

S. 462 includes provisions that will enhance cooperation between our countries in the areas of energy, defense, homeland security, and agriculture.

While I support the end goal of the bill, I do have reservations about a section dealing with the visa waiver program. The visa waiver program was created by Congress but is largely overseen and maintained by the executive branch. The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may designate any country as a participant if certain qualifications are met. Congress laid out the criteria, which include low nonimmigrant visa refusal rate; machine readable passport program; law enforcement and security interests; reporting lost and stolen passports; repatriation of aliens; and passenger information exchange.

Once a country meets these requirements, the Secretary of Homeland Security allows the country to participate in the visa waiver program. Yet, S. 462 would amend the statute and allow Israel in the program even if all the criteria are not met. Specifically, under the legislation, Israel would not have to abide by the low nonimmigrant visa refusal rate. Currently, 37 countries participate in the visa waiver program without needing a special exception.

I am concerned about section 9 of the bill because it sets a precedent for other countries not to have to abide by all the terms of the program. Participating in the visa waiver program is a great benefit. Congress should not be making exceptions.

So, while I support the bill and am cosponsoring it today, I will advocate that section 9 be amended before it is passed by this body. The Senate should accept the House language, which simply includes a statement of policy and requires the Secretary of State to report on the extent to which Israel satisfies the requirements specified in law.

I hope my colleagues will work with me on this section, and I look forward to helping pass this bill in the Senate to reaffirm the partnership of United States with Israel.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT KIRK A. OWEN

Mr. INHOFE, Madam President, I pay tribute today to a true American hero, Army SSG Kirk A. Owen of Sapulpa, OK who died on August 2nd, 2011, serving our Nation in Paktya Province, Afghanistan. Staff Sergeant Owen was assigned as a scout to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Oklahoma Army National Guard.

Staff Sergeant Owen died of injuries sustained when the vehicle in which he was riding was attacked with an improvised explosive device in the Lajah District, Paktya Province while conducting combat operations. He was 37 years old.

Kirk enlisted in the Oklahoma National Guard at the age of 31 as a Chaplain's Assistant after seeing a recruiting commercial on television and deployed in support of disaster relief operations following Hurricane Katrina. Kirk then deployed again to Iraq in 2007 as an infantryman and rose through the ranks to Staff Sergeant. He served as a full time Army National Guard Soldier. He strived to be the best in everything he did and was repeatedly recognized for his excellence as the Hero of the Battlefield and the outstanding soldier in the 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team for his performance at the Joint Readiness Training Center, and presented the Unsung Hero Award when he attended the Ranger Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leader Course for his scout training. He also was Soldier of the Cycle for basic training and given Distinguished Honors at Advanced Individual Training.

A true warrior and leader, Kirk died while escorting an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team to disarm dangerous explosive devices in Paktya Province. Kirk was a loving husband, endearing father, and faithful friend. His loving presence, strong faith, incredible sense of duty and honor, and his wonderful sense of humor left a lasting impression on every heart he touched.

First Baptist Church Pastor Doyle Pryor said, "Kirk is one of those guys who had a natural sense of duty and honor. He really believed his military service was a calling from God."

Major General Myles Deering, the Oklahoma National Guard Adjutant General, said, "He was an outstanding non-commissioned officer, dedicated to loyally serving his country and fellow Soldiers. His loss is being felt across the state and he will be greatly missed."

His daughter Kylie wrote:

My dad was a fantastic leader. All of his guys looked up to him. My nickname for him was Ironman. There was nothing to me that he couldn't do. He loved Jesus with all his heart and that's where my peace is coming from. I can just see him up in heaven following Jesus around wanting to know everything. A few weeks before he left we were at the grocery store and my dad and little sister were walking down the marshmallow aisle and he turned to her and said 'Kayci, I think heaven will smell like marshmallows.' I hope it does. The memory of my dad will live on forever and his good looks will too.

In July 2012, the town of Sapulpa dedicated a neighborhood park where the Owen family still lives as a tribute to Kirk and his service to our Nation. There is a lasting monument in his honor.

Kirk lived a life of love for God, his wife and daughters, family, friends, and country. He leaves behind a wonderful and loving family: his wife, Tiffany and daughters, Kylie and Kayci. He will be remembered for his commitment to and belief in the greatness of our nation. I am honored to pay tribute to this true American hero who volunteered to go into the fight and made the ultimate sacrifice for our protec-

tion and freedom. We will keep them in our thoughts and prayers, always.

HYDROPOWER REGULATORY EFFICIENCY ACT

Mr. SESSIONS. I rise today to express my support for the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2013, H.R. 267. This important legislation will encourage and facilitate the development of clean and renewable hydropower capacity in the United States.

Hydropower has played a key role in the economic and industrial development of the State of Alabama over the last 100 years. In fact, according to the National Hydropower Association, Alabama ranks among the top ten States in hydropower generation, with over 8,700,000 megawatt-hours of conventional hydrogeneration. I believe hydropower will continue to make important contributions to meet Alabama's energy needs well into the future. For that reason, I believe the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2013 is an important piece of legislation that merits this body's full support. I would like to recognize the excellent work of the Senate Energy Committee, including the chairman and ranking member, on this legislation. At this time, I wish to ask the ranking member for permission to engage her in a brief colloquy concerning her understanding of Section 6 of this legislation.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I welcome an exchange for the record.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank my colleague for her willingness to discuss this legislation. Section 6 of the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2013 promotes hydropower development by directing the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, to investigate the feasibility of a more streamlined licensing process for certain hydro projects that should not be subjected to the lengthy and expensive licensing process that was designed for projects with many more complicated issues and stakeholder interests.

Under H.R. 267, two types of projects would be eligible for the 2-year licensing process: new hydro developments at existing nonpowered dams and closed-loop pumped storage hydro. It is my understanding that adding generation capacity at existing nonpowered dams would tap into an important and substantial renewable energy resource at projects where the impacts of dam construction have already been realized.

For hydropower developers to take full advantage of any streamlined licensing process that FERC may develop as contemplated in Section 6 of the act, I believe there needs to be a good understanding of what types of pumped storage projects would be considered "closed-loop pumped storage projects." This term is not defined in the act, and I am not aware of any generally accepted engineering or industry definition for that term.

In order that I might have a better understanding of the types of hydropower projects that would be eligible

for a streamlined licensing process that FERC may develop in accordance with Section 6 of the act, would the ranking member kindly provide a description of the types of pumped storage projects that she would consider to be “closed-loop pumped storage”?

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Senator for his support of this legislation and for his inquiry about Section 6 of the Act. Streamlining the licensing process for “closed-loop pumped storage” projects will encourage development of new and important sources of renewable energy that will help balance the country’s energy resources and provide critical support to the Nation’s power grid.

Section 6 of the bill directs FERC to develop criteria for identifying projects featuring “closed loop pumped storage” that would be appropriate for licensing within a 2-year process. This term was used in the bill to generally describe pumped storage projects that have a low impact on the various resources considered by FERC during the licensing process such as environmental, recreational, and navigation interests.

For example, pumped storage projects that are removed from major streams are likely to have fewer significant resource impacts and issues to be addressed and resolved, which makes them appropriate for the 2-year licensing process. Accordingly, the types of pumped storage projects considered “closed loop” and, therefore, eligible for FERC’s expedited licensing process under this bill, would include projects where the upper and lower reservoirs do not impound or directly withdraw water from a navigable stream and projects that are not continuously connected to a naturally-flowing water feature.

These types of “closed loop pumped storage” designs are candidates for a 2-year licensing process because the resource impacts associated with such projects can be minimal as compared to more traditional pumped storage hydro designs and other conventional hydro projects for which the existing FERC licensing process was designed.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank Ranking Member MURKOWSKI for her explanation. Again, I applaud her for her work on the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act of 2013 and for her leadership in this body.

VOTE EXPLANATIONS

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I regret having missed the July 31, 2013 vote on the confirmation of Byron Jones, of Minnesota, to be Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of the confirmation of Mr. JONES.

I also regret having missed three votes on August 1, 2013. The three votes that I missed are as follows: the nomination of Raymond Chen to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Federal

Circuit; cloture on S. 1243, Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations; and the nomination of Samantha Power to serve as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Had I been present, I would have voted in favor of all three votes.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Madam President, I was unable to cast my vote earlier this week on the nomination of James Comey to be the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, FBI, and the nominees for the National Labor Relations Board.

Had I been present, I would have voted to confirm Mr. Comey as FBI Director and would have voted in support of the motions to invoke cloture and confirmation of the nominations of Kent Hirozawa, Nancy Schiffer, and Mark Pearce to be members of the National Labor Relations Board.

REMEMBERING LINDY BOGGS

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I wish to pay tribute to an incredible woman—former Congresswoman and Ambassador Lindy Boggs—who was a trailblazer for women and a passionate advocate for the people of Louisiana and people across the country who too often don’t have a voice in Washington.

When I first became a Member of Congress in 1983, Lindy was one of only 21 women serving in the House of Representatives. I will always be grateful for the kindness and generosity she showed in taking me under her wing—and it was the same for so many other women who followed her in Congress and found in her a role model of such dignity and strength.

No one will ever forget her courage in the face of unspeakable tragedy—the loss of her husband, Congressman Hale Boggs, whose plane disappeared during a campaign trip to Alaska in 1972. Louisianans, including her husband’s closest friends, urged her to run for the seat in a special election the next year, and she became the first woman elected to Congress from the State where she was beloved.

I remember visiting Lindy’s home State of Louisiana years later and being overwhelmed at the outpouring of love and respect the people she represented had for her—and with good reason. Throughout her time in Congress, she was a champion for civil rights, women’s equality, and social justice.

During her first term in Congress, Lindy was assigned to the House Banking Committee. At one point, the committee was considering an amendment to a lending bill banning discrimination on the basis of race, age or veteran status.

Seizing the opportunity, Lindy quickly added the words “sex or marital status” to the amendment and ran to a copy machine to make copies for each Member. She told her colleagues:

Knowing the Members composing this committee as well as I do, I’m sure it was just an

oversight that we didn’t have ‘sex’ or ‘marital status’ included. I’ve taken care of that, and I trust it meets with the committee’s approval.

That is how sex discrimination was made illegal in the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974.

She was a skilled lawmaker who used her immense personal charm, political savvy and intellect to win over colleagues on issues that were critical to her State and the country. One of her Republican House colleagues remarked:

It was impossible not to like Lindy. She liked everybody. She was nice to everybody. She achieved more with less huff and puff and bluster than any of the rest of us did.

Lindy stood up for equality and racial justice, even when her views were not popular with some voters in her own district. When she left Congress in 1991 after serving nine terms, she was the only White Member to represent a Black-majority district.

She led the fight for equal pay for women in government jobs and for greater access to government contracts for women business owners. She worked to protect women from domestic violence, and inspired so many young people—women and men—to follow her into public service.

Lindy was a pioneer in so many ways—the first woman to chair a major political party’s nominating convention, the first woman to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican, and the first woman to have a room in the Capitol named in her honor. But because of her leadership and mentorship, Lindy made sure that she would not be the last and that generations of other women would be able to follow in her extraordinary footsteps.

My heart goes out to her family, her friends and all of those whose lives she touched. She will be dearly missed.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, today I honor and celebrate the life of an extraordinary American: Marie Corinne Morrison Claiborne Boggs, who we all knew as “Lindy.” She was a remarkable national leader, trailblazer for women everywhere, wife, mother, and a friend. Lindy taught me—and an entire generation of Louisianians, both men and women, through her example—to answer the call of public service.

With her death last Saturday, July 28, 2013, our entire State is in mourning but we are also celebrating a life well lived.

Throughout her life, she shaped the world to become a better and more just place. When she was born in 1916, women could not vote and segregation reigned supreme. But she refused to accept the world as it was and set about to change it. She lived through both World Wars and the Great Depression. Despite all of these daunting obstacles, Lindy—a graceful woman with a strong, passionate calling to serve others—was not deterred.

Like many women of her time, she married a man of great promise—and ultimately great power—Hale Boggs. But