

SEC. 103. COMPLIANCE WITH FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS FOR DORMITORIES.

Section 487(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1094(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(24) The institution will adopt, within 10 years after the date of enactment of the Fire Safe Dorm Act of 2000, plans to install sprinklers, smoke detectors, and open flame resistant furniture in dormitories in compliance with the standards established by the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration under section 201 of such Act.”.

SEC. 104. EXEMPTION.

The amendments made by this title shall not be construed to require the installation of sprinklers in any building or other structure that is listed on the National Register for Historic Places as maintained by the National Park Service under the authority of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.), if such installation would destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the historic nature of the property. The Secretary of Education shall determine disputes concerning the application of this exemption by reference of the matter to the Secretary of the Interior.

TITLE II—DORMITORY FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS**SEC. 201. STANDARDS.**

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration shall establish measurable standards for dormitory fire safety. Such standards shall include mandatory fire sprinklers, smoke detectors, and open flame resistant furniture and mattresses.

(b) **OUTREACH.**—The Administrator of the United States Fire Administration shall undertake appropriate activities to encourage the adoption by State and local authorities of the standards established under subsection (a).•

By Mr. ABRAHAM:

S. 2180. A bill to repeal the increase in the tax on social security benefits, to eliminate the earnings test for individuals who have attained retirement age, and to gradually raise the age for required minimum distributions from pension plans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

THE SENIOR CITIZENS' FINANCIAL FREEDOM ACT

Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Senior Citizens' Financial Freedom Act, a bill which would accomplish three objectives. First, it rolls back the Clinton Administration's 1993 tax increase on Social Security benefits. Second, it repeals the Social Security Earnings Test working penalty on Seniors. Finally, it returns to our Seniors the ability to control their own savings, by increasing the age when minimum IRA distributions must begin, from 70½ to 85.

Mr. President, our tax code mercilessly penalizes Seniors. In fact, Seniors are double taxed. First the government takes money from their paycheck to pay for the Social Security system. Then, when the senior receives their benefits, they are taxed again. The Government also penalizes Seniors for working by placing an “Earnings Test”

just to receive Social Security benefits. Finally, the Government forces Seniors to withdraw benefits from their IRAs, whether they want to or not, and penalizes them with a 50% tax if they do not.

This is immoral, illogical and simply wrong.

Mr. President, I applaud our colleagues in the House for passing a bill to eliminate the Social Security Earnings Test, which takes away Social Security benefits simply because a 60 year old works. We should be celebrating those between 60 and 70 years old who can work, but instead, we punish them. For a Senior between 60 and 65, if they earn over \$9,600 in income beyond Social Security benefits (which is just above the poverty level), they lose 50% of their benefits. For those between 65 and 70 years old, they lose 33% of their benefits for earning over \$15,500. It's not until they turn 70 can they both work and keep their benefits. This represents a marginal tax rate for someone under 65 of almost 60%. While I agree that the Earnings Test must be eliminated, Congress should go beyond this.

In 1993, President Clinton proposed, and the Democratic-controlled Congress passed by one vote, a 70% increase on Social Security benefits. These benefits should not be taxed at all, but the fact that they were raised so much gives us the opportunity, during these large surpluses, to provide immediate relief for our Seniors. When coupled with the Earnings Test, these two taxes can result in some couples suffering under a 103% marginal tax rate. Seniors could lose more than a dollar for making another dollar.

Finally, Mr. President, we must amend the IRA distribution requirements. When a person reaches 70½ years old, the Government forces them to begin taking out money from their IRA, which they personally have saved up for it's their money. They have to take all of it out of their account within their life expectancy at the time they start making withdrawals, which for someone 70½, is currently about 15 years. They must make these withdrawals whether they need to do so or not. And if they do not take out the money, or cannot because they're invested in long-term projects, they lose 50% of the money to punitive taxes. Essentially, they are penalized for their foresight in saving for retirement, and their industry for finding other sources of income than these retirement assets. Mr. President, this is a policy that only the federal government could think up, and it comes from the bureaucratic mentality that says the people's money belongs to the government, and not the people. What is particularly worrisome, is that although the current rules assume someone 70½ has a life expectancy of 15 years, people are living longer and retiring later, and

these rules could result in individuals not having the money available when they really do need it.

Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to support reducing the tax burden on Seniors, to give those Seniors who want to work the freedom to work, without the fear of penalty and to restore their control over their savings. In short, I ask my colleagues to restore to Seniors their financial freedom.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 13

At the request of Mr. SESSIONS, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. BINGAMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 13, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide additional tax incentives for education.

S. 71

At the request of Ms. SNOWE, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 71, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a presumption of service-connection for certain veterans with Hepatitis C, and for other purposes.

S. 512

At the request of Mr. GORTON, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 512, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the expansion, intensification, and coordination of the activities of the Department of Health and Human Services with respect to research on autism.

S. 809

At the request of Mr. BURNS, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 809, a bill to require the Federal Trade Commission to prescribe regulations to protect the privacy of personal information collected from and about private individuals who are not covered by the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 on the Internet, to provide greater individual control over the collection and use of that information, and for other purposes.

S. 864

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 864, a bill to designate April 22 as Earth Day.

S. 1017

At the request of Mr. MACK, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. STEVENS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1017, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase the State ceiling on the low-income housing credit.

S. 1028

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. GRAMM) and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) were added as cosponsors

of S. 1028, a bill to simplify and expedite access to the Federal courts for injured parties whose rights and privileges, secured by the United States Constitution, have been deprived by final actions of Federal agencies, or other government officials or entities acting under color of State law, and for other purposes.

S. 1266

At the request of Mr. GORTON, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1266, a bill to allow a State to combine certain funds to improve the academic achievement of all its students.

S. 1409

At the request of Mr. MCCONNELL, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. CAMPBELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1409, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reduce from 24 months to 12 months the holding period used to determine whether horses are assets described in section 1231 of such Code.

S. 1488

At the request of Mr. HUTCHINSON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. LOTT) was added as a cosponsor 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. 1642

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. MOYNIHAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1642, a bill to amend part F of title X of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to improve and refocus civic education, and for other purposes.

S. 1810

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1810, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify and improve veterans' claims and appellate procedures.

S. 1874

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY), and the Senator from Maine (Ms. SNOWE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1874, a bill to improve academic and social outcomes for youth and reduce both juvenile crime and the risk that youth will become victims of crime by providing productive activities conducted by law enforcement personnel during non-school hours.

S. 1940

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. GRAHAM) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1940, a bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to reaffirm the United States historic commitment to protecting refugees who are fleeing persecution or torture.

S. 1954

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1954, a bill to establish a compensation program for employees of the Department of Energy, its contractors, subcontractors, and beryllium vendors, who sustained beryllium-related illness due to the performance of their duty; to establish a compensation program for certain workers at the Paducah, Kentucky, gaseous diffusion plant; to establish a pilot program for examining the possible relationship between workplace exposure to radiation and hazardous materials and illnesses or health conditions; and for other purposes.

S. 1997

At the request of Mr. BINGAMAN, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. CONRAD) were added as cosponsors of S. 1997, a bill to simplify Federal oil and gas revenue distributions, and for other purposes.

S. 2001

At the request of Mr. GRAMS, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. ALLARD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2001, a bill to protect the Social Security and Medicare surpluses by requiring a sequester to eliminate any deficit.

S. 2003

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2003, a bill to restore health care coverage to retired members of the uniformed services.

S. 2005

At the request of Mr. BURNS, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SMITH), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK), and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. TORRICELLI) were added as cosponsors of S. 2005, a bill to repeal the modification of the installment method.

S. 2035

At the request of Mr. SPECTER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2035, a bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to clarify the application of the Act popularly known as the "Death on the High Seas Act" to aviation incidents.

S. 2049

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CLELAND), and the Senator from

California (Mrs. BOXER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2049, a bill to extend the authorization for the Violent Crime Reduction Trust Fund.

S. 2061

At the request of Mr. BIDEN, the names of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. BRYAN), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. THURMOND) were added as cosponsors of S. 2061, a bill to establish a crime prevention and computer education initiative.

S. 2070

At the request of Mr. FITZGERALD, the names of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. JEFFORDS), and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. DEWINE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2070, a bill to improve safety standards for child restraints in motor vehicles.

S. 2072

At the request of Mr. KERRY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. L. CHAFEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2072, a bill to require the Secretary of Energy to report to Congress on the readiness of the heating oil and propane industries.

S. 2074

At the request of Mr. ASHCROFT, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. HUTCHINSON), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. SANTORUM), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. JEFFORDS), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. SMITH), and the Senator from Washington (Mr. GORTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 2074, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the social security earnings test for individuals who have attained retirement age.

At the request of Mr. LOTT, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2074, supra.

S. 2082

At the request of Mr. DEWINE, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VOINOVICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2082, a bill to establish a program to award grants to improve and maintain sites honoring Presidents of the United States.

S. 2087

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SHELBY), and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2087, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to improve access to benefits under the TRICARE program; to extend and improve certain demonstration programs under the Defense Health Program; and for other purposes.

S. 2090

At the request of Mr. CAMPBELL, the name of the Senator from Delaware

(Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2090, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to impose a 1 year moratorium on certain diesel fuel excise taxes.

S. 2097

At the request of Mr. GRAMM, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. THOMAS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2097, a bill to authorize loan guarantees in order to facilitate access to local television broadcast signals in unserved and underserved areas, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 85

At the request of Mr. TORRICELLI, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. BIDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 85, a concurrent resolution condemning the discriminatory practices prevalent at Bob Jones University.

S. RES. 87

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. FEINGOLD) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. DOMENICI) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 87, a resolution commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the International Visitors Program.

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 87, supra.

S. RES. 128

At the request of Mr. COCHRAN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BOND) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 128, a resolution designating March 2000, as "Arts Education Month."

S. RES. 237

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CLELAND) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. KERRY) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 237, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations should hold hearings and the Senate should act on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

AMENDMENT NO. 2827

At the request of Mr. COVERDELL, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. BROWNBACK) was added as a cosponsor of Amendment No. 2827 proposed to S. 1134, an original bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow tax-free expenditures from education individual retirement accounts for elementary and secondary school expenses, to increase the maximum annual amount of contributions to such accounts, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. MACK, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of Amendment No. 2827 proposed to S. 1134, An original bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow tax-free expenditures from education individual retirement accounts for ele-

mentary and secondary school expenses, to increase the maximum annual amount of contributions to such accounts, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2867

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. BAYH), the Senator from Arkansas (Mrs. LINCOLN), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. KOHL), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. GRAHAM) were added as cosponsors of Amendment No. 2867 proposed to S. 1134, an original bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow tax-free expenditures from education individual retirement accounts for elementary and secondary school expenses, to increase the maximum annual amount of contributions to such accounts, and for other purposes.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 88—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE CONGRESS CONCERNING DRAWDOWNS OF THE STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. JEFFORDS, Ms. SNOWE, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. DODD) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

S. CON. RES. 88

Whereas the price of crude oil has more than doubled in the past year to over \$30 per barrel, and prices of petroleum products such as heating oil, diesel fuel, and gasoline have reached record levels;

Whereas a sharp sustained increase in the price of crude oil negatively affects the overall economic well-being of the United States;

Whereas high oil prices harm people and businesses;

Whereas the Energy Information Administration has determined that Northeastern United States fuel reserves are the lowest in 20 years and that Americans are "skating on thin ice" in meeting energy requirements;

Whereas the current price and supply crisis was largely created through the actions of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries ("OPEC") by market-distorting and collusive production reductions, and OPEC's activities would be in violation of United States antitrust laws if conducted within the United States;

Whereas OPEC has demonstrated unity not seen since the energy crises of the 1970's;

Whereas the United States has a Strategic Petroleum Reserve of over 570,000,000 barrels of crude oil to protect against threats to oil supplies;

Whereas many experts, trade associations, and members of Congress have called for a drawdown of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to combat OPEC's market distorting behavior;

Whereas a drawdown or the threat of a drawdown of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve could provide a critical tool to break the resolve of OPEC to practice market distorting behavior, and a sale of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve would increase domestic supplies and drive down prices in the short term;

Whereas swaps from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve offer a way to increase the overall size of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve at no cost to the taxpayer; and

Whereas low global inventories allow OPEC to retain inordinate control over supply and pricing, and consequently undue influence over the global economy: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) using authority under existing law, directly through time exchanges (or "swaps") or through other means, the President and the Secretary of Energy should draw down the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in an economically feasible manner and to a responsible degree, to combat unfair foreign trade practices of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and alleviate the severely deleterious consequences to people and businesses in the United States that those practices have caused; and

(2) the President and the Secretary of Energy should prepare for future threats to the economy and energy supply of the United States by developing methods to—

(A) draw down the Strategic Petroleum Reserve quickly when needed; and

(B) increase the quantity of crude oil in the Strategic Petroleum Reserve over time in an economically reasonable manner.

Mr. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today with my colleague, Senator SCHUMER, to submit a senate concurrent resolution expressing the Sense of the Congress that the Administration should act immediately to combat the anticompetitive campaign OPEC has waged on the world's oil markets. Through this resolution, we call upon the President and the Secretary of Energy to defend America's interests through the immediate release of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. We are pleased to be joined by Senators JEFFORDS, SNOWE, LIEBERMAN, MOYNIHAN, LEVIN, LEAHY, and DODD who are original cosponsors of this important legislation. We are also pleased to have the strong support of the American Trucking Association which represents 9.6 million people employed in the American trucking industry and their families. Perhaps no one has felt the pain for soaring oil prices more than they.

Today we ask the Administration to combat the unfair and anticompetitive practices of OPEC, and to ease the pain this cartel has inflicted—and will continue to inflict—on the people and businesses of the Northeast, the Midwest, and throughout America.

Last fall, Senator SCHUMER and I began cautioning the Administration about OPEC's production squeeze and the impact the cartel would have on our economy. At that time oil prices were rising, and U.S. inventories were falling. Throughout the winter, Mainers, New Yorkers, and all Americans who heat with oil have suffered from the highest distillate prices in a decade. The entire nation has suffered—and will continue to suffer—