

Mr. President, hardworking American families are facing many difficult challenges due to the current economic realities facing our country. Now, more than ever, they find themselves having to choose between basic needs to provide for their families, and this is being greatly exacerbated by rising gasoline prices, which have risen by more than 58 percent in the last 14 months. That is why I am pleased to be joined by so many of my colleagues in offering a proposal to provide some needed relief for every person who will be filling their gas or diesel tanks this summer.

In the past year, the price of unleaded regular gas has increased 53 cents per gallon. Diesel fuel prices nationwide are now over \$1.30 more per gallon more than this time last year. With the growing financial strains placed on so many Americans—rising food prices and falling home prices—the additional hit of rising fuel prices is becoming the breaking point.

In an effort to ease some of the hardship caused by the higher fuel prices, our bill would suspend the Federal tax on gas and the tax on diesel fuel from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Last Memorial Day, alone, approximately 32 million Americans traveled by car 50 miles or more from home. Suspending the federal excise tax during the summer, when fuel prices have historically been at the highest annually, would allow Americans to keep a few more of their hard-earned dollars.

Now, let me be clear: this bill would not harm the Highway Trust Fund. This bill would ensure that the Highway Trust Fund remains whole during this “gas tax holiday” by transferring monies from the General Treasury. We all agree that our roads and highways must be maintained and improved to ensure the safety of the road-traveling public, and this amendment would do nothing to impact highway construction.

So, my colleagues have an opportunity to take meaningful action to ease some of the financial burdens that are impacting all hardworking Americans every time they fill up their gas or diesel tanks. Let's put some action behind the usual rhetoric around here and vote to ease their tax burden this summer.

By Mr. KENNEDY (for himself, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. BROWN, Mr. FEINGOLD, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 2891. A bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to apply the protections of the Act to teaching and research assistants; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, it is important for Congress to do more to guarantee graduate students the right to organize and to bargain over their wages and working conditions as teaching and research assistants, so I am introducing legislation today to do so.

More than ever in modern education, teaching and research assistants are in

classrooms every day, educating students in colleges and universities across the country. Their numbers are increasing as the number of full time faculty dwindles. Often, teaching and research assistants are now doing the same job as junior faculty members.

In fact, the classroom is a workplace for these scholars. It's where they earn the money they need to pay to put food on their tables and a roof over their heads. They deserve the right to stand together and make their voice heard in their workplace. Like other employees, they should have the right to join a union and improve their working conditions. Obviously, better wages and working conditions for them also means better education for their students.

In 2004, however, a decision by the National Labor Relations Board changed the law and denied fundamental workplace rights and protections for teaching and research assistants. This ruling stopped an active organizing movement in its tracks and deprived thousands of teaching and research assistants of their right to organize and bargain over their wages and working conditions.

It is hardly the only bad decision by the National Labor Relations Board under the Bush administration, which has been the most anti-worker, anti-labor, anti-union NLRB in history. The Board has let workers down at every turn. It has blocked efforts to gain union representation, undermined workers' attempts to improve their pay and benefits, and exposed them to penalties for seeking to improve their working conditions.

The National Labor Relations Board is supposed to protect the rights of American workers, but it is failing teaching and research assistants, just as it has failed so many others. By passing the Teaching and Research Assistants Collective Bargaining Rights Act, Congress will give these workers back the rights that the National Labor Relations Board has taken away. This legislation amends the definition of employee under the National Labor Relations Act to explicitly include teaching and research assistants at private universities and colleges and restores the law to where it was before the Bush board's anti-worker decision.

This bill is a significant step forward in restoring workers' rights, and I urge my colleagues to join in supporting this important legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 519—WELCOMING POPE BENEDICT XVI TO THE UNITED STATES AND RECOGNIZING THE UNIQUE INSIGHTS HIS MORAL AND SPIRITUAL REFLECTIONS BRING TO THE WORLD STAGE

Mr. BROWNBACK (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr.

BURR, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DOMENICI, Mrs. DOLE, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. CRAIG, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. THUNE, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. ENZI, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. ALLARD) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 519

Whereas Pope Benedict XVI will travel to the United States for his first pastoral visit as Pope and will visit Washington, DC, and New York;

Whereas Pope Benedict XVI was elected as the 265th Bishop of Rome on April 19, 2005, succeeding the much beloved Pope John Paul II;

Whereas the visit of Pope Benedict XVI will mark the 9th visit of a pope to the United States, recognizing the historical importance of the Catholic Church in American life, the deep faith and charity of its members, and the responsibilities of the United States in world affairs;

Whereas Pope Benedict XVI has spoken approvingly of the vibrance of religious faith in the United States, a faith nourished by a constitutional commitment to religious liberty;

Whereas Pope Benedict XVI remains committed to ecumenical dialogue and, during his trip to the United States, will meet with leaders of world religions and representatives of other Christian denominations and will visit a synagogue in New York City, all demonstrating his commitment to sincere dialogue and unity among all members of the human family;

Whereas Pope Benedict XVI has authored 2 encyclical letters inviting the world to meditate on the virtues of love and hope, “Deus caritas est” and “Spe salvi”;

Whereas millions of Americans have discovered in Pope Benedict's words a renewed faith in the power of hope over despair and love over hate;

Whereas Pope Benedict XVI has been a clear and courageous voice for the voiceless, working tirelessly for the recognition of human dignity and religious freedom across the globe;

Whereas Pope Benedict XVI has spoken out for the weak and vulnerable;

Whereas Pope Benedict XVI seeks to advance a “civilization of love” across our world; and

Whereas Catholics in parishes and schools across the Nation, and countless other Americans as well, eagerly await the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate welcomes Pope Benedict XVI on the occasion of his first pastoral visit to the United States and recognizes the unique insights his moral and spiritual reflections bring to the world stage.

SENATE RESOLUTION 520—DESIGNATING MAY 16, 2008, AS “ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY”

Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BROWN, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. LEVIN, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. FEINGOLD) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 520

Whereas, in the United States and around the world, more than 1,000 species are officially designated as at risk of extinction and thousands more also face a heightened risk of extinction;

Whereas the actual and potential benefits that may be derived from many species have not yet been fully discovered and would be permanently lost if not for conservation efforts;

Whereas recovery efforts for species such as the whooping crane, Kirtland's warbler, the peregrine falcon, the gray wolf, the gray whale, the grizzly bear, and others have resulted in great improvements in the viability of such species;

Whereas saving a species requires a combination of sound research, careful coordination, and intensive management of conservation efforts, along with increased public awareness and education;

Whereas 2/3 of endangered or threatened species reside on private lands;

Whereas voluntary cooperative conservation programs have proven to be critical to habitat restoration and species recovery; and

Whereas education and increasing public awareness are the first steps in effectively informing the public about endangered species and species restoration efforts: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates May 16, 2008, as “Endangered Species Day”; and

(2) encourages schools to spend at least 30 minutes on Endangered Species Day teaching and informing students about—

(A) threats to endangered species around the world; and

(B) efforts to restore endangered species, including the essential role of private landowners and private stewardship in the protection and recovery of species; and

(3) encourages organizations, businesses, private landowners, and agencies with a shared interest in conserving endangered species to collaborate in developing educational information for use in schools; and

(4) encourages the people of the United States—

(A) to become educated about, and aware of, threats to species, success stories in species recovery, and opportunities to promote species conservation worldwide; and

(B) to observe the day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce a resolution to establish the third annual Endangered Species Day on May 16, 2008. I am introducing this resolution with Senators COLLINS, CANTWELL, LIEBERMAN, CLINTON, KERRY, BROWN, SNOWE, LEVIN, BOXER, and FEINGOLD whose co-sponsorship I appreciate.

I want to commend my constituent, Mr. David Robinson, who first suggested the establishment of an Endangered Species Day. Mr. Robinson is an example of people who really do make a difference.

The designation of Endangered Species Day will provide many wonderful opportunities for the public to familiarize themselves with the status and recovery efforts of endangered species in our country and around the world.

Last year, more than 50 events were held across the country to highlight endangered species success stories. The Governor of Maine, and the cities and counties of Santa Barbara, San Diego, and San Francisco also declared state and local Endangered Species Days. Zoos and aquariums across the country, such as the Roger Williams Zoo and the San Diego Wild Animal Park, also held educational events.

Based on the success of last year, I am confident that the events of this year's Endangered Species Day will continue to foster increased communication and awareness about many of the most endangered species by encouraging such activities as school field trips to the zoo or attending a lecture at the local library. In my city of San Francisco, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Farralones National Marine Sanctuary plan to hold special tours and viewings of endangered species to commemorate this special day.

Endangered Species recovery programs in California are examples of the conservation and management efforts that have helped significantly restore populations of California condor, the least Bell's vireo songbird, and the California gray whale. Over 300 species classified as either endangered or threatened currently call California home, and efforts to protect them will ensure that they continue to do so.

Despite these success stories, we need to be aware that more can be done. At this time, we have more than 5,000 threatened species in the U.S. and abroad, which receive protection. One small step is to increase awareness about the seriousness of the circumstances facing many of these endangered species and educating the public about them.

I am introducing this bill with the hope that Endangered Species Day can spark the wonder and interest in our youth to continue the conservation efforts we have begun, but still are far from finishing.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 521—AUTHORIZING THE TAKING OF A PHOTOGRAPH IN THE CHAMBER OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE

Mr. REID (for himself and Mr. McCONNELL) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 521

Resolved, That paragraph 1 of Rule IV of the Rules for the Regulation of the Senate Wing of the United States Capitol (prohibiting the taking of pictures in the Senate Chamber) be temporarily suspended for the sole and specific purpose of permitting the Senate Photographic Studio to photograph the United States Senate in actual session on Tuesday, June 3, 2008, at the hour of 2:15 p.m.

SEC. 2. The Sergeant at Arms of the Senate is authorized and directed to make the necessary arrangements therefor, which arrangements shall provide for a minimum of disruption to Senate proceedings.

SENATE RESOLUTION 522—RECOGNIZING THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE MODERN STATE OF ISRAEL AND REAFFIRMING THE BONDS OF CLOSE FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ISRAEL

Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. McCONNELL, Mr. AKAKA, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. ALLARD, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. BAYH, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. BOND, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BURR, Mr. BYRD, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mrs. CLINTON, Mr. COBURN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. COLEMAN, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. CORKER, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRAIG, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. DEMINT, Mr. DODD, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. DORGAN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ENSIGN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. GREGG, Mr. HAGEL, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. HATCH, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. INOUE, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. KERRY, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. KOHL, Mr. KYL, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. LAUTENBERG, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mrs. LINCOLN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. NELSON of Florida, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. PRYOR, Mr. REED, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. SMITH, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. SPECTER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. SUNUNU, Mr. TESTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. VITTER, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. WARNER, Mr. WEBB, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. WYDEN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 522

Whereas on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly voted to partition the British Mandate of Palestine and create a Jewish state;

Whereas on May 14, 1948, the people of Israel proclaimed the establishment of the sovereign and independent State of Israel, and the United States Government established full diplomatic relations with Israel;

Whereas the desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern State of Israel is an outgrowth of the existence of the historic kingdom of Israel established in the Land of Israel 3,000 years ago, with the city of Jerusalem as its capital;

Whereas for over 2,000 years, there has been continuous Jewish presence and residence in the land comprising the modern State of Israel;

Whereas the establishment of the modern State of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people followed the slaughter of more than 6,000,000 European Jews during the Holocaust;

Whereas since its establishment 60 years ago, the modern State of Israel has rebuilt a nation, forged a new and dynamic democratic society, and created a thriving economic, political, cultural, and intellectual life despite the heavy costs of war, terrorism, and unjustified diplomatic and economic boycotts against the people of Israel;