mr. GREGG (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. DODD, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DOMENICI, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SMITH, Mrs. CLINTON, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. SPENCER, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. SUNUNU, and Mr. PRYOR):

S. 2123. A bill to provide collective bargaining rights for public safety officers employed by States or their political subdivisions; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is a privilege to join Senator GREGG today in reintroducing the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act, to guarantee that all firefighters, police officers, emergency medical personnel, and other first responders across the country have fundamental collective bargaining rights. The issue is one of basic respect for this valuable workforce, and I urge all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

The first responders of our State and local governments are on the front

lines of the effort to keep America safe. They perform difficult, exhausting work, day and night, to preserve and protect our communities. In this post-9/11 era, they have an indispensable role in homeland security as well. It is vital to our national interest to ensure that these essential public services are carried out as effectively as possible.

Strong partnerships between first responders and the cities and States they serve are vital to public safety. Studies show that cooperation between public safety employers and employees improves the quality of services communities receive and reduces worker fatalities. These strong, cooperative partnerships are built on bargaining relationships. Every New York City firefighter, emergency medical technician, and police officer who responded to the disaster at the World Trade Center on 9/11 was a union member under a collective bargaining agreement, and those agreements strengthened their ability to respond in that time of crisis.

Unfortunately, many first responders across the country do not have basic workplace protections. Twenty-nine States and the District of Columbia guarantee all public safety workers the right to bargain collectively, but 21 States deny some or all of their public safety workers this fundamental right.

Our Nation's first responders have earned the right to be treated with respect. The Cooperation Act will ensure that they receive that respect and will benefit from the same protections enjoyed by many other workers across the country. The bill gives public safety officers the right to bargain over wages, hours, and working conditions, and ensures that these rights are enforceable in State court. It also provides an efficient and effective means to resolve disputes in labor-management conflicts.

The Cooperation Act accomplishes these important goals in reasonable, moderate ways. States that already have collective bargaining in place for public safety workers are not affected by the bill. States that do not currently provide these protections may establish their own collective bargaining systems or ask the assistance of the Federal Labor Relations Authority in doing so. This approach respects existing State laws and gives each State full authority to decide how it will comply with the basic standards.

America's public safety workers are prepared to put their lives on the line for their community each and every day. They deserve a voice at the table in the life-and-death decisions about their work. It is essential for their safety, the safety of our communities, and the safety of our entire Nation. It is a matter of basic fairness for these courageous men and women to have the same rights that have long benefited so many other Americans. I urge Congress to act quickly to provide these fundamental protections.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 338—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL PASSPORT MONTH

Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 338

Whereas, through international travel, Americans can individually play a major role towards improving foreign relations by building bridges and making connections with citizens of other countries;

Whereas interacting with the global community inspires Americans to reflect on the diverse multi-cultural background that has defined the United States as a great country of cooperation and progress;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad creates connections with the global community;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad promotes understanding and goodwill throughout the world, opening the doors to increased peace, tolerance, and acceptance;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad opens up a wealth of educational opportunities and experiences for Americans of all ages;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad enables Americans to see first-hand the effect of the United States on the world, including the tremendous amount of humanitarian aid given by the United States through both public and private sectors;

Whereas having a passport and traveling abroad reminds Americans that they are members of a global family and gives them opportunities to mend rifts around the world;

Whereas fewer than 23 percent of Americans have passports, thereby limiting their ability to travel outside the United States;

Whereas the more Americans travel outside the United States, the more they will experience opportunities to increase their understanding of the world and the place of the United States in it;

Whereas the creation and support of a National Passport Month signals to Americans the important role they can play as ambassadors for the United States by serving as agents of understanding, tolerance, and mutual respect; and

Whereas travel publishers along with travel editors from the most prestigious media outlets in the United States, student travel organizations, and book sellers have designated September as "National Passport Month" to educate the public about the importance of having a passport and the positive impact international travel has on individuals: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Passport Month; and

(2) calls on the Federal Government, States, localities, schools, nonprofit organizations, businesses, other entities, and the people of the United States to observe National Passport Month with appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 339—EXPRESSION OF THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE SITUATION IN BURMA

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. LUGAR, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DODD, Mr. DURBIN, Mr.