Refund Interception Act of 2000 closes a loophole in current federal statute by expanding the eligibility of one of the programs of enforcing child support orders—that of intercepting the federal tax refunds of parents who are delinquent in paying their court-ordered financial support for their children.

Under current law, eligibility for the federal tax refund offset program is limited to cases involving minors, parents on public assistance, or adult children who are disabled. Custodial parents of adult, non-disabled children are not assisted under the IRS tax refund intercept program, and in many cases, they must work multiple jobs in order to make ends meet. Some of these parents have gone into debt to put their college-age children through school.

The legislation we are introducing today will address this inequity by expanding the eligibility of the federal tax refund offset program to cover parents of all children, regardless of whether the child is disabled or a minor. This legislation will not create a cause of action for a custodial parent to seek additional child support. It will merely assist the custodial parent in recovering debt that is owed for a level of child support that was determined by a court.

Improving our child support enforcement programs is an issue that should be of concern to us all as it remains a serious problem in the United States. According to the most recent Government statistics, there are approximately twelve million active cases in which a child support order requires a noncustodial parent to contribute to the support of his or her child. Of the $13.7 billion owed in 1998, only $6.9 billion has been collected. It is important to note that this data does not include reporting from many states, including California, New York, Florida, and Illinois. Similar shortfalls in past years have brought the combined total of child support owed to $47.4 billion, or 51 percent, by the end of fiscal year 1997.

It is an injustice for the Federal Government to issue tax refunds to a deadbeat spouse while a custodial parent has to work 2 or 3 jobs to account for the shortfall in providing for their children.

The Congress finds the following:

(1) Enforcing child support orders remains a serious problem in the United States. There are approximately 12,000,000 active cases in which a child support order requires a noncustodial parent to contribute to the support of his or her child. Of the $13,700,000,000 owed in calendar year 1998 pursuant to such orders, $6,900,000,000, or 51 percent, has been collected. However, this data does not include reporting from many States, including California, New York, Florida, and Illinois. Similar shortfalls in past years have brought the combined total of child support owed to $47,400,000,000 by the end of fiscal year 1997.

(2) It is an injustice for the Federal Government to issue tax refunds to a deadbeat spouse while a custodial parent has to work 2 or 3 jobs to account for the shortfall in providing for their children.

(3) The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) program to intercept the tax refunds of parents who owe child support arrears has been successful in collecting more than 51% of such arrears.

(4) The Congress has periodically expanded eligibility for the IRS tax refund intercept program. Initially, the program was limited to intercepting Federal tax refunds owed to parents on public assistance. In 1984, Congress expanded the program to cover refunds owed to parents not on public assistance. Finally, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 made the program permanent and expanded the program to cover refunds owed to parents of adult children who are disabled.

(5) The injustice to the custodial parent is the same regardless of whether the child is disabled, non-disabled, a minor or an adult, so long as the child support obligation is provided for by a court or administrative order. It is common for parents to help their adult children finance a college education and support them through our public system received some form of payment, despite Federal and State efforts. Similar shortfalls in previous years bring the combined delinquency total to approximately $47 billion. We can fix this injustice in our Federal tax refund offset program by helping some of our most needy constituents receive the financial assistance they are owed.

While the administration has been somewhat successful in using tax refunds as a tool to collect child support payments, more needs to be done. The IRS tax refund intercept program has only collected one-third of tardy child support payments. The Child Support Fairness and Tax Refund Interception Act of 2000 will remove the current barrier to fulfilling an individual’s obligation to pay child support, while helping to provide for the future of our Nation’s children.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation, and I ask unanimous consent that the legislation be printed in the Record.
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bureaucratic burdens of many custodial parents. It

for the offset program, regardless of
due court-ordered support to be eligible
legislation would address this issue by
judicially available to other custodial parents,
impact for the offset program are not
increase since 1992. These collections
ten-date if their child support cases in-
for the offset program is that I care a great deal about. Every
day, far too many children in this
country go without the resources they
need to learn and grow in healthy, nur-
turing environments. Working to im-
prove the lives and futures of these
children in need should count amount
our highest priorities, and we can do
just that by improving our system of
child support enforcement.

Child support enforcement is an issue
that we are introdu-
ting today proposes one such
improvement by seeking to expand the
use of an important enforcement tool.
As my colleagues may know, under
the current law, custodial parents are eli-
gible to use the tax refund offset pro-
gram if their child support cases in-
volve minors, adult disabled children,
or parents on public assistance. The
offset program has played a key role in
securing overdue support payments. In
fact, along with wage withholding, the
offset program counts as one of the
most effective tools that custodial par-
ents owed support have at their dis-
posal. For the 1998 tax year, the federal
government collected a record $1.3 bil-
lion in overdue support through the tax
offset program, an 18 percent increase
over the previous year and a 99 percent
increase since 1992. These collections
yielded benefits to approximately 1.4
million families.

Yet despite these admirable gains, under current law, the offset pro-
gram of the tax refund offset program are not
available to other custodial parents,
those who have adult children, who are
rightfully owed past-due support. Our
legislation would address this issue by
allowing all parents who are owed over-
due court-ordered support to be eligible
for the offset program, regardless of
whether their child is disabled or a
minor. We believe that this straight-
forward change will both increase child
support collections and help ease the
burdens of many custodial parents. It
will assist those parents who may have
worked multiple jobs and struggled to
provide for their children but who may
still have difficulty recovering child
support debt owed to them without the
assistance of the offset program.

Our Nation’s unacceptably low rate of
child support enforcement is a na-
tional crisis. Our public system col-
lects only 23 percent of its caseload,
and over $47 billion in overdue support
is owed to our nation’s children. Clear-
lly, we must do all we can to address
this very serious problem.

I urge my colleagues to join with
Senators CHAFEE, GRAHAM, LINCOLN,
and myself is supporting this impor-
tant legislation. It will expand one ef-

cive tool in the enforcement arsenal
and help increase the resources avail-
able to families in need.

By Mr. MACK (for himself and
Mr. TORRICELLI). S. 2748.

A bill to prohibit the reschedul-
ing or forgiveness of any outstanding
bilateral debt owed to the United
States by the Government of the Rus-

fian Federation until the President
certifies to the Congress that the Gov-

ternment of the Russian Federation has
ceased all its operations at, removed
all personnel from, and permanently
closed the intelligence facility at
Lourdes, Cuba.

THE RUSSIAN-AMERICAN TRUST AND
COOPERATION ACT OF 2000.

Mr. MACK. Mr. President, I rise
today to offer a common sense piece of
legislation that would prohibit the re-
scheduling or forgiveness of any out-
standing bilateral debt owed to the
United States by the Government of the
Russian Federation until the Presi-
dent certifies to the Congress that the
Russian Federation has ceased all
operations and permanently closed its
intelligence facility at Lourdes, Cuba.

Currently the Government of the Rus-
sian Federation maintains a signals in-
telligence facility in Lourdes, Cuba,
from which it conducts intelligence ac-
tivities directed against the United
States. The Secretary of Defense has
reported that the Russian Federation
leases the Lourdes facility for an esti-

ated $100,000,000 to $300,000,000 a year.

This is several hundred million dollars
flowing to support a brutal tyrant for
the purpose of supporting espionage.

Mr. President, the United States
should prohibit debt rescheduling and
forgiveness for a country that is con-
ducting espionage activities against
America, while infusing Castro’s des-
potic government with between $100
million and $300 million per year.

I am pleased to have my colleague
from New Jersey as a cosponsor of this
legislation and I look forward to work-

ing with my colleagues to pass this
important bill. Mr. President, I
ask unanimous consent that a copy of
the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2748

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Rep-
resentatives of the United States of America in
Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Russian-
American Trust and Cooperation Act of
2000”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The Government of the Russian Federation
maintains an agreement with the
Government of Cuba which allows Russia to
operate an intelligence facility at Lourdes,
Cuba, and its use as a base for intelligence activities
directed against the United States.

(2) The Secretary of Defense has formally
expressed concerns to the Congress regarding
the espionage complex at Lourdes, Cuba, and
has reported that the Russian Federation
leases the Lourdes facility for an estimated
$100,000,000 to $300,000,000 a year.

(3) It has been reported that the Lourdes
facility is the largest such complex operated
by the Russian Federation and its intel-
ligence service outside the region of the
former Soviet Union.

(4) The Secretary of Defense, referring to a
1998 Defense Intelligence Agency assessment,
has reported that the Russian Federation
leases the Lourdes facility for an estimated
$100,000,000 to $300,000,000 a year.

(5) The Lourdes facility is reported to
cover a 28 square-mile area with over 1,500
Russian engineers, technicians, and military
personnel working at the site.

(6) Experts familiar with the Lourdes facili-
ty have reportedly confirmed that the base
has multiple groups of tracking dishes and
its own satellite systems some groups used
to cover targeted telephones and devices.

(7) News sources have reported that
the predecessor regime to the Government of the
Russian Federation had obtained sensitive
information about United States military
operations during Operation Desert Storm
through the Lourdes facility.

(8) Academic studies assessing the threat
the Lourdes espionage station poses to the
United States cite official United States
sources affirming that the Lourdes facility is
being used to collect personal information
about United States citizens in the private
and government sectors, and offers the
means to engage in cyberwarfare against the
United States.

(9) It has been reported that the oper-
ational significance of the Lourdes facility
grows dramatically since February 7,1996,
when then Russian President, Boris
Yeltsin, issued an order allowing the
Russian intelligence community to increase
its gathering of United States and other West-
ern economic and trade secrets.

(10) It has been reported that the Govern-
ment of the Russian Federation is estimated
to have spent in excess of $3,000,000,000 in
the operation and modernization of the Lourdes
facility.

(11) Former United States Government of-
ficials have been quoted confirming reports
about the Russian Federation’s expansion
and upgrade of the Lourdes facility.

(12) It was reported in December 1999 that
a high-ranking Russian military delegation
headed by Deputy Chief of the General Staff
Colonel-General Valentin Korabelnikov vis-
ited Cuba to discuss the continuing Russian
operation of the Lourdes facility.

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON BILATERAL DEBT RE-
SCHEDULING AND FORGIVENESS FOR THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Notwithstanding any
other provision of law, the President—

(1) shall not reschedule or forgive any out-
standing bilateral debt owed to the United
States by the Government of the Russian
Federation.

(2) shall not reschedule or forgive any out-
standing bilateral debt owed to the United
States by the Government of the Russian
Federation.
United States to oppose rescheduling or forgiveness of any outstanding bilateral debt owed by the Government of the Russian Federation, until the President certifies to the Congress that the Government of the Russian Federation has ceased all its operations at, removed all personnel from, and permanently closed the intelligence facility at Lourdes, Cuba.

(b) WAIVER.—(1) In general.—The President may waive the application of subsection (a)(1) if, not less than 10 days before the waiver is to take effect, the President determines and certifies in writing to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate that such waiver is necessary to the national interests of the United States.

(2) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT.—If the President waives the application of subsection (a)(1) pursuant to paragraph (1), the President shall include in the written certification under paragraph (1) a detailed description of the facts that support the determination to waive the application of subsection (a)(1).

(3) SUBMISSION IN CLASSIFIED FORM.—If the President considers it appropriate, the written certification under paragraph (1) or appropriate parts thereof, may be submitted in classified form.

(c) PERIODIC REPORTS.—The President shall, every 180 days after the transmission of the written certification under subsection (b)(1), prepare and transmit to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report that contains a description of the extent to which the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B) of subsection (b)(1) are being met.

SEC. 4. REPORT ON THE CLOSING OF THE INTELLIGENCE FACILITY AT LOURDES, CUBA.

Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 120 days thereafter until the President makes a certification under section 3, the President shall submit to the Committee on International Relations and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report with a classified annex detailing—

(1) the actions taken by the Government of the Russian Federation to terminate its presence and activities at the intelligence facility at Lourdes, Cuba; and

(2) the efforts by each appropriate Federal department or agency to verify the actions described in paragraph (1).

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 1020
At the request of Mr. Grassley, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mr. Gregg) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1020, a bill to amend chapter 1 of title 9, United States Code, to provide for greater fairness in the arbitration process relating to motor vehicle franchise contracts.

S. 1668
At the request of Mr. Kerry, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. Smith) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1668, a bill to amend title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to establish provisions with respect to religious accommodation in employment, and for other purposes.

S. 1726
At the request of Mr. McCain, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. Bingaman) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1726, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to treat for compensation purposes Indian tribal governments the same as State or local units of government or as nonprofit organizations.

S. 1810
At the request of Mrs. Murray, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. Feinstein) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1810, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify and improve veterans’ claims and appeal procedures.

S. 2018
At the request of Mr. Robb, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2018, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to revise the update factor used in making payments to PPS hospitals under the medicare program.

S. 2100
At the request of Mr. Edwards, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. Dodd) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2100, a bill to provide for fire sprinkler systems in public and private college and university housing and dormitories, including fraternity and sorority housing and dormitories.

S. 2300
At the request of Mr. Roth, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. Warner) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2330, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on telephone and other communication services.

S. 2396
At the request of Mr. Bennett, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. Hatch) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2396, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to enter into contracts with the Weber Basin Water Conservation District for the operation of the Weber Basin Project facilities for the impounding, storage, and carriage of nonproject water for domestic, municipal, industrial, and other beneficial purposes.

S. 2397
At the request of Mr. Craig, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. Grams) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2397, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for investment by farmers in value-added agricultural businesses.

S. 2417
At the request of Mr. Ashcroft, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. Grams) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2417, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to increase funding for State nonpoint source pollution control programs, and for other purposes.

S. 2420
At the request of Mr. Robb, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2420, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide for the establishment of a program under which long-term care insurance is made available to Federal employees, members of the uniformed services, and civilian and military retirees, and for other purposes.