

H.R. 2. An act to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-252. A communication from the Principal Deputy, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, authorization of 2 officers to wear the insignia of brigadier general in accordance with title 10, United States Code, section 777; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-253. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, a report on the approved retirement of General John P. Abizaid, United States Army, and his advancement to the grade of general on the retired list; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-254. A communication from the Federal Register Certifying Office, Financial Management Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Administrative Off-set Under Reciprocal Agreements with States" (RIN1510-AB09) received on January 9, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-255. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Community Reinvestment Act Regulations" (RIN1557-AD00) received on January 9, 2007; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-256. A communication from the Director, Strategic Human Resources Policy Division, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Awards" (RIN3206-AL06) received on January 9, 2007; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-1. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Louisiana relative to memorializing Congress to adopt the Constitution Restoration Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 16

Whereas, in 2005, the United States Supreme Court, in two razor thin majorities of 5-4 in *Van Orden v. Perry* (Texas) and *ACLU v. McCreary County* (Kentucky), concluded that it is inconsistent with the First Amendment to display the Ten Commandments in an outdoor public square in Texas, but not on the courthouse walls of two counties in Kentucky; and

Whereas, at the instance of the Indiana Civil Liberties Union, a federal judge recently ordered the Indiana House of Representatives to discontinue opening its sessions in prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, ruling that the practice is now "unconstitutional"; and

Whereas, despite the fact that America's Constitution ends with an acknowledgment of Jesus Christ in Article VII, providing in

pertinent part "Done . . . in the Year of our Lord . . .," threats of federal court litigation over the acknowledgment of God now have some Americans doubtful whether it is even "constitutional" to extend greetings of "Merry Christmas" or otherwise publicly acknowledge the historical birth of Christ; and

Whereas, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which provides in part that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," is specific and unequivocal instruction to only the United States Congress and the United States Constitution makes no restriction on the ability of states, municipalities, or individuals to acknowledge God, the Supreme Ruler of the Universe; and

Whereas, the federal judiciary has overstepped its constitutional boundaries and ruled against the acknowledgment of God as the sovereign source of law, liberty, and government by local and state officers and other state institutions, including state schools; and

Whereas, a constant complaint from the federal courts is that their caseloads are too heavy due in part to an increasingly large proportion of cases consuming the docket of federal courts which involve "unconstitutional separation between church and state" claims involving litigants who claim to be offended at the mention of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, one significant way dockets of federal courts could be reduced would be the adoption of the Constitutional Restoration Act by Congress which would remove the jurisdiction of the federal courts over these types of claims or controversies under the authority of Article III, Section 2, of the United States Constitution; and

Whereas, the Senate of the Louisiana Legislature recognizes that this is the season to give gifts and be charitable and an integral part of the season is the inclusion and acknowledgment of Jesus Christ: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana memorializes the Congress of the United States to adopt the Constitution Restoration Act, thereby reducing the caseload of our federal courts by removing from their jurisdiction any and all cases involving the acknowledgment of God as the sovereign source of law, liberty, or government as authorized by Article III, Section 2, of the United States Constitution. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

POM-2. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana relative to memorializing Congress to adopt the Constitution Restoration Act; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 23

Whereas, in 2005, the United States Supreme Court, in two razor thin majorities of 5-4 in *Van Orden v. Perry* (Texas) and *ACLU v. McCreary County* (Kentucky), concluded that it is inconsistent with the First Amendment to display the Ten Commandments in an outdoor public square in Texas, but not on the courthouse walls of two counties in Kentucky; and

Whereas, at the instance of the Indiana Civil Liberties Union, a federal judge recently ordered the Indiana House of Representatives to discontinue opening its sessions in prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, ruling that the practice is now "unconstitutional"; and

Whereas, despite the fact that America's Constitution ends with an acknowledgment

of Jesus Christ in Article VII, providing in pertinent part "Done . . . in the Year of our Lord . . .," threats of federal court litigation over the acknowledgment of God now have some Americans doubtful whether it is even "constitutional" to extend greetings of "Merry Christmas" or otherwise publicly acknowledge the historical birth of Christ; and

Whereas, the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, which provides in part that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," is specific and unequivocal instruction to only the United States Congress and the United States Constitution makes no restriction on the ability of states, municipalities, or individuals to acknowledge God, the Supreme Ruler of the Universe; and

Whereas, the federal judiciary has overstepped its constitutional boundaries and ruled against the acknowledgment of God as the sovereign source of law, liberty, and government by local and state officers and other state institutions, including state schools; and

Whereas, a constant complaint from the federal courts is that their caseloads are too heavy due in part to an increasingly large proportion of cases consuming the docket of federal courts which involve "unconstitutional separation between church and state" claims involving litigants who claim to be offended at the mention of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, one significant way dockets of federal courts could be reduced would be the adoption of the Constitutional Restoration Act by Congress which would remove the jurisdiction of the federal courts over these types of claims or controversies under the authority of Article III, Section 2, of the United States Constitution; and

Whereas, the Louisiana Legislature recognizes that this is the season to give gifts and be charitable and an integral part of the season is the inclusion and acknowledgment of Jesus Christ: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana memorializes the Congress of the United States to adopt the Constitution Restoration Act, thereby reducing the caseload of our federal courts by removing from their jurisdiction any and all cases involving the acknowledgment of God as the sovereign source of law, liberty, or government as authorized by Article III, Section 2, of the United States Constitution. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

POM-3. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Louisiana relative to memorializing Congress to take such actions as are necessary to create a federal catastrophe fund; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6

Whereas, creation of a federal catastrophe fund is a comprehensive, integrated approach to help better prepare and protect the nation from natural catastrophes, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, snowstorms, and earthquakes; and

Whereas, the current system of response to catastrophes leaves many people and businesses at risk of being unable to replace what they lost, wastes tax dollars, raises insurance premiums, and leads to shortages of insurance needed to sustain our economy; and

Whereas, creation of a federal catastrophe fund would help stabilize insurance markets following a catastrophe and help steady insurance costs for consumers while making it

possible for private insurers to offer more insurance in catastrophe-prone areas; and

Whereas, a portion of the premiums collected by insurance companies could be deposited into such a fund which could be administered by the United States Treasury and grow tax free; and

Whereas, the federal catastrophe fund would operate as a "backstop" and could only be accessed when private insurers and state catastrophe funds have paid losses in excess of a defined threshold; and

Whereas, utilizing the capacity of the federal government would help smooth out fluctuations consumers currently experience in insurance prices and availability because of exposure to large catastrophic losses and would provide better protection at a lower price; and

Whereas, when there is a gap between the insurance protection consumers buy and the damage caused by a major catastrophe, taxpayers across the country pay much of the difference, as congressional appropriations of billions of dollars for after-the-fact disaster relief in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina demonstrated: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to create a federal catastrophe fund; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-4. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana relative to commending and memorializing Congress for passing the Domenici-Landrieu Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 16

Whereas, since 1930 the coastal landscape of Louisiana has lost over 1,900 square miles of land, eroding at a rate of 25 square miles every year. In addition, hurricanes Katrina and Rita converted over 200 square miles of wetlands into open water; and

Whereas, the communities, economy, natural resources, and cultural heritage of south Louisiana remain vulnerable to the extremes of coastal flooding, hurricanes, and land loss; and

Whereas, the protection and restoration of coastal Louisiana will require a long term commitment of funding to establish comprehensive, effective and sustainable coastal protection projects and programs; and

Whereas, the Louisiana congressional delegation has been working for decades to secure a steady stream of revenue to fund the critical work of coastal protection and restoration in Louisiana; and

Whereas, since the inception and development of federal offshore oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico, the state of Louisiana has provided essential onshore support for such production; and

Whereas, such support has included numerous components of Louisiana's vital "energy corridor" that provide the nation with a third of its domestic oil and gas supply, including the pipeline systems that cross Louisiana's coastal wetlands; and

Whereas, the countless communities in south Louisiana that form the backbone and labor force to facilitate the delivery of these crucial energy resources to the rest of the nation are critical factors in such support; and

Whereas, the federal government collects over \$6 billion each year from the bonus bids,

rents and royalties derived from federal leases on the Outer Continental Shelf in the Gulf of Mexico, and under current federal law nearly all of these revenues are deposited into the General Treasury of the United States; and

Whereas, in recognition of the urgent crisis facing coastal Louisiana and of the support provided by each of the Gulf Coast states that produce oil and gas for the nation, and in further acknowledgment of the significant amount of funding available from oil and gas production on the Outer Continental Shelf, the United States Congress passed the Domenici-Landrieu Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 on December 9, 2006; and

Whereas, this act authorizes oil and gas development in about 8.3 million acres of the eastern Gulf of Mexico, including 2.5 million acres within a section known as Lease Area 181; and

Whereas, beginning in the federal Fiscal Year 2007 and in each fiscal year thereafter, this Act directs the secretary of the United States Department of the Interior to share 37.5 percent of the revenues from these new areas with the states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama for coastal restoration, with such funds to be derived from bonus bids, rents, and royalties on leases within the new areas; and

Whereas, beginning in the federal Fiscal Year 2016 and in each fiscal year thereafter, this Act further directs the secretary of the United States Department of the Interior to share 37.5 percent of the revenues with the states of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama from all new federal oil and gas leases after the date of enactment in existing U.S. Department of Interior, Mineral Management Service, planning areas throughout the Gulf of Mexico; and

Whereas, the enactment of this Act represents the most significant change offshore oil and gas policy in over fifty years; and

Whereas, the dedication of these revenues constitute the beginning of the steady stream of federal funding sought by the Louisiana congressional delegation for decades; and

Whereas, such steady stream of federal funding is a truly significant step towards sustainable coastal protection and restoration as an attainable goal for Louisiana: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana commends and memorializes the United States Congress for passing the Domenici-Landrieu Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006, which provides for sharing of federal offshore oil and gas revenue with Louisiana for coastal protection and restoration. Be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana congratulates the members of the Louisiana congressional delegation for their dedication, persistence, and vigilance in fighting for a share of federal offshore oil and gas revenues to protect and restore coastal Louisiana through the passage of the Domenici-Landrieu Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006. Be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana requests and urges President George W. Bush to immediately sign the Domenici-Landrieu Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives, to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress, and to the office of the President of the United States.

POM-5. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana relative to memorializing Congress to au-

thorize Louisiana to lease closed interstate rest areas to private entities; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 13

Whereas, many rest areas located on Louisiana's interstate highways have been closed in recent years; and

Whereas, these closed rest areas have created a burden on the state and an eyesore to interstate travelers; and

Whereas, if the Congress authorized Louisiana to lease closed interstate rest areas to private entities, certain conveniences, such as gas stations, auto repair stations and restaurants, could be offered to the traveling public in a convenient manner; and

Whereas, these conveniences would then be available in areas where they are not currently available; and

Whereas, such developments could provide a revenue stream to Louisiana by making use of property in a desirable area not currently being used in commerce: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Legislature of Louisiana memorializes the Congress of the United States to authorize Louisiana to lease closed interstate rest areas to private entities in order to provide services and products helpful or desirable to interstate travelers. Be it further

Resolved, That a copy of this Resolution shall be transmitted to the secretary of the United States Senate and the clerk of the United States House of Representatives and to each member of the Louisiana delegation to the United States Congress.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. CANTWELL:

S. 235. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain buildings and lands of the Yakima Project, Washington, to the Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. AKAKA):

S. 236. A bill to require reports to Congress on Federal agency use of data mining; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. 237. A bill to improve agricultural job opportunities, benefits, and security for aliens in the United States and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. GREGG, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 238. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to limit the misuse of Social Security numbers, to establish criminal penalties for such misuse, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. 239. A bill to require Federal agencies, and persons engaged in interstate commerce, in possession of data containing sensitive personally identifiable information, to disclose any breach of such information; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CRAIG (for himself, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. BENNETT, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. BUNNING):

S. 240. A bill to reauthorize and amend the National Geologic Mapping Act of 1992; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.