

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3641) to authorize funding for the National Crime Victim Law Institute to provide support for victims of crime under Crime Victims Legal Assistance Programs as a part of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am glad the Senate is moving forward today by passing a bill to reauthorize funding to provide legal support to victims of crime through Crime Victims Legal Assistance Programs. I was proud to be an original cosponsor of this bill. Too often, survivors who have been victims of crimes are left without recourse and legal assistance. This bill will help ensure that their needs are not forgotten. It is vitally important that we continue to recognize the needs of crime victims and their family members and work together to promote victims' rights and services.

We have been able to make some progress during the past 27 years to provide victims with greater rights and assistance. In particular, I was honored to support the passage of the Victims of Crime Act of 1984, VOCA, Public Law 98-473, which established the Crime Victims Fund. The Crime Victims Fund allows the Federal Government to provide grants to State crime victim compensation programs, direct victim assistance services, and services to victims of Federal crimes. Nearly 90 percent of the Crime Victims Fund is used to award victim assistance formula grants and provide State crime victim compensation. These VOCA-funded victim assistance programs serve nearly four million crime victims each year, including victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse, elder abuse, and drunk driving, as well as survivors of homicide victims. Our VOCA-funded compensation programs have helped hundreds of thousands of victims of violent crime.

The Crime Victims Fund is the Nation's premier vehicle for supporting victims' services. It is important to understand that the Crime Victims Fund does not receive a dime from tax revenue or appropriated funding. Instead, it is made up of criminal fines, forfeited bail bonds, penalties, and special assessments.

In 1995, after the Oklahoma City bombing, I proposed and Congress passed the Victims of Terrorism Act of 1995. Among other important matters, this legislation authorized the Office for Victims of Crime at the Department of Justice to set aside an emergency reserve as part of the Crime Victims Fund to serve as a "rainy day" resource to supplement compensation and assistance grants to States to provide emergency relief in the wake of an act of terrorism or mass violence that might otherwise overwhelm the resources of a State's crime victims compensation program and crime victims assistance services.

We also enacted, as part of the Justice for All Act of 2004, Federal rights

for victims. In the Scott Campbell, Stephanie Roper, Wendy Preston, Louarna Gillis, and Nila Lynn Crime Victims' Rights Act, we expressly provided for the right to reasonable, accurate, and timely notice of any public court proceeding; the right not to be excluded from any such public court proceeding; the right to be reasonably heard at any public proceeding involving release, plea, sentencing, or parole; the reasonable right to confer with the attorney for the Government in the case; the right to full and timely restitution as provided in law; the right to proceedings free from unreasonable delay; and the right to be treated with fairness and with respect for the victim's dignity and privacy. I wrote a letter to Attorney General Mukasey in June to ask what the Justice Department has done to ensure that family members of 9/11 victims are afforded the same level of respect as the 9/11 court and military commission proceedings and move forward.

Since fiscal year 2000, Congress has set a cap on annual obligations from the Crime Victims Fund. I have worked to ensure that the cap has never resulted in resources being lost to the Crime Victims Fund. I believe we need to increase the cap. With the failure of the Bush administration crime prevention policies, crime began to rise under Attorney General Gonzales. Crime victims, the States, and service providers need more assistance.

Instead of taking that salutary action, the Bush administration is proposing to raid the Crime Victims Fund and zero it out. The future of the Crime Victims Fund is in danger because the Bush administration has proposed rescinding all amounts remaining in the Crime Victims Fund at the end of fiscal year 2009—just cleaning it out and leaving the cupboard bare. That would leave the Crime Victims Fund with a zero balance going into fiscal year 2010 and create a disastrous situation for providers of victims' services. That is wrong.

Over the last few years, we have successfully blocked the Bush administration's past attempts to raid the Crime Victims Fund. This is not a cache of money from which this administration should try to reduce the budget deficits it has created. This administration has turned a \$5 trillion budget surplus into a \$9.4 trillion debt. Its annual deficits run into the hundreds of millions. It is wrong to try to pay for its failed fiscal policies by emptying out the Crime Victims Fund. These resources are set aside to assist victims of crime.

In order to preserve the Crime Victims Fund once again, Senator CRAPO and I, as well as 25 other Senators, sent a letter on April 4, 2008, to the Senate Appropriations Committee asking that the committee oppose the administration's proposal to empty the Crime Victims Fund. We asked the committee, instead, to permit unobligated funds to remain in the Crime Victims Fund, in accordance with current law,

to be used for needed programs and services that are so important to victims of crime in the years ahead.

The Judiciary Committee has worked hard this Congress to pass legislation that protects victims of Crime. This week the Senate unanimously reauthorized the Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant program, which helps forensic labs keep up with the increasing demand for DNA analysis. The Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant program has given States help they desperately needed, and continue to need, to carry out DNA analyses of backlogged evidence, particularly rape kits. It has provided a strong starting point in addressing this serious problem, but much work remains to be done before we conquer these inexcusable backlogs. I was pleased to work with Debbie Smith and Senator BIDEN to pass the reauthorization.

I am also proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation. This bill will help victims of crime by reauthorizing funding for essential programs such as the Victim Notification System, which is run by the Department of Justice, and programs that provide legal counsel and support services for victims in criminal cases.

We need to renew our national commitment to crime victims. I am glad the Senate has passed this important bill today, and I hope that the House will move on this legislation swiftly.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (S. 3641) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 3641

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 103(b) of the Justice for All Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-405; 118 Stat. 2264) is amended in paragraphs (1) through (5) by striking "2006, 2007, 2008, and 2009" each place it appears and inserting "2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013".

MINTING OF COINS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE LEGACY OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRY

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3229, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3229) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the legacy of the United States

Army Infantry and the establishment of the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 3229) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

REQUIRING THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY TO MINT COINS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Banking Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 5872, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5872) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of the Boy Scouts of America, and for other purposes.

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

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

The bill (H.R. 5872) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

PERSONNEL REIMBURSEMENT FOR INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ACT OF 2008

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 1052, H.R. 6098.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 6098) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to improve the financial assistance provided to State, local, and tribal governments for information sharing activities, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Personnel Reimbursement for Intelligence Cooperation and Enhancement of Homeland Security Act of 2008" or the "PRICE of Homeland Security Act".

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION ON USE OF FUNDS.

Section 2008 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 609) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking "Grants" and all that follows through "used" and inserting the following: "The Administrator shall permit the recipient of a grant under section 2003 or 2004 to use grant funds"; and

(B) in paragraph (10), by inserting ", regardless of whether such analysts are current or new full-time employees or contract employees" after "analysts"; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (3) and (4) as paragraphs (4) and (5), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

"(3) LIMITATIONS ON DISCRETION.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—With respect to the use of amounts awarded to a grant recipient under section 2003 or 2004 for personnel costs in accordance with paragraph (2) of this subsection, the Administrator may not—

"(i) impose a limit on the amount of the award that may be used to pay for personnel, or personnel-related, costs that is higher or lower than the percent limit imposed in paragraph (2)(A); or

"(ii) impose any additional limitation on the portion of the funds of a recipient that may be used for a specific type, purpose, or category of personnel, or personnel-related, costs.

"(B) ANALYSTS.—If amounts awarded to a grant recipient under section 2003 or 2004 are used for paying salary or benefits of a qualified intelligence analyst under subsection (a)(10), the Administrator shall make such amounts available without time limitations placed on the period of time that the analyst can serve under the grant."

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related thereto be printed in the RECORD.

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

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill, (H.R. 6098), as amended, was read the third time, and passed.

CONSOLIDATED SECURITY, DISASTER ASSISTANCE, AND CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2009—Continued

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to proceed to the hour that I have asked the leader to set aside for the purpose of discussing, in my view, a grave oversight that can be corrected if there is enough political will to do so. So the purpose of this hour is to try to lay out a case so that we can build, over the course of the next few days and weeks, the will necessary to take action that if not taken could literally result in the bankruptcy of thousands of people and individuals in rural communities throughout Louisiana and the Nation who, through no fault of their own, have been caught up in the disasters of the last few weeks and months.

The disasters I speak of are not like the manmade disaster that is happening on Wall Street as we speak. It is not the purpose for which a group of Senators, both Republicans and Democrats, have been meeting around the clock for hours. They are disasters of nature's making—hurricanes, strong winds, and heavy rains that no one could prevent, but we most certainly can stop the economic downturn in the aftermath that will occur.

I am here today because it looks to me and several of my colleagues as though this Congress intends to leave without taking any action whatsoever, to give even hope to people, thousands of hard-working taxpayers who are in this situation.

I will speak for an hour, but this cartoon says it all. This was in the USA TODAY newspaper yesterday. I don't think it needs any explanation. I represent the lower ninth ward. I am proud to represent the ninth ward and the lower ninth ward. I also represent St. Bernard Parish and Plaquemines Parish and Terrebonne Parish and others that were devastated and basically have been abandoned in large measure by aspects of this Government that did not come to their aid. This cartoon says we have been building a levee for the last several weeks—or trying to build a levee—around Wall Street. Meanwhile, the rest of the country—whatever.

Out there in the rest of the country—whatever—which is what I represent—are thousands of farmers. This is what their fields look like. They are completely underwater, not because they left the hose on too long or failed to do the proper irrigation techniques but because we had Hurricane Gustav, Hurricane Ike, and Hurricane Fay, which did not hit just Florida, but that storm, as the Presiding Officer will remember, dropped significant rains throughout large parts of the country right before harvest time. Then, a few weeks later—because the farmers in many districts who watch the weather, of course, every day, made the decision to wait until these rains were done, they would then go into their fields and harvest the thousands of acres that were planted in Louisiana in cotton, soybean, rice, sugarcane, sweet potatoes, and our beautiful pecan trees. They would wait until those rains subsided and then they would go to their fields for the harvest that they were expecting to be quite spectacular despite price inputs at the front of the season: high fuel and fertilizer costs. But then Hurricane Ike came and Hurricane Gustav, and the water just never went away. There was nowhere for it to go.

The State I represent, as people will know their geography, is the State that basically drains, through the Mississippi River, the Arkansas, the Missouri River, comes down through the Mississippi River to Louisiana. There was simply nowhere for the water to go. It broke levees everywhere. The