

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED  
BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. CASEY (for himself and Mr. HARKIN):

S. 3840. A bill to permit employees to request, and to ensure employers consider requests for, flexible work terms and conditions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President:

We all fill many roles in our lives. We are workers, parents, sons and daughters, and members of our communities. We struggle to do well in each responsibility. But when the demands of work overshadow the rest of our lives, our lives feel out of balance. This legislation gives millions of American workers the opportunity to restore that balance—to be good employees and responsible citizens and family members, too. They deserve no less.—Senator Ted Kennedy delivered these words on December 6, 2007.

With those words, Senator Kennedy introduced the Working Families Flexibility Act in 2007. Today, I continue his essential work by reintroducing the legislation he championed.

Millions of Americans face unbelievable demands on their time due to work and familial responsibilities. Thirty years ago, people worked fewer hours and it was commonplace for one parent to stay at home while the other worked. Today, 70 percent of households are led by either two employed parents, or a single parent.

There are numerous demands on our personal time. Parents spend countless hours on childcare, caring for older relatives, doctor's appointments, kids sporting events, and school activities—on top of putting in a full day at work. Then, there is the time it takes to get to work. It is not uncommon for people to spend hours every day in their cars, or on some form of public transportation, getting to and from work each day.

These time commitments lead to stress and a loss of productivity. According to research compiled by Workplace Flexibility 2010, a public policy initiative at Georgetown Law, a staggering 92 percent of employees feel they don't have enough flexibility on the job to meet the needs of their children and families.

We need a change. Parents deserve options. We must encourage an evolution in the modern workplace to acknowledge the realities of our outside time commitments.

One thing we can do is promote workplace flexibility. Flexibility can mean telecommuting, job sharing or part-time work. For workers, this flexibility means greater control about when and where they get their work done. For employers, it means less turn over, higher morale and more productive employees. It is a win-win for both employer and employee.

That is why I am introducing the Workplace Flexibility Fairness Act. Long championed by Senator Ted Kennedy, this bill acknowledges the realities of our modern workforce by providing employees the "right to re-

quest" flexible work options in terms of hours, schedules and work location. Further, the legislation provides employers with flexibility by encouraging them to review these requests, propose changes and even deny workers if the request is not in the best interest of the business. Lastly, the legislation imposes civil penalties on any employer who discriminates against an employee for exercising any right granted under this legislation. This provision is necessary to protect workers who initiate a conversation with their employer about workplace flexibility options.

Countries around the world, including Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands and New Zealand have "Right to Request" laws that have been shown to increase productivity, attendance and overall job satisfaction. It is time for Congress to encourage workplace flexibility in the United States. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to pass this common sense legislation.

## SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

## SENATE RESOLUTION 644—DESIGNATING THE WEEK BEGINNING OCTOBER 10, 2010, AS "NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WEEK"

Mr. KAUFMAN (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. LINCOLN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. BURRIS, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. KERRY, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. FEINGOLD, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. CORKER, Mr. REED, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mr. PRYOR, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. INOUE, and Mr. LEVIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 644

Whereas, in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt established the first national wildlife refuge on Florida's Pelican Island;

Whereas, in 2010, the National Wildlife Refuge System is the premier system of lands and waters to conserve wildlife in the world, and has grown to more than 150 million acres, 552 national wildlife refuges, and 38 wetland management districts in every State and territory of the United States;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important recreational and tourism destinations in communities across the Nation, and these protected lands offer a variety of recreational opportunities, including 6 wildlife-dependent uses that the National Wildlife Refuge System manages: hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation;

Whereas hunting is permitted on more than 320 national wildlife refuges and fishing is permitted on 272 national wildlife refuges, welcoming more than 2,500,000 hunters and more than 7,000,000 anglers;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are important to local businesses and gateway communities;

Whereas, for every \$1 appropriated, national wildlife refuges generate \$4 in economic activity;

Whereas approximately 41,000,000 people visit national wildlife refuges every year,

generating nearly \$1,700,000,000 and 27,000 jobs in local economies;

Whereas the National Wildlife Refuge System encompasses every kind of ecosystem in the United States, including temperate, tropical, and boreal forests, wetlands, deserts, grasslands, arctic tundras, and remote islands, and spans 12 time zones from the Virgin Islands to Guam;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are home to more than 700 species of birds, 220 species of mammals, 250 species of reptiles and amphibians, and more than 1,000 species of fish;

Whereas 59 refuges were established specifically to protect imperiled species and of the more than 1,200 federally listed threatened and endangered species in the United States, 280 species are found on units of the National Wildlife Refuge System;

Whereas national wildlife refuges are cores of conservation for larger landscapes and resources for other agencies of the Federal Government and State governments, private landowners, and organizations in their efforts to secure the wildlife heritage of the United States;

Whereas 39,000 volunteers and more than 220 national wildlife refuge "Friends" organizations contribute nearly 1,400,000 hours annually, the equivalent of 665 full-time employees, and provide an important link with local communities;

Whereas national wildlife refuges provide an important opportunity for children to connect with nature and discover the natural world;

Whereas, because there are national wildlife refuges located in several urban and suburban areas and 1 refuge located within an hour's drive of every metropolitan area in the United States, national wildlife refuges employ, educate, and engage young people from all backgrounds in exploring, connecting with, and preserving the natural heritage of the Nation;

Whereas, since 1995, refuges across the Nation have held festivals, educational programs, guided tours, and other events to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge Week during the second full week of October;

Whereas the week beginning on October 10, 2010, has been designated as "National Wildlife Refuge Week" by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and

Whereas, in 2010, the designation of National Wildlife Refuge Week would recognize more than a century of conservation in the United States and would serve to raise awareness about the importance of wildlife and the National Wildlife Refuge System and to celebrate the myriad recreational opportunities available to enjoy this network of protected lands: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week beginning on October 10, 2010, as "National Wildlife Refuge Week";

(2) supports the goals and ideals of National Wildlife Refuge Week;

(3) acknowledges the importance of national wildlife refuges for their recreational opportunities and contribution to local economies across the United States;

(4) pronounces that national wildlife refuges play a vital role in securing the hunting and fishing heritage of the United States for future generations;

(5) recognizes the importance of national wildlife refuges to wildlife conservation and the protection of imperiled species and ecosystems;

(6) applauds the work of refuge "Friends" groups, national and community organizations, and public partners that promote awareness, compatible use, protection, and restoration of national wildlife refuges;