

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 349) commemorating and honoring the service and sacrifice of the United States Armed Forces and their families as the official combat mission in Iraq draws to a close.

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

Mr. BAUCUS. I wish to add my name as a cosponsor to the resolution.

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

Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Rhode Island for bringing forward this resolution. As the proud wife of an Iraq war veteran, this is an appropriate time. We thank our troops for what they have done in Iraq, for their courage, their sacrifice, and for allowing Iraq an opportunity to forge a democracy moving forward. We also remember and honor the thousands who have lost their lives for us and for our freedom and we thank all of them at this time of year. I rise in support of this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 349) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 349

Whereas nearly 1,500,000 members of the United States Armed Forces served in Iraq, many serving on multiple deployments;

Whereas the members of the United States Armed Forces who served in support of operations in Iraq performed brilliantly in a highly complex and challenging environment, and did everything that was asked of them and more to meet the requirements of the mission;

Whereas thousands of members of the National Guard and Reserves left their civilian jobs and livelihoods to support operations in Iraq, making enormous contributions, and serving with distinction;

Whereas nearly 4,500 members of the United States Armed Forces made the ultimate sacrifice in giving their lives in support of operations in Iraq;

Whereas more than 30,000 members of the United States Armed Forces were wounded serving in support of operations in Iraq;

Whereas families of the members of the United States Armed Forces serving in Iraq endured repeated deployments and spent many holidays, birthdays, and anniversaries apart;

Whereas, after nearly nine years of combat, we welcome home our veterans and continue to support members of the United States Armed Forces deployed in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world;

Whereas Iraq's destiny and future development now lie with its people; and

Whereas the people of the United States recognize the service and sacrifices made by those members of the United States Armed Forces and veterans, as well as their families: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) pays tribute to the members of the United States Armed Forces who served in support of operations in Iraq;

(2) calls on the people of the United States to reflect on the service of those members of the United States Armed Forces, veterans, and their families, and honor their sacrifices; and

(3) commemorates and honors the contributions made by members of the United States Armed Forces and their families, as the official combat mission in Iraq draws to a close.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2012—CONFERENCE REPORT—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is now two minutes of debate prior to a vote on the conference report to accompany H.R. 2055.

Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, this Omnibus appropriations bill represents a victory for compromise, a victory for American taxpayers, and a victory for bipartisanship. It is fiscally responsible and it provides the necessary guidance to our agencies so they will be able to fulfill their vital missions on behalf of the American people. It meets every requirement of the Budget Control Act and contains not a single earmark; 149 Democrats and 147 Republicans voted in favor of this bill yesterday. Clearly it is a strong bipartisan bill and I urge a "yes" vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who yields time?

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this will be the last rollcall vote of this year.

Have a happy holiday, everyone.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the adoption of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2055.

Mr. BARRASSO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. KYL. The following Senator is necessarily absent: The Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 67, nays 32, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 235 Leg.]

YEAS—67

Akaka	Conrad	Landrieu
Alexander	Coons	Lautenberg
Baucus	Durbin	Leahy
Begich	Feinstein	Levin
Bennet	Franken	Lieberman
Bingaman	Gillibrand	Manchin
Blumenthal	Graham	Menendez
Blunt	Hagan	Merkley
Boozman	Harkin	Mikulski
Boxer	Heller	Murkowski
Brown (MA)	Hoeven	Murray
Brown (OH)	Hutchison	Nelson (NE)
Cantwell	Inouye	Nelson (FL)
Cardin	Isakson	Pryor
Carper	Johanns	Reed
Casey	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Chambliss	Kerry	Roberts
Cochran	Klobuchar	Rockefeller
Collins	Kohl	Schumer

Shaheen	Udall (NM)	Wicker
Stabenow	Warner	Wyden
Tester	Webb	
Udall (CO)	Whitehouse	

NAYS—32

Ayotte	Hatch	Portman
Barrasso	Inhofe	Risch
Burr	Johnson (WI)	Rubio
Coats	Kirk	Sanders
Coburn	Kyl	Sessions
Corker	Lee	Shelby
Cornyn	Lugar	Snowe
Crapo	McCain	Thune
DeMint	McCaskill	Toomey
Enzi	McConnell	Vitter
Grassley	Moran	

MOT VOTING—1

Paul

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 67, the nays are 32. Under the previous order requiring 60 votes for the adoption of the conference report to accompany H.R. 2055, the conference report is agreed to.

The majority leader.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, today I cast my vote against H.R. 2055, the nine-bill appropriations measure. I opposed this package because the process put forward by the majority was woefully inadequate given the seriousness of the issues involved. Valuable legislative time was wasted this year on political messaging votes; time that could have been more properly devoted to the nuts and bolts of legislating. The full Senate, for example, was denied the opportunity to consider the Defense Appropriations bill at a time when our men and women in uniform are facing looming uncertainty over out-year funding.

Despite my overall opposition to this measure, I would note that there are several provisions that I am in favor of in this package. As always, I support funding for the brave members of our military and for our veterans. Indeed, I voted for the Senate version of the Military Construction/VA appropriations bill earlier this year and just a few days ago voted for the final version of the Defense Authorization bill. Among the other provisions I support are policy riders such as those that encourage a culture of life and that rein in government overreach.

In closing, it is unfortunate that the majority continues to operate as it has. I am hopeful that the majority's efforts in this regard do not presage further legislative shortcuts on matters of national importance in the second session of this Congress.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business until 2 p.m. today, with Senators during that period of time being permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oregon.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—
S. 1874

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I rise to ask unanimous consent of all of my colleagues. Before I explain the unanimous consent request, I will give a little bit of background to S. 1874, which Senator SNOWE and I have worked on for some time because of our mutual interest in making the HUBZone process for rural economic development work better.

When this process occurs with each census, there is a 2-year nightmare of redtape before communities that should benefit from this economic development opportunity have the ability to do so. Across the country right now, we have rural communities that absolutely need to benefit from this most recent census. They have high unemployment rates. They are hit hard by the drop in exports. They are hit hard by the collapse of the housing communities. Sawmills have shut down. Paper mills have shut down.

So many folks come to this floor to talk about cutting redtape and talk about helping the economy in the heart of rural America. They come to this floor and they talk about how important economic development and jobs are. And this is a little fix that takes 1 year out of the bureaucracy. That is why Senator SNOWE and I have worked together on this process.

Now, twice we have brought this forward, and twice it has been cleared by every Member of this body. Neither time did it make it into a bill that got to the President's desk. So we are coming back once more to say: Let common sense prevail to fix the entanglement in the bureaucracy that is taking away opportunities for rural America. Let's put an end to that today.

I will defer to my colleague to speak, and then we will ask for unanimous consent.

I yield to the Senator from Maine.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I wish to thank the Senator from Oregon regarding this critical issue we have been working on for a considerable period of time and that thought we had really cleared on both sides. This language is mightily important to improving the rural economies of this country, particularly because it would expedite the HUBZone designation to allow businesses in those HUBZones to provide jobs by virtue of the fact that they would get preferential treatment in the contracting process.

As we know, the Federal Government buys more than \$400 billion worth of contracts each year. We want to make sure small businesses and particularly those located in hard-hit areas of our country have access to those contracting dollars and are able to participate on an equal footing.

This would create jobs. So I regret the fact that we are not able to get support to move this legislation forward because I know the Senator from

Oregon has tested it on both sides. We have run it through the hotline. There are no objections to the language. I cannot understand why we cannot move this very important legislation that absolutely would be central to creating jobs in the areas that need them the most throughout the country, especially when we have such a high unemployment rate.

This is not a difficult issue to understand. It is very straightforward. The legislation expedites the timeframe in which these designations occur for HUBZones, particularly because HUBZones are areas that are suffering most with respect to the downturn of this economy.

When we have a paltry economic growth of 1.3 percent, of .4 percent, or 2 percent, when we have an unemployment rate that is 8.6 percent but we have had 9 percent or higher for a good 28 months, and over 8 percent for the last 34 months, we need to do something about it. This could help small businesses, and it could help people in these areas who are currently unemployed. So I would hope there would be no objections with respect to this initiative.

I thank the Senator from Oregon for his leadership on this matter.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague.

The third sponsor on this bill is Senator LANDRIEU, the chair of the Small Business Committee. I yield to her.

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, I ask the indulgence of my colleague. If my colleague could make the unanimous consent request to which I can respond, then I can leave.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Banking Committee be discharged from further consideration of S. 1874, the HUBZone Qualified Census Tract Act of 2011; that the Senate proceed to its consideration; that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate, and any statements related to the bill be printed in the RECORD as if read.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. KYL. Mr. President, there is objection on our side. I will object. But I do want to make a point that as a result of Senator SNOWE and Senator MERKLEY's intercession here, our staff has talked to Senator SHELBY, who says he will try to work to get it cleared and to hotline it again on our side today. So at this time, I cannot clear it, but there will be an effort to accomplish that result.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Arizona. We appreciate his help. We appreciate the ranking member of the Banking Committee assisting in this matter.

I yield to my colleague.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would like to add my voice to the strong work that has been done by Senator MERKLEY and Senator SNOWE. As the chair of the committee that has some jurisdiction over the HUBZone Program, I want to urge the Banking Committee and the staff and offer the staff of the Small Business Committee from the majority side to work very hard today to see if we can get this cleared. It is very important to the ranking member of our committee, who has worked so hard, and to the Senator from Oregon, who has made very strong arguments about expediting and streamlining some of these approvals, so I wish them the best.

We are going to work today to see if we can get it cleared. It would be the second really substantial victory in the Small Business space, having gotten our SBIR bill through just recently after 6 years of very acrimonious debate. If we can get this fix to the HUBZone Program, it would be terrific.

I thank the Senators for their hard work.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I thank all of my colleagues.

I yield the floor, and 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. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO TIM MASSANELLI

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, as we close out the year, I want to take today to honor the work and career of Tim Massanelli.

Last month, Tim stepped down from his position as parliamentarian of the Arkansas House of Representatives, a place where he has worked since 1973—39 good years of valuable public service.

When Tim first came to work for the Arkansas House of Representatives, things were much different than they are today. My longtime friend Dale Bumpers was our Governor and Richard Nixon was President. I was in the fourth grade.

Upholding the mantra of citizen legislators, the Arkansas House had no permanent employees and only a small support system in the Bureau of Legislative Research. With our Nation and state modernizing, full-time employees were needed in the house, and Tim was in the right place at the right time. He was also exactly the right man for the job.

Growing up in Pine Bluff, AR, Tim's family raised him to be civically engaged and active in his community—