

Kyl	Nelson (FL)	Smith
Landrieu	Nelson (NE)	Specter
Leahy	Obama	Stabenow
Levin	Pryor	Stevens
Lincoln	Reid	Sununu
Lott	Roberts	Talent
Lugar	Rockefeller	Thomas
Martinez	Salazar	Thune
McCain	Santorum	Vitter
McConnell	Schumer	Voinovich
Mikulski	Sessions	Warner
Murkowski	Shelby	

NAYS—12

Boxer	Lautenberg	Reed
Dayton	Lieberman	Sarbanes
Feinstein	Menendez	Snowe
Harkin	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—2

Biden	Kerry
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The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 86, the nays are 12. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT
AGREEMENT—H.J. RES. 87

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12 noon on Wednesday, July 26, the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.J. Res. 87, which was received from the House. I further ask unanimous consent that there be 30 minutes equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, and that following the use or yielding of time, the joint resolution be read a third time and the Senate proceed to a vote on passage without intervening action or debate.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

RETURNED AMERICANS
PROTECTION ACT OF 2006

Mr. MARTINEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 5865, which was received from the House.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 5865) to amend the Social Security Act to increase the limit on payments for temporary assistance to U.S. citizens returned from foreign countries.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, recent events in the Middle East have led to the evacuation of thousands of U.S. citizens from Lebanon. This evacuation is being conducted by the U.S. State Department.

However, the Department of Health and Human Services, or more specifically, the Administration for Children and Families, ACF, is responsible for assisting U.S. citizens upon their return to the United States.

Over the past several days, ACF has established repatriation facilities at the Baltimore/Washington airport, the Philadelphia airport, and McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. More than

5,000 Americans have been offered assistance at these facilities in recent days. Thousands more are expected within the week.

These repatriation facilities are staffed by Federal and State employees who provide assistance with travel, lodging, and access to medical facilities, as necessary. These employees are doing a tremendous job assisting all of the evacuees.

Unfortunately, under current law, this critical assistance is subject to a statutory cap of \$1 million dollars. Given the expected number of evacuees, the statutory cap could be reached at any moment. Unless Congress acts quickly to raise the cap, the ongoing repatriation efforts will be suspended. We must not allow that to happen.

The legislation I have offered today, along with my colleague from Montana, Senator BAUCUS, will raise the cap to \$6 million through the end of this fiscal year. This increase is expected to fully cover the anticipated costs of the evacuation this year, as well as provide for the continued operation of the repatriation program next year.

In addition to temporarily raising the cap, this legislation would provide the States with the option to use the National Directory of New Hires to verify eligibility under the Food Stamp Program. This language is similar to the provisions in current law now being used to verify eligibility for the SSI Program and to collect delinquent child support payments.

According to the Congressional Budget Office, the utilization of this option in the Food Stamp Program would save roughly \$1 million a year, thus offsetting the cost of raising the cap.

In contrast to the legislation passed by the House yesterday, this legislation does not sunset the repatriation program. The repatriation program has been in operation, in one form or another, since the 1930s. There is no reason to believe this program should be abolished. Thus, the sunset provision contained in the House bill is merely a gimmick to create the appearance that the bill is paid for when in fact it is not.

On another matter, the House language includes a requirement for an IG report on the repatriation program. However, it does not appear such a report is necessary.

According to ACF, under the emergency repatriation program each State has an approved plan which they implement when needed. They are allowed to assume costs for all of the activities contained in their approved plan. The States then submit a detailed explanation of how the funds were spent, along with supporting documentation.

Finally, it should be noted that the language in the House bill was intended to lift the million-dollar cap for the current fiscal year. But it is not entirely clear it accomplishes that goal. Under current law, the cap is ef-

fective for fiscal years beginning after September 30, 2003. Under the House-passed language, the cap is effective for fiscal years beginning after September 30, 2006. Since the current fiscal year occurs after 2003 but before 2006, that begs the question—what is the cap for this year? The answer to this question should not be ambiguous. The Senate language clearly states the cap for the current fiscal year is \$6 million.

Given all of these concerns, I urge my colleagues to reject the House language and support the Senate alternative. The Senate alternative will maintain the critical assistance now being provided to evacuees, while at the same time offsetting the cost of this assistance in a reasonable and responsible manner.

I urge its adoption.

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I urge the Senate to adopt the Grassley-Baucus amendment to the bill H.R. 5864—The Returned Americans Protection Act of 2006. This bill provides needed resources to the United States Repatriation Program, which is currently assisting U.S. citizens who are returning to United States from Lebanon.

The United States Repatriation Program was established by title XI, section 1113 of the Social Security Act to provide temporary assistance to U.S. citizens and their dependents who have been identified by the Department of State as having returned, or been brought from a foreign country to the U.S. because of destitution, illness, war, threat of war, or a similar crisis. The program is currently being used to provide assistance to citizens returning from Lebanon, but estimates indicate that the program could reach its statutory spending cap at any moment. The cap is currently \$1 million per fiscal year. We have been asked by HHS to increase the cap for fiscal year 2006 to \$6 million.

The Grassley-Baucus amendment lifts the cap for fiscal year 2006 from \$1 million to \$6 million. The amendment also includes an offset from the President's fiscal year 2006 budget to use the National Directory of New Hires, NDNH, to improve the administration of the Food Stamp Program. Access to the NDNH will help USDA verify wage and employment information on food stamp applications. That proposal was scored by CBO as providing \$11 million in savings over 10 years.

We have worked with the Department of Health and Human Services and other Government agencies in creating this legislation. We believe we have a reasonable and fiscally responsible solution to this relatively minor problem. We urge the Senate to adopt our amendment, pass the bill, and send the bill to the House for their immediate consideration.

This bill involves a small and, thankfully, seldom-used Federal program. But as recent news events have made clear, this is a program that can provide much-needed assistance to our constituents during difficult circumstances. We should not allow these