

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate to conduct a hearing on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at 10 a.m., in room SD-366 of the Dirksen Senate office building.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at 10 a.m. in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate office building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at 9:30 a.m., to hold a hearing entitled "Global Climate Change: U.S. Leadership for a New Global Agreement."

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERAN'S AFFAIRS

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 22, 2009. The Committee will meet in room 418 of the Russell Senate office building beginning at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT INFORMATION, FEDERAL SERVICES, AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Federal Financial Management, Government Information, Federal Serv-

ices, and International Security be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 22, 2009 at 3 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, "Eliminating Waste and Fraud in Medicare and Medicaid."

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at 10 a.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

Mr. KAUFMAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMENDING CAPTAIN RICHARD PHILLIPS, THE CREW OF THE MAERSK ALABAMA AND THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 108, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 108) commending Captain Richard Phillips, the crew of the "Maersk Alabama," and the United States Armed Forces, recognizing the growing problem of piracy off Somalia's coast, and urging the development of a comprehensive strategy to address piracy and its root causes.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Today I have submitted—along with Senators GREGG of New Hampshire, FEINGOLD of Wisconsin, KENNEDY and KERRY of Massachusetts, and, of course, my colleague, Senator SANDERS of Vermont—a Senate resolution on Captain Richard Phillips, the ship captain from Underhill, VT, who Somali pirates took hostage 2 weeks ago.

This resolution praises Captain Phillips for his selfless heroism—he offered himself in lieu of his crew as a hostage—his extraordinary rescuers, his family, and the Federal agencies that kept close watch on the captain while the pirates held him literally at gunpoint in an 18-foot lifeboat in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

This situation was an all too real drama that played out on the high seas. With grappling hooks and guns, Somali pirates took control of Captain Phillips' ship, the Maersk Alabama.

The 20-member crew of the 500-foot container ship retook control after a harrowing struggle.

But to protect his crew from further danger, Captain Phillips agreed to go with the pirates into a lifeboat where he was held hostage at gunpoint for 5 days. Displaying a resourcefulness and the indomitable spirit that speaks to the best qualities of Vermont, New England, and our great Nation, he attempted to escape. He kept his cool and confidence in the most volatile situation where the pirates, in a second, could have easily killed him.

The U.S. Navy arrived, headed up by the guided missile destroyer, USS Bainbridge, and when the captain faced imminent danger, snipers from one of our most elite military units, the Navy SEALs, killed his captors.

The entire country has shared feelings of admiration for the courage and fortitude of Captain Phillips, relief that he and his crew are safely home, and gratitude for the outstanding performance of the U.S. Navy, particularly the Bainbridge crew and the SEALs, for their rescue of the captain.

The Maersk Alabama incident is part of a troubling pattern of piracy that comes from the anarchy and the poverty plaguing Somalia. Pirates have taken hostage more than 200 crew members in dozens of countries. They have absconded with tens of millions of dollars in ransom, reinvesting that money into more advanced equipment and weapons, from guns to rocket-propelled grenades to global positioning systems.

The scale and intensity of the piracy is only getting worse, as this resolution underscores. This piracy has to be addressed.

But on that Wednesday, those pirates met their match, from Captain Phillips and his crew, to the remarkable Phillips family, to the formidable U.S. military, and the wider U.S. Government.

The President monitored the situation closely. He gave the necessary direction to the SEALs to use force if required to protect Phillips. The FBI provided guidance to the USS Bainbridge to deal with the hostage situation, while the Department of State kept the family informed.

Andrea Phillips, Captain Phillips' wife, was incredible throughout this crisis. I was receiving calls from the White House. I was told what was going on, as were my staff. I was calling Mrs. Phillips and talking with her. And the calmness of this woman, realizing the harrowing danger that her husband faced, and her respect for our Government's efforts to save him were remarkable—she repeatedly thanked the Navy personnel, the FBI, and others for keeping such close tabs on the situation. Even though this was an especially difficult experience for their two children, Daniel and Mariah, they weathered the crisis and had a happy reunion.