This bill authorizes a federal program that would award grants based on how well states improve access to the ballot in at least nine ways: flexible registration opportunities, including same-day registration; early voting, at a minimum of 9 of the 10 calendar days preceding an election; no-excuse absentee voting; assistance to voters who do not speak English as a primary language or who have disabilities, including visual impairment; effective access to voting for members of the armed services; formal training of election officials, including State and county administrators and volunteers; audited and reduced waiting times at the poorest performing polling stations; contingency plans for voting in the event of a natural or other disaster, such as Superstorm Sandy, which impacted voting in New York and New Jersey, and would have only needed to take a slight turn to dramatically impact my home State of Delaware.

The stakes are high, and the importance of achieving these electoral reforms is paramount. When tens of thousands, or even hundreds of thousands, of Americans have their right to vote denied or compromised, we have to take action.

The implications of these voting irregularities are felt far beyond our shores. I am the chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs, and I worked and studied in South Africa during its apartheid regime. One of the most inspiring sights I have ever seen was during the first ever free and fair election in that nation, when South Africans stood in line for up to two days to cast their votes. Members of our subcommittee meet regularly with African heads of State, and all of us, Democrats and Republicans alike, stress with these leaders the vital importance of free and fair elections. So when we still have substantial voting issues in our own elections, that is a cause for deep concern.

We have the opportunity to send a message to first time voters here at home, as well as those fighting for democracy overseas, that every vote counts and every voter will be counted.

When States prevent their citizens from exercising their fundamental right of ballot access, whether deliberately through the law or regulations, or accidentally because of incompetence or lack of preparedness, it is a violation of voters' civil rights.

The FAST Voting Act is one way to try to fix our elections and make sure what happened across our country last week does not happen again. I look forward to working with my colleagues of both parties to move this important solution forward.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I rise today to join my colleague and friend, the Senator from Delaware, CHRIS COONS, in introducing legislation that would make voting faster and more accessible to all voters. Here we are, barely a week after a historic election in 2012. I can't speak about North Carolina, but in Virginia it is remarkable that in 2012 people had to wait for hours in line to vote. In Prince William County, folks waited for up to 3 hours. In Chesapeake, VA, folks waited for up to 4 hours. It was remarkable that it was 5 days after the fact before we even knew the results in Florida. In the 21st century, in the greatest democracy in the world, voting should not be this much of a burden.

In many ways, when you have those kinds of extraordinary lines, particularly when you are working, what we have in effect created is a 21st-century poll tax. Those of us in the South have a history where poll taxes were used to restrict voters. What you in effect have by having these extensive lines is when, if you work on an hourly basis or can only get off a bit of time, you cannot afford to wait 3, 4, or 5 hours in line to vote.

This legislation, the Fair, Accurate, Secure and Timely Voting Act of 2012—the so-called FAST Act—creates a competitive grant program to encourage States to aggressively pursue election reforms. It would provide incentives for States such as Virginia to invest in practices and technology designed to expedite voting at the polls and simplify voter registration.

The FAST Voting Act addresses this issue in a responsible way. It doesn't add new mandates; it authorizes simply additional resources for those States which step up with commonsense reforms to make voting faster and more accessible to voters. This is a relatively very small program, but a few dollars spent to both improve the access and increase the number of voting machines at those polling places which are so restricted would, I believe, remove some of the embarrassment Virginia and so many other States saw last week when people had to wait so long.

I encourage Virginia's elected leaders to embrace this opportunity to improve access for Virginia voters, who should not have to wait in line for hours to exercise their most basic constitutional right—the right to vote.

As I mentioned, this bill authorizes a Federal program that would award grants based on how well applicant States—again, States will be the decisionmakers on whether they would want to apply for this program—are able to improve access to the polls in at least nine specific ways. Let me mention three of those.

No. 1, provide absentee voting, including no-excuse absentee voting. We in Virginia still have restrictions on absentee voting.

No. 2, provide assistance to voters who do not speak English as a primary language. Virginia and North Carolina and other States are becoming more diverse, and we need to accommodate those voters.

No. 3, audit and reduce waiting time in polling stations. No one in the 21st century should have to wait 4 or 5 or, as in some reported cases in Florida, up to 7 or 8 hours to vote.

This voluntary grant program also requires the establishment of performance measures and reporting requirements to ensure a State's progress in eliminating statutory, regulatory, procedural, and other barriers to expedited voting and accessible voter registration.

This is a relatively small bill. I commend my colleague from Delaware, Senator COONS, for taking the lead. I join him as a cosponsor. Regardless of which side of the aisle you stand on in 2012—and surely before 2016—we ought not to have a repeat of this 21st-century poll tax that is imposed on folks all across America by not being able to exercise their vote, having to pay too high a price, or having the kind of embarrassment where it takes us literally days and days for the public to get the results.

I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 597—TO PERMIT THE COLLECTION OF CLOTHING, TOYS, FOOD, AND HOUSEWARES DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES IN SENATE BUILDINGS

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Mr. BURR) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

Resolved,

SECTION 1. COLLECTION OF CLOTHING, TOYS, FOOD, AND HOUSEWARES DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES IN SENATE BUILDINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of the rules or regulations of the Senate—

(1) a Senator, officer of the Senate, or employee of the Senate may collect from another Senator, officer of the Senate, or employee of the Senate within Senate buildings nonmonetary donations of clothing, toys, food, and housewares for charitable purposes related to serving persons in need or members of the Armed Forces and the families of those members during the holiday season, if the charitable purposes do not otherwise violate any rule or regulation of the Senate or of Federal law; and

(2) a Senator, officer of the Senate, or employee of the Senate may work with a nonprofit organization with respect to the delivery of donations described under paragraph (1).

(b) EXPIRATION.—The authority provided by this resolution shall expire at the end of the second session of the 112th Congress.

SENATE RESOLUTION 598—COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING THE SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS FOR WINNING THE 2012 WORLD SERIES

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mrs. BOXER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 598

Whereas the San Francisco Giants defeated the American League champions, the Detroit

Tigers, 4 games to none to win the seventh World Series championship in the history of the Giants franchise, and the second World Series championship in 3 years;

Whereas the San Francisco Giants won the 2012 National League West Division title with 94 wins;

Whereas the San Francisco Giants won 6 straight elimination games in the 2012 post-season, rallying from being down two games to none to defeat the Cincinnati Reds in the National League Division Series, and from being down three games to one to defeat the defending World Series champions, the St. Louis Cardinals, for the National League championship;

Whereas the San Francisco Giants won 7 straight post-season games and allowed just 7 runs in that span;

Whereas third baseman Pablo Sandoval received the World Series Most Valuable Player award after hitting .500 during the World Series and hitting 3 home runs in Game 1, becoming just the fourth player to do so in World Series history;

Whereas all 25 players on the playoff roster should be congratulated, including Jeremy Affeldt, Joaquin Arias, Brandon Belt, Gregor Blanco, Madison Bumgarner, Matt Cain, Santiago Casilla, Brandon Crawford, Aubrey Huff, George Kontos, Tim Lincecum, Javier Lopez, Jose Mijares, Guillermo Mota, Xavier Nady, Angel Pagan, Hunter Pence, Buster Posey, Sergio Romo, Hector Sanchez, Pablo Sandoval, Marco Scutaro, Ryan Theriot, Ryan Vogelsong, and Barry Zito;

Whereas the 2012 San Francisco Giants will be remembered for overpowering starting pitching, unflappable relief pitching, steady defense, and timely hitting;

Whereas the San Francisco Giants are superbly led by President and Chief Executive Officer Larry Baer, General Manager Brian Sabean, and Manager Bruce Bochy;

Whereas San Francisco is a city with a rich baseball tradition, where players such as Willie Mays, Willie McCovey, Orlando Cepeda, Juan Marichal, Monte Irvin, and Gaylord Perry displayed exceptional skill that eventually took them to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York; and

Whereas the San Francisco Giants inspired the city of San Francisco and all Giants fans by showing unprecedented determination, resolve, and teamwork in winning the 2012 World Series: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate commends and congratulates the San Francisco Giants for winning the 2012 World Series.

SENATE RESOLUTION 599—EXPRESSING VIGOROUS SUPPORT AND UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO THE WELFARE, SECURITY, AND SURVIVAL OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL AS A JEWISH AND DEMOCRATIC STATE WITH SECURE BORDERS, AND RECOGNIZING AND STRONGLY SUPPORTING ITS RIGHT TO ACT IN SELF-DEFENSE TO PROTECT ITS CITIZENS AGAINST ACTS OF TERRORISM

Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. RISCH, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MORAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. WARNER, Mr. HOEVEN, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. COATS, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. CASEY, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CORNYN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BURR, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. KYL, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. HELLER, Mr. BROWN of Ohio, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. MANCHIN, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. VITTER, Mr. THUNE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. TESTER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. KOHL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mr. LEVIN) submitted the following resolution; which was consider and agreed to:

S. RES. 599

Whereas Hamas was founded with the stated goal of destroying the State of Israel;

Whereas Hamas has been designated by the Secretary of State as a Foreign Terrorist Organization;

Whereas Hamas refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, and accept previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians;

Whereas Hamas has launched thousands of rockets and missiles since Israel dismantled settlements and withdrew from Gaza in 2005;

Whereas terrorists in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip have fired approximately 900 rockets and missile shells into Israel this year, an increase from roughly 675 attacks in 2011 and 350 in 2010;

Whereas Hamas has increased the range of its rockets, reportedly with support from Iran and others, putting additional large numbers of Israelis in danger of rocket attacks from Gaza;

Whereas, on November 14, 2012, President Barack Obama condemned the rocket fire from Gaza into Israel and reiterated Israel's right to self-defense; and

Whereas Israel, a fellow democracy, has an inherent right to self defense in the face of terrorist attacks: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) expresses unwavering commitment to the security of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state with secure borders, and recognizes and strongly supports its inherent right to act in self-defense to protect its citizens against acts of terrorism;

(2) reiterates that Hamas must end Gaza-linked terrorist rocket and missile attacks against Israel, recognize Israel's right to exist, renounce violence, and agree to accept previous agreements between Israel and the Palestinians;

(3) urges the United Nations Security Council to condemn the recent spike in Gaza-linked terrorist missile attacks against Israel, which risk causing civilian casualties in both Israel and Gaza; and

(4) encourages the President to continue to work diplomatically with the international community to prevent Hamas and other Gaza-based terrorist organizations from retaining or rebuilding the capability to launch rockets and missiles against Israel.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 60—PROVIDING FOR A CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE SENATE AND AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. REID of Nevada for himself and Mr. MCCONNELL) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 60

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That when the Senate recesses or adjourns on any day from Thursday, November 15, 2012, through Friday, November 16, 2012, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until 12:00 noon on Monday, November 26, 2012, or such other time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Friday, November 16, 2012, through Friday, November 23, 2012, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 27, 2012, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. The Majority Leader of the Senate and the Speaker of the House, or their respective designees, acting jointly after consultation with the Minority Leader of the Senate and the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify the Members of the Senate and House, respectively, to reassemble at such place and time as they may designate if, in their opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2923. Mr. COATS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 3254, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2924. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 3254, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2925. Mr. MANCHIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 3254, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2926. Ms. LANDRIEU (for Mr. ALEXANDER) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1440, to reduce preterm labor and delivery and the risk of pregnancy-related deaths and complications due to pregnancy, and to reduce infant mortality caused by prematurity.

SA 2927. Mr. KYL (for himself and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 3254, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2923. Mr. COATS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 3254, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2013 for military activities of the Department