

S. RES. 572

At the request of Mrs. DOLE, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 572, a resolution calling upon the Court of Appeal for the Second Appellate District of California to uphold the fundamental and constitutional right of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children.

S. RES. 580

At the request of Mr. BAYH, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 580, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate on preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. REID (for Mr. OBAMA (for himself, Mr. COBURN, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. MCCAIN)):

S. 3077. A bill to strengthen transparency and accountability in Federal spending; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. OBAMA. I am proud today to introduce the Strengthening Transparency and Accountability in Federal Spending Act of 2008. This important legislation will improve Government transparency and give the American people greater tools to track and monitor nearly \$2 trillion of Government spending on contracts, grants, and other forms of assistance.

Throughout my time in public service, I have consistently fought to increase the openness and accessibility of Government and to encourage greater participation by people of all interests and backgrounds in public debates. One of the most important public debates is how Washington spends the people's money. Unfortunately, it has been far too difficult for ordinary citizens to see where, how, and why money is spent.

Congress took a big step toward improving transparency two years ago when it passed the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act that I introduced with Senator COBURN. That bill, which created the public website USASpending.gov, makes information about nearly all Federal grants, contracts, loans and other financial assistance available to the public in a regularly updated, user-friendly, and searchable format. The website includes the names of entities receiving Federal awards, the amounts of the awards, information on the awards including transaction types, funding agencies, location, and other information. Soon the website will also include information about subcontracts and subgrants.

Our work is not done however. The early success of USASpending.gov has demonstrated that additional public information should be made available. Whether you believe Government ought to spend more or spend less or

just spend differently, we all should be able to agree that Government spending should be transparent and that public information ought to be accessible to the public. We should also be able to agree that the quality of Government financial data must be improved and made more reliable.

Today I am pleased to be joined by Senators COBURN, CARPER, and MCCAIN on a bill to build upon USASpending.gov and further advance Government transparency. In addition to a few technical corrections, the bill we are introducing today will require the website to include additional public information, including a copy of each Federal contract in both PDF and searchable text format. The improved website will also include details about competitive bidding, the range of technically acceptable bids or proposals, the profit incentives offered for each contract, and the complete amount of money awarded, including any options to expand or extend under a contract.

With this legislation, the website will also show if a Federal grant or contract is the result of an earmark as well as provide an assessment of the quality of work performed. Ordinary citizens will be able to use the website to find information about Federal audit disputes and resolutions, terminations of Federal awards, contractor and grantee tax compliance, suspensions and debarments, and administrative agreements involving Federal award recipients. The website can also be used to find information about any civil, criminal, or administrative actions taken against Federal award recipients, including for violations related to the workplace, environmental protection, fraud, securities, and consumer protections.

Under the enhanced website, information about government lease agreements and assignments will be available in the same manner that information is reported for contracts and grants. Information about parent company ownership will also be available.

In addition to improving the transparency and accessibility of public data, our bill will also improve the quality and usability of data that is made available. For one thing the data on USASpending.gov will be accessible through an application programming interface. The bill also requires the use of unique award identifiers that prevent the release of personally identifiable information. Finally, the bill creates a simple method for the public to report errors and track the performance of agencies in confirming or correcting errors while also requiring regular audits of data quality.

People from every State in this great Nation sent us to Congress to defend their rights and stand up for their interests. To do that we have to tear down the barriers that separate citizens from the democratic process and to shine a brighter light on the inner workings of Washington.

This bill helps to shine that light. It is simple common sense and good gov-

ernance that has been endorsed by a diverse range of grassroots organizations and Government watchdog groups, including the American Association of Law Libraries, Americans for Democratic Action, Americans for Tax Reform, the Center for American Progress, the Center for Democracy & Technology, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, the Environmental Working Group, the Federation of American Scientists, the Government Accountability Project, the National Taxpayer Union, OMB Watch, OpenTheGovernment.org, POGO, Public Citizen, ScienceCorps, the Sunlight Foundation, Taxpayers for Common Sense Action, U.S. Action, and U.S. PIRG among others.

This bill continues the bipartisan progress we have made opening up Washington to greater scrutiny and oversight. I am grateful for continued grassroots leadership on these issues and I appreciate the hard work of my Senate colleagues. Together I know we can change the way business is done in this town and make our Government more accountable to the people who sent us here to work for them. I urge support for this important legislation.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mrs. CLINTON):

S. 3078. A bill to establish a National Innovation Council, to improve the coordination of innovation activities among industries in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the National Innovation and Job Creation Act, a bill which aims to spur the adoption of new technologies and practices that can accelerate economic growth and build a secure foundation for good, high-paying jobs. I am pleased that Senator CLINTON joins me in offering this legislation.

We are all familiar with the fiscal challenges our Nation will face in the coming years. Over the next 2 decades, more than 75 million members of the Baby Boom generation will leave the workforce and enter retirement. The loss of their participation in the workforce, coupled with our Social Security obligations and rising healthcare costs, will put enormous strains on our economy. So too will competition from other countries, brought about by increased international trade and globalization. If we do not act to strengthen our competitiveness, our nation's ability to create good, high-paying jobs will be severely tested.

Indeed, there are already troubling signs that our economy's competitive edge has been dulled, and we are losing ground to other nations. In just the last 4 months, we've seen 340,000 jobs lost across the country. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are 1.6 million more workers unemployed today than in 2001, and 800,000 more workers unemployed than just

one year ago. Our trade deficit is now 6.5 percent of GDP—the highest in history—while manufacturing continues its decades-long decline, accounting for only 12.1 percent of GDP in 2006. We now import more high-technology products than we sell to other nations, and even in agriculture, where America has long been the world leader, our trade surplus is dropping toward zero.

Even the service sector is not immune from the effects of international competition. With the increased telecommunications capacity provided by trans-oceanic fiber-optic networks, geographic proximity to the market is no longer necessary for services such as back-office operations, call-centers, and software development.

As the Brookings Institute pointed out in a series of recent white papers on the topic of Innovation, “the growth of international trade and the globalization of production make it increasingly important for the United States to innovate to maintain its standard of living.” They explain that low-wage countries will always find it easier to compete with America for labor-intensive work that is difficult-to-automate, but that does not mean that we must surrender whole industries to China and India, nor does it mean that we must fear the inevitable loss of high value-added jobs that depend upon research and development, and advanced technology.

Rather, it means that we must build upon what has always given America its competitive edge—innovation. This means taking what has already been invented, and putting it to use. It is only by doing this that we can raise our productivity rate, and ultimately, continue to create the high-paying jobs that Americans need and deserve.

Last year, with the passage of the America COMPETES Act, we took an important step toward bolstering research and education that can serve as the foundation for future innovation. But we must go beyond this, to help enterprises understand innovative technologies and services that can make them more competitive, and to help them overcome the barriers they face in adopting these innovations.

That is what the bill Senator CLINTON and I are introducing today aims to do. The bill creates a National Innovation Council in the Executive Office of the President, to take the lead in coordinating existing Federal efforts on innovation, and to help support those efforts at the State and local level. Six Federal programs that share innovation-based missions would be relocated to the NIC. These are: The Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program (the “MEP”), the Technology Innovation Program, Partnerships for Innovation, the Industry-University Cooperative Research Center Program, the Engineering Research Center Program, and the Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development program, known as the “WIRED” program.

The operation and funding of these existing programs would be unaltered by my legislation, but the NIC would lead these programs to coordinate their activities where feasible.

The NIC would operate several grant programs to support efforts to spread innovation and create good jobs. Chief among these would be a grant program to support innovation-based economic development partnerships in every State. The NIC would also provide grants for the diffusion of technology in every state, operating through the existing MEP program.

The NIC would also oversee a new “Cluster Development” program which would operate alongside the six existing programs I have already mentioned. I want to focus for a moment on this aspect of my proposal since cluster development is so essential to our ability to keep and create good, high-paying jobs in the face of international competition.

“Clusters” are geographic areas where interrelated economic activity is taking place. Businesses that locate in a cluster build the foundation they all rely on to succeed, even as they compete with one another. Because of this, clusters are often at the heart of strong regional economies. Silicon Valley in California, Route 128 around Boston, and the Research Triangle Park in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, are famous examples of clusters in the high-tech sector. But cluster development is not just a phenomenon of the high-tech industry—successful clusters can and do arise in any sector of the economy. Think insurance in Connecticut, theme parks in Florida, movies in Hollywood, and boatbuilding in Maine. Each of these “clusters” is built around a skilled labor force that can command good wages, and is ready to compete with the best the world has to offer.

In Maine, cluster development has been championed by Karen Mills, the primary author of the Brookings Institute’s white paper “Clusters and Competitiveness.” From her work in helping Maine secure \$15 million in WIRED funding to further develop the composite and boatbuilding clusters in a project that hopes to create 2,500 high-quality jobs over the next 5 to 7 years, to her current position as chair of Maine’s Council on Competitiveness and the Economy, Karen’s hard work and dedication on cluster development is unsurpassed.

The WIRED grant has enabled Maine to make great progress on cluster development, but more must be done nationally. As Karen explained in the Brookings white paper, our Nation’s network of cluster initiatives is “thin and uneven,” and consequently “many U.S. industry clusters are not as competitive as they could be, to the detriment of the nation’s capacity to sustain well-paying jobs.” Because of this, “too many workers are losing decent jobs, and too many regions are struggling economically.”

The Cluster Development program we are proposing in this bill is modeled after the Department of Labor’s WIRED program. It would identify geographic regions where cluster activity is taking place or can develop, and provide assistance to local and regional efforts to build on those clusters.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on this and other proposals to bolster innovation, strengthen our Nation’s competitiveness, and most of all, help preserve the foundation for high-quality jobs in the face of the coming economic challenges.

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, today I introduce the National Innovation Act of 2008, a bill that will strengthen America’s leadership in technology and manufacturing innovation, while helping to keep and create more jobs here at home. I would like to recognize my colleague, Senator COLLINS, for her leadership on this bill, and I thank her and her staff for all their hard work.

Our Nation is at a crossroads. Every day we hear of more jobs being sent overseas and new technology centers growing halfway across the world. In this increasingly global economy, we need to have the tools and the knowledge to compete and succeed. There is no doubt that technology and innovation will be the foundation of the new economy. And America must be at the forefront of this new, innovation economy.

The National Innovation Act is a comprehensive plan to spur the growth of innovative technologies to increase America’s productivity gains and economic growth. It builds on the long-standing bipartisan commitment to improve our Nation’s competitiveness by strengthening our innovation infrastructure.

This new legislation creates a “National Innovation Council” to coordinate Federal innovation policy, and to help support efforts at the State and local level to accelerate the adoption of innovation technologies throughout the economy. It will include six existing Federal programs which share this important innovation-based mission.

The National Innovation Act also establishes a CLUSTER Information Center and a Cluster Grant Program. The CLIC will collect, develop, and disseminate analysis on industry clusters throughout all 50 States, provide technical assistance guides for regional cluster development, and develop initiatives and programs.

Since I took office, I have devoted time and energy into trying to help the economically distressed communities throughout New York State, particularly those in upstate New York that were once economically vibrant but now are facing a declining economy. This legislation will help revitalize communities in upstate New York and across the country who have been hit hard by manufacturing and job loss by establishing regional economic clusters. It will bring innovation to every corner of America. Communities can

use cluster grants to build on the strengths of their particular regions by utilizing the skills and knowledge base of local businesses, economic developers, colleges and universities, scientists, nonprofits, and the public sector.

In order to secure the future of America's economy we must create new, good-paying jobs here at home. Investing in new technologies and industries will expand our workforce, ensuring America remains competitive in the global economy and putting us on a course toward growth and prosperity for future generations.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. BROWN):

S.J. Res. 37. A joint resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the United States should sign the Declaration of the Oslo Conference on Cluster Munitions and future instruments banning cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join with my friend from California, Senator FEINSTEIN, in sponsoring this joint resolution calling on the administration to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions when it is open for signature in December.

This treaty is the product of a year of negotiations among many of our closest allies and other nations that came together to prohibit the use of cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.

I regret that the United States did not participate in the negotiations. The Pentagon continues to insist that cluster munitions are necessary, but the country with the world's most powerful military should not be on the sidelines while others are trying to protect the lives and limbs of civilians in war.

Any weapon, whether cluster munitions, landmines or even poison gas, has some military utility. But anyone who has seen the indiscriminate devastation cluster munitions cause over a wide area understands the unacceptable threat they pose for civilians. These are not the laser guided weapons that were shown destroying their targets during the invasion of Baghdad.

And there is the insidious problem of cluster munitions that do not explode as designed, and remain as active duds, like landmines, until they are triggered by whoever comes into contact with them. Often it is an unsuspecting child, or a farmer.

This resolution follows an amendment I sponsored which prohibits U.S. sales and exports of cluster munitions that do not meet strict criteria, which became law as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008. These criteria are no different from what the Pentagon set for itself 7 years ago for new procurements of cluster munitions, applied also to those in existing U.S.

stockpiles. Senator FEINSTEIN and I have also introduced legislation that would apply these same criteria to the use of cluster munitions. That legislation now has 20 cosponsors.

I want to express my appreciation to the Government of Norway for its leadership in initiating the process that led to the agreement on the treaty in Dublin, and to the Cluster Munitions Coalition, a group of some 200 nongovernmental organizations that worked diligently in support of the treaty.

I traveled to Dublin last week to meet with delegates to the negotiations, including the president of the Conference Daithi O'Ceallaigh. He did a masterful job of guiding the discussions to a successful conclusion.

There are some who have dismissed this effort as a "feel good" exercise, since it does not have the support of the United States and other major powers such as Russia, China, Pakistan, India and Israel. These are the same critics of the Ottawa treaty banning antipersonnel landmines, which the U.S. and the other countries I named have also refused to sign. But that treaty has dramatically reduced the number of landmines produced, used, sold and stockpiled, and the number of mine victims has fallen sharply. Any government that contemplates using landmines today does so knowing that it will be condemned by the international community. I suspect it is only a matter of time before the same is true for cluster munitions.

The administration insists that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, known as the CCW, is the right place to negotiate limits on cluster munitions because all countries are represented. I don't doubt their intentions, but it is what they said about landmines, and nothing happened because Russia and China were opposed. The same is likely for cluster munitions. It is a way to make it appear as if you are doing something, when you are not.

It is important to note that the U.S. today has the technological ability to produce cluster munitions that would not be prohibited by the treaty. What is lacking is the political will to expend the necessary resources. There is no other excuse for continuing to use cluster munitions that cause unacceptable harm to civilians.

Finally, I want to thank Senator FEINSTEIN who has shown a real passion for this issue and has sought every opportunity to protect civilians from these weapons.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 581—DESIGNATING JUNE 6, 2008, AS "NATIONAL HUNTINGTON'S DISEASE AWARENESS DAY"

Mr. INHOFE (for himself and Mr. DODD) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 581

Whereas Huntington's Disease is a progressive degenerative neurological disease that causes total physical and mental deterioration over a 12 to 15 year period;

Whereas each child of a parent with Huntington's Disease has a 50 percent chance of inheriting the Huntington's Disease gene;

Whereas Huntington's Disease typically begins in mid-life, between the ages of 30 and 45, though onset may occur as early as the age of 2;

Whereas children who develop the juvenile form of the disease rarely live to adulthood;

Whereas the average lifespan after onset of Huntington's Disease is 10 to 20 years, and the younger the age of onset, the more rapid the progression of the disease;

Whereas Huntington's Disease affects 30,000 patients and 200,000 genetically "at risk" individuals in the United States;

Whereas, since the discovery of the gene that causes Huntington's Disease in 1993, the pace of Huntington's Disease research has accelerated;

Whereas, although no effective treatment or cure currently exists, scientists and researchers are hopeful that breakthroughs will be forthcoming;

Whereas researchers across the Nation are conducting important research projects involving Huntington's Disease; and

Whereas the Senate is an institution that can raise awareness in the general public and the medical community of Huntington's Disease: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates June 6, 2008, as "National Huntington's Disease Awareness Day";

(2) recognizes that all people of the United States should become more informed and aware of Huntington's Disease; and

(3) respectfully requests the Secretary of the Senate to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Huntington's Disease Society of America.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 86—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF CONGRESS THAT THE UNITED STATES, THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION, SHOULD USE ALL APPROPRIATION MEASURES TO END COMMERCIAL WHALING IN ALL OF ITS FORMS AND SEEK TO STRENGTHEN MEASURES TO CONSERVE WHALE SPECIES

Mr. KERRY (for himself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 86

Whereas 78 countries have adopted the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, signed at Washington December 2, 1946 (TIAS 1849) (in this preamble referred to as the "Convention"), which established the International Whaling Commission (in this preamble referred to as the "Commission") to provide for the conservation of whale stocks;

Whereas the Commission has adopted a moratorium on commercial whaling in order to conserve and promote the recovery of whale stocks, many of which had been hunted to near extinction by the whaling industry;

Whereas the United States was instrumental in the adoption of the moratorium and has led international efforts to address the threat posed by commercial whaling for more than 3 decades;