

(A) strategies to improve the accuracy of food allergy prevalence data by expanding and intensifying current collection methods, including support for research that includes the identification of biomarkers and tests to validate survey data and the investigation of the use of identified biomarkers and tests in national surveys;

(B) strategies to overcome gaps in surveillance and data collection activities related to food allergies and specific food allergens; and

(C) recommendations for the development and implementation of a regulatory process and framework that would allow for the timely, transparent, and evidence-based modification of the definition of "major food allergen" included in section 201(qq) of the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 321(qq)), including with respect to—

(i) the scientific criteria for defining a food or food ingredient as a "major food allergen" pursuant to such process, including recommendations pertaining to evidence of the prevalence and severity of allergic reactions to a food or food ingredient that would be required in order to establish that such food or food ingredient is an allergen of public health concern appropriate for such process; and

(ii) opportunities for stakeholder engagement and comment, as appropriate, in considering any such modification to such definition.

(b) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall make the report under subsection (a) available on the internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services.

MAKING A TECHNICAL CORRECTION TO THE ALS DISABILITY INSURANCE ACCESS ACT OF 2019

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 579, which was introduced earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 579) to make a technical correction to the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I further ask that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 579) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows

S. 579

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

SECTION 1. RETROACTIVE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY BENEFITS INDIVIDUALS WITH AMYOTROPHIC LATERAL SCLEROSIS (ALS).

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2(b) of the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-250) is amended by striking "applications for disability insurance benefits filed after the date of enactment of this Act" and inserting "applications for disability insurance benefits approved after the date that is 5 months before the date of enactment of this Act".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the ALS Disability Insurance Access Act of 2019 (Public Law 116-250).

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 90, S. Res. 91, S. Res. 92, and S. Res. 93.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

NATIONAL TRIBAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WEEK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 94, submitted earlier today.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 94) designating the week beginning February 28, 2021, as "National Tribal Colleges and Universities Week".

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

Mr. DURBIN. I know of no further debate on the resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the resolution.

The resolution (S. Res. 94) was agreed to.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

REMEMBERING BILL NIGHBERT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, earlier this year, my home State of Kentucky said goodbye to Bill Nighbert, a longtime public servant and a kindhearted friend. Both as a local mayor and a statewide official, Bill was instrumental to the achievements of communities across our Com-

monwealth. Today, I would like to recognize his lifetime of contributions to Kentucky.

As the Gateway to the Cumberland, the city of Williamsburg holds a special significance not just in Southeastern Kentucky but for the entire Commonwealth. Bill worked several jobs for the city he loved before being elected mayor in 1993. For the next decade, the people of Williamsburg put their trust in him. In return, Bill worked around the clock to deliver for his community. Even in the city's top job, Bill could still be found helping plow snow, deliver goods, or any other job that needed doing. A beloved local splash park is just one tangible example of Bill's leadership and vision for his city.

As a successful mayor, Bill's reputation grew across the Commonwealth. He was elected president of the Kentucky League of Cities in 2002, using his talents to improve communities throughout the Bluegrass. Bill left city hall when Governor Ernie Fletcher tapped him to be deputy commissioner of the Department of Local Government and later the secretary of the Transportation Cabinet. Even as Bill served the entire Commonwealth in Frankfort, he still took care of Whitley County. For instance, he was a driving force in the construction of a new interchange over I-75 near Williamsburg.

Apart from his professional work, Bill was legendary for his ability to make a friend in any situation. I guess you don't become the president of the Optimists Club without a sunny disposition. He was a role model and a little league coach, lending whatever free time he could find to a variety of local organizations.

Of course, Bill's greatest achievement was the love he shared with his wife of 34 years, Susan, as well as his children and their spouses, Brad and Monica, Renee and Chris, and Benton. Anyone who was lucky enough to know Bill could see the immense pride he had in his children and grandchildren. He said they were the reasons he dedicated so much of his life to public service. On behalf of the Senate, I send sincere condolences to Bill's friends and loved ones. We are grateful they shared him with us for so many years. Kentucky was made better as a result.

NOTICE OF A TIE VOTE UNDER S. RES. 27

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to print the following letter in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

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

To the Secretary of the Senate:

PN78-2, the nomination of Xavier Becerra, of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services having been referred to the Committee on Finance, the Committee, with a quorum present, has voted on the nomination as follows—

(1) on the question of reporting the nomination favorably with the recommendation that the nomination be confirmed, 14 ayes to 14 noes; and

In accordance with section 3, paragraph (1)(A) of S. Res. 27 of the 117th Congress, I hereby give notice that the Committee has not reported the nomination because of a tie vote, and ask that this notice be printed in the RECORD pursuant to the resolution."

RON WYDEN.

RECOGNIZING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PRINT DISABLED

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I rise today to recognize the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled on its 90th anniversary. The National Library Service, or NLS, is an important part of the Library of Congress, an institution that has long been committed to serving readers with disabilities. The concept of a national library for the blind was introduced in 1897 by the seventh Librarian of Congress, John Russell Young, who established a reading room for the blind that included more than 500 books and music items in raised characters.

In 1913, Congress began to require that one copy of each book be made in raised characters and deposited in the Library of Congress for educational use; however, as impressive as this collection was, it was only available to people who were able to visit in person.

In 1930, legislation was introduced in both the House and the Senate to fund a Library of Congress program to provide service to blind readers on a national scale. This led to passage of the Pratt-Smoot Act which, on March 3, 1931, established what we now know as the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. The act has been amended several times, not only increasing funding for the program, but also expanding service to children and people with physical and reading disabilities and adding what is now the world's largest accessible music materials collection.

Missouri has wonderful local libraries that play a key role in connecting the NLS program to my constituents across the State. NLS and the Wolfner Talking Book and Braille Library serve nearly 6,500 individuals and more than 600 intuitions in Missouri, providing daily access to all the incredible resources NLS has to offer.

NLS is continuing its innovative and adaptive approach to serving Americans with disabilities. NLS has a vibrant history that spans phonograph records, cassette tapes, flash memory cartridges, and the internet, all while continuing to supply hardcopy and digital braille materials. With its modernization efforts underway, NLS no doubt has a very exciting future ahead.

Today, it is my pleasure to congratulate NLS on its 90th anniversary. I wish the wonderful staff at NLS continued success as they work to ensure the NLS mission "that all may read."

TRIBUTE TO CHRISTOPHER PICKENS

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, today I wish to recognize Mr. Christopher Pickens, a Knauss Sea Grant fellow on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. Pickens has had a significant impact during his time as a fellow. His expertise on fisheries management and ocean sciences has meaningfully contributed to the committee's efforts. He has worked on several pieces of legislation that have passed the Senate or have become law, such as the FLOODS Act and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Amendments Act. His contributions will help improve ocean and flood monitoring to keep Americans safe, promote deep sea ocean exploration, and inform the stewardship of our Nation's marine resources.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Mr. Pickens for all of the fine work he has done and wish him luck in the years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

VERMONT STATE OF THE UNION ESSAY CONTEST FINALISTS

• Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I ask to have printed in the RECORD some of the finalists' essays written by Vermont High School students as part of the 11th annual "State of the Union" essay contest conducted by my office.

The material follows:

FINALISTS

EMILY BORRAZZO, SOUTH BURLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL, SOPHOMORE

Supporting Our Veterans

Every day, men and women in the military risk their lives for the protection of their fellow citizens. The ideology of our nation depends on their service. Yet every day, veterans across the country face issues regarding claim approvals, mental health, and post-service employment.

The lengthy claim approval process and 36% claim granting rate is something that many veterans encounter. The issue is not the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' generous budget, but how the money is spent, and the efficiency/availability of the benefits being offered. The VA should hire more people to process claims in order to shorten the processing time, which is currently four months or longer on average. Hiring veterans in these positions would also address unemployment issues. Additionally, more guidance should be given on how to file a claim. This includes identifying the quickest claim type and specifying what medical information should be given. Lastly, the VA only approves claims for illnesses and injuries which they deem to be a direct cause of service. Extending this to all serious illnesses and injuries throughout life, or at least partial financial and medical support, would be extremely beneficial to veterans and could even improve their mental health.

Studies have shown that veterans have a higher risk for alcohol/drug abuse, and suicide. One in five veterans suffer from mental

health problems like PTSD, depression, and severe anxiety. Veterans account for 13.8% of the suicides in America, and for over a decade 17-18 veterans have died daily from suicide. We cannot take away their experiences, but offering more support in their recovery is the least we can do. Many veterans with mental health problems are not aware of their condition, or are too embarrassed to ask for help. Educating veterans (especially while serving) about signs and effects of mental health problems, and the care and treatment available to them, could save lives. Additionally, implementing a mental health scan for veterans every few years could be very effective in identifying these issues early on, and opening thousands of veterans' eyes to the care available to them. Enforcing quality-of-care standards for treatment in all mental health care facilities would also benefit the nation.

American veterans receive very effective military training and preparation, but are rarely prepared for post-service employment. Studies suggest the unemployment rate for veterans is considerably higher than their civilian counterparts. This can be attributed to the rarity of higher education and the numerous mental health issues among veterans. Increasing accessibility and lowering costs for college education would broaden the post-service career opportunities for countless veterans. Lower tuition rates for veterans could be paid for by the VA, with the extra money resulting from having to offer less veterans unemployment benefits.

Our nation cannot forget the selfless sacrifices our soldiers and military families make. Brave women and men have been taking care of this nation for almost 250 years. It's time we start taking care of them.

LING BUSHEY, BELLOWS FREE ACADEMY, FAIRFAX, SENIOR

The sexual health education and curriculum in America is not adequate to our current society, and should be focused on immensely to ensure better health in our youth population. Kids are not educated on the topics revolving around sexual health, and this leads to struggling mental health effects and potentially life changing decisions that teens should be informed on.

Ignorance on sexual orientation, contraceptives, and diseases leads to a dangerous society, where teens are unaware of consequences and ignorant to possible solutions of preventions. According to the USC Department of Nursing, nearly 750,000 teenagers in the United States will become pregnant this year; and half of the 20 million new cases of sexually transmitted diseases will be diagnosed in young people ages 15 to 24. Being informed about the physical, mental, and emotional changes in a teenagers' life and environment will benefit not only the person learning, but relationships surrounding them for years to come. By starting to educate kids in middle school will normalize these discussions to be had later on, and create a more open and unjudged environment. According to the United Nations, understanding one's own body is a human right, and the US needs to address a human's right to learn about their body and have legislature and youth service providers fund and educate a coherent and inclusive sexual education across the nation.

A guaranteed cohesive program or set curriculum addressing sexual health, will also allow for schools to help inform kids in the LGBTQ community, what the subject is and how to respect and support members that are a part. The importance of educating a positive outlook sexual orientation, and safe hetero and homosexual activities is crucial. Only 24 states mandate sex education, which is unacceptable. America needs to educate