

BACKGROUND

Fueled by climate change, the annual Western wildfire season has grown longer and more intense. Where the threat used to peak between August and November, we are now seeing massive wildfire events earlier in the Summer and continuing through the end of the year.

Last year alone, California experienced more than 9,600 fires which burned more than 4.1 million acres, consumed more than 10,000 structures, and claimed 33 lives.

It is imperative that we commit enough manpower and resources to combat the threat that such devastating wildfire seasons pose to life and property.

Unfortunately, some of our most experienced Federal firefighters work so many overtime hours each year that they reach an overtime pay cap and become ineligible for additional overtime compensation. Others are forced to pay back money they have rightfully earned fighting wildfires.

NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Federal firefighters from the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior are paid on the General Schedule (GS) pay scale based on their seniority and performance. They make a base salary and are paid overtime when they exceed eight hours a day.

However, there is an annual premium pay cap that limits how many overtime hours for which these firefighters can be compensated.

This arbitrary pay cap places an unfair expectation on federal fire personnel to work long hours for less or even no pay, and serves as a dangerous disincentive to respond to more fire incidents, especially later in the fire season. California's worst wildfires often occur late in the fire season, further illustrating the problem we face.

The Forest Service estimates that up to 500 senior-level firefighters either stop participating or do not request pay for hours worked once they reach the pay cap. This has a significant negative impact on federal wildfire response capabilities.

WHAT THE LEGISLATION WOULD DO

Our bill would create a statutory waiver for Federal firefighters responding to wildfire emergencies to ensure they receive fair compensation for all overtime hours they work.

This waiver would apply to Forest Service and Department of the Interior personnel engaged in emergency wildland fire suppression activities.

CONCLUSION

For wildland firefighters, working long hours in dangerous conditions is often considered a necessary part of the job. It is crucial that this demanding work be recognized, and that these heroes be appropriately compensated for the critical service that they perform.

I hope my colleagues will join me in support of this bill. Thank you, Mr. President, and I yield the floor.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 19—RECOGNIZING JANUARY 2021 AS “NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH”

Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. SMITH, Mr. REED, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mr. BROWN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. PETERS, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BRAUN, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. LANKFORD, and Mrs. CAPITO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 19

Whereas the goals of National Mentoring Month are to raise awareness of mentoring, recruit individuals to mentor, celebrate the powerful impact of caring adults who volunteer time for the benefit of young people, and encourage organizations to engage and integrate quality in mentoring into the efforts of the organizations;

Whereas there are young people across the United States who make everyday choices that lead to the big decisions in life without the guidance and support on which many other young people rely;

Whereas a mentor is a caring, consistent presence who devotes time to a young person to help that young person discover personal strength and achieve the potential of that young person;

Whereas quality mentoring encourages positive life and social skills, promotes self-esteem, bolsters academic achievement and college access, supports career exploration, and nurtures youth leadership development;

Whereas mentoring happens in various settings, including community-based programs, elementary and secondary schools, colleges, government agencies, religious institutions, and the workplace, and in various ways, including formal mentoring matches and informal relationships with teachers, coaches, neighbors, faith leaders, and others;

Whereas mentoring programs have been shown to be effective in helping young people make positive choices;

Whereas studies have shown that incorporating culture and heritage into mentoring programs can improve academic outcomes and increase community engagement, especially for Alaskan Native and American Indian youth;

Whereas young people who meet regularly with mentors are 46 percent less likely than peers to start using illegal drugs;

Whereas research shows that young people who were at risk for not completing high school but who had a mentor were, as compared with similarly situated young people without a mentor—

(1) 55 percent more likely to be enrolled in college;

(2) 81 percent more likely to report participating regularly in sports or extracurricular activities;

(3) more than twice as likely to say they held a leadership position in a club or sports team; and

(4) 78 percent more likely to pay it forward by volunteering regularly in the communities of young people;

Whereas students who are chronically absent are more likely to fall behind academically, and mentoring can play a role in helping young people attend school regularly, as research shows that students who meet regularly with a mentor are, as compared with the peers of those students—

(1) 52 percent less likely to skip a full day of school; and

(2) 37 percent less likely to skip a class;

Whereas youth development experts agree that mentoring encourages positive youth development and smart daily behaviors, such as finishing homework and having healthy social interactions, and has a positive impact on the growth and success of a young person;

Whereas mentors help young people set career goals and use the personal contacts of the mentors to help young people meet industry professionals and train for and find jobs;

Whereas each of the benefits of mentors described in this preamble serves to link youth to economic and social opportunity while also strengthening communities in the United States; and

Whereas, despite those described benefits, an estimated 9,000,000 young people in the United States feel isolated from meaningful connections with adults outside the home, constituting a “mentoring gap” that demonstrates a need for collaboration and resources: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes January 2021 as “National Mentoring Month”;

(2) recognizes the caring adults who serve as staff and volunteers at quality mentoring programs and help the young people of the United States find inner strength and reach their full potential;

(3) acknowledges that mentoring is beneficial because mentoring supports educational achievement and self-confidence, supports young people in setting career goals and expanding social capital, reduces juvenile delinquency, improves positive personal, professional, and academic outcomes, and strengthens communities;

(4) promotes the establishment and expansion of quality mentoring programs across the United States to equip young people with the tools needed to lead healthy and productive lives; and

(5) supports initiatives to close the “mentoring gap” that exists for the many young people in the United States who do not have meaningful connections with adults outside the home.

SENATE RESOLUTION 20—PROVIDING FOR SUFFICIENT TIME FOR LEGISLATION TO BE READ

Mr. PAUL submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration:

S. RES. 20

Resolved,

SECTION 1. TIME FOR READING OF LEGISLATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—It shall not be in order for the Senate to consider any bill, resolution, message, conference report, amendment between the Houses, amendment, treaty, or other measure or matter until 1 session day has passed since introduction for every 20 pages included in the measure or matter in the usual form plus 1 session day for any number of remaining pages less than 20 in the usual form.

(b) POINT OF ORDER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any Senator may raise a point of order that consideration of any bill, resolution, message, conference report, amendment, treaty, or other measure or matter is not in order under subsection (a). A motion to table the point of order shall not be in order.

(2) WAIVER.—Paragraph (1) may be waived or suspended only by an affirmative vote of three-fifths of the Members, duly chosen and sworn. All motions to waive under this paragraph shall be debatable collectively for not

to exceed 3 hours equally divided between the Senator raising the point of order and the Senator moving to waive the point of order or their designees. A motion to waive the point of order shall not be amendable.

(c) CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY.—This resolution is adopted pursuant to the power granted to each House of Congress to determine the Rules of its Proceedings in article I, section 5, clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 21—RAISING AWARENESS AND ENCOURAGING THE PREVENTION OF STALKING BY DESIGNATING JANUARY 2021 AS “NATIONAL STALKING AWARENESS MONTH”

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. ERNST, Ms. HIRONO, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. CRAPO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 21

Whereas approximately 1 in 6 women in the United States, at some point during their lifetimes, have experienced stalking victimization, during which the women felt very fearful or believed that they or someone close to them would be harmed or killed;

Whereas it is estimated that each year between 6,000,000 and 7,500,000 individuals in the United States report that they have been victims of stalking;

Whereas more than 85 percent of victims of stalking reported that they had been stalked by someone they knew;

Whereas nearly 70 percent of intimate partner stalking victims were threatened with physical harm by stalkers;

Whereas 11 percent of victims of stalking reported having been stalked for more than 5 years;

Whereas two-thirds of stalkers pursue their victims at least once a week;

Whereas many victims of stalking are forced to take drastic measures to protect themselves, including relocating, changing jobs, or obtaining protection orders;

Whereas the prevalence of anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, and severe depression is much higher among victims of stalking than the general population;

Whereas many victims of stalking do not report stalking to the police or contact a victim service provider, shelter, or hotline;

Whereas stalking is a crime under Federal law and the laws of all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the territories of the United States;

Whereas stalking affects victims of every race, age, culture, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, and economic status;

Whereas national organizations, local victim service organizations, campuses, prosecutor's offices, and police departments stand ready to assist victims of stalking and are working diligently to develop effective and innovative responses to stalking, including online stalking;

Whereas there is a need to improve the response of the criminal justice system to stalking through more aggressive investigation and prosecution;

Whereas there is a need for an increase in the availability of victim services across the United States, and the services must include programs tailored to meet the needs of victims of stalking;

Whereas individuals 18 to 24 years old experience the highest rates of stalking victim-

ization, and a majority of stalking victims report their victimization first occurred before the age of 25;

Whereas up to 75 percent of women in college who experience behavior relating to stalking experience other forms of victimization, including sexual or physical victimization;

Whereas there is a need for an effective response to stalking on each campus;

Whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened the risk of online stalking and harassment, particularly among school-aged individuals;

Whereas victim service organizations and law enforcement entities have swiftly adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic in order to continue to serve victims of stalking; and

Whereas the Senate finds that “National Stalking Awareness Month” provides an opportunity to educate the people of the United States about stalking: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates January 2021 as “National Stalking Awareness Month”;

(2) applauds the efforts of service providers for victims of stalking, police, prosecutors, national and community organizations, campuses, and private sector supporters to promote awareness of stalking;

(3) encourages policymakers, criminal justice officials, victim service and human service agencies, institutions of higher education, and nonprofit organizations to increase awareness of stalking and continue to support the availability of services for victims of stalking; and

(4) urges national and community organizations, businesses in the private sector, and the media to promote awareness of the crime of stalking through “National Stalking Awareness Month”.

SENATE RESOLUTION 22—RE-AFFIRMING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF ECUADOR AND RECOGNIZING THE RESTORATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF ECONOMIC RELATIONS, SECURITY, AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN BOTH NATIONS

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RISC, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. CRUZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 22

Whereas the United States and Ecuador have enjoyed a history of bilateral partnership and cooperation, and share the aims of promoting democratic values, economic prosperity, and the security of both nations;

Whereas the United States and Ecuador have taken important steps to restore the bilateral relationship between the United States and Ecuador, including by signing various agreements to strengthen economic ties, security cooperation, and development opportunities;

Whereas President Moreno has signaled Ecuador's commitment to promoting democratic values and has advocated for greater government transparency;

Whereas in February 2018, more than 64 percent of Ecuadorians voted, in a constitutional referendum, to reinstate a 2-term presidential limit, an effort that was carried out by President Moreno's administration and which is indicative of the Ecuadorian people's support for presidential term limits

as a reasonable check against a history of corruption and abuse of power;

Whereas the United States-Ecuador bilateral relationship has been historically characterized by strong commercial and investment ties through the Generalized System of Preferences, the United States-Ecuador Trade and Investment Council, and the Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Ecuador Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, done at Washington August 27, 1993, which was terminated by Ecuador's previous government, effective May 18, 2018;

Whereas President Moreno's administration has committed to implement economic policies that will lay the groundwork for sustainable economic growth, while protecting the poorest and most vulnerable people;

Whereas, under President Moreno's leadership, there have been significant advances in areas related to freedom of expression, including through the reform of the controversial Ecuadorian Communications Law;

Whereas the Government of Ecuador has called for the peaceful restoration of democracy and the rule of law in Venezuela and Ecuador has been a generous host of approximately 385,000 Venezuelan refugees;

Whereas on May 15, 2019, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Ecuador's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to the return of the USAID Mission to Ecuador after the 53-year program was forced to close in 2014 due to tensions in the bilateral relationship;

Whereas Ecuador has been one of the countries most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Latin America, which has overwhelmed the country's health care system and aggravated the country's already challenging economic situation;

Whereas in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, USAID is providing Ecuador with technical support and training in diagnostics, and technical assistance in clinical management, risk communication, and community engagement; and

Whereas the United States and Ecuador have agreed to advance security cooperation on law enforcement, counternarcotics, anticorruption, and bilateral military training and assistance: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms its commitment—

(A) to the historic partnership between the United States and Ecuador; and

(B) to continue working to strengthen the relationship between the United States and Ecuador based on mutual respect and shared democratic values and principles;

(2) recognizes President Lenin Moreno and his administration for recommitting Ecuador to democratic values, anti-corruption efforts, and the adoption of economic policies that will benefit the people of Ecuador;

(3) commends the important steps that President Moreno and his administration have taken to protect freedom of expression and freedom of the press in his country;

(4) encourages the Republic of Ecuador to ensure that the rights of refugees and asylum seekers are protected; and

(5) supports actions to strengthen the historic bilateral relationship between the United States and Ecuador, including—

(A) by strengthening economic relationships with Ecuador to build mutual prosperity through greater transparency, adherence to the rule of law, and support for human rights;

(B) stronger law enforcement and security cooperation between the 2 countries, including in cybersecurity, border management, addressing illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, counternarcotics, anti-money