former Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto, and the political crisis in Pakistan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. WEBB (for himself, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. WARNER, Mr. DODD, Mr. HAGEL, Mrs. BOXER, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. Con. Res. 66. A concurrent resolution commemorating the 175th anniversary of the commencement of the special relationship between the United States and the Kingdom of Thailand; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 2604. A bill to establish the Baltimore National Heritage Area in the State of Maryland, and for other purposes, to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

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

S. 2604

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Baltimore National Heritage Area Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The City of Baltimore contains 24 National Historic Landmarks, 53,000 buildings listed in 52 National Register Historic Districts, 8,000 buildings in 30 local historic districts, and 12 Chesapeake Bay Gateways, nestled in an unparalleled system of parks and waterways, and connected by 5 Maryland Scenic Byways and an All-American Road.

(2) The Battle of Baltimore represented the definitive end of the American Revolution, secured United States sovereignty, and gave the country 2 enduring symbols: the United States flag and the poem by Francis Scott Key that became our national anthem, ''The Star-Spangled Banner''.

(3) The proposed Baltimore National Heritage Area will tell 2 of the most significant national heritage stories at the locus of black history and the transformative effects of education, which are the following:

(A) Frederick Douglass, who while as a slave learned to read in Baltimore and credited his time in the city as the foundation for his accomplishments; and

(B) Thurgood Marshall, whose public school education in Baltimore led directly to his unparalleled contributions to civil rights as an attorney in Baltimore and as a United States Supreme Court Justice.

(4) Between the early 1800s and the mid 1900s, about 2,000,000 immigrants landed in Baltimore, second only to New York, as a major port of entry into the United States.

(5) In 1811, the Nation's first federally funded interstate transportation route, the National Road, begun its journey from Baltimore to the west.

(6) Baltimore is the farthest inland east coast port, closest to the Nation's interior. The Chesapeake Bay, the continent's largest estuary, is a magnificent, fertile, natural resource. This special mix gave rise to the largest city in the 6 States of the Chesapeake region, with a cultural landscape unique among world port cities.

(7) Although Baltimore is a largely urban environment, a number of important natural and recreational resources can be found within the proposed National Heritage Area boundaries. Beginning with the first city park in 1827, Patterson Park, the city's natural and recreational resources enjoy a noteworthy history. Most remarkable is the city's acquisition, beginning in 1860, of 7 large estates that created the base for the current park system, including Leakin Park that is one of the largest urban wilderness parks remaining on the East Coast.

(8) The Baltimore City Heritage Area is a State heritage area designated by the State of Maryland in 2001.

(9) The ''Feasibility Study for a Baltimore National Heritage Area'', dated December 2006, found that the proposed area met the National Park Service's interim criteria for national heritage area designation.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) HERITAGE AREA.—The term ''Heritage Area'' means the Baltimore National Heritage Area, established in section 4.

(2) LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.—The term ''local coordinating entity'' means the local coordinating entity for the Heritage Area designated by section 4(d).

(3) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—The term ''management plan'' means the management plan for the Heritage Area specified in section 6.

(4) MAP.—The term ''map'' means the map titled ''Baltimore National Heritage Area'', numbered T10/80,000, and dated October 2007.

(5) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(6) STATE.—The term ''State'' means the State of Maryland.

SEC. 4. BALTIMORE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established the Baltimore National Heritage Area in the State.

(b) BOUNDARIES.—The Heritage Area shall be comprised of the following, as depicted on the map:

(1) The area encompassing the Baltimore City Heritage Area certified by the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority in October 2001 as part of the Baltimore City Heritage Area Management Action Plan.

(2) The Mount Auburn Cemetery.

(3) The Cylburn Arboretum.

(4) The Middle Branch of the Patapsco River and surrounding shoreline, including—

(A) the Cruise Maryland Terminal;

(B) new marina construction;

(C) the National Aquarium Aquatic Life Center;

(D) the Westport Redevelopment;

(E) the Gwynns Falls Trail;

(F) the Baltimore Rowing Club; and

(G) the Masonville Cove Environmental Center.

(c) AVAILABILITY OF MAP.—The map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, and the Baltimore Heritage Area Association.

(d) LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.—The Baltimore Heritage Area Association shall be the local coordinating entity for the Heritage Area.

SEC. 5. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES OF THE LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.

(a) DUTIES OF THE LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.—To further the purposes of the Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity shall—

(1) prepare and submit a management plan for the Heritage Area to the Secretary in accordance with section 6;

(2) assist units of local government, regional planning organizations, and nonprofit organizations in implementing the approved management plan by—

(A) carrying out programs and projects that recognize, protect, and enhance important resource values within the Heritage Area;

(B) establishing and maintaining interpretive exhibits and programs within the Heritage Area;

(C) developing recreational and educational opportunities in the Heritage Area;

(D) increasing public awareness of and appreciation for natural, historical, scenic, and cultural resources of the Heritage Area;

(E) protecting and restoring historic sites and buildings in the Heritage Area that are consistent with heritage area themes;

(F) ensuring that signs identifying points of public access and sites of interest are posted throughout the Heritage Area; and

(G) promoting a wide range of partnerships among governments, organizations, and individuals to further the purposes of the Heritage Area;

(3) consider the interests of diverse units of government, businesses, organizations, and individuals in the Heritage Area in the preparation and implementation of the management plan;

(4) conduct meetings open to the public at least semi-annually regarding the development and implementation of the management plan;

(5) submit an annual report to the Secretary for any fiscal year in which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this Act, setting forth its accomplishments, expenses, and income, amounts and sources of matching funds, amounts leveraged with Federal funds and sources of such leveraging, and grants made to any other entities during the year for which the report is made;

(6) make available for audit for any fiscal year in which it receives Federal funds under this Act, all information pertaining to the expenditure of such funds and any matching funds, and require in all agreements authorizing expenditures of Federal funds by other organizations, that the receiving organizations make available for such audit all records and other information pertaining to the expenditure of such funds; and

(7) encourage, by appropriate means, economic development that is consistent with the purposes of the Heritage Area.

(b) AUTHORITIES.—The local coordinating entity may, subject to the prior approval of the Secretary, for the purposes of preparing and implementing the management plan for the Heritage Area, use Federal funds made available through this Act to—

(1) make grants to the State, its political subdivisions, nonprofit organizations, and other persons;

(2) enter into cooperative agreements with or provide technical assistance to the State, its subdivisions, nonprofit organizations, Federal agencies, and other interested parties;

(3) hire and compensate staff;

(4) obtain money or services from any source including any that are provided under any other Federal law or program;

(5) contract for goods or services; and

(6) support activities of partners and any other activities that further the purposes of the Heritage Area and are consistent with the approved management plan.

(c) PROHIBITION ON THE ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.—The local coordinating entity may not use Federal funds received under this Act to acquire real property.

SEC. 6. MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The management plan for the Heritage Area shall—

(1) describe comprehensive policies, goals, strategies, and recommendations for telling

the story of the region's heritage and encouraging long-term resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development of the Heritage Area;

(2) take into consideration existing State, county, and local plans in the development of the management plan and its implementation;

(3) include a description of actions and commitments that governments, private organizations, and citizens plan to take to protect, enhance, and interpret the natural, historic, scenic, and cultural resources of the Heritage Area;

(4) specify existing and potential sources of funding or economic development strategies to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the Heritage Area;

(5) include an inventory of the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the Heritage Area related to the stories and themes of the region that should be protected, enhanced, managed, or developed;

(6) recommend policies and strategies for resource management including, the development of intergovernmental and interagency agreements to protect the Heritage Area's natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources;

(7) describe a program of implementation for the management plan, including—

(A) performance goals;

(B) plans for resource protection, enhancement, interpretation; and

(C) specific commitments for implementation that have been made by the local coordinating entity or any government, organization, business, or individual;

(8) include an analysis and recommendations for ways in which local, State, Tribal, and Federal programs may best be coordinated, including the role of the National Park Service and other Federal agencies associated with the Heritage Area, to further the purposes of this Act;

(9) include an interpretive plan for the Heritage Area; and

(10) include a business plan that—

(A) describes the role, operation, financing, and functions of the local coordinating entity and of each of the major activities contained in the management plan; and

(B) provides adequate assurances that the local coordinating entity has the partnerships and financial and other resources necessary to implement the management plan for the Heritage Area.

(b) DEADLINE AND TERMINATION OF FUNDING.—

(1) DEADLINE.—The local coordinating entity shall submit the management plan to the Secretary for approval not later than 3 years after the date on which any funds are made available for this purpose after designation as a Heritage Area.

(2) TERMINATION OF FUNDING.—If the management plan is not submitted to the Secretary in accordance with this subsection, the local coordinating entity shall not qualify for additional financial assistance under this Act until the management plan is submitted to and approved by the Secretary.

SEC. 7. DUTIES AND AUTHORITIES OF THE SECRETARY.

(a) TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may, upon the request of the local coordinating entity, provide technical and financial assistance on a reimbursable or non-reimbursable basis (as determined by the Secretary) to the Heritage Area to develop and implement the management plan.

(2) PRIORITY ACTIONS.—In assisting the Heritage Area, the Secretary shall give priority to actions that in general assist in—

(A) conserving the significant natural, historical, cultural, and scenic resources of the Heritage Area; and

(B) providing educational, interpretive, and recreational opportunities consistent with the purposes of the Heritage Area.

(3) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary is authorized to enter into cooperative agreements with the local coordinating entity and other public or private entities to carry out this subsection.

(b) APPROVAL OF MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(1) REVIEW.—The Secretary shall approve or disapprove the management plan not later than 180 days after receiving the management plan.

(2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall consult with the Governor of any State and Tribal government in which the Heritage Area is located prior to approving any management plan.

(3) CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.—In determining the approval of the management plan, the Secretary shall consider whether—

(A) the local coordinating entity will be representative of the diverse interests of the Heritage Area, including governments, natural and historic resource protection organizations, educational institutions, businesses, community residents, and recreational organizations;

(B) the local coordinating entity has afforded adequate opportunity for public and governmental involvement, including workshops and public meetings, in the preparation of the management plan;

(C) the resource protection and interpretation strategies contained in the management plan, if implemented, would adequately protect the natural, historical, and cultural resources of the Heritage Area;

(D) the management plan would not adversely affect any activities authorized on Federal or Tribal lands under applicable laws or pursuant to land use plans;

(E) the Secretary has received adequate assurances from the appropriate State, Tribal, and local officials whose support is needed to ensure the effective implementation of the State, Tribal, and local aspects of the management plan; and

(F) the local coordinating entity has demonstrated the financial capability, in partnership with others, to carry out the plan.

(4) ACTION FOLLOWING DISAPPROVAL.—If the Secretary disapproves the management plan, the Secretary shall advise the local coordinating entity in writing of the reasons and may make recommendations for revisions to the management plan. The Secretary shall approve or disapprove a proposed revision not later than 180 days after it is resubmitted.

(5) APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS.—Substantial amendments to the management plan shall be reviewed by the Secretary and approved in the same manner as provided for the original management plan. The local coordinating entity may not use Federal funds authorized by this Act to implement any amendments until the Secretary has approved the amendments.

(c) EVALUATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for the Heritage Area, the Secretary shall conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the Heritage Area and prepare a report with recommendations for the National Park Service's future role, if any, with respect to the Heritage Area.

(2) EVALUATION COMPONENTS.—An evaluation prepared under paragraph (1) shall—

(A) assess the progress of the local coordinating entity with respect to—

(i) accomplishing the purposes of the authorizing legislation for the Heritage Area; and

(ii) achieving the goals and objectives of the approved management plan for the Heritage Area;

(B) analyze the Federal, State, local, and private investments in the Heritage Area to determine the leverage and impact of the investments; and

(C) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the Heritage Area.

(3) RECOMMENDATIONS.—Based upon the evaluation under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall prepare a report with recommendations for the National Park Service's future role, if any, with respect to the Heritage Area. If the report recommends that Federal funding for the Heritage Area be reauthorized, the report shall include an analysis of—

(A) ways in which Federal funding for the Heritage Area may be reduced or eliminated; and

(B) the appropriate time period necessary to achieve the recommended reduction or elimination.

(4) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—On completion of a report under paragraph (3), the Secretary shall submit the report to—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.

SEC. 8. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—This Act shall not affect the authority of any Federal official to provide technical or financial assistance under any other law.

(b) CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION.—The head of any Federal agency planning to conduct activities that may have an impact on the Heritage Area is encouraged to consult and coordinate the activities with the Secretary and the local coordinating entity to the extent practicable.

(c) OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Nothing in this Act—

(1) modifies, alters, or amends any law or regulation authorizing a Federal agency to manage Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Federal agency;

(2) limits the discretion of a Federal land manager to implement an approved land use plan within the boundaries of the Heritage Area; or

(3) modifies, alters, or amends any authorized use of Federal land under the jurisdiction of a Federal agency.

SEC. 9. PROPERTY OWNERS AND REGULATORY PROTECTIONS.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to—

(1) abridge the rights of any property owner, public or private, including the right to refrain from participating in any plan, project, program, or activity conducted within the Heritage Area;

(2) require any property owner to permit public access (including Federal, Tribal, State, or local government access) to such property or to modify any provisions of Federal, Tribal, State, or local law with regard to public access or use of private lands;

(3) alter any duly adopted land use regulations or approved land use plan or any other regulatory authority of any Federal, State, or local agency, or Tribal government or to convey any land use or other regulatory authority to any local coordinating entity;

(4) authorize or imply the reservation or appropriation of water or water rights;

(5) diminish the authority of the State to manage fish and wildlife, including the regulation of fishing and hunting within the Heritage Area; or

(6) create any liability, or affect any liability under any other law, of any private property owner with respect to any persons injured on such private property.

SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated for the purposes of this Act $10,000,000, of which not more than $1,000,000 shall be made available for any fiscal year.

(b) MATCHING FUNDS.—Federal funding provided under this Act may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of any assistance or grant provided or authorized under this Act. Recipient matching funds—

(1) must be from non-Federal sources; and

(2) may be made in the form of in-kind contributions of goods and services fairly valued.

SEC. 11. SUNSET.

The authority of the Secretary to provide financial assistance under this Act shall terminate 15 years after the date of enactment of the Act.

By Mr. KENNEDY:

S. 2605. A bill to require certain semiautomatic pistols manufactured, imported, or sold by Federal firearms licensees to be capable of microstamping ammunition; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, today I am introducing the National Crime Gun Identification Act as an important step to reduce gun violence and support law enforcement. The bill requires semiautomatic handguns manufactured, imported or sold by federal firearms licensees to be equipped with microstamping technology. Congressman XAVIER BECERRA is introducing a companion measure in the House this week.

Nearly 70 percent of homicides in 2006 involved a firearm, and handguns were the weapons of choice for most offenders. Handguns are also the weapons most often used in murders of law enforcement officers. There is an urgent need for effective, high-tech gun-tracing capabilities such as microstamping, which can provide law enforcement with a much-needed investigation resource in solving gun crimes.

Microstamping uses lasers to make precise, microscopic engravings on the firing pin and chamber of a weapon, and this information is transferred onto the cartridge casing when the weapon is fired. The information includes the gun's make, model and serial number, and can yield important evidence to law enforcement officers investigating crimes. California has already enacted such legislation, and the technology has the support of many individuals and organizations, including Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, the Boston Police Department, Seattle Mayor Gregory Nickles, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, and the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. Additionally, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators passed a resolution supporting the use of microstamping technology.

Microstamping is a significant new technology for ballistics identification. Congress should obviously support emerging technologies that enable law enforcement to make more effective use of evidence at crime scenes. Current ballistic analyses, conducted through the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network, depend on the transfer of accidental markings from a gun barrel to bullets and cartridge cases, which are then compared to a limited database with evidence from other crime scenes.

The current Ballistic Information Network has already been an invaluable resource for law enforcement. A remarkable number of crimes have been solved by using it, and it makes sense to invest in the next generation of ballistic technology. Microstamping in no way replaces any of the methods currently used by police to conduct ballistics tests, but it would clearly enhance the work currently done by law enforcement agencies.

FBI data indicate that handguns are used in most homicides, accounting for nearly 7,800 murders in 2006. In Massachusetts, violent crime rates are on the rise—growing 11 percent in Boston in 2006. In 2005, Boston police made a total of 754 gun arrests and 797 illegal firearm seizures. Nevertheless, from 1997 to 2005, shooting incidents have jumped a drastic 153 percent. We can help law enforcement solve more handgun crimes and reduce gun trafficking through the use of microstamping technology.

Bullet casings are often the only evidence left behind at crime scenes, particularly in gang crimes such as drive-by shootings. In Boston during 2006, bullet casings were recovered from nearly half of crime scenes involving shootings. In those cases, investigators could obviously have benefited from knowing the make, model and serial number of the guns involved in those crimes. Microstamp information can also be used to identify straw buyers and gun traffickers who supply the illegal flow of weapons to violent teens, gang members and other prohibited purchasers.

Critics of microstamping technology claim that perpetrators engaged in crime will be able to subvert the technology by filing the microstamped information off the weapons. In fact, however, microstamping is virtually tamperproof. The microstamped information is invisible to the naked eye, and most criminals would be unable to detect it. The microstamp is placed on the firing pin and in the chamber of the gun, so even if a perpetrator replaced the firing pin, the information would still be transferred to the casing from the chamber.

Others argue that criminals will plant cartridges at crime scenes to disrupt investigations. Realistically, however, we know that offenders rarely take even the simplest precautions, such as wearing gloves during a burglary, when engaging in criminal behavior.

Opponents also contend that microstamping will result in the creation of a new national database of gun owners. In fact, it will not result in any new database, because it will use information already available to law enforcement officers investigating gun crimes. In addition, microstamped information on bullet casings can be viewed with imaging equipment generally found at Federal, State and local forensics laboratories, making it unnecessary to create and maintain special equipment or facilities.

Finally, critics claim that the cost of adding microstamping technology is prohibitive. In fact, the technology will be available to manufacturers through a free licensing agreement from its inventor. Based on independent estimates, adding the technology to new semiautomatic handguns will cost only 50 cents to a dollar for each firearm produced by large volume manufacturers.

Handgun owners and prospective handgun purchasers will not be burdened by this legislation. There will be no changes in the procedures or requirements for purchasing handguns. Existing handguns and handgun owners will not be affected by this legislation since it applies only to new handguns.

The technology has been thoroughly tested. Independent examiners have fired thousands of rounds from guns with microstamping, and have consistently obtained readable marks on the casings.

Microstamping technology is urgently needed by law enforcement and can make a major difference in solving gun crimes. It is cost effective and will not impinge on the rights of any gun owners. I urge my colleagues to support law enforcement and reduce gun crimes by enacting this important legislation.

By Mr. DODD (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. BIDEN, and Mr. MCCAIN):

S. 2606. A bill to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise with my colleague, Senator COLLINS, along with Senators BIDEN and MCCAIN, to introduce legislation that reauthorizes the U.S. Fire Administration, USFA.

Established in 1974, the USFA provides critical support to 30,300 fire departments across our Nation through training, emergency incident data collection, fire awareness and prevention education, and research and development activities. Each year, the USFA trains approximately one million fire and emergency personnel both at the USFA campus in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and through distance learning programs. The USFA also offers vital assistance to Federal Emergency Management Agency and Department of Homeland Security in the development of Federal preparedness and response policies.

The legislation I am introducing today with my colleagues seeks to provide the USFA with proper resources so

the agency may effectively meet the growing responsibilities of the fire service in the 21st century. It contains the following provisions. The USFA Reauthorization Act of 2008 provides $70 million in fiscal year 2009 with 1.3 percent annual increases through fiscal year 2012. The bill expands National Fire Academy training curricula to include issues relevant to urban-wildland interface fires, fires involving hazardous materials, and fire-based emergency medical services. The bill also encourages the expansion of onsite fire training, authorizes up to $5,000,000 annually for necessary technology upgrades to the National Fire Incident Reporting System, authorizes the USFA to expand research activities in relevant topics to urban-wildland interface fires, encourages the USFA to adopt national voluntary consensus standards relevant to firefighter health and safety, and requires the USFA to provide greater coordination with other Federal, State and local agencies on fire prevention and fire-based emergency medical services programs. Finally, the legislation establishes a rotating position at the DHS National Operations Center for State or local fire service officials. This new position will bring the expertise of the fire service to the incident management and information sharing activities of the Center.

I am pleased to say this bipartisan legislation is supported by the Congressional Fire Services Institute, the International Association of Fire Fighters, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, and the National Volunteer Fire Council.

The U.S. Fire Administration performs a critical array of duties that ensure the safety of Americans each day. It is important that we continue to pledge our support to the agency and our Nation's brave firefighters. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this important legislation.

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

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

S. 2606

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The number of lives lost each year because of fire has dropped significantly over the last 25 years in the United States. However, the United States still has one of the highest fire death rates in the industrialized world. In 2005, the National Fire Protection Association reported 3,675 civilian fire deaths, 17,925 civilian fire injuries, and $10,672,000,000 in direct losses due to fire.

(2) Every year, more than 100 firefighters die in the line of duty. The United States Fire Administration should continue its leadership to help local fire agencies dramatically reduce these fatalities.

(3) Members of the fire service community should continue to work together to further the promotion of national voluntary consensus standards that increase firefighter safety.

(4) The United States Fire Administration provides crucial support to the 30,300 fire departments of the United States through training, emergency incident data collection, fire awareness and education, and support of research and development activities for fire prevention, control, and suppression technologies.

(5) The collection of data on fire and other emergency incidents is a vital tool both for policy makers and emergency responders to identify and develop responses to emerging hazards. Improving the data collection capabilities of the United States Fire Administration is essential for accurately tracking and responding to the magnitude and nature of the fire problems of the United States.

(6) The research and development performed by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the United States Fire Administration, other government agencies, and non-governmental organizations on fire technologies, techniques, and tools advance the capabilities of the fire service of the United States to suppress and prevent fires.

(7) The United States Fire Administration is one of the strongest voices representing the fire service of the United States within the Federal Government, and, as such, it should have a prominent place within the Department of Homeland Security.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION.

Section 17(g)(1) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2216(g)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(2) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(3) by adding after subparagraph (D) the following:

''(E) $70,000,000 for fiscal year 2009, of which $2,520,000 shall be used to carry out section 8;

''(F) $72,100,000 for fiscal year 2010, of which $2,595,600 shall be used to carry out section 8;

''(G) $74,263,000 for fiscal year 2011, of which $2,673,468 shall be used to carry out section 8; and

''(H) $76,490,890 for fiscal year 2012, of which $2,753,672 shall be used to carry out section 8.''.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL FIRE ACADEMY TRAINING PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS AND REPORTS.

(a) AMENDMENTS TO FIRE ACADEMY TRAINING.—Section 7(d)(1) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2206(d)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (H), by striking ''terrorist-caused national catastrophes'' and inserting ''all hazards, including acts of terrorism'';

(2) in subparagraph (K), by striking ''forest'' and inserting ''wildland'';

(3) in subparagraph (M), by striking ''response tactics and'' and inserting ''response, tactics, and'';

(4) by redesignating subparagraphs (I) through (N) as subparagraphs (M) through (R), respectively; and

(5) by inserting after subparagraph (H) the following:

''(I) response, tactics, and strategies for fighting large-scale fires or multiple fires in a general area that cross jurisdictional boundaries;

''(J) response, tactics, and strategies for fighting fires occurring at the wildland-urban interface;

''(K) response, tactics, and strategies for fighting fires involving hazardous materials;

''(L) advanced emergency medical services training;''.

(b) TRIENNIAL REPORTS.—Section 7 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 2206) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(m) TRIENNIAL REPORT.—In the first annual report filed pursuant to section 16 for which the deadline for filing is after the expiration of the 18-month period that begins on the date of the enactment of the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008, and in every third annual report thereafter, the Administrator shall include information about changes made to the National Fire Academy curriculum, including—

''(1) the basis for such changes, including a review of the incorporation of lessons learned by emergency response personnel after significant emergency events and emergency preparedness exercises performed under the National Exercise Program; and

''(2) the desired training outcome of all such changes.''.

(c) AUTHORIZING THE ADMINISTRATOR TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS TO PROVIDE ON-SITE TRAINING THROUGH CERTAIN ACCREDITED ORGANIZATIONS.—Section 7(f) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 2206) is amended to read as follows:

''(f) ASSISTANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may provide assistance to State and local fire service training programs through grants, contracts, or otherwise.

''(2) AUTHORIZATION TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS TO PROVIDE ON-SITE TRAINING THROUGH CERTAIN ACCREDITED ORGANIZATIONS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Administrator may enter into a contract with nationally recognized organizations that have established on-site training programs that comply with national voluntary consensus standards for fire service personnel to facilitate the delivery of the education and training programs outlined in subsection (d)(1) directly to fire service personnel.

''(B) LIMITATION.—The Administrator may not enter into a contract with an organization described in subparagraph (A) unless such organization—

''(i) operates a fire service training program accredited by a nationally recognized accreditation organization experienced with accrediting such training; or

''(ii) at the time the Administrator enters into the contract, provides training under such a program under a cooperative agreement with a Federal agency.

''(3) RESTRICTION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The amounts expended by the Administrator to carry out this subsection in any fiscal year shall not exceed 8 per centum of the amount authorized to be appropriated in such fiscal year pursuant to section 17 of this Act.''.

SEC. 5. NATIONAL FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM UPGRADES.

(a) INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM DATABASE.—Section 9 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2208) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) NATIONAL FIRE INCIDENT REPORTING SYSTEM UPDATE.—Of the amounts made available pursuant to subparagraphs (E), (F), and (G) of section 17(g)(1), the Administrator shall use not more than an aggregate amount of $5,000,000 during the 3-year period consisting of fiscal years 2009, 2010, and 2011 to carry out activities necessary to update the National Fire Incident Reporting system to an Internet-based, real-time incident reporting database, including capital investment, contractor engagement, and user education.''.

(b) TECHNICAL CORRECTION.—Section 9(b)(2) of such Act (15 U.S.C. 2208(b)(2)) is amended by striking ''assist State,'' and inserting ''assist Federal, State,''.

SEC. 6. FIRE TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE AND RESEARCH DISSEMINATION.

(a) ASSISTANCE TO FIRE SERVICES FOR FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—Section 8(d) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2207(d)) is amended to read as follows:

''(d) RURAL AND WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator may, in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture, assist the fire services of the United States, directly or through contracts, grants, or other forms of assistance, to sponsor and encourage research into approaches, techniques, systems, equipment, and land-use policies to improve fire prevention and control in—

''(1) the rural and remote areas of the United States; and

''(2) the wildland-urban interface.''.

(b) TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH DISSEMINATION.—Section 8 of such Act (15 U.S.C. 2207) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(h) RESEARCH DISSEMINATION.—Beginning 1 year after the date of the enactment of the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008, the Administrator, in collaboration with the relevant departments and agencies of the Federal Government, shall make available to the public information about all ongoing and planned fire-related research funded by the Administration during fiscal year 2008 and each fiscal year thereafter, as well as the results generated from such research, through a regularly updated Internet-based database.''.

SEC. 7. ENCOURAGING ADOPTION OF STANDARDS FOR FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY.

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 37. ENCOURAGING ADOPTION OF STANDARDS FOR FIREFIGHTER HEALTH AND SAFETY.

''The Administrator shall promote adoption by fire services of national voluntary consensus standards for firefighter health and safety, including such standards for firefighter operations, training, staffing, and fitness, by—

''(1) educating fire services about such standards;

''(2) encouraging the adoption at all levels of government of such standards; and

''(3) making recommendations on other ways in which the Federal government can promote the adoption of such standards by fire services.''.

SEC. 8. STATE AND LOCAL FIRE SERVICE REPRESENTATION AT NATIONAL OPERATIONS CENTER.

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 22 the following:

''SEC. 23. STATE AND LOCAL FIRE SERVICE REPRESENTATION AT NATIONAL OPERATIONS CENTER.

''(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF POSITION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall, in consultation with the Administrator, establish a fire service position at the National Operations Center established under section 515 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 321d) (also known as the 'Homeland Security Operations Center') to represent the interests of State and local fire services.

''(b) DESIGNATION OF POSITION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall designate, on a rotating basis, a State or local fire service official for the position described in subsection (a)

''(c) MANAGEMENT.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall manage the position established pursuant to subsection (a) in accordance with such rules and regulations as govern other similar rotating positions at the National Operations Center.''.

SEC. 9. COORDINATION REGARDING FIRE SERVICE-BASED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES.

Section 21(e) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2218(e)) is amended to read as follows:

''(e) COORDINATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent practicable, the Administrator shall use existing programs, data, information, and facilities already available in other Federal Government departments and agencies and, where appropriate, existing research organizations, centers, and universities.

''(2) COORDINATION OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL PROGRAMS.—The Administrator shall provide liaison at an appropriate organizational level to assure coordination of the activities of the Administrator with State and local government agencies, departments, bureaus, or offices concerned with any matter related to programs of fire prevention and control with private and other Federal organizations and offices so concerned.

''(3) COORDINATION OF FIRE SERVICE-BASED EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PROGRAMS.—The Administrator shall provide liaison at an appropriate organizational level to assure coordination of the activities of the Administrator with State and local government agencies, departments, bureaus, or offices concerned with programs related to emergency medical services provided by fire service-based systems with private and other Federal organizations and offices so concerned.''.

SEC. 10. DEFINITIONS.

Section 4 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2203) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (3), by striking ''Administration'' and inserting ''Administration, who is the Assistant Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency'';

(2) in paragraph (7), by striking the ''and'' after the semicolon;

(3) in paragraph (8), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and'';

(4) by redesignating paragraphs (6), (7), and (8) as paragraphs (7), (8), and (9), respectively;

(5) by inserting after paragraph (5) the following:

''(6) 'hazardous material' has the meaning given such term in section 5102 of title 49, United States Code;''; and

(6) by adding at the end the following:

''(10) 'wildland-urban interface' has the meaning given such term in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).''.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President. I am pleased to join Senator DODD in introducing legislation to reauthorize the U.S. Fire Administration. The bill would provide additional resources to help the agency meet its growing responsibilities. We are pleased to be joined by our fellow cochairs of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus—Senators MCCAIN and BIDEN.

Since its creation in 1974, the Fire Administration and its Fire Academy have helped prevent fires, protect property, and save lives among firefighters and the public. Today, the Fire Administration is also integrated into our national, all-hazards preparations against natural disasters and terrorist attacks.

Last month marked the fifth anniversary of the Fire Administration's reorganization as part of the Federal Emergency Management Agency within the Department of Homeland Security. As both Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and as a cochair of the Congressional Fire Services Caucus, I am pleased that the bill being introduced today does much more than reauthorize the Fire Administration.

For example, the bill designates $5 million annually to support necessary technology upgrades to the National Fire Incident Reporting System. This important system helps State and local governments report and analyze fires, and allows nationwide sharing of data in standard formats. This database—the world's largest collection of fire-incident information—helps all levels of government to probe the nature and causes of injuries, deaths, and property loss resulting from fires.

Another vital component of this bill establishes a rotating position at the DHS National Operations Center to be filled by a State or local fire-service official. In our comprehensive, all-hazards approach to major disasters, it is just as important to have the fire services represented at operations center as it is military liaisons.

The bill has other important provisions, including provision for a 1.3 percent annual increase in the initial $70 million authorization through fiscal year 2012. In addition, the bill expands National Fire Academy training programs to include topics like hazardous-material fires and fire-based emergency medical services. It authorizes expanded research on fires in the urban-wildland interface and in rural areas. It encourages the Fire Administration to adopt national voluntary standards on firefighter health and safety—an important topic, considering that about 100 brave firefighters lose their lives in the line of duty each year, with many more suffering serious injuries.

My home state of Maine is keenly aware of the dangers of fire and the importance of effective fire services. Maine is one of the most rural states in the nation and most of its housing stock is wood framed. Some households rely on woodstoves for primary or supplemental heat.

According to the Maine Department of Public Safety, nearly 50 Mainers died in fires every year through the 1950s, '60s, and '70s. The average so far for this decade is 18, and 2007 produced only 12 fire-related deaths, still too many but a considerable improvement.

Maine public-safety officials attribute the decline to factors like wider use of smoke detectors and improved building codes—and fire-prevention efforts. As our national resource and clearing house for fire research, education, and training, the U.S. Fire Administration certainly deserves a share of the credit for my state's progress in reducing the pain, devastation, and death wrought by fires.

I have no doubt the Fire Administration's beneficial effects will grow. Its new campaign for preventing smoking-related home fires is a worthy effort. Its growing curriculum of online courses on topics like incident command for nursing-home fires, emergency medical service at multi-casualty incidents, and emergency response to terrorism is a valuable resource for firefighters.

The U.S. Fire Administration is a fine example of the good that can come of federal, state, and local collaboration to counter an ancient threat and to address new ones. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the reauthorization and improvement of this valuable agency.

By Ms. SNOWE:

S. 2607. A bill to make a technical correction to section 3009 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation that would better facilitate the DTV transition for rural Americans by making funds for digital upgrades available sooner to low-power television stations and translators. The reason this is imperative is that we don't want to create another ''digital divide'' where rural and low-income areas are not able to reap the benefits of digital TV as quickly as their urban counterparts.

Under the current statute, the Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information at the Department of Commerce must make payments for the low-power TV and translator upgrade program during fiscal year 2009—October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009—but may not actually disburse reimbursement payments until after October 1, 2010, which is 20 months past the DTV transition deadline of February 2009.

By having such a long delay for reimbursements, it will inevitably hold up the analog to digital upgrades of low-power TV stations and translators. This would adversely affect viewers since they will not be able to receive the benefits that digital signals offer and hence create this additional ''digital divide'' to these mostly rural and low-income areas where low-power TV and translators typically are situated.

This bill would correct this oversight and change the language to have the Assistant Secretary make payments during the fiscal years 2009 to 2012, and start providing reimbursements for the upgrade program on February 18, 2009, and in doing so will move up the date 20 months to bring the upgrade program more in line with the main deadline of the DTV transition. This will allow LPTV and translators to be reimbursed more quickly for analog to digital equipment upgrades, which can run in the tens of thousands of dollars.

As we all know, in less than 380 days, on February 17, 2009, television broadcasts will transition from analog TV signals to an all-digital system and in doing so begin a new chapter of innovation and viewing experience. The transition will free up scarce broadcast spectrum so that first responders and public safety services have much needed spectrum capacity. It will also provide space for advanced wireless technologies, which will bring us improved broadband and communications services. In addition, the new digital TV signals will provide higher quality video and sound, as well as the opportunity for broadcasters to offer new services such as interactive TV and multicasting, which allows the transmission of several program streams on one broadcast channel.

Consumer awareness of the DTV transition is improving and the Commerce Department announced earlier this month that it had already received requests from more than 2 million households for nearly 4 million converter box coupons—so demand is strong. More and more consumers are realizing the importance and benefits of the DTV transition. We must not unduly prohibit any American from not reaping the tremendous advantages of digital TV and other services that will quickly follow due to the transition. If we don't correct this critical oversight in the current law, we will do just that, once again disadvantaging the areas and people that have the most to gain from this new technology. That is why I sincerely hope that my colleagues join me in supporting the critical legislation.

Mr. President. I yield the floor.

S. 2607

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

SECTION 1. REIMBURSEMENTS FROM THE DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION AND PUBLIC SAFETY FUND.

Section 3009(a) of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–171) is amended—

(1) by striking ''fiscal year 2009'' and inserting ''fiscal years 2009 through 2012; and''

(2) by striking ''no earlier than October 1, 2010'' and inserting ''on or after February 18, 2009''.

By Ms. SNOWE (for herself and Mrs. DOLE):

S. 2608. A bill to make improvements to the Small Business Act; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today, along with Senator DOLE, to introduce the Small Business Women's Procurement Improvement Act, a measure that would enhance the Small Business Administration's women's procurement program, which was created back in 2000, to provide contracting opportunities to women-owned small businesses in Maine and across the Nation. As Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, one of my top priorities is to champion our nation's women-owned small businesses and to promote their interests. In these uncertain economic times it is our financial strengths that we must rely upon most. Women-owned small businesses are one such strength. In recent years, the percent growth in the number of women-owned firms was nearly twice that of all U.S. firms. Thus, we need to create programs that will continue to grow this vital and crucial resource.

Regrettably, the Small Business Administration, SBA, has failed to implement the women's procurement program that was enacted into law back in 2000. In December, the SBA finally proposed a rule to implement the program. The SBA had the opportunity to hit a home run, but instead published a rule that is highly deficient and unlikely to have any practical effect in helping the Federal Government satisfy its 5 percent women's contracting goal. So far, there has been one law—enacted back in December 2000—three reports, numerous hearings, and two proposed rules, and, tragically, it appears that we are no closer today then we were 7 years ago to helping our nation's small women-owned businesses stimulate our economy. What an inconceivable missed opportunity for the SBA to help boost our economy by promoting women-owned businesses.

The SBA's proposed rule has two fundamental flaws which hinder it from functioning as Congress originally intended. First, the proposed rule identifies just four industries, out of more than one hundred, in which women-owned small businesses are under-represented and eligible for set-asides. According to the Central Contractor Registration, this gross disparity means a mere 1,238 businesses across the entire Nation—or 2 percent of all women-owned small business contractors—would be subject to the proposed rule. Regrettably, only two of these contractors are located in my home State of Maine.

Second, for SBA's proposed rule to go into effect, individual Federal agencies must first publicly admit to a history of gender discrimination. I find it difficult, if not impossible, to envision a scenario where a Federal agency would make such an admission. Furthermore, such an unworkable admission isn't required anywhere in the Small Business Act.

To help remedy this appalling circumstance, today we introduce legislation to amend the Small Business Act so that the women-owned small businesses can finally have a procurement program that makes a real difference, not a 2 percent difference. For example, our bill would substantially broaden the range of applicable business industries for women across this Nation and take down the unnecessary barriers it has recently proposed. Women-owned small businesses deserve more than 2 percent of available business industries. These four industries will do little to nothing to help Federal agencies reach its statutory government-wide goal. Sadly enough, one of the industries the SBA has selected does not

allow for any private business participation, let alone women business participation.

Our bill also would preclude the SBA from promulgating a final rule that requires individual agencies to admit to past discrimination as a prerequisite for participation in the set-aside program. We find it difficult to envision a circumstance in which any agency would make such an admission. Furthermore, this requirement is not mandated anywhere in the Small Business Act.

Our bill has gained the support of women-owned small businesses across the Nation including major women's organizations like the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce, Women Impacting Public Policy, the National Women Business Owners Corporation, the Women Presidents' Organization, the Women Presidents' Educational Organization, and the Women's Business Development Center.

It has been nearly 14 years since the women's 5 percent government-wide contracting goal was established in 1994, but since its enactment, the women's contracting goal has never been met. Shockingly, at the historical percentage rate of increase, it would take until 2019 for this goal to be met—25 years after enactment of the original statutory requirement.

According to recent figures, women-owned firms in the U.S. generate $1.1 trillion in annual sales and employ 7.2 million people nationwide. I take great pride that my own state of Maine is a forerunner for women-owned businesses with more than 63,000 women-owned firms, creating 75,000 jobs, and spurring more than $9 billion in sales.

The SBA must develop a functioning procurement program that will cultivate women business so that they in turn can help grow our Nation's economy. This is why women businesses need a workable procurement program that does not create impenetrable barriers and provide so few business opportunities. Our bill eliminates these barriers and gives women-owned small business a tool they can use that will help them continue to grow our suffering economy. If ever there were a time to secure new avenues to generate revenue and spur the economy, wouldn't that time be now?

I urge my colleagues in Congress to support this vital legislation, so that we in Congress can make sure that the SBA publishes a meaningful final rule that will assist the Federal Government to satisfy—if not exceed—its government-wide contracting goal, and to help women-owned small businesses to stimulate our Nation's economy.

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

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

S. 2608

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Small Business Women's Procurement Program Improvement Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds—

(1) based on evidence presented by Congressional witnesses, testimony before Congress, and studies and reports, that women-owned small business concerns are under represented in certain identified industries with respect to Federal procurement contracting; and

(2) the women's small business government-wide statutory goal has never been achieved since the time of its enactment.

SEC. 3. SMALL BUSINESS ACT PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS.

Section 8(m) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 637(m)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2)(C), by striking ''(3)'' and inserting ''(4)'';

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking subparagraph (D) and inserting the following:

''(D) the contract is consistent with the requirements set forth in subsection (a)(1)(D)(i);'';

(3) by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

''(4) IDENTIFICATION OF INDUSTRIES.—

''(A) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Administrator shall conduct a study 5 years after the date on which the program under this section is implemented, to identify industries in which small business concerns owned and controlled by women are underrepresented with respect to Federal procurement contracting.

''(B) PRESUMPTION RELATING TO UNDERREPRESENTATION.—For purposes of this subsection, the industries identified by the 2007 North American Industry Classification System Code as industry codes 11 through 81 (as published by the Bureau of the Census) shall be presumed to be industries in which small business concerns owned and controlled by women are underrepresented with respect to Federal procurement contracting.''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) NO PAST FINDING OF DISCRIMINATION REQUIRED.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a contracting officer need not make a finding of past gender discrimination by a contracting agency in order to comply with or otherwise be subject to the requirements of this subsection.''.

By Mr. FEINGOLD (for himself, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. KERRY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. VOINOVICH):

S. 2609. A bill to establish a Global Service Fellowship Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today I am pleased to reintroduce the Global Service Fellowship Program Act. This important bipartisan bill would provide more Americans the opportunity to volunteer overseas and strengthen our existing Federal international education and exchange system. The U.S. Government needs to be taking a greater role in providing opportunities for U.S. citizens to volunteer overseas, and my bill will enhance U.S. efforts to be a global leader in people-to-people engagement.

People-to-people engagement is one of the United States' most effective public diplomacy tools and, today more than ever, we need to be investing in every opportunity to improve the perception of the U.S. overseas.

I often hear from constituents about their experiences volunteering overseas and how those experiences impacted their lives and the lives of those who they were helping. For example, I received an email from Eric Englund, from my hometown of Middleton, who wrote, ''[My wife Jane and I] have been privileged to participate in international volunteering experiences in 2006 and 2007. In 2006 we spent 4 weeks in China teaching English to Chinese primary and secondary English teachers in Xingping, China. * * * In 2007 we spent two weeks in Tanzania with Habitat for Humanity. . . . We return[ed] from both experiences humbled in the understanding of how lucky we have been and hungry to continue to share with others a cultural exchange that is hopefully symbiotic in helping us grow/learn/appreciate while at the same time sharing our knowledge, compassion and abilities with others.'' This email captures the life-changing effects that international volunteering often has on those who choose to commit their time and resources to volunteering across the globe.

Unfortunately, not enough of my constituents are able to volunteer overseas because of financial or time-related barriers. In an effort to reduce these barriers, I initially introduced, along with my colleague Senator COLEMAN, the Global Service Fellowship bill. Today, I am reintroducing a new and improved version of the bill.

This new bill builds on the original legislation but now ensures fellowships are not taxed, addresses the importance of geographical diversity in the selection process, and increases collaborative opportunities for the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Department of State in establishing and administering the program.

Additionally, congressional involvement has been changed from the original bill. The new version calls on participants to engage with Members of Congress prior to their departure and again upon their return by providing Members with a brief report of their experiences and impact abroad. The changes are intended to ensure that fellows are selected based on the merits while preserving for Members of Congress the opportunity, if they so wish, to engage directly with constituents who have volunteered for significant overseas work, whether by a personal exchange, a public event or correspondence that recognizes the value of their volunteer efforts.

Studies have shown that in areas where U.S. citizens have volunteered their time, money, and services, opinions of the U.S. have improved. Greater investment in volunteer opportunities has significant potential to improve the image of the U.S. overseas and while we have important programs already in place—the Peace Corps, programs administered through the Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, and

USAID's Volunteers for Prosperity—we can and should be doing more.

My bill would cost $150 million, which is more than offset by a provision that would require the IRS to deposit all of its fee receipts in the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts. CBO has estimated that this offset will save $559 million over 5 years for net deficit reduction of just over $400 million.

I am pleased that my colleagues, Senators COLEMAN, CASEY, COCHRAN, KERRY, VOINOVICH, and WHITEHOUSE have joined me in re-introducing this bill. This program will be a valuable addition to our public diplomacy and our private humanitarian efforts overseas and I encourage my colleagues to support the bill.

By Mr. DORGAN (for himself, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. CASEY):

S. 2611. A bill to make bills implementing trade agreements subject to a point of order unless certain conditions are met, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, today I am introducing a piece of legislation aimed at changing the course of our international trade policy.

Part of the problem with our current trade agenda is that there is no mechanism to gauge whether the trade agreements we enter into are successful—and there is no mechanism to withdraw from agreements that have not been successful.

So I am joining with Senators BROWN and CASEY in introducing the Trade Agreement Benchmarks and Accountability Act, which aims to fix that.

This is how the bill would work.

The legislation would create a point of order in the Senate against any future bill implementing a new trade agreement unless it included benchmarks to gauge the success or failure of the agreement.

The benchmarks would include, at a minimum, the trade agreement's impact in four respects.

First, the number of U.S. jobs created and lost.

Second, the impact on U.S. wages.

Third, the extent to which U.S. exports gain foreign market access in key sectors.

Fourth, the extent to which labor and environmental laws are followed and enforced.

The U.S. Trade Representative's office could include additional benchmarks in the implementing legislation, at their discretion.

Every 5 years, the U.S. International Trade Commission, ITC, would assess whether the benchmarks in the implementing legislation had been met.

If the ITC determined that any of the benchmarks were not met, there would be an expedited process under which the House and the Senate would consider a privileged resolution to pull the United States out of the trade agreement.

The resolution would be considered under expedited rules. The resolution would first be referred to the Ways and Means and Finance committees. If those committees failed to report out the resolution within a set period of time, either favorably or unfavorably, the resolution would be automatically discharged to the full House and Senate.

The resolution would not be amendable, and a floor vote in the House and the Senate on whether to approve the resolution would be mandatory.

Let me explain why something like this is necessary.

When NAFTA was sent to Congress for a vote in 1993, its advocates said that there would be 200,000 new jobs created annually as a result.

The proponents relied on a study by economists Gary Clyde Hufbauer and Jeffrey Schott. Hufbauer and Schott actually predicted that NAFTA would create 170,000 new jobs by 1995. But proponents of the deal in the administration and the Senate rounded this number up to 200,000 jobs.

Well, we now know that NAFTA has resulted in hundreds of thousands of job losses. About 412,000 U.S. jobs have been certified as lost to NAFTA, under just one program at the U.S. Labor Department.

In 2003, 10 years after NAFTA had been approved, I commissioned a study from the Congressional Research Service, which identified the top 100 companies that laid off U.S. workers as a result of NAFTA, between 1994 and 2002.

To come up with its data, CRS turned to the Department of Labor, which has a ''Trade Adjustment Assistance'' program that gives temporary benefits to workers laid off due to NAFTA.

This program requires companies to certify that they intended to eliminate U.S. jobs specifically because of NAFTA. This means that we can directly attribute these job losses to NAFTA.

These 100 companies accounted for 201,414 U.S. jobs lost specifically due to NAFTA. In every instance, the companies doing the layoffs certified that the jobs were being cut directly because of NAFTA.

If you look at all U.S. companies that participated in the Department of Labor program, the total number of U.S. jobs lost due to NAFTA is 412,177—and that is just under this one program alone.

There are some very familiar products, which many people consider all-American, now being produced in Mexico.

Levi Strauss laid off 15,676 U.S. workers due to NAFTA, and now makes its jeans in Mexico.

In March 2003, Kraft Foods closed the Nabisco plant in Fair Lawn, NJ, that made Fig Newtons. About 240 jobs were lost right there. Those jobs are now in Monterrey, Mexico. Kraft Foods has cut about 955 jobs due to NAFTA.

Fruit of the Loom laid off 5,352 U.S. workers in Texas alone, and thousands more in Louisiana. I have often said that it is one thing to lose your shirt, quite another to lose your shorts.

In March 2001, Mattel closed its last factory in the U.S.—a western Kentucky plant that produced toys such as Barbie playhouses and battery-powered pickups for nearly 30 years. The company shifted production at the 980–employee Kentucky plant to factories in Mexico.

John Deere has laid off about 1,150 workers, who made lawn mowers and chainsaws, and moved the jobs to Mexico.

By the way, in addition to this CRS study, a separate study by the Economic Policy Institute found that the overall net effect of NAFTA had been the loss of nearly 800,000 American jobs.

Today, the administration and the U.S. Trade Representative are careful to avoid promising that new trade agreements will create more U.S. jobs than the agreements will destroy.

But the administration has no problem figuring out how great trade deals will be for other countries.

One month before the administration signed a trade agreement with Korea last year, our principal negotiator in Korea, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Wendy Cutler, was already touting the benefits that the agreement would offer Korea:

> An FTA with the United States is predicted to produce significant economic benefits for the Korean economy, increasing Korea's real GDP by as much as 2%, establishing a foundation for Korea to achieve per capita income to as high as $30,000, boosting exports to the United States by 15%, and creating 100,000 new jobs.

Remarkably, Ms. Cutler had no difficulty predicting a specific level of job creation in Korea. But she made no similar projection with respect to the United States.

Well, we need accountability in trade agreements. And the best way to do that is with benchmarks.

This is a forward-looking strategy for a successful trade policy that is in America's national interest.

Our bill would apply only to future trade agreements. It would not apply retroactively to NAFTA.

I should say, however, that I think it is important that we gauge the impact of NAFTA on U.S. jobs. And I was able to include language in the omnibus conference report that will require the Department of Labor, by the end of 2008, to calculate the net impact of NAFTA on U.S. jobs, industry by industry.

In any event, we think that this piece of legislation should be embraced by the U.S. Congress, because the American people are beginning to demand accountability in trade.

On October 4, the Wall Street Journal provided fresh evidence that the American people don't believe that free trade deals are creating jobs.

The Wall Street Journal ran a story with the headline ''Republicans Grow Skeptical on Free Trade.''

The story described a poll, which found that by a two-to-one margin, Republican voters believe free trade deals have been bad for the U.S. economy.

It turns out that dissatisfaction with our current trade policy is a bipartisan sentiment.

The poll found that 59 percent of polled Republican voters agreed with the following statement:

Foreign trade has been bad for the U.S. economy, because imports from abroad have reduced demand for American-made goods, cost jobs here at home, and produced potentially unsafe products.

Only 32 percent of polled Republican voters agreed with the following statement:

Foreign trade has been good for the US. economy, because demand for U.S. products abroad has resulted in economic growth and jobs for Americans here at home and provided more choices for consumers.

This poll suggests a dramatic change in the way Americans view free trade agreements.

In December 1999, the Wall Street Journal did a poll that found that only 31 percent of Republican voters thought free trade agreements had hurt our country.

But in this month's poll, the Wall Street Journal found that the number of Republican voters opposing free trade agreements had risen from 31 percent to 59 percent.

Clearly, the American people have seen the results of free trade deals, and they don't like what they see. They demand accountability. And the Trade Agreement Benchmarks and Accountability Act would give them precisely that.

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

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

S. 2611

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Trade Agreement Benchmarks and Accountability Act''.

SEC. 2. LIMITATIONS ON BILLS IMPLEMENTING TRADE AGREEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 151 of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2191) or any other provision of law, any bill implementing a trade agreement between the United States and another country shall be subject to a point of order pursuant to subsection (c) unless the bill—

(1) is accompanied by a statement of the benchmarks described in subsection (b)(1) and that statement is approved as part of the implementing bill; and

(2) contains the reporting provisions described in subsection (b)(2).

(b) BENCHMARKS AND REPORTING PROVISIONS.—

(1) BENCHMARKS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each bill implementing a trade agreement shall be accompanied by a statement that contains benchmarks described in subparagraph (B) and predictions made by the International Trade Commission, the United States Trade Representative, and other Federal agencies, of the impact the implementation of the agreement will have on the United States economy.

(B) DESCRIPTION OF BENCHMARKS.—The benchmarks described in this subparagraph are as follows:

(i) An estimate of the number of new jobs that will be created, the number of existing jobs that will be lost, and the expected net effect on job creation in the United States as a result of the agreement. The estimate shall include the number and type of the new jobs that will be created and lost.

(ii) An assessment and quantitative analysis of the extent to which the agreement will result in an improvement in wages for workers in the United States.

(iii) An assessment and quantitative analysis of how each country that is a party to the agreement is implementing and enforcing the labor and environmental standards that are part of the agreement.

(iv) A quantitative analysis of the extent to which the agreement will result in an increase in the access by United States businesses to the market of each country that is a party to the agreement, particularly those sectors identified by the United States Trade Representative as of special importance with respect to the agreement.

(2) REPORTING PROVISIONS.—The reporting provisions described in this subsection are that each bill implementing a trade agreement shall contain a requirement that not later than 5 years after the date the agreement enters into force with respect to the United States, and every 5 years thereafter, the International Trade Commission shall submit to Congress a report that provides an assessment and quantitative analysis of how the trade agreement has resulted in meeting the benchmarks described in paragraph (1).

(3) CONTENTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF REPORT.—The International Trade Commission shall determine in any report required by this section regarding an agreement whether the benchmarks and predictions described in paragraph (1)(B) (i) and (ii) have been met with respect to that agreement.

(c) POINT OF ORDER IN SENATE.—The Senate shall cease consideration of a bill to implement a trade agreement, if—

(1) a point of order is made by any Senator against any bill implementing a trade agreement that is not accompanied by statement regarding the benchmarks to be achieved by the agreement or does not contain the reporting provisions regarding the benchmarks described in subsection (b); and

(2) the point of order is sustained by the Presiding Officer.

(d) WITHDRAWAL OF APPROVAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The approval of Congress, provided in a bill to implement a trade agreement, shall cease to be effective if, and only if, a report described in subsection (b) indicates that the benchmarks and predictions made in connection with the agreement are not being met and a joint resolution described in subsection (e) is enacted into law pursuant to the provisions of subsection (e) and paragraph (2).

(2) PROCEDURAL PROVISIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The requirements of this paragraph are met if the joint resolution is enacted under subsection (e), and—

(i) Congress adopts and transmits the joint resolution to the President before the end of the 1-year period (excluding any day described in section 154(b) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2194(b)), beginning on the date on which Congress receives a report described in subsection (b); and

(ii) if the President vetoes the joint resolution, each House of Congress votes to override that veto on or before the later of the last day of the 1-year period referred to in clause (i) or the last day of the 15-day period (excluding any day described in section 154(b) of the Trade Act of 1974) beginning on the date on which Congress receives the veto message from the President.

(B) INTRODUCTION.—A joint resolution to which this section applies may be introduced at any time on or after the date on which the International Trade Commission transmits to Congress a report described in subsection (b), and before the end of the 1-year period referred to in subparagraph (A)(i).

(e) JOINT RESOLUTIONS.—

(1) JOINT RESOLUTIONS.—For purposes of this section, the term ''joint resolution'' means only a joint resolution of the 2 Houses of Congress, the matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''That Congress withdraws its approval, provided under section ___ of the _____, of the _____ Agreement.'', with the first blank space being filled with the section of the Act implementing and approving the applicable agreement, the second blank space being filled with the name of the Act implementing and approving the agreement, and the third blank space being filled with the title of the agreement.

(2) PROCEDURES.—

(A) INTRODUCTION AND REFERRAL.—

(i) HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—Joint Resolutions in the House of Representatives—

(I) may be introduced by any Member of the House;

(II) shall be referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and, in addition, to the Committee on Rules; and

(III) may not be amended by either Committee.

(ii) SENATE.—Joint Resolutions in the Senate—

(I) may be introduced by any Member of the Senate;

(II) shall be referred to the Committee on Finance; and

(III) may not be amended.

(B) CONSIDERATION BY COMMITTEES.—

(i) HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—It is not in order for the House of Representatives to consider any resolution that is not reported by the Committee on Ways and Means and, in addition, by the Committee on Rules.

(ii) SENATE.—It is not in order for the Senate to consider any resolution that is not reported by the Committee on Finance.

(C) APPLICATION OF OTHER PROVISIONS.—The provisions of section 152 (c), (d), and (e) of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2192 (c), (d), and (e)) (relating to discharge of committees and floor consideration of certain resolutions in the House and Senate) shall apply to joint resolutions under this section to the same extent as such provisions apply to resolutions under such section.

(3) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—This subsection is enacted by Congress—

(A) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the House of Representatives and the Senate, respectively, and as such is deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, and such procedures supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent with such other rules; and

(B) with the full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedures of that House) at any time, in the same manner and to the same extent as any other rule of that House.

By Mr. KERRY:

S. 2612. A bill to provide economic stimulus for small business concerns; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, data from the Federal Reserve Bank and the

Small Business Administration show that the home mortgage crisis is spreading, making it harder and more expensive for small businesses to get loans. Specifically, according to the Federal Reserve's survey, more than 30 percent of domestic banks indicated that they have tightened their credit standards for commercial and industrial loans to small businesses over the past three months. That same survey also found that 80 percent of the domestic banks reported tighter lending standards for commercial real estate loans—the highest percentage recorded since the Fed began posing the question 18 years ago.

While that information is troubling, it is not a surprise. So far this fiscal year, the number of loans made through the SBA's largest lending program, the 7(a) loan guaranty program, dropped 14 percent compared with the same period last year, and dollar volume fell six percent. Lending in SBA's 504 loan program, after growing steadily over the last few years, and being up even three months ago, has gone flat. These figures are alarming because, historically, SBA loan activity has increased when the conventional credit market has tightened and their absence or smaller role in financing is a problem. Why? These two loan programs—the 7(a) Loan Guaranty program and the 504 Loan Guaranty program—are the largest source of long-term capital to small businesses in this country. They play an essential role in the continuum of financing to our small businesses.

As we talked to lenders and SBA to try and understand what was causing this trend, we identified several changes we could make to SBA's lending programs to try and stimulate the economy. What could we do to get lenders to start lending again, and how could we make it more affordable for small businesses? The bill I am introducing today—the Small Business Lending Stimulus Act of 2008—incorporates those findings. We made the changes temporary, targeted, and timely. We have evidence that these changes work, because we did something similar, in a bipartisan way, after the terrorist attacks of 9–11, and it stimulated the economy and mitigated job loss and business closures by pumping almost $3 billion into our local economies.

Unfortunately, there is no magic bullet to right the economy, but we need to use every tool at our disposal to mitigate further problems for our economy. The SBA's programs are one effective tool. I hope that my colleagues can get behind this legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 445—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE ASSASSINATION OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN BENAZIR BHUTTO, AND THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN PAKISTAN

Mr. BIDEN (for himself, Mr. OBAMA, Mr. BAUCUS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. REID, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 445

Whereas, on October 18, 2007, former Prime Minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto returned to Pakistan after more than 8 years in exile, and was welcomed by supporters numbering in the hundreds of thousands;

Whereas hours after her return, a suicide bomb attack on her convoy in Karachi killed 145 people and narrowly missed killing Benazir Bhutto herself, in one of the most violent terrorist attacks in Pakistan's history;

Whereas Members of Congress and other friends of Pakistan wrote to President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf weeks prior to the October 18, 2007, attack on Benazir Bhutto, urging support for the democratic process and the provision of adequate security for democratic leaders such as Benazir Bhutto;

Whereas Members of Congress and other friends of Pakistan wrote to President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf immediately after the October 18, 2007, attack, urging that a specific set of security measures be taken to protect Benazir Bhutto, and that a full investigation into the October 18 attack be undertaken;

Whereas, on November 3, 2007, President Musharraf, in his role as Chief of Army Staff of Pakistan, declared a state of emergency, suspended the Constitution of Pakistan, dismissed Supreme Court Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry and other justices of the Supreme Court and provincial High Courts, replacing them with candidates willing to take an oath to uphold his actions during the suspension of the Constitution, and initiated a nationwide crackdown on political opposition, the media, and the courts of Pakistan that resulted in the arrest of more than 1,000 political opponents;

Whereas, on December 15, 2007, President Musharraf lifted the State of Emergency, but did not reinstate the dismissed Supreme Court and High Court justices, allow full freedom of the press, or release all political prisoners arrested during the crackdown;

Whereas President Musharraf justified his actions in November 2007 on the grounds of more effective counterterrorism efforts, beginning his November 3 proclamation with the statement, ''Whereas there is visible ascendancy in the activities of extremists and incidents of terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings, IED explosions, rocket firing and bomb explosions and the banding together of some militant groups have taken such activities to an unprecedented level of violent intensity posing a grave threat to the life and property of the citizens of Pakistan'';

Whereas, on December 27, 2007, Benazir Bhutto was killed in the garrison town of Rawalpindi;

Whereas video footage, backed up by eyewitness testimony, shows at least 1 gunman firing shots at Benazir Bhutto instants before her death, and a second terrorist detonating a bomb near her vehicle shortly after the firing of the gunshots;

Whereas the precise circumstances surrounding both the October 18, 2007, attack and the December 27, 2007, assassination remain unclear, and those responsible for both terrorist attacks remain at large;

Whereas President Musharraf has accepted the assistance of Scotland Yard in his government's investigation of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, but has rejected calls for an independent investigation under the auspices of the United Nations;

Whereas President Musharraf has used the turmoil following the assassination of Benazir Bhutto to delay elections from their scheduled date of January 8, 2008, to February 18, 2008;

Whereas Benazir Bhutto's political party and the other major opposition parties had opposed this delay, and have expressed concern that it was motivated by an intention to shape the outcome of the election through poll-rigging or other improper means;

Whereas the current political crisis in Pakistan has a grave impact on the national security of the United States, in that it seriously undermines the ability of the Government of Pakistan to devote adequate resources and attention to the fight against al Qaeda, the Taliban, and other extremist forces;

Whereas the political crisis in Pakistan cannot be resolved without a speedy return to the democratic path, including free and fair elections and restoration of an independent judiciary in accordance with the express wishes of the vast majority of the people of Pakistan;

Whereas the United States has provided Pakistan with approximately $10,000,000,000 in assistance over the past 6 years; and

Whereas, on December 26, 2007, President Bush signed H.R. 2764, an omnibus spending bill which limited United States military aid to Pakistan to counterterrorism and law enforcement activities directed against al Qaeda and the Taliban, and which withheld $50,000,000 in military aid until such time as the Secretary of State reports that Pakistan has restored democratic rights and an independent judiciary, and is making concerted efforts to fight al Qaeda and the Taliban: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) conveys the deep condolences of the people of the United States to the people of Pakistan on the tragic loss of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and conveys special condolences to the families of Benazir Bhutto and the other victims of this terrorist attack;

(2) condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the murder of Benazir Bhutto on December 27, 2007, and the slaughter of at least 165 other Pakistani citizens in this attack and the prior attempt on Benazir Bhutto's life in Karachi on October 18, 2007;

(3) calls upon the Government of Pakistan to do everything in its power to bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice, and to permit investigators to follow their inquiries in whatever direction they may lead;

(4) calls upon the Government of Pakistan to support and facilitate an independent inquiry into the assassination of Benazir Bhutto;

(5) strongly urges the Government of Pakistan to ensure that free and fair elections are held on February 18, 2008, as scheduled, and that independent election monitors are allowed to monitor the elections;

(6) calls upon the Election Commission of Pakistan to remove all of the restrictions it