

In short, the equipment-expensing change I propose are a win-win for small businesses consumers, equipment manufacturers, and our national economy as a whole.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I rise today to respond to the urgent needs of small businesses in my home State of Oregon. Oregon small businesses are in need of help as the state's economy deals with poor growth and high unemployment.

In an effort to boost both small business and the Oregon economy I am proud to introduce legislation with Senator COLLINS that will provide tax relief for small firms, the section 179 small business expensing bill.

Economic recovery must include job creation. In Oregon most new jobs are created by the State's 270,000 small businesses. Small businesses have a broad impact on Oregon's economy and are essential to its well-being.

Oregon ranks third in the Nation in small businesses per capita. Oregonians are independent and creative and much of this creativity goes into the wide diversity of small businesses that exist in my State. Therefore it is imperative that we bolster and strengthen the small business community in Oregon.

One critical way in which we can help small firms is by raising the threshold for expensing equipment purchases.

Currently, companies may expense equipment purchases up to \$24,000 of the cost of equipment and depreciate the remainder.

This legislation will increase the amount small businesses can expense per purchase to \$40,000 and increase the total investment from the current \$200,000 to \$325,000 annually.

This limit of \$325,000 on total purchases of equipment in a single year applies to the smallest of companies.

Only the smallest of firms that are struggling to stay afloat and seek to grow by buying equipment would be able to take advantage of this expensing.

This would provide a greatly needed boost to small businesses in Oregon, allowing them to move forward on job hiring and capital investment plans that they have had to put aside during the downturn of recent days.

This legislation is strongly supported by the National Federation of Independent Businesses and I would like to enter into the RECORD a letter from Dan Danner expressing the importance of this increase to small businesses.

I believe these changes will ease the record-keeping burden of depreciating such equipment and fill free up capital that can be used to create and sustain new jobs, expand current small businesses, and encourage the creation of new businesses as well.

All of these economic actions will boost the Oregon economy at a time it is still sorely needed. Businesses will use the extra money to purchase new equipment, which will help an economic expansion.

Creating new jobs for Oregonians who were laid off last year lessens the burden on the State economy and puts unemployed Oregonians back to work.

In conclusion, I would like you to know that this critical legislation that would boost small businesses in Oregon was initially part of the economic stimulus legislation that the Senate passed overwhelmingly in January. I call on all of my colleagues to support this legislation and swiftly give small businesses across the Nation and in my State this important boost.

I ask unanimous consent that the letter to which I referred previously be printed in the RECORD.

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

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF
INDEPENDENT BUSINESS,
Washington, DC, March 15, 2002.

Hon. GORDON SMITH,
U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SENATOR SMITH: On behalf of the 600,000 members of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), I commend you for introducing The Section 179 Small Business Expensing bill. Your bill will increase the amount of equipment purchases, allow small businesses to expense each year from the current \$24,000 to \$40,000 and most importantly, make this language permanent.

Many small businesses are currently struggling to cope with the recession and the events of September 11th. Increasing the expensing limit would provide small and growing firms with the funds to make critical investments and keep their firms running and growing, creating new jobs.

This legislation will also help small business by eliminating burdensome record keeping involved in depreciating equipment. And it adjusts the investment limit on expensing from \$200,000 to \$325,000.

Small business is the major job generator for the economy. Let's give them the tools to grow, hire more employees, and lead this country out of recession.

Sincerely,
DAN DANNER,
Senior Vice President, Public Policy.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet for a hearing on "Child Care: Helping Parents Work and Improving the Well-being of Children" during the session of the Senate on Friday, March 15, 2002, at 9:30 a.m.

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

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, MARCH 18, 2002

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until the hour of 3 p.m. on Monday, March 18; that following the prayer and the pledge, the Journal of pro-

ceedings be approved to date, the morning hour be deemed expired, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and the Senate begin consideration of H.R. 2356, the Campaign Finance Reform Act; further, that at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 705, with 30 minutes for debate, equally divided between the chairman and ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, prior to a vote on the nomination, with no intervening action or debate; further, that it be in order to request the yeas and nays on the nomination at this time.

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

Mr. REID. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following the disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, any statements relating to the nomination be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate return to legislative session.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATIONS DISCHARGED AND EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session and that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of the nominations of Amy Apfel Kass, Andrew Ladis, Wright Lassiter, Jr., to be members of the National Council on the Humanities, and Maribeth McGinley to be a member of the National Council on the Arts. I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 727, the nomination of Sally Stroup to be an Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education; that the nominations be confirmed, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate return to legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES

Amy Apfel Kass, of Illinois, to be a Member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2004.

Andrew Ladis, of Georgia, to be a Member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2006.

Wright Lassiter, Jr., of Texas, to be a Member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2006.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Maribeth McGinley, of California, to be a Member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2006.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Sally Stroup, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education, Department of Education.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now return to legislative session.

NATIONAL INHALANTS AND POISON PREVENTION WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 325, S. Res. 206.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 206) designating the week of March 17 through March 23, 2002 as "National Inhalants and Poison Prevention Week."

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to, en bloc; that the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table; and that any statements related to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 206) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 206

Whereas according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, inhalant use ranks third in popularity behind use of alcohol and tobacco for all youths through the eighth grade;

Whereas the over 1,000 products that are being inhaled to get high are legal, inexpensive, and found in nearly every home and corner market;

Whereas using inhalants even once to get high can lead to kidney failure, brain damage, or even death;

Whereas inhalants are considered a gateway drug, one that leads to the use of harder, more deadly drugs; and

Whereas because inhalant use is difficult to detect, the products used are accessible and affordable, and abuse is so common, increased education of young people and their parents regarding the dangers of inhalants is an important step in our Nation's battle against drug abuse: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of March 17 through March 23, 2002, as "National Inhalants and Poison Prevention Week";

(2) encourages parents to learn about the dangers of inhalant abuse and discuss those dangers with their children; and

(3) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe the week with appropriate activities.

NATIONAL CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 326, S. Res. 207.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 207) designating March 31, 2002, and March 31, 2003, as "National Civilian Conservation Corps Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on the Judiciary with an amendment in the nature of a substitute, with an amendment to the preamble, and an amendment to the title, as follows:

Whereas the Civilian Conservation Corps, commonly known as the CCC, was an independent Federal agency that deserves recognition for its lasting contribution to natural resources conservation and infrastructure improvements on public lands in the United States and for its outstanding success in providing employment and training to thousands of Americans;

Whereas March 31, 2002, is the 69th anniversary of the signing by President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the Emergency Conservation Work Act, a precursor to the Civilian Conservation Corps Act that established the CCC;

Whereas, between 1933 and 1942, the CCC provided employment and vocational training for more than 3,000,000 men, including unemployed youths, more than 250,000 veterans of the Spanish American War and World War I, and more than 80,000 Native Americans in conservation and natural resources development work, defense work on military reservations, and forest protection;

Whereas the CCC coordinated a mobilization of men, material, and transportation on a scale never previously known in time of peace;

Whereas the CCC managed more than 4,500 camps in every State and the then-territories of Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands;

Whereas the CCC left a legacy of natural resources and infrastructure improvements that included planting more than 3,000,000,000 trees, building 46,854 bridges, restoring 3,980 historical structures, developing more than 800 state parks, improving 3,462 beaches, creating 405,037 signs, markers, and monuments, and building 63,256 structures and 8,045 wells and pump houses;

Whereas the benefits of many CCC projects are still enjoyed by Americans today in national and state parks, forests, and other lands, including the National Arboretum in Washington, DC, Banderier National Monument in New Mexico, Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee, Yosemite National Park in California, Acadia National Park in Maine, Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado, and Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi;

Whereas the CCC provided a foundation of self-confidence, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, communication, and leadership for its participants through education, training, and hard work, and participants made many lasting friendships in the CCC;

Whereas the CCC demonstrated the commitment of the United States to the conservation of land, water, and natural resources on a national level and to leadership in the world on public conservation efforts; and

Whereas the conservation of the Nation's land, water, and natural resources is still an im-

portant goal of the American people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates March 31, 2002, as "National Civilian Conservation Corps Day"; and

(2) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Amend the title so as to read: "Designating March 31, 2002, as 'National Civilian Conservation Corps Day'."

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the substitute amendment be agreed to, the resolution be agreed to, as amended, the amendment to the preamble be agreed to, the preamble, as amended, be agreed to, the amendment to the title be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and any statements relating to the resolution be printed in the RECORD.

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

The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The resolution (S. Res. 207), as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment to the preamble was agreed to.

The preamble, as amended, was agreed to.

The amendment to the title was agreed to.

COMMEMORATING AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE DEDICATION AND SACRIFICE MADE BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 327, S. Res. 221.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 221) to commemorate and acknowledge the dedication and sacrifice made by the men and women who have lost their lives while serving as law enforcement officers.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of this resolution to honor our Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our public safety. I commend Senator CAMPBELL for his leadership in submitting Senate Resolution 221, which recognizes May 15, 2002, as Peace Officers Memorial Day, in honor of Federal, State, and local officers killed or disabled in the line of duty.

I want to recognize the other cosponsors of this resolution: Senators HATCH, BIDEN, DEWINE, CANTWELL, ALLARD, ALLEN, BINGAMAN, BUNNING, COCHRAN, GREGG, HUTCHINSON, ROCKEFELLER, and THOMAS.

Since my time as a State prosecutor, I have always taken a keen interest in law enforcement in Vermont and around the country. Vermont has the reputation of being one of the safest States in which to live, work and visit,