

Armed Forces do, from humanitarian efforts to combat operations;

Whereas, in 2022, following a 'wings of hope and compassion' tradition dating back more than a century, when airmen provided food and supplies to Texas flood victims in 1919, the USAF and coalition partners airlifted 124,334 people out of Afghanistan in the largest humanitarian evacuation operation in history, spanning 17 days, 9 countries, 8 time zones, and more than 10 temporary safe havens;

Whereas, since February 24, 2022, airmen and guardians have responded to Russian aggression against Ukraine by guarding the skies of members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (commonly referred to as "NATO"), transporting essential equipment to the Ukrainian military, and providing critical support from space;

Whereas women have played a prominent role in the evolution of the Department of the Air Force, courageously fighting alongside their male counterparts and dedicating their lives to protecting peace, liberty, and freedom around the world as they provide air and space power whenever and wherever needed;

Whereas the Department of the Air Force has made tremendous strides in the global warfighting domain of cyberspace by revolutionizing offensive and defensive capabilities and effects with speed, agility, and surgical precision, thereby ensuring the continuous command, control, and execution of operations in contested, degraded, and limited environments;

Whereas the Civil Air Patrol, as a Total Force partner and auxiliary of the USAF, has maintained a steadfast commitment to the United States and the communities of the United States through a proud legacy of service, from the earliest days of World War II, when the Civil Air Patrol protected the shorelines of the United States, through 2022, as the Civil Air Patrol executes emergency service missions and aerospace education programs;

Whereas the Department of the Air Force is steadfast in the commitment to fielding a world-class air and space expeditionary force by recruiting, training, and educating its officer, enlisted, and civilian corps comprising the active duty, Guard, and Reserve components of the Total Force;

Whereas airmen were imprisoned and tortured during several major conflicts, including World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, the Korean War, and the Persian Gulf War, and, in the valiant tradition of airmen held captive, continued serving the United States with honor and dignity under the most inhumane circumstances;

Whereas airmen have earned the Medal of Honor 18 times, the Air Force Cross 203 times, the Distinguished Service Cross 42 times, and, since September 11, 2001, the Silver Star 92 times;

Whereas the USAF and the USSF are tremendous stewards of resources in developing and applying groundbreaking technology to manage complex acquisition programs for all air and space weapon systems throughout their life cycles;

Whereas talented and dedicated airmen and guardians will continue to make the investments necessary to accelerate transformation and modernization to counter the adversaries of the United States and meet the future challenges of an ever-changing world with limitless strength, resolve, and patriotism;

Whereas the USAF and the USSF are committed to accelerating change and preparing for the future, because failure is not an option;

Whereas, on every continent around the world, airmen and guardians have bravely

fought for freedom, liberty, and peace, preserved democracy, and protected the people and interests of the United States;

Whereas the future success of the United States Armed Forces depends upon the ability to control the air and space domains;

Whereas airmen and guardians will continue to be a tremendous resource for the United States in fights across every domain and at every location, thereby ensuring the safety and security of the United States; and

Whereas, for 75 years, the airmen and guardians of the Department of the Air Force, through their exemplary service and sacrifice, have repeatedly proven their value to the United States, the people of the United States, the allies of the United States, and all free people of the world: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate—

(1) commemorates the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the Department of the Air Force; and

(2) remembers, honors, and commends the achievements of the United States Air Force and the United States Space Force in serving and defending the United States.

### AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 5498. Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. COONS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 4543, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2023 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

### TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 5498. Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. COONS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 4543, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2023 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle F of title XII, add the following:

#### SEC. 1276. INVESTMENT, TRADE, AND DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

(a) STRATEGY REQUIRED.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall establish a comprehensive United States strategy for public and private investment, trade, and development in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean.

(2) FOCUS OF STRATEGY.—The strategy required by paragraph (1) shall focus on increasing exports of United States goods and services to Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean by 200 percent in real dollar value by the date that is 10 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) CONSULTATIONS.—In developing the strategy required by paragraph (1), the President shall consult with—

(A) Congress;

(B) each agency that is a member of the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee;

(C) the relevant multilateral development banks, in coordination with the Secretary of

the Treasury and the respective United States Executive Directors of such banks;

(D) each agency that participates in the Trade Policy Staff Committee;

(E) the President's Export Council;

(F) each of the development agencies;

(G) any other Federal agencies with responsibility for export promotion or financing and development; and

(H) the private sector, including businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and African and Latin American and Caribbean diaspora groups.

(4) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—

(A) STRATEGY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to Congress the strategy required by paragraph (1).

(B) PROGRESS REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of the strategy required by paragraph (1).

(b) SPECIAL AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN EXPORT STRATEGY COORDINATORS.—The President shall designate an individual to serve as Special Africa Export Strategy Coordinator and an individual to serve as Special Latin America and the Caribbean Export Strategy Coordinator—

(1) to oversee the development and implementation of the strategy required by subsection (a); and

(2) to coordinate developing and implementing the strategy with—

(A) the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee;

(B) the Assistant United States Trade Representative for African Affairs or the Assistant United States Trade Representative for the Western Hemisphere, as appropriate;

(C) the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs or the Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, as appropriate;

(D) the Export-Import Bank of the United States;

(E) the United States International Development Finance Corporation; and

(F) the development agencies.

(c) TRADE MISSIONS TO AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.—It is the sense of Congress that, not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce and other high-level officials of the United States Government with responsibility for export promotion, financing, and development should conduct a joint trade missions to Africa and to Latin America and the Caribbean.

(d) TRAINING.—The President shall develop a plan—

(1) to standardize the training received by United States and Foreign Commercial Service officers, economic officers of the Department of State, and economic officers of the United States Agency for International Development with respect to the programs and procedures of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, the United States International Development Finance Corporation, the Small Business Administration, and the United States Trade and Development Agency; and

(2) to ensure that, not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act—

(A) all United States and Foreign Commercial Service officers that are stationed overseas receive the training described in paragraph (1); and

(B) in the case of a country to which no United States and Foreign Commercial Service officer is assigned, any economic officer of the Department of State stationed in that country receives that training.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES.—The term "development agencies" means the United

States Department of State, the United States Agency for International Development, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the United States International Development Finance Corporation, the United States Trade and Development Agency, the United States Department of Agriculture, and relevant multilateral development banks.

(2) **MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS.**—The term “multilateral development banks” has the meaning given that term in section 1701(c)(4) of the International Financial Institutions Act (22 U.S.C. 262r(c)(4)) and includes the African Development Foundation.

(3) **TRADE POLICY STAFF COMMITTEE.**—The term “Trade Policy Staff Committee” means the Trade Policy Staff Committee established pursuant to section 2002.2 of title 15, Code of Federal Regulations.

(4) **TRADE PROMOTION COORDINATING COMMITTEE.**—The term “Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee” means the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee established under section 2312 of the Export Enhancement Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 4727).

(5) **UNITED STATES AND FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE.**—The term “United States and Foreign Commercial Service” means the United States and Foreign Commercial Service established by section 2301 of the Export Enhancement Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 4721).

#### AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I have two request for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the Majority and Minority Leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

#### COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 8, 2022, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing.

#### COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

The Committee on the Judiciary is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, September 8, 2022, at 9 a.m., to conduct an executive business meeting.

#### SOLID START ACT OF 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 478, S. 1198.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1198) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and expand the Solid Start program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Solid Start Act of 2021”.

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) In 2021, veterans continue to die by suicide at higher rates than civilians. Many of those veterans have no ties to the Department of Veterans Affairs, limiting the ability of the Department to help in times of crisis.

(2) The first year after separating from the military is a critical time in the transition to civilian life for a member of the Armed Forces. Many changes occur during that transition, from career and location changes to shifts in financial circumstances and health care coverage.

#### SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that the United States must strive to better serve members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are transitioning to civilian life by—

(1) providing up-to-date information and access to resources that such members of the Armed Forces and veterans may not be aware of;

(2) supporting the critical time of transition by ensuring that mental health needs are met in a timely manner; and

(3) assisting members of the Armed Forces and veterans in accessing newly available services.

#### SEC. 4. SOLID START PROGRAM OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Chapter 63 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subchapter:

##### “Subchapter II—Other Outreach Programs and Activities

##### “§ 6320. Solid Start program

“(a) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of this section are—

“(1) to build the capacity of the Department to efficiently and effectively respond to the queries and needs of veterans who have recently separated from the Armed Forces; and

“(2) to systemically integrate and coordinate efforts to assist veterans, including efforts—

“(A) to proactively reach out to newly separated veterans to inform them of their eligibility for programs of and benefits provided by the Department; and

“(B) to connect veterans in crisis to resources that address their immediate needs.

“(b) **ACTIVITIES OF THE SOLID START PROGRAM.**—(1) The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, shall carry out the Solid Start program of the Department by—

“(A) collecting up-to-date contact information during transition classes or separation counseling for all members of the Armed Forces who are separating from the Armed Forces, while explaining the existence and purpose of the Solid Start program;

“(B) calling each veteran, regardless of separation type or characterization of service, three times within the first year after separation of the veteran from the Armed Forces;

“(C) providing information about the Solid Start program on the website of the Department and in materials of the Department, especially transition booklets and other resources;

“(D) ensuring calls are truly tailored to the needs of each veteran's unique situation by conducting quality assurance tests;

“(E) prioritizing outreach to veterans who have accessed mental health resources prior to separation from the Armed Forces;

“(F) providing women veterans with information that is tailored to their specific health care and benefit needs;

“(G) as feasible, providing information on access to State and local resources, including Vet Centers and veterans service organizations; and

“(H) gathering and analyzing data assessing the effectiveness of the Solid Start program.

“(2) The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, may carry out the Solid Start program by—

“(A) encouraging members of the Armed Forces who are transitioning to civilian life to authorize alternate points of contact who can be

reached should the member be unavailable during the first year following the separation of the member from the Armed Forces; and

“(B) following up missed phone calls with tailored mailings to ensure the veteran still receives similar information.

“(3) In this subsection:

“(A) The term ‘Vet Center’ has the meaning given that term in section 1712A(h) of this title.

“(B) The term ‘veterans service organization’ means an organization recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of this title.

“(c) **OBLIGATIONS OF AMOUNTS.**—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary may not, in a fiscal year, obligate an amount to carry out the Solid Start program that is less than the total amount obligated in the previous fiscal year to carry out the program, unless the Secretary determines that increased efficiencies of the program warrant the obligation of a lesser amount.”.

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Chapter 63 of such title, as amended by subsection (a), is further amended—

(1) by inserting before section 6301 the following:

##### “Subchapter I—Outreach Services Program”; and

(2) in sections 6301, 6303, 6304, 6305, 6306, and 6307, by striking “this chapter” each place it appears and inserting “this subchapter”.

(c) **CLERICAL AMENDMENTS.**—The table of contents at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended—

(1) by inserting before the item relating to section 6301 the following new item:

“SUBCHAPTER I—OUTREACH SERVICES PROGRAM”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new items:

##### “SUBCHAPTER II—OTHER OUTREACH PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

“§ 6320. Solid Start program.”.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute be agreed to.

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

The committee-reported amendment, in the nature of a substitute, was agreed to.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time.

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

The bill, as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

Mr. SCHUMER. I know of no further debate on the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass, as amended?

The bill (S. 1198), as amended, was passed.

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

#### PATIENT ADVOCATE TRACKER ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs be discharged from further consideration of