

health care providers in the United States.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 462—DESIGNATING THE FIRST WEEK OF APRIL 2008 AS “NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK”

Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mr. REID, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. TESTER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. ISAACSON, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, and Mr. KENNEDY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 462

Whereas dangerous asbestos fibers are invisible and cannot be smelled or tasted;

Whereas the inhalation of airborne asbestos fibers can cause significant damage;

Whereas these fibers can cause mesothelioma, asbestosis, and other health problems;

Whereas asbestos-related diseases can take 10 to 50 years to present themselves;

Whereas the expected survival time for those diagnosed with mesothelioma is between 6 and 24 months;

Whereas generally little is known about late stage treatment and there is no cure for asbestos-related diseases;

Whereas early detection of asbestos-related diseases may give some patients increased treatment options and might improve their prognosis;

Whereas the United States has substantially reduced its consumption of asbestos yet continues to consume almost 2,000 metric tons of the fibrous mineral for use in certain products throughout the Nation;

Whereas asbestos-related diseases have killed thousands of people in the United States;

Whereas asbestos exposures continue and safety and prevention will reduce and has reduced significantly asbestos exposure and asbestos-related diseases;

Whereas asbestos has been a cause of occupational cancer;

Whereas thousands of workers in the United States face significant asbestos exposure;

Whereas thousands of people in the United States die from asbestos-related diseases every year;

Whereas a significant percentage of all asbestos-related disease victims were exposed to asbestos on naval ships and in shipyards;

Whereas asbestos was used in the construction of a significant number of office buildings and public facilities built before 1975;

Whereas people in the small community of Libby, Montana have asbestos-related diseases at a significantly higher rate than the national average and suffer from mesothelioma at a significantly higher rate than the national average; and

Whereas the establishment of a “National Asbestos Awareness Week” would raise public awareness about the prevalence of asbestos-related diseases and the dangers of asbestos exposure: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the first week of April 2008 as “National Asbestos Awareness Week”;

(2) urges the Surgeon General, as a public health issue, to warn and educate people that asbestos exposure may be hazardous to their health; and

(3) respectfully requests the Secretary of the Senate to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Surgeon General.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise to talk about an important resolution I

am submitting. It is the asbestos awareness week resolution. This resolution has passed the Senate for 3 years, and I am pleased to submit it again this year.

This is a very deeply personal issue for me. About 8 years ago, I was in Libby, MT, in the living room of Les Skramstad, and there were several people in the room who were suffering from asbestos-related diseases. This was in Libby. Since then, about 200 people have died of asbestos-related diseases.

Les Skramstad, whom I met that day about 8 or 9 years ago, was dying from mesothelioma. He looked at me and said: As a U.S. Senator, I expect you do something to help us in Libby.

I said: You bet.

He looked me straight in the eye, and because he has been around a little bit, he said: Senator, I am going to be watching you to make sure that is not just an idle promise. I will be watching you.

Boy, I got the message loudly and clearly. I decided right then at that moment that I need to do all I can to help make sure that people in Libby, MT, get justice. As I said, over 200 people died since then.

He was an employee of a W.R. Grace mine. W.R. Grace clearly knew it was poisoning people in Libby, MT, in its mine there. It did not admit it. There is a criminal case going on right now against the officers of W.R. Grace claiming that they did know what they were doing.

Asbestos from this mine is called tremolite. It is not the ordinary crystal asbestos. This is tremolite asbestos, which is much more pernicious. It gets more deeply embedded in your lungs, more angles to the dust that gets into your lungs. It is harder to detect. Sometimes the latency period can be from 20 to 30 years.

Les would come home all dusty from the mine, and he would go home and embrace his wife, and his kids would jump into his lap. Guess what. Les is now dead. He died last month from mesothelioma. Les's wife is dying from asbestos-related diseases. Three of his four children are now dying.

It is the dust, the asbestos dust that is in Libby, MT. This stuff was used on playgrounds. It was used on golf courses. It was used for insulation in attics in homes. People have died and are dying. We are doing all we can to address this, and we are trying to get them proper medical care.

There is a clinic called the CARD Clinic in Libby which is doing a really good job in screening people, trying to find out who has it and who doesn't. Again, it is very hard to find. You need special techniques. We had to change the disability laws in America because—not change but point out to the Social Security Administration that this is a different kind of asbestos, it is not ordinary asbestos, and then decide whether to grant disability payments. They were looking at ordinary asbestos. They didn't know about this asbestos. They didn't know about tremolite

asbestos. Finally, people in Montana are getting disability benefits because of the asbestos diseases they have.

So I am very proud to submit this resolution. As I said, I have been doing this for several years, and we are making this National Asbestos Recognition Week in April, the first week in April. I believe it is so important to highlight this dread disease so we can stamp out the scourge and, in my view, finally banish asbestos. If we can accomplish that, then in some small way we have vindicated the people of Libby, MT.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that an oversight hearing has been scheduled before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The hearing will be held on Wednesday, March 5, 2008, at 3 p.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The purpose is to receive testimony on the impacts of the capability of the United States to maintain a domestic enrichment capability as a result of the recently initialed amendment between the United States and the Russian Federation on the Agreement Suspending the Antidumping Investigation on Uranium from the Russian Federation.

Because of the limited time available for the hearing, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record may do so by sending it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510-6150, or by e-mail to Rosemarie_Calabro@energy.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact Jonathan Epstein (202) 228-3031 or Rosemarie Calabro at (202) 224-5039.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 27, 2008, at 9:30 a.m., in open session, and possibly closed session, to receive testimony on the current and future worldwide threats to the national security of the United States.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, February 27, 2008, at 2:30 p.m., in room 253 of the Russell