

S. Res. 332. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to the peace process in Northern Ireland; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. COLLINS (for himself, Mr. MOYNIHAN, Mr. KYL, Mr. GREGG, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. HUTCHINSON):

S. Res. 333. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate that there should be parity among the countries that are parties to the North American Free Trade Agreement with respect to the personal exemption allowance for merchandise purchased abroad by returning residence, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HELMS:

S. Con. Res. 126. An original concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that the President should support free and fair elections and respect for democracy in Haiti; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. FITZGERALD:

S. Con. Res. 127. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the Parthenon Marbles should be returned to Greece; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. SANTORUM:

S. Con. Res. 128. A concurrent resolution to urge the Nobel Commission to award the Nobel Prize for Peace to His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, for his dedication to fostering peace throughout the world; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself, Mr. GORTON, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, Mr. CLELAND, Mr. BYRD, Mr. CONRAD, Mr. BENNETT, and Mr. GRAMS):

S. Con. Res. 129. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress regarding the importance and value of education in United States history; considered and agreed to.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KYL:

S. 2834. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Bureau of Reclamation, to convey property to the Greater Yuma Port Authority of Yuma County, Arizona, for use as an international port of entry; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

LEGISLATION TO CONVEY LAND TO THE GREATER YUMA PORT AUTHORITY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A SECOND COMMERCIAL PORT OF ENTRY FOR THE YUMA AREA

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I introduce a bill today to facilitate the construction of a secondary port of entry in Yuma County. I introduce this measure in collaboration with Representative ED PASTOR, who has taken the lead on this issue in the House of Representatives and has seen his bill H.R. 3023, through to passage just this week by a vote of 404 to 1.

The identical bill I introduce today will convey to the Greater Yuma Port Authority an area of land currently controlled by the Bureau of Reclamation for the purpose of constructing a commercial port of entry on approximately 330 acres of land just east of the city of San Luis.

Anyone who has ever been to the U.S. port of entry in San Luis, Arizona,

knows that traffic congestion there causes such bad delays that oftentimes individuals attempting to conduct cross-border trade there, bring goods across the border, or simply visit relatives and friends, are discouraged from crossing the border or are faced with spending two to four hours to cross. The port of entry at San Luis has become one of the busiest ports-of-crossing in the nation.

After months of negotiation, all of the local principals involved in this effort, from the city of Yuma to Yuma County, the city of San Luis and Somerton and the Cocopah Indian Nation, and the Bureau of Reclamation, now fully support this effort. The bill will facilitate the construction of an additional commercial port of entry just east of San Luis, to be conveyed to the Greater Yuma Port Authority (YMPO) for fair market value.

Mr. President, this legislation will make a difference to the people of Arizona, particularly to the people of Yuma and surrounding areas. It will help increase cross-border trade in the area, and will help to spur economic development for an Arizona region in need. I urge expeditious consideration of this legislation.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. FEINGOLD):

S. 2835. A bill to provide an appropriate transition from the interim payment system for home health services to the prospective payment system for such services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

MEDICARE HOME HEALTH REFINEMENT ACT OF 2000

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today I am joining Senator FEINGOLD of Wisconsin in introducing the Medicare Home Health Refinement Act of 2000. I want to thank my colleague for inviting me to join him in this effort to preserve our nation's home health providers.

In my work as Chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, of which Senator FEINGOLD is a member, I have been monitoring our nation's critical home health care system closely. In 1997, we investigated distressing examples of fraud and abuse among a few home health agencies (HHAs). In 1998, I chaired a hearing on the devastating effects of the Interim Payment System (IPS) for home health. Unfortunately, my legislative efforts to improve the payment system that year were blocked. Last year, the Aging Committee held a hearing on the new OASIS information collection instrument, and on the burden it imposed on home care providers.

At this point in 2000, the main challenge facing our system of home care is the new Prospective Payment System (PPS), which will take effect on October 1 of this year. We've been working toward this for many years, and I am

gratified that it will finally happen. The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) published the final PPS rule on June 28, and I was pleased to hear that many home health providers consider it an improvement over the proposed rule. After the trauma of the Interim Payment System, I have high hopes that the PPS will be great news for our Medicare beneficiaries who need home care.

Even so, the new PPS will pose major transitional challenges for home health agencies, and this bill seeks to ease that transition so that the PPS will succeed. The bill does the following:

1. Emergency cash flow assistance. The bill provides one-time advance payments to home health agencies during transition from IPS to PPS. Eligible agencies either have low cash reserves, have negative cash flow under PPS as defined by the Secretary of HHS, or were eligible to receive funds from the Periodic Interim Payment (PIP) system on September 30, 2000. Payments equal the average total Medicare costs incurred by the agency in a three-month period as reported on the agency's most recently settled cost report. Payments would be available for six months and repaid within twelve months.

Agencies would also receive 80 percent of the 60-day episode payment rate after notifying HCFA of admission, with the remaining 20 percent coming after submission of final episode claim, instead of 60/40 under the rule published on June 28, 2000. HCFA would also be prohibited from imposing conditions on a claim based on the status of an earlier claim for the same beneficiary.

The rationale for this is that PIP, which largely serves nonprofit, community-based agencies with minimal cash reserve, will be discontinued as of October 1. If PPS delays a substantial portion of payment until after termination of patient episode, providers will have significant cash flow problems. Many agencies are unable to secure lines of credit or other loans because of the effect of IPS on cash reserves.

2. Reimbursement for unfunded PPS-related costs. The bill reimburses agencies for technology costs required for PPS compliance, up to \$10 per beneficiary. Payments would be authorized for Fiscal Years 2001 through 2003.

The rationale for this item: agencies have had to purchase new hardware, software, and other technology to comply with new rules. These costs are not reimbursed by Medicare.

3. Reimbursement for OASIS labor costs. It reimburses agencies for labor costs associated with OASIS assessments, up to \$30 per beneficiary annually. Payments are authorized for FY 2001–2003.

This is needed because the final rule provides for only a modest payment per