

S. 1375. A bill to promote energy conservation investments in Federal facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. AKAKA (for himself and Mr. INOUE):

S. 1376. A bill to increase the Federal medical assistance percentage for Hawaii to 59.8 percent; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. DASCHLE):

S. 1377. A bill to amend the Act incorporating the American Legion to make a technical correction; considered and passed.

By Mr. WARNER:

S. 1378. A bill to extend the authorization of use of official mail in the location and recovery of missing children, and for other purposes; considered and passed.

By Mr. DEWINE (for himself, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Mr. HATCH, Mr. D'AMATO, Mr. DODD, Mr. KOHL, Mr. COVERDELL, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. INOUE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Mr. THURMOND, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CAMPBELL, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1379. A bill to amend section 552 of title 5, United States Code, and the National Security Act of 1947 to require disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act regarding certain persons, disclose Nazi war criminal records without impairing any investigation or prosecution conducted by the Department of Justice or certain intelligence matters, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COATS (for himself, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. D'AMATO, and Mr. KERREY):

S. 1380. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 regarding charter schools; to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources.

By Mr. NICKLES:

S. 1381. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Army to convey lands acquired for the Candy Lake project, Osage County, Oklahoma; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. FORD):

S. Res. 143. A resolution to authorize the printing of a revised edition of the Senate Election Law Guidebook; considered and agreed to.

S. Con. Res. 61. A concurrent resolution authorizing printing of a revised edition of the publication entitled "Our Flag"; considered and agreed to.

S. Con. Res. 62. A concurrent resolution authorizing printing of the brochure entitled "How Our Laws Are Made"; considered and agreed to.

S. Con. Res. 63. A concurrent resolution authorizing printing of the pamphlet entitled "The Constitution of the United States of America"; considered and agreed to.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. LOTT, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. GLENN, Mr. D'AMATO, Mr. HOLLINGS, Mr. HUTCHINSON, Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN, Mr. INOUE, Mr. FORD, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 1370. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to provide that a

monthly insurance benefit thereunder shall be paid for the month in which the recipient dies, subject to a reduction of 50 percent if the recipient dies, during the first 15 days of such month, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

THE SOCIAL SECURITY FAMILY PROTECTION ACT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today, I rise to talk about an issue that is very important to me, very important to my constituents in Maryland and very important to the people of the United States of America.

For the second Congress in a row, I am joining in a bipartisan effort with my friend and colleague, Senator OLYMPIA SNOWE, to end an unfair policy of the Social Security System.

Senator SNOWE and I are introducing the Social Security Family Protection Act. This bill addresses retirement security and family security. We want the middle class of this Nation to know that we are going to give help to those who practice self-help.

What is it I am talking about? We have found that Social Security does not pay benefits for the last month of life. If a Social Security retiree dies on the 18th of the month or even on the 30th of the month, the surviving spouse or family members must send back the Social Security check for that month.

I think that is an harsh and heartless rule. That individual worked for Social Security benefits, earned those benefits, and paid into the Social Security trust fund. The system should allow the surviving spouse or the estate of the family to use that Social Security check for the last month of life.

This legislation has an urgency, Mr. President. When a loved one dies, there are expenses that the family must take care of. People have called my office in tears. Very often it is a son or a daughter that is grieving the death of a parent. They are clearing up the paperwork for their mom or dad, and there is the Social Security check. And they say, "Senator, the check says for the month of May. Mom died on May 28. Why do we have to send the Social Security check back? We have bills to pay. We have utility coverage that we need to wrap up, mom's rent, or her mortgage, or health expenses. Why is Social Security telling me, 'Send the check back or we're going to come and get you?'"

With all the problems in our country today, we ought to be going after drug dealers and tax dodgers, not honest people who have paid into Social Security, and not the surviving spouse or the family who have been left with the bills for the last month of their loved one's life. They are absolutely right when they call me and say that Social Security was supposed to be there for them.

I've listened to my constituents and to the stories of their lives. What they say is this: "Senator MIKULSKI, we don't want anything for free. But our family does want what our parents worked for. We do want what we feel we deserve and what has been paid for in the trust fund in our loved one's

name. Please make sure that our family gets the Social Security check for the last month of our life."

That is what our bill is going to do. That is why Senator SNOWE and I are introducing the Family Social Security Protection Act. When we talk about retirement security, the most important part of that is income security. And the safety net for most Americans is Social Security.

We know that as Senators we have to make sure that Social Security remains solvent, and we are working to do that. We also don't want to create an undue administrative burden at the Social Security Administration—a burden that might affect today's retirees. But it is absolutely crucial that we provide a Social Security check for the last month of life.

How do we propose to do that? We have a very simple, straightforward way of dealing with this problem. Our legislation says that if you die before the 15th of the month, you will get a check for half the month. If you die after the 15th of the month, your surviving spouse or the family estate would get a check for the full month.

We think this bill is fundamentally fair. Senator SNOWE and I are old-fashioned in our belief in family values. We believe you honor your father and your mother. We believe that it is not only a good religious and moral principle, but it is good public policy as well.

The way to honor your father and mother is to have a strong Social Security System and to make sure the system is fair in every way. That means fair for the retiree and fair for the spouse and family. That is why we support making sure that the surviving spouse or family can keep the Social Security check for the last month of life.

Mr. President, we urge our colleagues to join us in this effort and support the Social Security Family Protection Act.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleague and friend, the Senator from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI, in introducing legislation to correct an inequity that exists in our Social Security system.

Currently, when a Social Security beneficiary dies, his or her last monthly benefit check must be returned to the Social Security Administration. This provision often causes problems for the surviving family members because they are unable to financially subsidize the expenses accrued by the late beneficiary in their last month of life. The bill we are introducing today is based on legislation I have introduced during the last four Congresses. My original legislation prorated the Social Security benefit based on the date of death. If the beneficiary died before the 15th, the surviving spouse received 50 percent of the benefit, if the beneficiary died after the 15th, the surviving spouse received the entire