

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on December 16, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled "The Administration's Strategy in Afghanistan."

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Joshua Manning, a NASA fellow and a detailee, and Brandon Fisher, a Coast Guard fellow at the commerce committee, be allowed floor privileges for the 114th Congress.

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

MEASURE INDEFINITELY POSTPONED—H. CON. RES. 91

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that H. Con. Res. 91 be indefinitely postponed.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 269, 433, 435, 436, and 437.

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

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Thomas O. Melia, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development; Gabriel Camarillo, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force; Marcel John Lettre, II, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence; the Navy, Vice Adm. Kurt W. Tidd to be Admiral; and Thomas Edgar Rothman, of Maryland, to be a Member of the National Council on the Arts for a term expiring September 3, 2016.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote en bloc without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that following disposition of the nominations, 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 statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Melia, Camarillo, Lettre, Tidd, and Rothman nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following nomination under the privileged section of the Executive Calendar: PN892; that the Senate vote on the nomination with no intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The clerk will report the nomination. The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Steven Michael Haro, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Haro nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

SECURING FAIRNESS IN REGULATORY TIMING ACT OF 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 3831, which was received from the House.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3831) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to extend the annual comment period for payment rates under Medicare Advantage.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (H.R. 3831) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SAVING FEDERAL DOLLARS THROUGH BETTER USE OF GOVERNMENT PURCHASE AND TRAVEL CARDS ACT OF 2015

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 315, S. 1616.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1616) to provide for the identification and prevention of improper payments and the identification of strategic sourcing opportunities by reviewing and analyzing the use of Federal agency charge cards.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the Carper substitute amendment which is at the desk be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 2930) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Saving Federal Dollars Through Better Use of Government Purchase and Travel Cards Act of 2015".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) IMPROPER PAYMENT.—The term "improper payment" has the meaning given the term in section 2 of the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (31 U.S.C. 3321 note).

(2) QUESTIONABLE TRANSACTION.—The term "questionable transaction" means a charge card transaction that from initial card data appears to be high risk and may therefore be improper due to non-compliance with applicable law, regulation or policy.

(3) STRATEGIC SOURCING.—The term "strategic sourcing" means analyzing and modifying a Federal agency's spending patterns to better leverage its purchasing power, reduce costs, and improve overall performance.

SEC. 3. EXPANDED USE OF DATA ANALYTICS.

(a) STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator for General Services, shall develop a strategy to expand the use of data analytics in managing government purchase and travel charge card programs. These analytics may employ existing General Services Administration capabilities, and may be in conjunction with agencies' capabilities, for the purpose of—

(1) identifying examples or patterns of questionable transactions and developing enhanced tools and methods for agency use in—

(A) identifying questionable purchase and travel card transactions; and

(B) recovering improper payments made with purchase and travel cards;

(2) identifying potential opportunities for agencies to further leverage administrative process streamlining and cost reduction from purchase and travel card use, including additional agency opportunities for card-based strategic sourcing;

(3) developing a set of purchase and travel card metrics and benchmarks for high risk activities, which shall assist agencies in identifying potential emphasis areas for their purchase and travel card management and oversight activities, including those required by the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-194); and

(4) developing a plan, which may be based on existing capabilities, to create a library of analytics tools and data sources for use by Federal agencies (including inspectors general of those agencies).

SEC. 4. GUIDANCE ON IMPROVING INFORMATION SHARING TO CURB IMPROPER PAYMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in consultation with the Administrator of General Services and the inter-agency charge card data management group established under section 5, shall issue guidance on improving information sharing by government agencies (including inspectors general) for the purposes of section 3(a)(1).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The guidance issued under subsection (a) shall—

(1) require relevant officials at Federal agencies to identify high-risk activities and communicate that information to the appropriate management levels within the agencies;

(2) require that appropriate officials at Federal agencies review the reports issued by charge card-issuing banks on questionable transaction activity (such as purchase and travel card pre-suspension and suspension reports, delinquency reports, and exception reports), including transactions that occur with high risk activities, and suspicious timing or amounts of cash withdrawals or advances;

(3) provide for the appropriate sharing of information related to potential questionable transactions, fraud schemes, and high risk activities with General Services Administration Office of Charge Card Management and the appropriate officials in Federal agencies; and

(4) include other requirements determined appropriate by the Director for the purposes of carrying out this Act.

SEC. 5. INTERAGENCY CHARGE CARD DATA MANAGEMENT GROUP.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of General Services and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall establish a purchase and travel charge card data management group to develop and share best practices for the purposes described in section 3(a).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The best practices developed under subsection (a) shall—

(1) cover rules, edits, and task order or contract modifications related to charge card-issuing banks;

(2) include the review of accounts payable information and purchase and travel card transaction data of agencies for the purpose of identifying potential strategic sourcing and other additional opportunities (such as recurring payments, utility payments, and grant payments) for which the charge cards or related payment products could be used as a payment method; and

(3) include other best practices as determined by the Administrator and Director.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—The purchase and travel charge card data management group shall meet regularly as determined by the co-chairs, for a duration of three years, and include those agencies as described in section 2 of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-194) and others identified by the Administrator and Director.

SEC. 6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator for General Services shall submit a report to Congress on the implementation of this Act, including the metrics used in determining whether the analytic and benchmarking efforts have reduced, or contributed to the reduction of, questionable or improper payments as well as improved utilization of card-based payment products.

(b) AGENCY REPORTS AND CONSOLIDATED REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of each Federal agency described in section 2 of the Government Charge Card Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-194) shall submit a report to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on that agency's activities to implement this Act.

(c) OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall submit to Congress a consolidated report of agency activities to implement this Act, which may be included as part of another report submitted to Congress by the Director.

(d) REPORT ON ADDITIONAL SAVINGS OPPORTUNITIES.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of General Services shall submit a report to Congress identifying and exploring further potential savings opportunities for government agencies under the Federal charge card programs. This report may be combined with the report required under subsection (a).

The bill (S. 1616), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

REGARDING THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF DEMOCRACY IN MONGOLIA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 320, S. Res. 189.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 189) expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 25th anniversary of democracy in Mongolia.

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 189) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to. (The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of June 1, 2015, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

CONGRATULATING THE PEOPLE OF BURMA ON THEIR COMMITMENT TO PEACEFUL ELECTIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Sen-

ate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 321, S. Res. 320.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 320) congratulating the people of Burma on their commitment to peaceful elections.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment to strike out all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in italic.

S. RES. 320

Whereas Burma conducted general elections on November 8, 2015, the country's first national vote since a civilian government was introduced in 2011 that ended nearly 50 years of military rule;

Whereas the people of Burma have, by their vigorous participation in electoral campaigning and public debate, strengthened the foundations of a free and democratic way of life;

Whereas preliminary reports indicate that voter turnout exceeded 80 percent;

Whereas international observers have reported that election day was largely free and fair and conducted in an orderly and peaceful fashion despite broader structural concerns such as the disenfranchisement of the Rohingya;

Whereas the ruling military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party suffered a dramatic loss at the polls, and the National League for Democracy won a sizable majority in both chambers of Burma's Union Parliament, the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, and will select Burma's next President;

Whereas Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi has symbolized the struggle for freedom and democracy in Burma and has actively supported democratic reform through her leadership of the National League for Democracy;

Whereas the National League for Democracy espouses a policy of nonviolent movement towards multi-party democracy in Burma, supports national reconciliation, and endorses strengthening democratic institutions, protecting human rights, implementing free market economic reforms, and reinforcing rule of law;

Whereas President Thein Sein and Commander-in-Chief Min Aug Hlaing made public commitments to respect the election results and vowed to abide by the law to ensure an orderly and prompt transition to a new government; and

Whereas the continued democratic development of Burma is a matter of fundamental importance to the advancement of United States interests in Southeast Asia and is supported by the United States Senate: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the people of Burma for embracing democracy through their participation in the November 8, 2015, general elections, and for their continuing efforts in developing a free, democratic society that respects internationally recognized human rights;

(2) recognizes the National League for Democracy's victory as a reflection of the will of the Burmese people;

(3) calls on the Union Solidarity and Development Party to undertake a peaceful transfer of power and abide by the law to ensure an orderly and prompt transition to a new government;

(4) encourages all parties to pursue national reconciliation talks and work together in the