

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 5, 2011, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 5, 2011, at 2:30 p.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a hearing entitled, "Closing the Digital Divide: Connecting Native Nations and Communities to the 21st Century."

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 5, 2011, at 12 p.m. in S-216.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 5, 2011, at 10:15 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 5, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 5, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Airland on the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 5, 2011, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMPETITIVENESS, INNOVATION, AND EXPORT PROMOTION

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Competitiveness, Innovation, and Export Promotion of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet

during the session of the Senate on April 5, 2011, at 10 a.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a hearing entitled, "Tourism in America: Removing Barriers and Promoting Growth."

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following staff of the Finance Committee be allowed on the Senate floor for the duration of the debate on H.R. 4: Andrew Fishburn and Eric Roberts.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 493

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 11 a.m., Wednesday, April 6, the Senate resume consideration of S. 493 and the pending amendments be set aside and Senator REID or a designee be recognized to call up the following amendments:

Baucus No. 236; Stabenow No. 277; Rockefeller No. 215; Coburn No. 217; Coburn No. 223; Coburn No. 273; Inouye No. 286; that the pending Sanders amendment No. 207 be modified with the changes at the desk; that the Senate then proceed to a period of debate only until 4 p.m., with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees prior to votes in relation to the following amendments in the order listed below:

Baucus No. 236; Stabenow No. 277; Rockefeller No. 215; McConnell No. 183; Coburn No. 223; Inouye No. 286; and Coburn No. 273; that there be no amendments in order to the amendments prior to the votes; the amendments not be divisible; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; there be 2 minutes equally divided in between the votes; all after the first vote be 10 minutes in duration; and the amendments be subject to a 60-vote threshold for adoption; that upon the disposition of the Coburn amendment No. 273, amendment Nos. 184 and 217 offered by Senator COBURN be agreed to; that no amendments be in order to the Coburn amendments Nos. 184 and 217 prior to their adoption; and all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I appreciate everyone's patience in regard to getting this consent agreement. None of these votes are easy, but the votes are necessary.

I would also say, in relation to the statement made by my friend from Colorado, that—I am trying to figure out who is the senior Senator between the Presiding Officer—the junior Senator from Colorado, the nice statement he

made: We are doing our very best to work something out on the CR that will fund the government to the end of this fiscal year. As has been reported in the press, I had a meeting with the Speaker tonight at 4 o'clock. We are still negotiating in good faith. We are not that far apart. Hopefully, we can work something out. It is something we should be able to do and certainly we are trying. As we speak, our people are working. So I want everyone to know the government is not going to be shut down yet. There is still air in the tire. We still have some miles to travel, but I hope there is enough air in it to get us where we need to go.

HONORING PERISHED WEST VIRGINIA AND OTHER COAL MINERS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the HELP Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Res. 129, and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 129) honoring the 29 coal miners who perished in the explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine in Montcoal, West Virginia, on April 5, 2010, and remembering all those who have lost their lives while mining for the resources on which the United States relies.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and that any statements relating to the measure be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 129) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 129

Whereas West Virginia coal miners and their predecessors not only have a strong commitment to providing a good living for their families, but also take a deep and patriotic pride in the fact that their work and the energy they produce has made the United States strong and free;

Whereas coal mining has been, and remains, an important part of the economy of the United States;

Whereas coal accounts for nearly ½ of the electricity produced in the United States;

Whereas coal has been commercially mined in what is now the State of West Virginia since 1810;

Whereas since 1810, West Virginia miners and their families have sacrificed greatly to mine the coal that powers the economy of the United States;

Whereas, on April 5, 2010, 29 heroic and patriotic West Virginia miners tragically lost their lives in an explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine in Montcoal, West Virginia;

Whereas a search and rescue effort was launched immediately following the explosion that involved dozens of courageous volunteers, first responders, and mine rescue teams who fearlessly risked their lives to rescue survivors and find lost miners;

Whereas Carl "Pee Wee" Acord, Jason Matthew Atkins, Christopher Lee Bell, Sr., Gregory Steven Brock, Kenneth A. Chapman, Sr., Robert Eugene Clark, Cory Davis, Charles Timothy Davis, Michael Lee Elswick, William Ildon Griffith, Steven J. "Smiley" Harrah, Edward "Dean" Jones, Richard Keith Lane, William Roosevelt Lynch, Joe Marcum, Ronald Lee Maynor, Nicolas D. McCroskey, James "Eddie" Moonney, Adam K. Morgan, Rex Lane Mullins, Joshua Scott Napper, Howard "Boone" Payne, Jr., Dillard Earl "Dewey" Persinger, Joel R. "Jody" Price, Gary Wayne Quarles, Edward Allan Scott, Grover Dale Skeens, Benny Ray Willingham, and Ricky L. Workman perished in the explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine;

Whereas the terrible tragedy broke the hearts of the people of the United States;

Whereas since the beginning of 2010, 77 miners of coal and other resources have lost their lives on the job, and thousands more have been injured or diagnosed with occupational illnesses, such as Black Lung disease;

Whereas the families of the deceased continue to suffer, as do those miners who have become seriously injured or ill; and

Whereas Congress has long recognized the need to protect the safety and health of miners: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the coal miners who lost their lives in the explosion at the Upper Big Branch Mine in Montcoal, West Virginia, on April 5, 2010;

(2) extends its continued heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased, who are still looking for answers to the tragedy;

(3) recognizes the hardships faced by survivors of the tragedy and fellow miners who worked side-by-side with the deceased;

(4) acknowledges the risks faced by all miners, as well as the important and often overlooked contributions that miners make to the United States;

(5) expresses its appreciation for the volunteers, first responders, and mine rescue teams who fearlessly risk their lives to save miners after tragedies; and

(6) reaffirms its commitment to keep miners safe and healthy on the job.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

GOLD STAR WIVES DAY

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 130, which was submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 130) designating April 5, 2011, as "Gold Star Wives Day."

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

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 130) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 130

Whereas the Senate honors the sacrifices made by the spouses and families of the fallen members of the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. represents the spouses and families of the members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States who have died on active duty or as a result of a service-connected disability;

Whereas the primary mission of the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. is to provide services, support, and friendship to the spouses of the fallen members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas, in 1945, the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. was organized with the help of Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt to assist the families left behind by the fallen members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas the first meeting of the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. was held on April 5, 1945;

Whereas April 5, 2011, marks the 66th anniversary of the first meeting of the Gold Star Wives of America;

Whereas the members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States bear the burden of protecting freedom for the United States; and

Whereas the sacrifices of the families of the fallen members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States should never be forgotten: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates April 5, 2011, as "Gold Star Wives Day";

(2) honors and recognizes—

(A) the contributions of the members of the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.; and

(B) the dedication of the members of the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. to the members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to observe "Gold Star Wives Day" to promote awareness of—

(A) the contributions and dedication of the members of the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. to the members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(B) the important role the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. plays in the lives of the spouses and families of the fallen members and veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States.

TSUNAMI AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 131, submitted earlier today.

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

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 131) designating April 2011 as "Tsunami Awareness Month."

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

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I rise in support of my resolution designating April 2011 as Tsunami Awareness Month.

The recent events in Japan serve as a reminder of the importance of tsunami preparedness and mitigation. As we recently saw, tsunamis can strike at any time, continue for hours, wash away homes, buildings, and roads, and claim thousands of lives. Deadly tsunamis have struck Hawaii, Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands within the last 150 years. All coastline communities in the United States are at risk of being impacted by tsunamis.

Sixty-five years ago, my home State of Hawaii experienced the most devastating and destructive tsunami in its history, which claimed the lives of 159 individuals. Hawaii's geographic location in the middle of the Pacific Ocean makes us extremely vulnerable to tsunamis because 80 percent of all tsunamis occur in the Pacific.

To encourage citizens to educate themselves on tsunami preparedness, President Obama has designated March 20–26, 2011, as Tsunami Awareness Week. For the month of April, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Weather Service in Hawaii will conduct activities to raise public awareness of the dangers of tsunamis and commemorate the lives lost to the April 1, 1946 tsunami. Additionally, Hawaii State and local officials have partnered with NOAA to develop a Tsunami Safety Booklet to educate school-aged children about the dangers of tsunamis, and they plan to distribute the booklets and other preparedness materials at sponsored events.

I encourage all citizens to observe Tsunami Awareness Month and prepare for tsunamis by finding out if their homes, schools, and workplaces are in areas likely to flood should a tsunami occur; identifying evacuation routes; and preparing portable disaster supply kits. Additional information about tsunami preparedness can be found at TsunamiReady (www.tsunamiready.noaa.gov).

As Congress continues debates about cuts to the Federal budget, I remind my colleagues of the importance of federal funding for tsunami programs.

Funding for NOAA tsunami program supports warning, mitigation, and research activities that are critical to our Nation's safety and security. The NOAA operates two tsunami warning centers, the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center at Ewa Beach, Hawaii, and the West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center at Palmer, Alaska. Through Deep-Ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunamis stations, these Centers monitor an extensive network of deep