

of Dimes for choosing such a deserving figure on whom to bestow this honor.●

NATIONAL HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WEEK

Mr. GORTON. I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be discharged from further consideration of Senate Resolution 111, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 111) designating the week beginning September 14, 1997, as "National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week," and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the resolution?

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

AMENDMENT NO. 1128

(Purpose: To change the week that is to be designated as "National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week" and for other purposes)

Mr. GORTON. Senator THURMOND has an amendment at the desk. I ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Washington [Mr. GORTON], for Mr. THURMOND, proposes an amendment numbered 1128.

On page 1, in the first clause, strike "116" and insert "104".

On page 2, line 3, strike "14" and insert "21".

Mr. GORTON. I ask unanimous consent the amendment be agreed to, the resolution as amended be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, as amended, the amendment to the title be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the resolution appear at this point in the RECORD.

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

The amendment (No. 1128) was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 111), as amended, was agreed to, as follows:

[The resolution was not available for printing. It will appear in a future issue of the RECORD.]

The title was amended to read:

A resolution designating the week beginning September 21, 1997, as "National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week", and for other purposes.

REAUTHORIZING THE REFUGEE ASSISTANCE ACT

Mr. GORTON. I ask unanimous consent the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. 1161, introduced earlier today by Senator ABRAHAM.

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

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1161) to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to authorize appropriations for refugee and entrant assistance for fiscal years 1998 and 1999.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

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

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation to reauthorize the Refugee Assistance Act. The act authorizes assistance to refugees through grants to private nonprofit associations, as well as public associations, to be used to provide services such as job training, educational programs, and English language classes to newly arrived refugees. These programs play an important role in the American tradition of opening new doors to those from around the world who have been subjected to persecutions of all kinds.

I would note that under the act, the Department of Health and Human Services is free to experiment with innovative ways to help refugees become self-sufficient in America. For example, the program currently makes some use of private nonprofit groups in rendering assistance to refugees, and I would encourage the Department of Health and Human Services to expand those uses more broadly. Such experimentation has great potential to help the program accomplish its purpose to help refugees make a new life for themselves, rather than becoming dependent on the Government. My understanding is that the Department of Health and Human Services is also committed to experiments along these lines, and I look forward to working with the administration and the nonprofit community involved with refugees to make this program even more effective in the next few years.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, Senator ABRAHAM and I have introduced a 2-year extension of the Refugee Act. The Refugee Act is the core of U.S. refugee policy. It sets the criteria under which persons can be designated as refugees, and provides funds for refugee resettlement. Last year, the United States admitted more than 75,000 refugees under the Refugee Act's criteria.

In addition to determining whom is considered a refugee, the Refugee Act allows the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Office of Refugee Resettlement [ORR], to provide services to refugees resettled in the United States. For example, ORR provides job training and employment assistance to new refugees to help them become economically self-sufficient. ORR helps States provide English language classes, preventive health services, and cash assistance to new refugees to help them get on their feet in their new country. Refugees

often arrive in the United States terrified, jet-lagged, and with few possessions. Most fled persecution in their home countries, and left their clothes and possessions behind. These programs make a refugee's assimilation into the United States a little easier.

In addition to providing assistance directly to refugees, the Refugee Act provides funds to the Public Health Service to provide overseas medical screening for United States-bound refugees for the protection of public health against contagious diseases. ORR also provides targeted assistance to States and counties with large refugee populations, and runs matching grant programs for voluntary agencies that assist States in refugee resettlement. For example, The Boston Tech Center in Middlesex County, MA received \$250,000 in discretionary targeted assistance to teach refugees short-term skills training, basic English and math. The International Rescue Committee in Boston received funds under the Refugee Act to provide a refugee youth program for newly arrived Somali children.

Mr. President, the Refugee Act is the heart of our refugee law and policy. If it is not reauthorized, the United States will send a signal worldwide that refugees are no longer welcome here. We cannot let that happen. I am grateful to my colleagues for supporting this bill.

Mr. GORTON. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read the third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the bill appear at this point in the RECORD.

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

The bill (S. 1161) was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1116

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

SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR REFUGEE AND ENTRANT ASSISTANCE

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 414(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1524(a)) is amended by striking "fiscal year 1995, fiscal year 1996, and fiscal year 1997" and inserting "each of fiscal years 1998 and 1999".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect October 1, 1997.

ORDER FOR STAR PRINT

Mr. GORTON. I ask unanimous consent that report 105-65 which accompanies S. 542 be star printed with the changes that are at the desk.

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

JOINT REFERRAL OF NOMINATION

Mr. GORTON. As in executive session, I ask unanimous consent the nomination of Espiridion A. Borrego, of Texas, to be Assistant Secretary of Labor for Veteran's Employment and