

the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2842) to amend chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, concerning the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program, to enable the Federal Government to enroll an employee and his or her family in the FEHB Program when a State court orders the employee to provide health insurance coverage for a child of the employee but the employee fails to provide the coverage.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 2842) was read the third time and passed.

TO COMPLETE THE ORDERLY WITHDRAWAL OF THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION FROM THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF THE PRIBILOF ISLANDS, ALASKA

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Commerce Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3417 and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3417) to complete the orderly withdrawal of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration from the civil administration of the Pribilof Islands, Alaska.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 4320

(Purpose: To reauthorize the Coastal Zone Management Act and the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, and for other purposes.)

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, Senators SNOWE and KERRY have an amendment at the desk, and I ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. LOTT] for Ms. SNOWE, for herself and Mr. KERRY, proposes an amendment numbered 4320.

(The text of the amendment is printed in today's RECORD under "Amendments Submitted.")

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 4320) was agreed to.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise to support H.R. 3417, the Pribilof Islands Transition Act with the amendment I have offered. This bill, as amended, contains a number of ocean, coastal, and fisheries related titles that will result in major conservation gains for our nation's marine resources at a time when we are placing enormous demands on them. The bill not only attempts to provide additional environmental protections through a number of state and local programs, but also tools for better management.

Title I of this bill is the Pribilof Islands Transition Act. The Alaskan Pribilof Islands in the Bering Sea were a former reserve for harvesting fur seals. The Commerce Department, acting through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), has been involved in municipal and social services on the islands since 1910. In 1983, NOAA tried to remove themselves from administering these programs. However, despite the \$20 million in funds the Pribilof Islands received to replace future annual Federal appropriations, the Pribilof Islanders claim that the terms of the transition process were not met and the withdrawal failed.

This title authorizes \$28 million over five years to again attempt to achieve the orderly withdrawal of NOAA from the civil administration of the Pribilof Islands. Additionally, it authorizes \$10 million a year for five years for NOAA to complete its environmental cleanup and landfill closure obligations prior to the final transfer of federal property to the six local entities. The Pribilof Islands have historically been a very expensive program to the American taxpayers. Congress expects that this title will provide a final termination of NOAA's municipal and social service responsibilities on the islands and a distinct end to federal taxpayer funding of those services.

Title II of this bill is the Coastal Zone Management Act of 2000, which refines and reauthorizes funding for the nation's coastal zone management program. This is the same language that was passed by unanimous consent in the Senate on September 28, 2000. Not only is this federal-state partnership important to my home state of Maine, but it is also a significant management tool for coastal states throughout the country. Despite the fact that the coastal zone only comprises 10 percent of the contiguous U.S. land area, it is home to more than 53 percent of the U.S. population, and more than 3,600 people relocate there annually. Not only is it an important economic region, but the coastal zone is also critical ecologically.

We are currently facing a very serious problem in the coastal zone in the form of non-point source pollution. This type of runoff pollution is degrading the condition of our coastal rivers, wetlands, and marine environments. Compromising the environmental integrity of the coastal zone can in turn

have a large impact on the regions' economic viability in a number of sectors, including tourism and fishing. The Coastal Zone Management Act of 2000 addresses this issue by encouraging and funding states to implement local solutions to their non-point source pollution problems. We have not created any new mandates or programs addressing non-point source pollution. Rather, the Coastal Community program can be used at the states' discretion if they want to create and implement local community-based solutions to problems, which would include non-point source pollution control strategies and measures.

This title greatly increases authorization levels for the coastal zone management program, allowing states to better address their coastal management plan goals. While we have achieved many successes through the CZMA, the states have made it clear that they can do more and that they can raise additional funds to match the increased federal funding. Therefore, we have authorized a total of \$136.5 million for fiscal year 2001 and increased authorization levels by \$5.5 million a year through fiscal year 2004. This total authorization includes an increase for the National Estuarine Research and Reserve System (NERRS) to \$12 million in fiscal year 2001, with an additional \$1 million increase each year through fiscal year 2004.

Mr. President, Title III of the bill deals with the management of several Atlantic coast fisheries. Subtitle A reauthorizes the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act (ASBCA). The ASBCA was originally passed to help coordinate and improve interstate management of Atlantic striped bass, an important commercial and recreational fish. Because striped bass migrate along the eastern seaboard, it is imperative that management measures be coordinated among the various states. The rebuilding of striped bass populations is considered one of our fisheries management success stories and it is critical that we continue these efforts. This subtitle authorizes \$1.25 million a year for fiscal years 2001 through 2003 to carry out the provisions of the act and another \$250,000 to conduct a population study on the Atlantic striped bass.

Subtitle B, the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Act of 2000, will reauthorize the highly successful interstate program that manages coastal fisheries that cross jurisdictional boundaries along the east coast. The states have proven that joint management of these resources is far more effective than a piecemeal approach by individual states. In an effort to further increase the effectiveness of interstate management, the states have initiated the Atlantic Coastal Cooperative Statistics Program. This joint data collection and analysis program is intended to meet the need for improved fishery statistics for management purposes. It is a comprehensive effort to address all

areas and fisheries and could serve as a model for a national cooperative statistics program. This subtitle authorizes \$10 million in fiscal year 2001, increasing the authorization by \$2 million a year until fiscal year 2005.

Subtitle C of this title deals with a significant problem facing the Atlantic bluefin tuna, ABT, fishery. In 1998, the Highly Migratory Species Advisory Panel unanimously requested and advised the Secretary of Commerce to ban the use of spotter aircraft in the General and Harpoon categories of the ABT fishery. Spotter aircraft tend to accelerate the catch of the ABT, and thus can create significant impacts on both the communities that depend on the fishery and the conservation intentions of the ABT management plans. Because NMFS has been unable to successfully implement a rule to ban the use of spotter aircraft in the ABT fishery over the past two years, it has become necessary for Congress to take legislative action. Subtitle C prohibits the unfair use of spotter aircraft to locate or assist in fishing for ABT in the General and Harpoon categories of the ABT fishery. This action follows numerous public hearings held by NMFS and the discussion of this issue at several Senate hearings. This provision passed by unanimous consent in the Senate as part of an amendment to H.R. 1651, the Fishermen's Protective Act, on June 26, 2000.

Mr. President, to many Americans, as well as myself, the practice of shark finning is both wasteful and disturbing. Shark finning is a method by which the dorsal fin and tail of a shark are cut off and retained, while the rest of the shark carcass is discarded as waste. Much of the fin product is then exported for sale to Asian countries. Title IV, the Shark Conservation Act, attempts to address this problem by prohibiting the domestic landing and at-sea transshipment of shark fins. It also directs the Administration to begin international negotiations to reduce foreign shark finning.

Title V of the bill is the Fishermen's Protective Act Amendments of 2000. It amends the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967 to lengthen the period during which reimbursement can be provided to owners of U.S. fishing vessels for costs incurred when a vessel is illegally seized, detained, or charged certain fees by a foreign country. Under the title, the reimbursement period is extended until fiscal year 2003. This provision passed by unanimous consent in the Senate on June 26, 2000.

Mr. President, title VI of the bill is the Yukon River Salmon Act of 2000. It creates a Yukon River Salmon Panel to advise both the Secretary of State regarding negotiation of any international agreements with Canada relating to management of Yukon River salmon stocks and Secretary of the Interior regarding management of those stocks. An Advisory Committee is created to make advisory recommendations to a number of entities, including

the Panel. A total of four million dollars a year for fiscal years 2000 through 2003 is authorized. Of these funds, up to \$3 million a year can be used for a Yukon River salmon survey, restoration, enhancement activities; \$600,000 of the total is to be available for cooperative Yukon River salmon research and management projects. This provision passed by unanimous consent in the Senate on June 26, 2000.

This bill also address the very serious problem of an aging fishery research vessel, FRV, fleet. Because these vessels are used to conduct the majority of fishery stock assessments, they are a critical tool for improving management and regulation of our commercial fish species. Over the past year, I have conducted a series of six hearings across the country on fisheries management. At every hearing, the need for more and better data was raised repeatedly by the witnesses. The seventh title of the bill directs the Secretary of Commerce to acquire vessels, authorizing \$60 million a year for fiscal years 2002 through 2004. They will be outfitted with the latest technology and enable innovative research. New England is in particular need of a replacement FRV, since the current NOAA vessel, the Albatross IV, is 38 years old and at the end of its useful life. Without a new vessel, the ability for NOAA to collect long term fisheries, oceanographic, and biological data in New England will be seriously compromised. I had offered this provision as an amendment to the Fishermen's Protective Act which passed by unanimous consent in the Senate on June 26, 2000.

Mr. President, the bill also makes significant conservation and management improvements for our nation's coral reefs. Title VIII, the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, requires the creation of a national coral reef action strategy. Of particular note is the use of marine protected areas to serve as replenishment zones. The U.S. Coral Reef Task Force has called for setting aside 20 percent of coral reefs in each region of the United States that contains reefs as no-take areas. However, many of the U.S. islands that have coral reefs have significant cultural ties to these reefs. It is imperative that any new marine protected areas are developed in close cooperation with the people of these islands and account for traditional and cultural uses of these resources. Without such cooperation, there will not be public support. The national strategy will address how such traditional uses will be incorporated into these replenishment zones.

The national program will also incorporate such important topics as mapping; research, monitoring, and assessment; international and regional management; outreach and education; and restoration. According to NOAA, the majority of our nation's coral reefs are within federal waters, therefore it is expected that NOAA will continue to

work cooperatively with the states, territories, and commonwealths in the development and implementation of coral reef management plans and shift the burden of responsibility onto these states, territories, and commonwealths.

The title also creates a new coral reef conservation program, which will provide grants to states, governmental authorities, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations. This is intended to foster locally based coral reef conservation and management. Creation of a coral reef conservation fund is also authorized. This fund would allow the Administration to enter into agreements with nonprofit organizations to support partnerships between the public and private sectors to further the conservation of coral reefs and help raise the matching funds required as part of the new grants program.

The title authorizes a total of \$16 million a year for fiscal years 2001 through 2004 to be split equally between the local coral reef conservation program and national coral reef activities.

Title IX of the bill amends the American Fisheries Act to allow for the participation of two additional catcher vessels in the Alaskan pollock fishery. These vessels were able to demonstrate that they should have been included in the Act when it passed in 1998. This title also makes a number of minor technical changes to other fisheries laws.

Title X creates a new marine mammal rescue assistance grant program. This new program will assist eligible marine mammal stranding network participants by providing funding for recovery and treatment of marine mammals. Grants can also be used for data collection and the continued operation of these stranding centers. Efforts of these centers are critical for the continued conservation and management of marine mammals in our nation's waters. This program is authorized at \$5 million for each of fiscal years 2001, 2002, and 2003.

I would like to thank Senator KERRY, the ranking member of the Oceans and Fisheries Subcommittee for his hard work and support of this bill. I would also like to thank Senator INOUE for his support, particularly for his contributions to the coral reef conservation section of the bill. In addition, I would like to thank Senator MCCAIN, the chairman of the Commerce Committee, and Senator HOLLINGS, the ranking member of the Committee, for their bipartisan support of this measure. We have before us an opportunity to significantly improve our Nation's ability to conserve and manage our marine resources and I urge the Senate to pass H.R. 3417, as amended.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I rise to make a few remarks on H.R. 3417 and amendments to it that will pass the Senate today. It is a package of several bills all designed to benefit our coastal

and marine environment. It is my hope, Mr. President, that the House of Representatives will consider and pass the bill immediately. They are sound proposals with broad support.

Since the day I first arrived in the Senate more than 15 years ago, I have worked hard to address the many challenges confronting our common ocean and coastal resources. After all, few states draw as much of their national and regional identity from their coasts as does Massachusetts. And I have been fortunate that the Commerce Committee includes members of both parties who are ready and willing to work together, to find compromise and pass sound legislation. In that regard, I want to thank Senators SNOWE, MCCAIN and HOLLINGS for their work on this bill.

The major provisions of H.R. 3417, as amended, are the Pribilof Islands Transition Act, the Shark Finning Prohibition Act, the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, the Coastal Zone Management Act, the Fishermen's Protective Act Amendments, the Coral Reef Conservation Act and the Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance Act. Each of these major proposals in the bill, except the corals bill, has already passed the House, the Senate or both. The bill also includes a ban on the use of spotter aircraft in certain bluefin tuna fishery categories. This proposal has passed the Senate.

I would like to make a few short comments on the Coastal Zone Management Act. To begin, I want to thank Senator SNOWE, our chairman on the Oceans and Fisheries Subcommittee on the Commerce Committee, for putting this legislation on the Committee agenda this Congress and working for its enactment.

Mr. President, when Congress enacted the Coastal Zone Management Act in 1972, it made the critical finding that, "Important ecological, cultural, historic, and esthetic values in the coastal zone are being irretrievably damaged or lost." As we deliberated CZMA's reauthorization this session, I measured our progress against that almost 30-year-old congressional finding. And, I concluded that while we have made tremendous gains in coastal environmental protection, the increasing challenges have made this congressional finding is as true today as it was then.

It is clear from the evidence presented to the Committee in our oversight process and from other input that I have received, that a great need exists for the federal government to increase its support for states and local communities that are working to protect and preserve our coastal zone. To accomplish that goal, the Committee has reported a bill that substantially increases annual authorizations for the CZMA program and targets funding at controlling coastal polluted runoff, one the more difficult challenges we face in the coastal environment.

This reauthorization tackles the problem of polluted coastal runoff. This is one of the great environmental and economic challenges we face in the coastal zone. At the same time that pollution from industrial, commercial and residential sources has increased in the coastal zone, the destruction of wetlands, marshes, mangroves and other natural systems has reduced the capacity of these systems to filter pollution. Together, these two trends have resulted in environmental and economic damage to our coastal areas. These effects include beach closures around the nation, the discovery of a recurring "Dead Zone" covering more than 6,000 square miles in the Gulf of Mexico, the outbreak of *Pfiesteria* on the Mid-Atlantic, the clogging of shipping channels in the Great Lakes, and harm to the Florida Bay and Keys ecosystems. In Massachusetts, we've faced a dramatic rise in shell fish beds closures, which have put many of our fishermen out of work.

To tackle this problem, the Coastal Zone Management Act of 2000 targets up \$10 million annually to, "assist coastal communities to coordinate and implement approved coastal nonpoint pollution control strategies and measures that reduce the causes and impacts of polluted runoff on coastal waters and habitats." This is an important amendment. For the first time, we have elevated the local management of runoff as national priority within the context of the CZMA program. Runoff is not a state-by-state problem; the marine environment is far too dynamic. States share the same coastlines and border large bodies of waters, such as the Gulf of Mexico, the Chesapeake Bay or the Long Island Sound, so that pollutants from one state can detrimentally affect the quality of the marine environment in other states. We are seeing the effects of polluted runoff both in our coastal communities and on our nation's living marine resources and habitats. Mr. President, I'm pleased that we've included the runoff provision in the bill. It's an important step forward and I believe we will see the benefits in our coastal environment and economy.

The Coastal Zone Management Act of 2000, Mr. President, has been endorsed by the 35 coastal states and territories through the Coastal States Organization. It also has the endorsement of the Great Lakes Commission, American Oceans Campaign, Coast Alliance, Center for Marine Conservation, Sierra Club, Environmental Defense, California CoastKeeper and many other groups. It's a long list that makes clear that this is a consensus proposal. We heard from all sides and did our best to find compromise, and I believe that we succeeded.

I also want to make a short statement on shark finning. H.R. 3417 would prohibit the practice of shark finning. Sharks are among the most biologically vulnerable species in the ocean. Their slow growth, late matu-

rity and small number of offspring leave them exceptionally vulnerable to overfishing and slow to recover from depletion. At the same time, sharks, as top predators, are essential to maintaining the balance of life in the sea. While many of our other highly migratory species such as tunas and swordfish are subject to rigorous management regimes, sharks have largely been overlooked until recently.

The bill bans the wasteful practice of removing a shark's fins and returning the remainder of the shark to sea. National Marine Fisheries Service regulations in the Atlantic Ocean prohibit the practice of shark finning, but a nationwide prohibition does not currently exist. Shark fins comprise only a small percentage of the weight of the shark, and yet this is often the only portion of the shark retained. The Magnuson-Stevens Act and international commitments discourage unnecessary waste of fish, and thus I believe this bill ensures our domestic regulations are consistent on this point. Another goal of the Magnuson-Stevens Act—the minimization of bycatch and bycatch mortality—is an issue that I have been particularly committed to over the years. Because most of the sharks caught and finned are incidentally captured in fisheries targeting other species, I believe establishing a domestic ban will help us further reduce this type of shark mortality.

The next step in this process is to act internationally. At present, foreign fleets transship or land approximately 180 metric tons of shark fins annually through ports in the Pacific alone. The global shark fin trade involves at least 125 countries, and the demand for shark fins and other shark products has driven dramatic increases in shark fishing and shark mortality around the world. International measures are an absolutely critical component of achieving effective shark conservation.

Finally, the bill authorizes a Western Pacific longline fisheries cooperative research program to provide information for shark stock assessments, identify fishing gear and practices that prevent or minimize incidental catch of sharks and ensure maximum survivorship of released sharks, and provide data on the international shark fin trade.

The United States is a global leader in fisheries conservation and management. I believe this legislation provides us the opportunity to further this role, and take the first step in addressing an international fisheries management issue. In addition, I believe the U.S. should continue to lead efforts at the United Nations and international conventions to achieve coordinated international management of sharks, including an international ban on shark-finning.

Mr. President, this package also includes a provision to ban the use of spotter aircraft in both the harpoon and general categories of the Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery. This has been an

ongoing issue in New England since 1996. Several of my Senate colleagues, including Senators SNOWE, KENNEDY, GREGG, and COLLINS, have asked the agency to ban aircraft in the past. Unfortunately Mr. President, because aircraft do not catch fish, our legal system has determined that the agency cannot regulate these aircraft. Let me point out that the fisheries service has gone through two rounds of public rule-making on this issue and in both instances an overwhelming number of public comments were in support of this ban. The Atlantic bluefin tuna fishery is one of the last open fisheries in New England, and spotter aircraft provide an unfair competitive advantage to those fishermen who use them. Banning spotter aircraft will level the playing field and provide the opportunity for thousands of New Englanders to experience the thrill of landing a 400 pound bluefin tuna that, depending on the quality of the fish, can easily be worth \$10,000.

Mr. President, H.R. 3417 also includes an authorization for the Secretary of Commerce to acquire fishery research vessels in 2002, 2003, and 2004 at a cost of \$60 million. These state-of-the-art fishery research vessels will replace a fleet of vessels that are becoming technologically obsolete and reaching the end of their useful lives. In New England, the primary vessel used for our stock assessments is the 38-year old Albatross IV. Over the years NOAA has assumed increased responsibilities for managing our marine resources under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the Endangered Species Act. It is absolutely imperative that we give NOAA scientists the tools necessary to carry out the mandates Congress has given them.

Mr. President, I sincerely hope that the House will move to pass this legislation. This is a very reasonable proposal. Indeed, it includes several proposals the House has initiated and passed. We have made every effort to act on their priorities and we ask that they do the same with our priorities.

ATLANTIC STRIPED BASS CONSERVATION ACT

Mr. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to applaud my colleague from Arizona, Senator MCCAIN, on his efforts to reauthorize the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act in a package of oceans and fisheries legislation. I would also like to reaffirm the continued interest of the Committee on Environment and Public Works in this important legislation, over which our two committees have traditionally shared jurisdiction. As my colleague knows, this legislation is critically important to the northeast.

The populations of striped bass, which can be found all along the east coast, began to decline dramatically during the 1970s. In 1979, Congress responded by authorizing the Emergency Striped Bass Study as part of the Anadromous Fish Conservation Act.

And in 1984, Congress enacted the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act. This Act promotes a coordinated Federal-State partnership for striped bass management. The National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been jointly responsible for working with State agencies to recover the fishery. Their efforts have been very successful. The commercial catch of striped bass peaked in 1998 at 19 million pounds, which is a dramatic increase from 1983 when the catch was 2.9 million pounds.

Historically, both the Environment and Public Works Committee, which I chair, and the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which is chaired by Senator MCCAIN, have shared jurisdiction over the conservation of striped bass. Because both the Department of Commerce and the Department of the Interior are involved in the conservation of the fishery, legislation to reauthorize the 1984 Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act has always been of interest to both the Commerce Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee. The most recent reauthorizing legislation, the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act Amendments of 1997, was sequentially referred, by unanimous consent, to the Environment and Public Works Committee after the Commerce Committee ordered the bill to be reported. The Environment Committee then amended and reported the bill. It was signed into law on December 16, 1997.

In order to facilitate passage of reauthorizing legislation this year, I have agreed to the language being offered by Senator MCCAIN in H.R. 3417, as amended, the Pribilof Islands Transition Act, and will not request sequential referral. However, I want to reaffirm, with the agreement of my colleague, that this in no way affects the future jurisdiction of the Environment and Public Works Committee over the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act.

Mr. MCCAIN. As the Senator from New Hampshire stated, the Commerce Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee have historically shared jurisdiction over the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act. Our two committees have in the past always worked together to reauthorize and amend the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act. I expect that relationship to continue.

In order to facilitate the passage of this year's Atlantic Striped Bass reauthorization, Subtitle A of Title III of H.R. 3417, as amended, reauthorizes the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act. Although the Pribilof Islands Transition Act and the other provisions in this legislation are under the sole jurisdiction of the Commerce Committee, I understand that my colleague from New Hampshire has reviewed and approved the language contained in Title III; therefore, the shared jurisdiction of the Commerce Committee and the Environment and Public Works

Committee over the conservation of Atlantic Striped bass should not be altered.

Mr. LOTT. I ask unanimous consent the bill be read a third time and passed, as amended, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 3417), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMERCIAL SPACE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Commerce Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2607, and the Senate then proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2607) to promote the development of the commercial space transportation industry, to authorize appropriations for the Office of the Associate Administrator for Commercial Space Transportation, to authorize appropriations for the Office of Space Commercialization, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

AMENDMENT NO. 4321

Mr. LOTT. Mr. President, Senators MCCAIN and FRIST have an amendment at the desk, and I ask for its consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Mississippi [Mr. LOTT] for Mr. MCCAIN, for himself and Mr. FRIST, proposes an amendment numbered 4321.

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To promote the development of the commercial space transportation industry, and for other purposes)

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Commercial Space Transportation Competitiveness Act of 2000".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds that—

- (1) a robust United States space transportation industry is vital to the Nation's economic well-being and national security;
- (2) enactment of a 5-year extension of the excess third party claims payment provision of chapter 701 of title 49, United States Code, (Commercial Space Launch Activities) will have a beneficial impact on the international competitiveness of the United States space transportation industry;
- (3) space transportation may evolve into airplane-style operations;
- (4) during the next 3 years the Federal Government and the private sector should analyze the liability risk-sharing regime to determine its appropriateness and effectiveness, and, if needed, develop and propose a new regime to Congress at least 2 years prior