

food stamp benefits provided under the Food Stamp Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), including the feasibility and desirability of a single hub for switching (as defined in section 7(k)(1) of that Act (as added by section 3)).

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am proud to join Senator FITZGERALD in cosponsoring the Electronic Benefit Interoperability and Portability Act of 1999.

The Food Stamp Program has been critical to diminishing hunger and improving nutrition and health throughout our country. As the country's largest source of food aid, approximately 18 million people—half of which are children—receive food stamp benefits every month. In my home State of Vermont, more than 20,000 households depend on food stamps to help feed their families.

In an effort to strengthen and streamline the Food Stamp Program, three years ago Congress mandated that every State switch to an Electronic Benefits Transfer system for distributing food stamp benefits. Operating like ATM or credit card machines at cash registers, EBT streamlines food stamps by eliminating the cumbersome paper system.

The implementation of the EBT system was left up to the States, and nearly 40 States currently have switched to this new system. EBT has already demonstrated itself to be a more efficient system for distributing food stamp benefits, and it promises to help reduce food stamp fraud.

However, three years into the implementation of EBT, a problem has arisen—some State EBT systems do not match up with neighboring State EBT systems, leaving residents of border communities unable to utilize their food stamp benefits across State lines. This Federal benefit program has always been recognized and redeemable in every State, irrespective of where the actual food stamps were issued.

For some of our more rural States, the inability to access food stamp benefits across State lines could mean the difference between traveling a few miles to a grocery store in the next State to traveling an hour or more to the closest grocery store in one's home State. Clearly, this creates quite a burden.

The bill which we are introducing today would correct this oversight by requiring the U.S. Department of Agriculture to adopt a national EBT standard, and requiring that all States be EBT interoperable by 2002.

Vermont Commissioner of Social Welfare Jane Kitchel has voiced her support for this bill, as has the New England Convenience Store Association.

Mr. President, I would like to thank Senator FITZGERALD for all of his work on this issue. I believe that this bill will help make the Food Stamp Program more streamlined and efficient,

and I am proud to cosponsor this legislation.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. FITZGERALD):

S. 1734. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to contribute funds for the establishment of an interpretive center on the life and contributions of President Abraham Lincoln; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, today I am pleased to be joined by my Illinois colleague, Senator FITZGERALD, in introducing legislation that would authorize an important Department of the Interior project—the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

I should begin by confessing a Lincoln bias. Obviously, I'm an Illinoisan, but I hail from the same city, Springfield, that Abraham Lincoln once called home. I practiced law in an office not far from the historic Lincoln-Herndon Law Office. I also represented a district in the U.S. House of Representatives that included portions of the district Congressman Abraham Lincoln represented in the 30th Congress—1847 to 1849. My home state, the "Land of Lincoln," holds the former President in very high regard.

Abraham Lincoln is considered to be one of our nation's greatest Presidents. Yet, his works and the story of his life and public service are spread over numerous historic sites, monuments, museums, and private collections of Lincoln memorabilia. The State of Illinois has a more than 42,000-item Lincoln Collection which contains national treasures such as the Gettysburg Address, the Emancipation Proclamation, and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address. The Collection is part of the State's 12-million-item historical library, which is the nation's only public institution engaged in ongoing research on the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln.

Currently, 13 former Presidents, including Confederate leader Jefferson Davis, have presidential libraries. Our 16th President certainly deserves such a facility so children and people from around the world can learn from the excellent examples Lincoln set during his life and his Presidency and historians can continue to discover more about the man who preserved the Union.

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library would serve as a state-of-the-art, interactive library, museum, and interpretative center where visitors could learn about Abraham Lincoln and the events and places that shaped his life and the history of our country. It would also serve as an academic archive and research facility for scholars to study Illinois' collection of Lincoln documents and personal effects.

The legislation we are introducing today would require that for every dollar of federal funds directed toward this project, two dollars must come from other non-federal sources. The State of Illinois and the City of Springfield have already pledged significant financial support for the Library. Also, it is important to note that the U.S. Department of the Interior is not being asked to operate or maintain the facility. The State of Illinois, through the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, would run the day-to-day operations and handle upkeep of the Library.

Mr. President, the Illinois Congressional Delegation, Illinois Governor George Ryan, and the City of Springfield strongly support this important project and this authorizing legislation. I urge my colleagues to join me and Senator FITZGERALD in constructing a lasting legacy for Abraham Lincoln. •

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 31

At the request of Mr. THURMOND, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 31, a bill to amend title 1, United States Code, to clarify the effect and application of legislation.

S. 285

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 285, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to restore the link between the maximum amount of earnings by blind individuals permitted without demonstrating ability to engage in substantial gainful activity and the exempt amount permitted in determining excess earnings under the earnings test.

S. 631

At the request of Mr. DEWINE, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 631, a bill to amend the Social Security Act to eliminate the time limitation on benefits for immunosuppressive drugs under the medicare program, to provide continued entitlement for such drugs for certain individuals after medicare benefits end, and to extend certain medicare secondary payer requirements.

S. 662

At the request of Mr. CHAFEE, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 662, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to provide medical assistance for certain women screened and found to have breast or cervical cancer under a federally funded screening program.

S. 777

At the request of Mr. FITZGERALD, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 777, a bill to require the Department of Agriculture to establish an

electronic filing and retrieval system to enable the public to file all required paperwork electronically with the Department and to have access to public information on farm programs, quarterly trade, economic, and production reports, and other similar information.

S. 784

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 784, a bill to establish a demonstration project to study and provide coverage of routine patient care costs for medicare beneficiaries with cancer who are enrolled in an approved clinical trial program.

S. 808

At the request of Mr. JEFFORDS, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. KERREY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 808, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide tax incentives for land sales for conservation purposes.

S. 1133

At the request of Mr. GRAMS, the name of the Senator from Washington (Mr. GORTON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1133, a bill to amend the Poultry Products Inspection Act to cover birds of the order Ratitae that are raised for use as human food.

S. 1187

At the request of Mr. DORGAN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1187, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, and for other purposes.

S. 1277

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1277, a bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to establish a new prospective payment system for Federally-qualified health centers and rural health clinics.

S. 1291

At the request of Mr. DEWINE, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1291, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow small business employers a credit against income tax for certain expenses for long-term training of employees in highly skilled small business trades.

S. 1304

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. ROBB) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1304, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to allow employees to take school involvement leave to participate in the academic school activities of their children or to participate in literacy training, and for other purposes.

S. 1488

At the request of Mr. GORTON, the names of the Senator from Arkansas

(Mrs. LINCOLN), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1488, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for recommendations of the Secretary of Health and Human Services regarding the placement of automatic external defibrillators in Federal buildings in order to improve survival rates of individuals who experience cardiac arrest in such buildings, and to establish protections from civil liability arising from the emergency use of the devices.

S. 1547

At the request of Mr. BURNS, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1547, a bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to require the Federal Communications Commission to preserve low-power television stations that provide community broadcasting, and for other purposes.

S. 1571

At the request of Mr. JEFFORDS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1571, A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for permanent eligibility of former members of the Selected Reserve for veterans housing loans.

S. 1590

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SPECTER) were added as cosponsors of S. 1590, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to modify the authority of the Surface Transportation Board, and for other purposes.

S. 1623

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1623, a bill to select a National Health Museum site.

S. 1666

At the request of Mr. LUGAR, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1666, a bill to provide risk education assistance to agricultural producers, and for other purposes.

SENATE RESOLUTION 118

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of Senate Resolution 118, a resolution designating December 12, 1999, as "National Children's Memorial Day."

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 59—URGING THE PRESIDENT TO NEGOTIATE A NEW BASE RIGHTS AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF PANAMA IN ORDER FOR UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES TO BE STATIONED IN PANAMA AFTER DECEMBER 31, 1999

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire (for himself, Mr. BROWNBACK, and Mr. HELMS) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 59

Whereas the Panama Canal remains a vital economic and strategic asset to the United States, its allies, and the world;

Whereas the United States has maintained a military presence in Panama since Panama gained its independence in 1903, ensuring the protection of the Canal and its unfettered operations;

Whereas the United States Armed Forces have depended upon the Panama Canal for rapid transit in times of global conflict, including during World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Persian Gulf War;

Whereas the 1977 Treaty Concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal provides that Panama and the United States have the joint responsibility to ensure that the Panama Canal will remain open and secure, and provides that each signatory, in accordance with their constitutional processes, shall defend the Canal against any threat to its neutrality and shall have the right to act against threats against the peaceful transit of vessels through the Canal;

Whereas the Government of Panama, in the bilateral Protocol of Exchange of instruments of ratification, agreed to consider negotiating future arrangements or agreements to maintain military forces necessary to fulfill the responsibility of both signatories to maintain the neutrality of the Canal;

Whereas the common interests of Panama and the United States have produced close relations between the two nations and a shared interest in protecting the Canal and its operations;

Whereas public opinion surveys in Panama consistently demonstrate that an estimated 70 percent of the people of Panama support a continued United States military presence in Panama;

Whereas Panama and the United States are both confronting growing problems with illegal drug trafficking, money laundering, and narcoterrorism in the Western Hemisphere, and those problems threaten peace and security in the region;

Whereas facilities now utilized by the United States Armed Forces in Panama are essential to the coordination of any counter-narcotic efforts in the region;

Whereas the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), a narco-trafficking terrorist organization, is operating from Panamanian territory and poses a risk to the security of Panama and to the stability of Latin America;

Whereas the former United States Ambassador to Panama and others have protested the lack of transparency and the unorthodox bidding process in the granting of leases for the port facilities at Balboa and Cristobal in 1997 during the Administration of former Panamanian President Balladares; and