

BIDEN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. KERRY, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DODD, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. ALLEN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. BURR, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. DEMINT, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. REED, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. KOHL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. COLEMAN, and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. Res. 504. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the President should not accept the credentials of any representative of the Government of Libya without the expressed understanding that the Government of Libya will continue to work in good faith to resolve outstanding cases of United States victims of terrorism sponsored or supported by Libya, including the settlement of cases arising from the Pan Am Flight 103 and LaBelle Discotheque bombings; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. TALENT, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. THUNE, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. KOHL, and Mr. JOHNSON):

S. Con. Res. 97. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that it is the goal of the United States that, not later than January 1, 2025, the agricultural, forestry, and working land of the United States should provide from renewable resources not less than 25 percent of the total energy consumed in the United States and continue to produce safe, abundant, and affordable food, feed, and fiber; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 420

At the request of Mr. KYL, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 420, a bill to make the repeal of the estate tax permanent.

S. 484

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 484, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal civilian and military retirees to pay health insurance premiums on a pretax basis and to allow a deduction for TRICARE supplemental premiums.

S. 495

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 495, a bill to impose sanctions against perpetrators of crimes against humanity in Darfur, Sudan, and for other purposes.

S. 918

At the request of Mr. OBAMA, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 918, a bill to provide for Flexible Fuel Vehicle (FFV) refueling capability at new and existing refueling station facilities to promote energy security and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

S. 1064

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1064, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to improve

stroke prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.

S. 1272

At the request of Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1272, a bill to amend title 46, United States Code, and title II of the Social Security Act to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II.

S. 1353

At the request of Mr. REID, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. DORGAN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. LIEBERMAN) and the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. BUNNING) were added as cosponsors of S. 1353, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the establishment of an Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Registry.

S. 1575

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. SARBANES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1575, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to authorize a demonstration program to increase the number of doctorally-prepared nurse faculty.

S. 1691

At the request of Mr. CRAIG, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. MARTINEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1691, a bill to amend selected statutes to clarify existing Federal law as to the treatment of students privately educated at home under State law.

S. 1722

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. DAYTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1722, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize and extend the Fetal Alcohol Syndrome prevention and services program, and for other purposes.

S. 2025

At the request of Mr. BAYH, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2025, a bill to promote the national security and stability of the United States economy by reducing the dependence of the United States on oil through the use of alternative fuels and new technology, and for other purposes.

S. 2140

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2140, a bill to enhance protection of children from sexual exploitation by strengthening section 2257 of title 18, United States Code, requiring producers of sexually explicit material to keep and permit inspection of records regarding the age of performers, and for other purposes.

S. 2284

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2284, a bill to extend the termination date for the exemption of returning workers from the numerical limitations for temporary workers.

S. 2416

At the request of Mr. BURNS, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2416, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the scope of programs of education for which accelerated payments of educational assistance under the Montgomery GI Bill may be used, and for other purposes.

S. 2467

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. SALAZAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2467, a bill to enhance and improve the trade relations of the United States by strengthening United States trade enforcement efforts and encouraging United States trading partners to adhere to the rules and norms of international trade, and for other purposes.

S. 2545

At the request of Mr. DEWINE, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. COLEMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2545, a bill to establish a collaborative program to protect the Great Lakes, and for other purposes.

S. 2616

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2616, a bill to amend the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 and the Mineral Leasing Act to improve surface mining control and reclamation, and for other purposes.

S. 2658

At the request of Mr. BOND, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2658, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to enhance the national defense through empowerment of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau and the enhancement of the functions of the National Guard Bureau, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2658, supra.

S. 2661

At the request of Mr. SANTORUM, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2661, a bill to provide for a plebiscite in Puerto Rico on the status of the territory.

At the request of Mr. MARTINEZ, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) were added as cosponsors of S. 2661, supra.

S. 2707

At the request of Mr. SUNUNU, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. BYRD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2707, a bill to amend the United States Housing Act of 1937 to exempt qualified public housing agencies from the requirement of preparing an annual public housing agency plan.

S. 2810

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. INOUE) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) were added as cosponsors of S. 2810, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to eliminate months in 2006 from the calculation of any late enrollment penalty under the Medicare part D prescription drug program and to provide for additional funding for State health insurance counseling program and area agencies on aging, and for other purposes.

S. 3069

At the request of Mr. DODD, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 3069, a bill to amend section 2306 of title 38, United States Code, to modify the furnishing of government markers for graves of veterans at private ceremonies, and for other purposes.

S. 3275

At the request of Mr. ALLEN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. SMITH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 3275, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a national standard in accordance with which nonresidents of a State may carry concealed firearms in the State.

S. CON. RES. 71

At the request of Mr. AKAKA, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 71, a concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that States should require candidates for driver's licenses to demonstrate an ability to exercise greatly increased caution when driving in the proximity of a potentially visually impaired individual.

S. CON. RES. 96

At the request of Mr. BROWNBACK, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 96, a concurrent resolution to commemorate, celebrate, and reaffirm the national motto of the United States on the 50th anniversary of its formal adoption.

S. RES. 331

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 331, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding fertility issues facing cancer survivors.

S. RES. 420

At the request of Mr. LAUTENBERG, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 420, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that effective treatment and access to care for individuals with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis should be improved.

AMENDMENT NO. 4189

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 4189 intended to be proposed to S. 2012, a bill to authorize appropriations to the Secretary of Commerce for the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act for fiscal years 2006 through 2012, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 3457. A bill to provide a national franchise and other regulatory relief to video service providers who offer a-la-carte programming for cable television, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Consumers Having Options in Cable Entertainment, CHOICE, Act of 2006. This bill would encourage broadcasters and cable companies that own cable channels to sell their channels individually to subscribers. It would also promote cable programming distribution over the Internet.

For almost 10 years I have supported giving consumers the ability to buy cable channels individually, also known as a la carte, to provide consumers with more control over the viewing options in their home and their monthly cable bill. Cable companies have resisted this and have continued to give consumers all the "choice" of a North Korean election ballot. There is only one option available: buy a package of channels, whether you watch all the channels or not. The alternative is to not receive cable programming at all. Why have cable companies and cable programmers refused to give consumers the ability to buy and pay for only those channels consumers watch? Simply because they do not have to. They are the only game in town. But not for long, I hope.

Telephone companies have realized that consumers want more and are poised to provide consumers across the nation with an alternative to the local cable company. Many of these telephone companies, including AT&T, are also ready to offer consumers the ability to purchase channels a la carte. Such companies will offer two crucial benefits to consumers: more competition in the video service provider market, and more options for programming packages. Together, these two offerings will allow consumers to have greater control over the content that enters the home and the ability to manage their monthly cable bills.

According to a Government Accountability Office, GAO, report, in communities where there are two cable companies competing for customers, cable rates are 15 percent less than in communities without any competition. A subsequent GAO study suggests that in some markets the presence of another cable competitor may reduce rates by an astounding 41 percent. Unfortunately, today less than 5 percent of communities have two companies competing to provide consumers cable television service.

The CHOICE Act would help bring competition to the cable television market. Choice in cable television delivery is long overdue for consumers who have suffered steep rate hikes year after year. Since 1996, cable rates have increased 58 percent or nearly three times the rate of inflation. The Federal Communications Commission, FCC, has found that rates increased 7 percent in 2001 and 2002, and 5 percent in 2003. The FCC's most recent report found that rates again rose 5 percent in 2004, double the rate of inflation, but only 3.6 percent where the local cable company faced competition. I can only imagine the savings consumers could reap if presented with a choice of providers of cable service and a choice of channels. For this reason I call on Congress to pass the CHOICE Act.

A recent USA Today/Gallup poll found that a majority of Americans would like to buy cable channels individually and an AP/Ipsos poll found that a remarkable 78 percent of Americans would like to do so. According to Nielsen Media Research, households receiving more than 70 channels only watch, on average, about 17 of these. Consumers know that they could have greater control over their monthly bill if given the ability to choose their channels. This was recently confirmed by the FCC. This year the FCC found that consumers could save as much as 13 percent on their monthly cable bills if they could buy only the channels they want.

Mr. President, consider the situation of a senior citizen on fixed income living in Sun City, Arizona, who watches only a few news and movie channels, but continues to pay for high priced channels such as ESPN, Fox Sports, and MTV—channels that other consumers enjoy, but channels that certain seniors may not want and possibly cannot afford. In fact, the general manager of the Sun City cable system has told my staff that he has tried to drop several expensive music video channels from the company's channel lineup to make room for channels his viewers want to receive and to decrease costs, but the owners of the music video channels have forbid him to do so without serious repercussions. So the residents of Sun City continue to subsidize the cost of these channels for viewers around the country. That is why AARP, representing 35 million senior citizens, supports the ability for viewers to buy channels on an a la carte