

study child participants; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself, Mr. BURR, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WEBB, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BURRIS, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. WICKER, Mr. JOHANNIS, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S. 407. A bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2009, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. INOUE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. DORGAN, and Mr. AKAKA):

S. 408. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide a means for continued improvement in emergency medical services for children; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. DODD):

S.J. Res. 8. A joint resolution providing for the appointment of David M. Rubenstein as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. DODD):

S.J. Res. 9. A joint resolution providing for the appointment of France A. Cordova as a citizen regent of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

#### ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 213

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) was added as a cosponsor of S. 213, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to ensure air passengers have access to necessary services while on a grounded air carrier, and for other purposes.

S. 332

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 332, a bill to establish a comprehensive interagency response to reduce lung cancer mortality in a timely manner.

S. 371

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 371, a bill to amend chapter 44 of title 18, United States Code, to allow citizens who have concealed carry permits from the State in which they reside to carry concealed firearms in another State that grants concealed carry permits, if the individual complies with the laws of the State.

S. 388

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 388, a bill to extend the termination date for the exemption of returning workers from the numerical limitations for temporary workers.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself, Mr. BAUCUS, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. BURR, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 402. A bill to improve the lives of our Nation's veterans and their families and provide them with the opportunity to achieve the American dream; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today with Senator BAUCUS, Senator LINCOLN, Senator BURR, and Senator COLLINS to introduce the Keeping Our Promise to America's Military Veterans Act. Quite simply, my colleagues and I strongly believe that Congress must remain focused on fully supporting our veterans and their families in the 111th Congress. As we begin this new Congress, our legislative priorities should reflect the unending gratitude of the American people for the sacrifices of our veterans and their families in defending the Nation and our way of life.

To date, the war on terrorism has already generated nearly 1 million discharged veterans and their ranks will grow with nearly 300,000 new veterans per year. The Congress must not waver in our commitment of support for their service, as well as the service and sacrifices of each of our citizens who have taken that extra step and donned the uniform of this great Nation. The bill that we are introducing would express the sense of Congress that legislation should be enacted in the 111th Congress to improve the lives of our Nation's veterans and their families and provide them with the opportunity to achieve the American dream, including legislation to assure funding for medical care and for timely and accurate adjudication of all benefit claims, to assure access to high quality treatment for PTSD and TBI conditions, and to assure a seamless transition for veterans and their families from military to civilian life.

As we consider legislation for this Congress, I point out, for example, the problem of providing the VA health care system with funding in a timely and predictable manner. With the exception of last year, VA appropriations have historically not met this simple standard. To correct this problem, I have supported, and will continue to support measures to make VA appropriations mandatory, or to provide advance appropriations to the VA. Neither are new budget concepts, but rather a means of achieving timely, predictable, and sufficient funding of VA health care via the current annual appropriations process. I joined with a number of senators in the last Congress, including then-Senator Barack Obama, on legislation to provide advance appropriations to the VA, and will continue to work to this end in the 111th.

Of the many challenges on which this Congress must act in the weeks and months ahead, we believe that it is imperative that we not waver in our sup-

port for our Nation's veterans and their families. I sincerely hope that my colleagues will join Senator BAUCUS, Senator LINCOLN, Senator BURR, Senator COLLINS, and me and offer their support for this important legislation.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself and Mr. BURRIS):

S. 404. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand veteran eligibility for reimbursement by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for emergency treatment furnished in a non-Department facility, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I introduce legislation to correct a deficiency in the law governing health care for veterans. Under current law, originally enacted on November 30, 1999, a veteran who is enrolled in VA's health care system can be reimbursed for emergency treatment received at a non-VA hospital. However, the statute only permits such VA reimbursement if the veteran has no other outside health insurance, no matter how limited that other coverage might be.

This sole payor provision means that a veteran who has any insurance is not entitled to reimbursement from VA for emergency medical treatment received at a non-VA facility. This is true even if the veteran's insurance policy does not cover the full amount owed.

The bill I am introducing would amend current law so that a veteran who has outside insurance would be eligible for reimbursement in the event that any outside insurance does not cover the full amount of the emergency care. VA would be authorized to cover the difference between the amount the veteran's insurance will pay and the total cost of care. In essence, VA would become the payor of last resort in such cases. This would keep the veteran from being burdened by exorbitant medical fees with no insurance with which to pay them.

In addition to amending current law in a prospective manner, this legislation would also allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to retroactively apply this law to emergency treatment received between the effective date of the current law and the date of enactment of the legislation I am introducing today.

One example of the sort of case to which this discretionary authority might apply is one that came to the Committee's attention involving a disabled Vietnam veteran who was in a serious motorcycle accident which led to a medical bill for emergency room care of over \$100,000. This veteran, who lived in Illinois, had state mandated auto insurance which included a medical benefit of \$10,000. Since he had this other insurance, VA was precluded from paying for his care and the veteran was personally responsible for the difference between the amount covered by his state-required policy and the total charge for his care. Had this veteran