

transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Airworthiness Directives; Boeing Model 767 Series Airplanes" (Docket 99-NM-39-AD) received on March 29, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2604. A communication from the Associate Managing Director for Performance Evaluation and Records Management, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Table of Allotments, FM Broadcast Stations: Pauls Valley and Wynnewood, Oklahoma" (Docket 98-140) received on March 15, 1999; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC-2605. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report concerning developments in Kosovo and the region, particularly Macedonia and Albania; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-2606. A communication from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report concerning the decision to deploy additional United States forces to Albania; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES SUBMITTED DURING RECESS

Under the authority of the order of the Senate of March 25, 1999, the following reports of committees were submitted on March 26, 1999:

By Mr. CHAFEE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

S. 148: A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program to provide assistance in the conservation of neotropical migratory birds (Rept. No. 106-36).

By Mr. ROTH, from the Committee on Finance, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 331: A bill to amend the Social Security Act to expand the availability of health care coverage for working individuals with disabilities, to establish a Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program in the Social Security Administration to provide such individuals with meaningful opportunities to work, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 106-37).

By Mr. THOMPSON, from the Committee on Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

S. 380: A bill to reauthorize the Congressional Award Act (Rept. No. 106-38).

By Mr. CHAFEE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

S. 574: A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to make corrections to a map relating to the Coastal Barrier Resources System (Rept. No. 106-39).

By Mr. HELMS, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with amendments:

S. Res. 26: A resolution relating to Taiwan's Participation in the World Health Organization.

By Mr. HATCH, from the Committee on the Judiciary, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 461: A bill to assure that innocent users and businesses gain access to solutions to the year 2000 problem-related failures through fostering an incentive to settle year 2000 lawsuits that may disrupt significant sectors of the American economy.

By Mr. HELMS, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment:

S. Con. Res. 17: A concurrent resolution concerning the 20th Anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. THURMOND:

S. 763. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to increase the minimum Survivor Benefit Plan basic annuity for surviving spouses age 62 and older, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. THURMOND (for himself and Mr. HATCH):

S. 764. A bill to amend section 1951 of title 18, United States Code (commonly known as the Hobbs Act), and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Mr. TORRICELLI):

S. 765. A bill to ensure the efficient allocation of telephone numbers; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. ROBB, Mr. HELMS, and Mr. FEINGOLD):

S. 766. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to revise the requirements for procurement of products of Federal Prison Industries to meet needs of Federal agencies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COVERDELL (for himself, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. TORRICELLI, Mrs. HUTCHISON, and Mr. CLELAND):

S. 767. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a 2-month extension for the due date for filing a tax return for any member of a uniformed service on a tour of duty outside the United States for a period which includes the normal due date for such filing; read the first time.

#### STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. THURMOND:

S. 763. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to increase the minimum Survivor Benefit Plan basic annuity for surviving spouses age 62 and older, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

##### SBP BENEFITS IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 1999

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, today, as our Armed Forces are engaged in operations over Yugoslavia, I am introducing legislation that corrects a long-standing injustice to the widows of our military retirees. My bill would immediately increase for survivors over the age 62 the minimum Survivor Benefit Plan annuity from 35 percent to 40 percent of the Survivor Benefit Plan-covered uniform services retired pay. The bill would provide a further increase to 45 percent of covered retired pay as of October 1, 2004.

Mr. President, I expect every member of the Senate has received mail from military spouses expressing dismay that they would not be receiving the 55 percent of their husband's retirement

pay as advertised in the Survivor Benefit Plan literature provided by the military. The reason that they do not receive the 55 percent of retired pay is that current law mandates that at age 62 this amount be reduced either by the amount of the Survivors Social Security benefit or to 35 percent of the SBP. This law is especially irksome to those retirees who joined the plan when it was first offered in 1972. These service members were never informed of the age-62 reduction until they had made an irrevocable decision to participate. Many retirees and their spouses, as the constituent mail attests, believed their premium payments would guarantee 55 percent of retired pay for the life of the survivor. It is not hard to imagine the shock and financial disadvantage these men and women who so loyally served the Nation in troubled spots throughout the world undergo when they learn of the annuity reduction.

Mr. President, uniformed services retirees pay too much for the available SBP benefit both, compared to what we promised and what we offer other federal retirees. When the Survivor Benefit Plan was enacted in 1972, the Congress intended that the government would pay 40 percent of the cost to parallel the government subsidy of the Federal civilian survivor benefit plan. That was short-lived. Over time, the government's cost sharing has declined to about 26 percent. In other words, the retiree's premiums now cover 74 percent of expected long-term program costs versus the intended 60 percent. Contrast this with the federal civilian SBP, which has a 42 percent subsidy for those personnel under the Federal Employees Retirement System and a 50 percent subsidy for those under the Civil Service Retirement System. Further, Federal civilian survivors receive 50 percent of retired pay with no offset at age 62. Although Federal civilian premiums are 10 percent retired pay compared to 6.5 percent for military retirees, the difference in the percent of contribution is offset by the fact that our service personnel retire at a much younger age than the civil servant and, therefore pay premiums much longer than the federal civilian retiree.

Mr. President, two years ago, with the significant support from the Members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I was successful in gaining approval from the Congress in enacting the Survivor Benefit Plan benefits for the so-called Forgotten Widows. This is the second step toward correcting the Survivors Benefit Plan and providing the surviving spouses of our military personnel earned and paid for benefits. I urge that the Senate act promptly on this bill.

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

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