Whereas automatic fire alarm systems provide the early warning of a fire that is necessary for occupants and the fire department to take appropriate action;

Whereas automatic fire sprinkler systems are a highly effective method of controlling or extinguishing a fire in its early stages, protecting the lives of the building’s occupants;

Whereas many college students live in off-campus residences, fraternity and sorority housing, and residence halls that are not adequately protected with automatic fire sprinkler systems and automatic fire alarm systems;

Whereas fire safety education is an effective means of reducing the occurrence of fires and reducing the resulting loss of life and property damage;

Whereas college students do not routinely receive effective fire safety education during their time in college;

Whereas it is vital to educate young people in the United States about the importance of fire safety to help ensure fire-safe behavior by young people during their college years and beyond; and

Whereas, by developing a generation of fire-safe adults, future loss of life from fires may be significantly reduced: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates September 2011 as “Campus Fire Safety Month”; and

(2) encourages administrators of institutions of higher education and municipalities across the country—

(A) to provide educational programs to all students during September and throughout the school year;

(B) to evaluate the level of fire safety being provided in both on- and off-campus student housing; and

(C) to ensure fire-safe living environments through fire safety education, installation of fire suppression and detection systems, and the development and enforcement of applicable codes relating to fire safety.

NATIONAL AIRBORNE DAY

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 254.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 254) designating August 16, 2011, as “National Airborne Day.”

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

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

The resolution (S. Res. 254) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

Whereas the airborne forces of the Armed Forces have a long and honorable history as bold and fierce warriors who, for the national security of the United States and the defense of freedom and peace, project the ground combat power of the United States by air transport to the far reaches of the battle area and to the far corners of the world; Whereas the United States’ experiment with airborne operations began on June 19, 1940, when the Army Parachute Test Platoon was first authorized by the Department of War, and 48 volunteers began training in July 1940;

Whereas August 16 marks the anniversary of the first official Army parachute jump on August 16, 1940, to test the innovative concept of inserting ground combat forces behind a battle line by means of a parachute;

Whereas the success of the Army Parachute Test Platoon in the days immediately before the entry of the United States into World War II validated the airborne operational concept and led to the creation of a formidable force of airborne formations, such as the 11th, 13th, 17th, 82nd, and 101st Airborne Divisions;

Whereas included in these divisions, and among other separate formations, were many airborne combat, combat support, and combat service support units that served with distinction and achieved repeated success in armed hostilities that provide the lineage and legacy of many airborne units throughout our Armed Forces;

Whereas the deployments of the airborne forces during World War II prompted the evolution of those forces into a diversified force of parachute and air-assault units that, over the years, have fought in Korea, Vietnam, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf region, and Somalia, and have engaged in peacekeeping operations in Lebanon, the Sinai Peninsula, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo;

Whereas since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, forces, which include members of the XVIII Airborne Corps, the 82nd Airborne Division, the 101st Airborne Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team, the 4th Infantry Division, the 10th Mountain Division, the 75th Ranger Regiment, and special operations forces of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force, together with other units of the Armed Forces, have demonstrated bravery and honor in combat, stability, and training operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and beyond;

Whereas the modern-day airborne force also includes other elite forces composed of airborne-trained and qualified special operations warriors, including Army Special Forces, Marine Corps Reconnaissance units, Navy SEALs, and Air Force combat control and para-rescue personnel;

Whereas the members and former members of the United States airborne forces, thousands have achieved the distinction of making combat jumps, dozens have earned the Medal of Honor, and hundreds have earned the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, or other decorations and awards for displays of heroism, gallantry, intrepidity, and valor;

Whereas the members and former members of the United States airborne forces are all proud of a proud and honorable tradition that, together with their special skills and achievements, distinguishes such members as intrepid combat parachutists, air assault forces, special operations forces, and, in former days, glider troops;

Whereas the history and achievements of the members and former members of the United States airborne forces are an inspiration to our young people;

Whereas the United States and the world are observing the anniversary of the first official jump by the Army Parachute Test Platoon, August 16 is an appropriate day to recognize as National Airborne Day: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates August 16, 2011, as “National Airborne Day”; and

(2) calls on the people of the United States to observe National Airborne Day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

NATIONAL CHESS DAY

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent to proceed to S. Res. 255.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 255) designating October 8, 2011, as “National Chess Day” to enhance awareness and encourage students and adults to engage in a game known to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

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

Mr. ROCKEFELLER: Mr. President, I rise today in support of this resolution to designate National Chess Day as October 8, 2011. I greatly appreciate the support of my colleague, Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER of Tennessee.

National Chess Day is designed to enhance awareness and encourage students and adults to engage in a game known to enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

There are 76,000 members of the Chess Federation and half of them are students. Studies indicate that chess programs can help with students improving in math and reading. Engaging students in such activities can make learning fun and help them develop a lifelong pastime to engage their skills.

Engaging students in chess is a wonderful opportunity to promote education, and I hope as school begins in a few weeks, more students will join the Chess Federation and learn this historical game.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 255) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

Whereas there are more than 76,000 members of the United States Chess Federation (referred to in this preamble as the “Federation”), and unknown numbers of additional people in the United States who play the game without joining an official organization;

Whereas approximately ½ of the members of the Federation are scholastic members, and many of the scholastic members join by threatening to leave the Federation if their school does not support the chess club;

Whereas the Federation is very supportive of the scholastic programs and sponsors a...
Certified Chess Coach program that provides the coaches involved in the scholastic programs training and ensures schools and students can have confidence in the programs.

Whereas many studies have linked chess programs to the improvement of student scores in reading and math, as well as improved self-esteem;

Whereas the Federation offers a school curriculum to educators to help incorporate chess into the school curriculum;

Whereas chess is a powerful cognitive learning tool that can be used to successfully enhance reading and math concepts; and

Whereas chess engages students of all learning styles and strengths and promotes problem solving and higher-level thinking skills; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 6, 2011, as “National Chess Day”;

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe “National Chess Day” with appropriate programs and activities.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 95, 229, 230, 236, 237, 279, 280, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 288, and Calendar Nos. 291 through 323, and nominations placed on the Secretary’s Desk in the Air Force, Army, Foreign Service, Marine Corps, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to any of the nominations; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; and that President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate’s action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for the second year in a row, the Senate has failed to take significant steps before the August recess to address the serious crisis of judicial vacancies on courts around the country. Last August, Senate Republicans left 17 judicial nominations pending and consented to confirm only four Federal circuit and district court nominations before the recess. I noted at that time what a serious blow that was to our ability to make progress addressing the judicial vacancies crisis that had already persisted for well over a year. Today, as the Senate recesses with judicial vacancies still near 90 as they were a year ago, the Senate is doing even worse, confirming only 4 judicial nominations that the 24 nominees already considered by the Judiciary Committee and awaiting a Senate vote.

Last week, I urged the Senate to confirm the two dozen judicial nominations already fully considered by the Judiciary Committee and ready for final action by the Senate. Of them, 20 were unanimously reported, without a single negative vote. Many have been pending without final action for months. I am, again, disappointed as Senate Republicans continue to delay these much needed and long awaited confirmations.

Even though Federal judicial vacancies have remained near or above 90 for more than 2 years, the Senate’s Republican leadership has refused to consent to vote on these qualified, consensus nominations, leaving 16 of the 20 unanimously reported nominees in limbo. This is in line with what the American people should not have to wait more weeks and months for the Senate to do its constitutional duty and ensure the ability of our Federal courts to provide justice to Americans around the country.

In the past, we were able to confirm consensus nominees more promptly. They were not forced to languish for months. In the second year of the Bush administration, in 2002, before the August recess the Senate moved ahead to confirm a dozen circuit and district court nominees. The next year, with a Republican Senate majority, Senate Democrats consented to seven confirmations before the August recess. With the delays that have been backlogging confirmations for years now, we have nominally reported judicial nominees who could all have been confirmed before this recess. Regrettably, 16 will not go forward today because Republicans refuse to consent.

At a time when judicial vacancies remain near 90, these needless delays perpetuate the judicial vacancies crisis that Chief Justice Roberts wrote of last December and that the President, the Attorney General, bar associations, and chief judges around the country have urged us to join together to end. The Senate can and should be doing a better job working to ensure the ability of our Federal courts to provide justice to Americans around the country.

Just last week, the Congressional Research Service released a report that confirms what many of us have been saying for some time: This is the longest sustained period of historically high vacancy rates on the Federal judiciary in the last 35 years.

This is hardly surprising. Republican obstruction kept the total confirmations in the first year of the President’s term to the lowest total for a presidential term in nearly 90 years, when only 12 judicial vacancies at that time were confirmed. Republican obstruction kept the 2-year total of confirmations to the lowest total in 35 years, for the first 2 years of a President’s term, with only a total of 60 Federal circuit and district court nominations confirmed during the course of those entire first 2 years of the Obama administration. Accordingly, judicial vacancies have perpetuated needlessly and caused needless delay on consensus nominees.

We are seeing it, again, this week as we approach the August recess in the third year of the Obama administration. In the 17 months I chaired the Judiciary Committee during President Bush’s first term, the Senate confirmed 100 of his Federal circuit and district court nominees. It looks like it will take twice as long to reach 100 confirmations of President Obama’s Federal circuit and district court nominees. President Obama has been in office for 31 months and only 95 of his Federal circuit and district court nominees have been confirmed. There are still over 200 judicial vacancies that need to be filled and we’re only halfway through the August recess.

Resolved, That the Senate—

That the Senate—

(1) confirms 143 Federal circuit and district court nominationsPending the consideration of nominations. We