

have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 264

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 264, a bill to expand access to community mental health centers and improve the quality of mental health care for all Americans.

S. 316

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. LAUTENBERG) were added as cosponsors of S. 316, a bill to recalculate and restore retirement annuity obligations of the United States Postal Service, to eliminate the requirement that the United States Postal Service prefund the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund, to place restrictions on the closure of postal facilities, to create incentives for innovation for the United States Postal Service, to maintain levels of postal service, and for other purposes.

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BAUCUS, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the land and water conservation fund to maximize the effectiveness of the fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 381

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 381, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the World War II members of the "Doolittle Tokyo Raiders", for outstanding heroism, valor, skill, and service to the United States in conducting the bombings of Tokyo.

S. 450

At the request of Mr. SHELBY, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 450, a bill to require enhanced economic analysis and justification of regulations proposed by certain Federal banking, housing, securities, and commodity regulators, and for other purposes.

S. 457

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 457, a bill to posthumously award a Congressional gold medal to Alice Paul, in recognition of her role in the women's suffrage movement and in advancing equal rights for women.

S. 462

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 462, a bill to enhance the strategic partnership between the United States and Israel.

S. 480

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 480, a bill to improve the effectiveness of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System by clarifying reporting requirements related to adjudications of mental incompetency, and for other purposes.

S. 557

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 557, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve access to medication therapy management under part D of the Medicare program.

S. 577

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 577, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the distribution of additional residency positions, and for other purposes.

S. 649

At the request of Mr. KAINE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 649, a bill to ensure that all individuals who should be prohibited from buying a firearm are listed in the national instant criminal background check system and require a background check for every firearm sale, and for other purposes.

S. 655

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. COWAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 655, a bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to authorize the Secretary of Labor to provide grants for Urban Jobs Programs, and for other purposes.

S. 687

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 687, a bill to prohibit the closing of air traffic control towers, and for other purposes.

S. 689

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) were added as cosponsors of S. 689, a bill to reauthorize and improve programs related to mental health and substance use disorders.

## STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 693. A bill to amend the Reclamation Wastewater and Groundwater Study and Facilities Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to participate in the City of Hermiston, Oregon, water recycling and reuse project, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I rise to reintroduce legislation that will authorize the Bureau of Reclamation to share in the cost of the construction of a new wastewater treatment plant for Hermiston, Oregon. This is the same bill that was passed by the House of Representatives, by voice vote, in the 111th Congress and reported by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee without opposition that Congress as well. I look forward to working with supporters of this bill to advance this important reclamation project.

The city of Hermiston will be responsible for the lion's share of this project. CBO has estimated that the Federal share of the \$26 million project would be \$7 million or just over ¼ of the cost. Once constructed, the plant will provide the Bureau of Reclamation-authorized West Extension Irrigation District with enough additional high-quality water per year to irrigate approximately 600 acres of high value crops. This will have a significant, long-term benefit to the farming industry in the Hermiston area.

The Hermiston project has gotten the sign-off at every level from the local irrigation district to Federal agencies. The city and the bureau have completed the required feasibility report and the bureau of reclamation has formally concluded that the project meets the requirements of the Title XVI cost-sharing program. The regional office of the National Marine Fisheries Service at NOAA has completed a biological opinion approving the project. The city and the West Extension Irrigation District have signed a memorandum of understanding to work together to develop the project. The bureau has concluded its environmental review of the authorization to transfer the water to they district and issued a finding of no significant impact, or FONSI.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation have also recognized the benefits of the project and support it. These benefits include a significant improvement in the quality of water discharged to the Umatilla River in winter and protection of sensitive fish habitat during summer. These benefits have led the tribe to endorse construction of the Hermiston Water Recycling System Improvement Project and the city's effort to obtain Federal funding.

This project will increase agricultural production while improving the local economy, the environment and habitat for endangered fish. I intend to

work with colleagues to complete action on legislation that has advanced so far in previous Congresses.

By Mr. BOOZMAN (for himself and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 695. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to pay a monthly assistance allowance to disabled veterans training or competing for the Paralympic Team and the authorization of appropriations for the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide assistance to United States Paralympics, Inc., and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, physical activity offers injured members of the Armed Forces and veterans additional opportunities for rehabilitation for both physical and mental health. Using the expertise of the United States Olympic Committee to work with local programs is a great tool to help our veterans improve their quality of life. The U.S. Paralympic Integrated Adaptive Sports Program partners with local organizations to develop programs and skills that meet the needs of our wounded warriors. As a result of this legislation, the program has reached more than 5,000 participants in more than 150 communities in 46 States and has successfully collaborated with 85 VA Medical Centers in 39 States to provide adaptive sports programs to veterans in their local communities through outreach programs, training, practices, camps, clinics, and competitions. For this reason, Senator BEGICH and I are introducing Veterans Paralympic Act of 2013, which would extend the authorization for the U.S. Paralympic Integrated Adaptive Sports Program through 2018.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 695

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Veterans Paralympic Act of 2013".

**SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR PAYMENT OF A MONTHLY ASSISTANCE ALLOWANCE TO DISABLED VETERANS TRAINING OR COMPETING FOR THE PARALYMPIC TEAM.**

Section 322(d)(4) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking "2013" and inserting "2018".

**SEC. 3. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE TO UNITED STATES PARALYMPICS, INC.**

Section 521A of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (g), by striking "2013" and inserting "2018"; and

(2) in subsection (l), by striking "2013" and inserting "2018".

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr.

GRAHAM, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. LEE, Mr. CRUZ, and Mr. FLAKE):

S. 699. A bill to reallocate Federal judgeships for the courts of appeals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. President, today I am introducing the Court Efficiency Act, a bill that will help some of the nation's busiest courts. Hopefully, it will also ease some of the tension that arises during debates of D.C. Circuit Court nominees. I am pleased that Senators HATCH, SESSIONS, GRAHAM, CORNYN, LEE, CRUZ, and FLAKE are original co-sponsors.

It is no secret that the D.C. Circuit is the least-busy, least-worked appellate court in the nation. By nearly every measurement taken by the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts, the D.C. Circuit comes in a distant last. Here are three of the most common measurements using the most recent data available for the 12 months ending September 30, 2012.

First, "Total Appeals Filed." Total Appeals Filed measures the amount of work coming into the court. Simply put, it is the total number of appeals that a circuit court received in the last 12 months. The D.C. Circuit has 108 appeals per authorized judgeship, the lowest in the nation. To put this in perspective, the Second Circuit is 4 times higher and the Eleventh Circuit, the busiest in the nation, is more than five times as high, with 583 appeals filed per authorized judge.

Next, "Total Appeals Terminated" measures the amount of work the court is accomplishing. Once again, the D.C. Circuit is by far the lowest in the nation with 108 total appeals terminated per authorized judgeship. By comparison, the Second Circuit is 4 times higher and the Eleventh Circuit is 5 times higher, at 540 appeals terminated per authorized judgeship.

Finally, "Total Appeals Pending" measures the amount of work before the court. In other words, it is the number of appeals the court hasn't yet addressed or the cases that are outstanding. The D.C. Circuit has 120 appeals pending per authorized judgeship, which means it is essentially tied for last with the Tenth Circuit that has 115. In contrast, the Second Circuit and the Eleventh Circuit have 343 and 323 appeals pending per authorized judgeship, respectively.

Back during President Bush's administration, my friends on the other side of the aisle cited the light work load of that court in order to block qualified, non-controversial nominees. Since that time, the D.C. Circuit Court workload has only continued to decrease.

Considering the imbalance between the workloads of the Circuits, my bill essentially reallocates those vacancies to other circuits that are much busier. The Court Efficiency Act does four things. First, it adds one seat to the Second Circuit. Second, it adds one seat to the Eleventh Circuit. Third, it reduces the number of authorized

judgeships for the D.C. Circuit from 11 to 8. Fourth, it would become effective upon enactment.

Adopting this bill would be a step towards rectifying the great workload disparities between the circuit courts. The Court Efficiency Act would ease some of the pressure on the Second and Eleventh circuits. By moving just one judgeship each to the Second and Eleventh circuits, we would lower each circuit's respective workload by approximately 7.5 percent. This reduction can be accomplished without jeopardizing the D.C. Circuit's status as the "least-busy Circuit." Even after the D.C. Circuit is reduced to 8 seats, it would still be roughly half as busy as the Circuit median in appeals filed, terminated, and pending per authorized judgeship.

I would also like to highlight several things that this bill will not do. First, it would not impact the President's current nominee to the D.C. Circuit, Mr. Srinivasan, whose hearing occurred earlier today. Instead, for the remaining three seats, it removes one and reallocates the other two.

Second, the bill would not affect the president's opportunity to nominate two of those Circuit court vacancies. It simply reassigns those vacancies to other circuits that are clearly busier.

Third, this legislation will be effective immediately, rather than postponing until the beginning of the next presidential term, as has been in the past. Immediate enactment will empower the President to quickly act to alleviate some of the heavy workloads of the Second and Eleventh Circuits.

The bill will also save the taxpayer a significant amount of money annually. Although the bill has not been scored yet by the CBO, this estimate is based on previous estimates offered by the CBO when it has scored judgeship bills.

The last time the D.C. Circuit had 11 nominees was the end of 1999. I want to move past the disagreements over the D.C. Circuit and shift these judges to circuits where there is a greater need to fill them.

This is a common sense bill. It moves judges to where they are needed, a significant step in addressing the severe imbalance in the workloads of some of these circuit courts. It saves the taxpayers money. It doesn't negatively impact the D.C. Circuit Court. It won't affect President Obama's current nominee, Mr. Srinivasan. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of this bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 699

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Court Efficiency Act of 2013".

**SEC. 2. REALLOCATION OF FEDERAL JUDGESHIPS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate—

(1) 1 additional circuit judge for the second circuit court of appeals; and

(2) 1 additional circuit judge for the eleventh circuit court of appeals.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 44(a) of title 28, United States Code, is amended in the table—

(1) in the item relating to the District of Columbia circuit court of appeals, by striking “11” and inserting “8”;

(2) in the item relating to the second circuit court of appeals, by striking “13” and inserting “14”; and

(3) in the item relating to the eleventh circuit court of appeals, by striking “12” and inserting “13”.

By Ms. COLLINS:

S. 701. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of the individual mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. 700. A bill to ensure that the education and training provided members of the Armed Forces and veterans better assists members and veterans in obtaining civilian certifications and licenses, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce my first bill as a US Senator. It has been delivered to the desk. The bill is the Troop Talent Act of 2013. I am pleased to note it is cosponsored by Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS and Senator MAX BAUCUS.

The bill begins with a problem which I know concerns all Americans, the unemployment rate of our veterans. Currently, the national unemployment rate average is 7.6 percent, but the unemployment rate for veterans is 9.4 percent. That unemployment rate is particularly acute for veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We can't be comfortable if we see the statistic that our veterans have a higher unemployment rate than the national average. It should be otherwise.

In Virginia, where one in nine of our citizens, one in nine of our 8 million citizens from birth to death is a veteran, this is a particularly acute challenge. Frankly, it is only going to get worse as more and more people exit military service in the drawdown from Afghanistan.

What is the reason for the veterans' unemployment rate being higher than the national average? Some of the reasons have to do with medical challenges and issues which are in the province of the VA. I learned of another reason as I was campaigning across the State for 19 months. I heard stories from veterans, and they would say the following: I was in the military. I was a battlefield medic. I got out of the military and tried to get a job as a physician's assistant or a nurse, and I

was told I had no credit for all my military service as I tried to transition into the civilian world.

Another stated: I maintained Naval aviation engines for 20 years. Then when I finished and tried to do the same thing on the civilian side, I was told I had to go back and start as if I had no experience.

Another: I operated heavy equipment, but I was told I would need a commercial driver's license.

Many of the members of our military—all of them are gaining skills along the way, but they go into a civilian workforce where their skills and talents are not recognized. In some ways this is a feature of an all-volunteer military. When we had a draft and men were compelled to serve, someone departing military service would go into the workforce and say they were a gunnery sergeant in the Marine Corps or an E-5 in the Navy, and someone in the workforce would know what it was they had done.

Today only 1 percent of our adults serve in the military. We appreciate what our military members do, but we don't understand their technical skills or their leadership talent.

This is the genesis for the Troop Talent Act of 2013. It is to make sure military members, while they are active, are getting recognized, credentialled credit for the skills they obtain, which will help them get immediate traction back into the civilian workforce.

The True Talent Act has three pillars: The first is the credentialing of military members for the skills they have obtained and the sharing of information between the military branches about the skills they have with service-members, the private sector, and with agencies who would credential them with a civilian credential. This is the first pillar, credentialing people for the skills people obtain.

The second pillar is a bit of a policing function. Sometimes folks will prey upon people leaving the military and say: Pay me \$500, and I will administer a test which will give you a credential. Then it turns out their credential is worthless.

The VA had a working committee to police these credential-granting agencies to ensure no one was being ripped off. That committee no longer is in service. This bill would restart it.

Finally, the last thing this bill would do would be to take one particular industry sector, information technology, where there is a huge need to hire people and where our military members have significant skills, and this will accelerate credentialing traction for those members back into the military workforce.

There is a current pilot project DOD is working on with certain specialties but not IT. This would seek to expand the pilot programs to add IT to the list where people are credentialled.

In conclusion, this is about doing what the Nation should do for our servicemembers and making sure they re-

ceive the traction they deserve for the service they provided. It is not just about the members themselves, it is also about us. We have invested in our service men and women. They have skills, technical and leadership skills, which would help our society be more successful. To the extent we do not allow them traction back in the civilian life, we are not only depriving them, we are depriving ourselves of their strengths and talents.

I am pleased to introduce this bill and honored to have Senators BAUCUS and CHAMBLISS as cosponsors.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, today I am offering legislation correcting Obamacare's definition of a “full-time” employee to allow employees to work 40 hours a week without triggering penalties on the businesses that hire them. Currently, Obamacare defines an employee working just 30 hours a week as “full time.”

Because Obamacare uses an unreasonably low threshold of 30 hours a week to define “full time” employees, some businesses are restricting their employees to no more than 29 hours of work per week, to ensure that their workers are considered “part time” for purposes of Obamacare. This is a consequence of the substantial penalties Obamacare imposes on businesses that reach a threshold of 50 “full time” employees, unless they provide expensive health care coverage which many small businesses simply can't afford.

The penalties imposed by Obamacare begin at \$40,000 for businesses with 50 employees, plus \$2,000 for each additional “full-time equivalent” employee. These penalties serve as a huge disincentive for businesses to grow or add jobs, particularly for firms close to the 50-job trigger.

One Maine business I know has 47 employees, and it would like to hire more but won't because of these onerous penalties. If more businesses follow suit, millions of American workers could find their hours, and their earnings, cut back. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics nearly 10.5 million Americans work between 30 and 35 hours per week. Another 9.7 million work between 35 and 40 hours per week. My bill will help protect these Americans who may otherwise find their hours curtailed and their earnings cut as a result of Obamacare.

Obamacare's definition of a “full time” employee is completely out-of-keeping with standard employment practices in the U.S. today. According to the American Time of Use Survey published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average American works 8.8 hours per day, which equates to 44 hours per week. Under Obamacare, working only 30 hours a week is considered “full-time”—nearly one-third lower than actual practice.

Likewise, the Obamacare definition of “full-time” employee is one-quarter lower than the 40 hours per week used by the GAO in its study of the budget and staffing required by the Internal

Revenue Service to implement Obamacare. In that report, the GAO described a “full time equivalent,” or “FTE,” as: “a measure of staff hours equal to those of an employee who works 2,080 hours per year, or 40 hours per week for 52 weeks.”

During consideration of the Budget resolution last month, the Senate adopted my amendment calling for legislation setting a more sensible definition of a “full time” employee for purposes of Obamacare penalties. That amendment was endorsed by the National Association of Manufacturers, and the National Education Association. The fact that these two organizations—typically thought of as bookends on the political spectrum—would agree that Obamacare’s definition of a “full-time” employee is broken illustrates how out-of-step it truly is.

Under my bill, a “full time” employee would be someone who works a 40-hour week. This is a sensible definition in keeping with actual practice. I urge my colleagues to support it.

#### SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 95—RECOGNIZING LINEMEN, THE PROFESSION OF LINEMEN, THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THESE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WHO PROTECT THE PUBLIC SAFETY, AND EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE DESIGNATION OF APRIL 18, 2013, AS NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

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

#### S. RES. 95

Whereas the profession of linemen is steeped in personal, family, and professional tradition;

Whereas linemen are often first responders during storms and other catastrophic events, working to make the scene safe for other public safety heroes;

Whereas linemen work with thousands of volts of electricity high atop power lines 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to keep electricity flowing;

Whereas linemen must often work under dangerous conditions far from their families to construct and maintain the energy infrastructure of the United States;

Whereas linemen put their lives on the line every day with little recognition from the community regarding the danger of their work; and

Whereas April 18, 2013, would be an appropriate date to designate as National Lineman Appreciation Day: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the efforts of linemen in keeping the power on and protecting public safety; and

(2) supports the designation of April 18, 2013, as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 12—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS THAT OUR CURRENT TAX INCENTIVES FOR RETIREMENT SAVINGS PROVIDE IMPORTANT BENEFITS TO AMERICANS TO HELP PLAN FOR A FINANCIALLY SECURE RETIREMENT

Mr. ISAKSON (for himself, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, and Mrs. HAGAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Finance:

#### S. CON. RES. 12

Whereas private retirement plans in the United States paid out over \$3,824,000,000,000 in benefits from 2000 through 2009, while public sector retirement plans paid out \$2,651,000,000,000 during the same period, with both playing an essential role in providing retirement income for millions of our Nation’s senior citizens;

Whereas there are approximately 670,000 private-sector defined contribution plans that are currently covering 67,000,000 participants, and over 48,000 private-sector defined benefit plans covering 44,000,000 participants;

Whereas \$4,700,000,000,000 is held in 401(k), 403(b), 457 and similar defined contribution plans, \$2,300,000,000,000 is held in private defined benefit plans, and another \$4,900,000,000,000 is held in Individual Retirement Accounts, largely consisting of funds rolled over from employer-based retirement plans;

Whereas from 2000 through 2009, employers have contributed almost \$3,500,000,000,000 to public and private retirement plans;

Whereas tax incentives are an important impetus for individuals to save for retirement and for employers to offer plans under our voluntary system;

Whereas generally, the taxation of amounts contributed to pension and retirement plans is simply deferred, not lost;

Whereas more than 70 percent of American workers making between \$30,000 and \$50,000 a year contribute to their own retirement when covered by a retirement plan at work;

Whereas under current law, if business owners and managers sponsor a retirement plan, they also must cover and provide benefits to lower-income and middle-income employees;

Whereas 401(k) and similar defined contribution plans have been enhanced over the years by Congress on a bipartisan basis;

Whereas the private retirement system in the United States is voluntary and is dependent on the willingness of business owners and corporations to adopt and maintain retirement plans; and

Whereas the United States system of employer-based retirement savings is designed to work together with other personal savings and the Social Security program to provide meaningful income replacement upon retirement: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring)*, That it is the sense of the Congress that—

(1) tax incentives for retirement savings play an important role in encouraging employers to sponsor and maintain retirement plans and encouraging participants to contribute to such plans;

(2) existing tax incentives have increased the number of Americans who are covered by a retirement plan; and

(3) a reformed and simplified Federal tax code should include properly structured tax incentives to maintain and contribute to

such plans and to strengthen retirement security for all Americans.

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

##### COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 10, 2013, at 2:30 p.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a hearing entitled, “Expanding the Panama Canal: What Does it Mean for American Freight and Infrastructure?”

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

##### COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 10, 2013, at 11 a.m., to hold a briefing entitled, “Intelligence Update on Syria”.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 10, 2013, at 10 a.m. in SD-430.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 10, 2013, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled “Border Security: Frontline Perspectives on Progress and Remaining Challenges.”

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

##### COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 10, 2013, in room SD-628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled “Identifying Barriers to Indian Housing Development and Finding Solutions”.

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

##### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on April 10, 2013, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled “Judicial Nominations.”

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