

Workers Regulation Amendment Act of 2021 enacted by the District of Columbia Council.

S.J. RES. 56

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 56, a joint resolution directing the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen that have not been authorized by Congress.

S.J. RES. 61

At the request of Mr. BURR, the names of the Senator from Wyoming (Ms. LUMMIS), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) and the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. TILLIS) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 61, a joint resolution to provide for the resolution of issues in a railway labor-management dispute, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 754

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 754, a resolution designating November 13, 2022, as "National Warrior Call Day" in recognition of the importance of connecting warriors in the United States to support structures necessary to transition from the battlefield.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 4823. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to remove the overtime wages exemption for certain employees, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. PADILLA. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the Guaranteeing Overtime for Truckers Act, which I introduced today.

America's truckdrivers are on the frontlines of keeping goods and our economy moving. More than 70 percent of goods across the United States are shipped by truck.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting supply chain crisis exacerbated longstanding challenges for truckers, including long hours away from home and time spent waiting—often unpaid—to load and unload at congested ports, warehouses, and distribution centers.

As our Nation makes historic investments in our port and supply chain infrastructure through the bipartisan infrastructure law, we should also improve wages and working conditions for essential workers and ensure they are paid for all of the hours they work.

However, for more than 80 years, Federal law has denied truckers guaranteed overtime pay benefits that are afforded to nearly all other professions.

This means that if a truckdriver experiences delays due to congestion or weather, they are often not paid even though they are working.

The motor carrier exemption is exacerbating trucking workforce challenges. Additionally, research suggests that when truck labor rates are fair, there is less driver fatigue, fewer regulatory violations, and lower crash rates.

That is why I am proud to introduce this bill to repeal the overtime exemption for motor carriers.

I want to thank Senator MARKEY for co-leading this bill with me, and I hope our colleagues will join us in support of this bill that will ensure that trucker compensation reflects the fact that these jobs are essential.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 4826. A bill to amend the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to modify the definition of the term "at-risk community"; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the Community Wildfire Protection Act, bipartisan legislation that Senator DAINES and I are introducing today.

This bill would ensure that those communities that are deemed to be under the greatest threat from wildfire are eligible to receive existing Federal wildfire grants. This sounds obvious but unfortunately is not the case under existing law.

This will help more communities in our home States of California and Montana and others throughout the West access Federal grants to reduce hazardous fuels around their communities and reduce the threat posed by wildfire. In particular, it would protect areas at risk of a large-scale wildfire that would significantly threaten human life and property.

Aligning the definition in law for at-risk communities to today's environmental realities is more important than ever given the increased spread, frequency, and destructiveness of wildfires, especially in the West.

The current definition of an "at-risk community" was codified in the 2003 Healthy Forest Restoration Act. That law requires that, other than experiencing significant wildfire risk, an eligible community must either be adjacent to Federal land or included on a list generated in 2001 consisting of voluntary input from States and Tribes.

To be clear, including a town on this list was not based on an objective evaluation of wildfire risk or threat to life and property, only whether an individual Governor or Tribal leader decided to add it. There are obvious omissions from the list that show its inadequacy, and in fact, 19 States and territories never submitted a single community.

For example, in California, big cities like Fresno, Fairfield, and Napa are not included, all of which have experi-

enced major wildfires in recent years, nor are countless small towns that are at great risk of wildfire. The town of Grizzly Flats, CA, which was devastated by the 2021 Caldor Fire, is also notably absent from the list.

The exclusion of these communities means that they are not eligible for Federal grant funding that would help them develop and implement wildfire resiliency plans, such as hazardous fuels reduction, nor can they utilize critical authorities to expedite wildfire mitigation projects on nearby Federal lands.

Our bill would simply end the practice of making Federal grants contingent on being this outdated, incomplete list. Instead, our legislation would allow communities to be included based on the most up-to-date quantitative wildfire risk data for the entire United States—data that are already maintained by the U.S. Forest Service.

Our bill would also allow communities not immediately within or adjacent to Federal lands to qualify as "at risk" of wildfire. This is important given a recent survey of more than 22,000 fires that indicated that wildfires are more likely to start on private lands and burn into Federal forestlands than the reverse. Federal policies must adapt to recognize this fact, not prevent funding from going to where it would be most effective.

Better tailoring Federal grants to the areas at greatest risk of wildfire is particularly essential given congressional funding of wildfire resilience projects, including \$1.8 billion that passed as part of the recently enacted Inflation Reduction Act.

I am proud that our bill has received the support of the National Association of Counties, Rural County Representatives of California, the National Association of State Foresters, the Pacific Forest Trust, and the California Fire Safe Council.

I am pleased to work with Senator DAINES on this commonsense bill that will save lives, save communities, and ensure that Federal dollars are spent as effectively as possible.

Mr. President, my bill is simple—just three lines long—but it would ensure that our Federal policies enable billions in wildfire resiliency funding to be applied where it is needed most.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 4832. A bill to temporarily prohibit the hiring of additional Internal Revenue Service employees until a certain level of taxpayer services have improved, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 4832

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Increase Reliable Services Now Act”.

SEC. 2. TEMPORARY PROHIBITION ON ADDITIONAL TAX ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the Internal Revenue Service may not hire any person for the purpose of conducting enforcement activities during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the first date after such date on which—

(1) the Internal Revenue Service has maintained, for 6 consecutive months—

(A) a level of service for accounts management phone lines of not less than 70 percent; and

(B) an average speed of answering calls in 5 minutes or less; and

(2) not less than 90 percent of the regular employees of the Internal Revenue Service perform work in person at their job sites.

(b) ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.—For purposes of this section, the term “enforcement activities” means activities described in section 10301(a)(1)(A)(ii) of Public Law 117-169.

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON USE OF ADDITIONAL INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE FUNDS FOR TAXPAYER AUDITS.

Section 10301(a)(1)(A)(ii) of Public Law 117-169 is amended by inserting before the period at the end the following: “: *Provided further*, That the Internal Revenue Service shall not audit taxpayers with taxable incomes below \$400,000 at a greater rate than such taxpayers were audited for the most recent taxable year beginning before the date of the enactment of this Act”.

SEC. 4. TEMPORARY PROHIBITION ON INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE HIRING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, the Internal Revenue Service may not hire any person (other than for activities related to return processing and call center operations) during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending on the first date after such date on which the Internal Revenue Service meets the requirements of subsection (b).

(b) REQUIREMENTS.—The requirements specified in this subsection are the following:

(1) With respect to the processing of taxpayer correspondence, tax forms, and payments, the Internal Revenue Service has a backlog not in excess of 1,000,000 cases.

(2) With respect to tax returns eligible for a refund, refunds are issued to taxpayers on average within six weeks or less of the receipt of the return.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 4833. A bill to improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of legislation that I introduced today along with Senator PADILLA to preserve the enduring legacy of California’s giant sequoias: the Save Our Sequoias Act. I thank Senator PADILLA for working with me on this important bill, as well as the bipartisan sponsors of similar legislation in the House.

The Save Our Sequoias Act would charge a dedicated group of Federal, State, local, and Tribal land managers

known as the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition with developing wildfire resilience projects to help save these magnificent trees.

The bill would also provide Federal Agencies with narrow, targeted authorities to implement these projects quickly and protect our remaining sequoias, as well as create a strategy to enhance sequoia reforestation.

Giant sequoias are one of the most iconic plants in the world. The sequoia known as General Sherman is the largest tree on Earth at more than 100 feet in circumference and 275 feet tall.

Sequoias grow quickly, producing a 50-foot tree’s worth of wood each year, yet can live to be thousands of years old. They are also remarkably fire-adapted, with spongy bark that can be up to 2-feet thick.

Perhaps most importantly to me, these incredible trees only grow in my home State of California. Just being around these trees is a humbling experience. Their immensity puts them in a class by themselves, and it is no wonder that they have been the source of reverence and amazement.

For many years, sequoias were considered nearly immune to the effects of wildfires, but unfortunately devastating fires in recent years have overwhelmed even their potent defenses. Officials have estimated that 20 percent of all mature giant sequoias have been destroyed just since 2020.

Scientific research has additionally suggested that without significant action, another 20 percent could be lost in the next 3 years. This would be a staggering tragedy and demands action. As former President Theodore Roosevelt himself put it, “A grove of giant redwood or sequoias should be kept just as we keep a great and beautiful cathedral.”

The vast majority of giant sequoias live on Federal land, and I thank President Biden and his administration for using existing authorities to try to save these magnificent trees. Nevertheless, Congress can and should enact legislation to protect sequoias long into the future.

Our bill would accomplish this goal by first codifying the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition, an existing group of public land managers with jurisdiction over sequoia groves, and requiring it to develop a strategy to make sequoia groves more resilient to wildfire. It would also provide congressional support for the Biden Administration’s current actions under an emergency declaration to expedite sequoia wildfire resilience projects.

Federal agencies should not be reliant on emergency authorities, however, in order to implement necessary wildfire resilience projects in the future. To that end, our bill provides those Agencies with narrow, targeted authorities to continue making progress on those projects and authorizes funding for dedicated personnel. It also establishes a grant program for sequoia resilience projects that occur off of Federal land.

Lastly, our bill ensures that we do not simply mitigate future sequoia losses but also begin the process of regrowth. Since sequoias can live to be thousands of years old, it is never too early to begin rejuvenating these majestic trees.

Mr. President, giant sequoias are one of the great treasures of the world, not just of California. It is incumbent upon Congress to pass our bill to ensure they are protected and can be cherished for thousands of years to come.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 757—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE IN SUPPORT OF THE PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC AND ECONOMIC ASPIRATIONS OF THE SRI LANKAN PEOPLE

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 757

Whereas Sri Lanka gained its independence peacefully in 1948, bringing an end to British colonial rule;

Whereas, more than 100,000 Sri Lankans died or went missing in subsequent decades of ethnic conflict, most acutely at the end of the civil war in May 2009;

Whereas the roots of the conflict, including historical inequalities, remain largely unresolved;

Whereas the period of peace, which began in 2009, contributed to Sri Lanka’s high growth and economic development, building on a tourism-based economy;

Whereas Gotabaya Rajapaksa was elected as Sri Lanka’s President on November 16, 2019, and on November 21, 2019, he appointed his brother, Mahinda Rajapaksa, as Prime Minister;

Whereas Sri Lanka’s governance under President Rajapaksa was highly corrupt, nepotistic, and lacked transparency;

Whereas on August 8, 2020, Human Rights Watch described President Rajapaksa’s rule in 2020 as “a campaign of fear and intimidation against human rights activists, journalists, lawyers, and others challenging government policy”;

Whereas the Government of Sri Lanka declined \$480,000,000 in United States assistance in 2020 in the form of a grant from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which was designed to reduce poverty through economic growth;

Whereas, the Government of Sri Lanka, under the rule of President Rajapaksa—

(1) devoted state resources for personal political purposes with little transparency;

(2) implemented misguided agricultural policies; and

(3) borrowed billions of dollars from China to develop economically unviable mega projects;

Whereas, since 2019, Sri Lanka has faced an economic crisis, only further exacerbated by predatory loans from the People’s Republic of China as part of its debt trap diplomacy;

Whereas Sri Lanka’s economic crisis caused millions of Sri Lankan citizens to live in extremely dire conditions, with severe shortages of medicine, food, and fuel;

Whereas many Sri Lankans have immigrated in search of income to support their