

are protected. Dating back to President Harry Truman, the Federal Government has assumed a responsibility to our mineworkers. In 1992, I was extremely proud to work on the passage of the COAL Act, where we recommitted to our miners. That bill allowed the transfer of interest accruing to the unappropriated balance of the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Fund to be used to provide health care for a large number of orphaned miners and their widows. This Federal commitment was once again affirmed in the 2006 amendments to the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program which sought to again protect the health care plans of miners from insolvency.

Now, 18 years after passing the COAL Act, Senator GOODWIN and I are again renewing our commitment to the nation's miners with the CARE Act. This bill will protect the solvency of our miners' pension plans.

In West Virginia, we revere our miners—the men and women who put their lives on the line every single day to provide for their families and bring light and heat to millions. Their tenacity, their courage and their determination is an inspiration to us all. The work they do everyday provides nearly half of our nation with power to light and heat our homes. We should all thank them for the service they provide this country, and continue protecting our miners' retirement benefits going forward.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. VOINOVICH, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. LIEBERMAN):

S. 3650. A bill to amend chapter 21 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that fathers of certain permanently disabled or deceased veterans shall be included with mothers of such veterans as preference eligibles for treatment in the civil service; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are taking a huge toll on our servicemembers and their families. To date, 123 Oregonians have died in those wars, leaving behind grieving friends and families. I'll never forget the pain I've heard in the voices of the Oregon parents I've spoken to after they've lost a son or daughter to war.

These parents are often called "Gold Star parents" because, by tradition, they display a Gold Star flag to let the world know of their sacrifice.

Our nation can't lift the burden of their grief. No one can.

However, our nation does commit to recognize the immense sacrifice of Gold Star parents by giving them certain benefits. One of those benefits is a 10-point hiring preference for unmarried Gold Star mothers when they apply for jobs with the federal government.

But I was surprised to learn that this preference cannot be given to Gold

Star fathers. This inequity is a relic from the past; an example of the law has not kept up with the times. We can now see that all unmarried Gold Star mothers and fathers deserve to have the federal government recognize their sacrifice equally. That is why I am introducing a bill to update the law.

I learned of this disparity from my friend Steve Ellis of Baker City, Oregon. Steve lost his beloved daughter, Army Corporal Jessica Ann Ellis, when she was killed by a roadside bomb in Baghdad in 2008. Although Steve is a Gold Star father, he would still not be eligible for the benefit under my proposed change because he is married. But he didn't point out this inequity in the law for his own benefit. He did it for future Gold Star fathers. He saw an inequity in the law, and felt it was his duty to try and get it fixed for other Gold Star fathers.

So today I introduce the Jessica Ann Ellis Gold Star Fathers Act as a small legislative fix that will make a big change to federal veterans' preference laws through true equality.

This bill will give any unmarried Gold Star parent, regardless of gender, a 10-point hiring preference when they apply for federal jobs. It will also give the benefit to any unmarried parent of a totally and permanently disabled servicemember.

Gold Star mothers and fathers deserve equal recognition for the loss of a child who bravely made the ultimate sacrifice for his or her country. The Jessica Ann Ellis Gold Star Fathers Act will give them that.

This bill is supported by the American Gold Star Mothers organization, and is cosponsored by Senator AKAKA, Senator VOINOVICH, Senator COLLINS, Senator LANDRIEU and Senator LIEBERMAN. I hope it can be passed quickly.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 3650

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Jessica Ann Ellis Gold Star Fathers Act of 2010".

SEC. 2. PREFERENCE ELIGIBLE TREATMENT FOR FATHERS OF CERTAIN PERMANENTLY DISABLED OR DECEASED VETERANS.

Section 2108(3) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraphs (F) and (G) and inserting the following:

"(F) the parent of an individual who lost his or her life under honorable conditions while serving in the armed forces during a period named by paragraph (1)(A) of this section, if—

"(i) the spouse of that parent is totally and permanently disabled; or

"(ii) that parent, when preference is claimed, is unmarried or, if married, legally separated from his or her spouse;

"(G) the parent of a service-connected permanently and totally disabled veteran, if—

"(i) the spouse of that parent is totally and permanently disabled; or

"(ii) that parent, when preference is claimed, is unmarried or, if married, legally separated from his or her spouse; and".

SEC. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE.

The amendment made by this Act shall take effect 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 4514. Mr. MCCONNELL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 4500 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. LEMIEUX (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. MURRAY)) to the amendment SA 4499 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. BAUCUS) to the bill H.R. 5297, to create the Small Business Lending Fund Program to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to make capital investments in eligible institutions in order to increase the availability of credit for small businesses, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for small business job creation, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4515. Mr. JOHANNIS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 4500 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. LEMIEUX (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. MURRAY)) to the amendment SA 4499 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. BAUCUS) to the bill H.R. 5297, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4516. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 4500 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. LEMIEUX (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. MURRAY)) to the amendment SA 4499 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. BAUCUS) to the bill H.R. 5297, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 4517. Ms. MURKOWSKI submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 4500 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. LEMIEUX (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. MURRAY)) to the amendment SA 4499 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. BAUCUS) to the bill H.R. 5297, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 4514. Mr. MCCONNELL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 4500 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. LEMIEUX (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mrs. MURRAY)) to the amendment SA 4499 proposed by Mr. REID (for Mr. BAUCUS) to the bill H.R. 5297, to create the Small Business Lending Fund Program to direct the Secretary of the Treasury to make capital investments in eligible institutions in order to increase the availability of credit for small businesses, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for small business job creation, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the amendment, add the following: