

2024 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 731

At the request of Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 731 intended to be proposed to S. 2226, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 740

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 740 intended to be proposed to S. 2226, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 752

At the request of Mrs. BRITT, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. FETTERMAN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 752 intended to be proposed to S. 2226, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 756

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 756 intended to be proposed to S. 2226, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 757

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 757 intended to be proposed to S. 2226, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 760

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 760 intended to be proposed to S. 2226, an original bill to au-

thorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 761

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. VANCE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 761 intended to be proposed to S. 2226, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 792

At the request of Ms. ROSEN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 792 intended to be proposed to S. 2226, an original bill to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2024 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.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. MERKLEY, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 2337. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to promulgate certain limitations with respect to pre-production plastic pellet pollution, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam 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. 2337

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 the "Plastic Pellet Free Waters Act".

SEC. 2. EFFLUENT LIMITATIONS FOR WASTE-WATER, SPILLS, AND RUNOFF FROM PLASTIC POLYMER PRODUCTION FACILITIES, PLASTIC MOLDING AND FORMING FACILITIES, AND OTHER POINT SOURCES ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRANSPORT AND PACKAGING OF PLASTIC PELLETS OR OTHER PRE-PRODUCTION PLASTIC MATERIALS.

Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (referred to in this section as the "Administrator") shall promulgate a final rule to ensure that—

(1) the discharge of plastic pellets or other pre-production plastic materials (including discharge into wastewater and other runoff) from facilities regulated under part 414 or 463

of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act), is prohibited;

(2) the discharge of plastic pellets or other pre-production plastic materials (including discharge into wastewater and other runoff) from a point source (as defined in section 502 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1362)) that makes, uses, packages, or transports those plastic pellets and other pre-production plastic materials is prohibited; and

(3) the requirements under paragraphs (1) and (2) are reflected in—

(A) all wastewater, stormwater, and other permits issued by the Administrator and State-delegated programs under section 402 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1342) to facilities and other point sources (as defined in section 502 of that Act (33 U.S.C. 1362)) that make, use, package, or transport plastic pellets or other pre-production plastic materials, as determined by the Administrator, in addition to other applicable limits and standards; and

(B) all standards of performance promulgated under section 312(p) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1322(p)) that are applicable to point sources (as defined in section 502 of that Act (33 U.S.C. 1362)) that make, use, package, or transport plastic pellets or other pre-production plastic materials, as determined by the Administrator.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 2342. A bill to prohibit any official action to recognize or normalize relations with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam 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. 2342

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 "Assad Regime Anti-Normalization Act of 2023".

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION OF RECOGNITION OF ASSAD REGIME.

(a) STATEMENT OF POLICY.—It is the policy of the United States—

(1) not to recognize or normalize relations with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad due to the Assad regime's prior and ongoing crimes against the Syrian people, including failure to meet the criteria outlined in section 7431(a) of the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 (title LXXIV of Public Law 116–92; 22 U.S.C. 8791 note);

(2) to actively oppose recognition or normalization of relations by other governments with any Government of Syria that is led by Bashar Al-Assad, including by fully implementing the mandatory primary and secondary sanctions in the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 and Executive Order 13894 (84 Fed. Reg. 55851; relating to blocking property and suspending entry of certain persons contributing to the situation in Syria); and

(3) to use the full range of authorities, including those provided under the Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act of 2019 and Executive Order 13894, to deter reconstruction activities in areas under the control of Bashar al-Assad.

(b) PROHIBITION.—In accordance with subsection (a), no Federal official or employee may take any action, and no Federal funds may be made available, to recognize or otherwise imply, in any manner, United States recognition of Bashar al-Assad or any Government in Syria that is led by Bashar al-Assad.

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

S. 2351. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to clarify the use of certain taxes and revenues; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to introduce State and Local General Sales Tax Protection Act. This legislation would clarify congressional intent around a 1987 amendment to the Federal Aviation Administration's authorization regarding the use of local excise taxes on aviation fuel for airport purposes.

In 2014, the FAA implemented a policy change to require State and local governments to use general sales taxes collected on aviation fuel for airport purposes. This contradicted congressional intent clearly stated in the 1987 conference report and 29 years of practice, which applied this requirement only to local excise taxes on fuel and not to other taxes imposed by State and local governments.

This legislation would overturn the 2014 FAA policy and remove any ambiguity in Federal interpretation by distinguishing State and local sales tax measures of general application from aviation fuel excise taxes.

In my home State of California, local government sales taxes are voter-approved by a two-thirds margin for specific purposes. Diverting this money would be a violation of the State's constitution and the will of its voters. This 2014 FAA rulemaking, if enforced, is estimated to divert tens of millions of dollars away from voter-approved purposes like local transportation, first responders, education, and social programs every year. It is an assault on State and local control of general application sales tax measures.

The 2014 FAA rulemaking would also impose an unfunded mandate on States and local governments that would be required to implement a burdensome tracking system to segregate taxes on aviation fuel from other taxable sources.

Furthermore, in recognition of this error, the FAA included in its recommendations to Congress that the clarification provided in this legislation be included in an FAA reauthorization bill.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact the State and Local General Sales Tax Protection Act to protect every State and local government that have or will have general sales taxes that include aviation fuel.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. ROMNEY):

S. 2355. A bill to clarify the applicability of sanctions and antimoney laundering compliance obligations to United States persons in the decentralized finance technology sector and virtual currency kiosk operators, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Madam President, today I am introducing the Crypto Asset National Security Enhancement and Enforcement, CANSEE, Act along with Senators ROUNDS, WARNER, and ROMNEY. This bipartisan bill will close concerning gaps in the anti-money laundering, AML, and sanctions frameworks for cryptocurrency, most importantly decentralized finance, DeFi, and virtual currency kiosks.

Decentralized finance or "DeFi" refers to cryptocurrency protocols and applications that purport to allow automated peer-to-peer transactions using blockchain technology. DeFi enables users to transact and trade cryptocurrency without requiring a traditional financial institution to broker trades, clear and settle transactions, or custody assets.

Criminal syndicates, fraudsters, ransomware hackers, and rogue states have been quick to recognize how DeFi can be exploited to advance their nefarious activities. By design, DeFi provides anonymity allowing malicious and criminal actors to evade traditional tools that the government uses to enforce the AML and sanctions laws.

According to the U.S. National Money Laundering Risk Assessment published in February 2022, "DeFi services often involve no AML/CFT or other processes to identify customers, allowing layering of proceeds to take place instantaneously and pseudonymously." A risk assessment published by the Treasury Department in April 2023 specifically found that "ransomware cybercriminals, thieves, scammers, and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) cyber actors are using DeFi services [and] exploiting vulnerabilities in the U.S. and foreign AML/CFT regulatory, supervisory, and enforcement regimes."

In addition, DeFi is used in cross-border drug trafficking. Blockchain analytics firm Elliptic has estimated that China-based chemical manufacturers have received enough payments in cryptocurrency to sell \$54 billion worth of fentanyl—enough to manufacture 8.6 billion deadly doses.

A series of Federal indictments unsealed in April 2023 revealed how these Chinese companies sell precursor chemicals to the Sinaloa drug cartel to manufacture fentanyl in Mexico, which is then smuggled for distribution in the United States. The manufacturers and cartels transact in cryptocurrency and no longer need to rely exclusively on bulk cash shipments. According to the indictments, once "fentanyl proceeds are deposited into cryptocurrency wallets, that cryptocurrency can also be used directly to purchase additional fentanyl, without the need to convert

the cryptocurrency back into cash." Wallets associated with a large sanctioned Chinese chemicals manufacturer have used DeFi to launder funds.

DeFi is so attractive to criminals and other bad actors because the industry takes the position that it does not need to comply with the AML requirements in the Bank Secrecy Act nor the economic sanctions programs administered by the Treasury Department. That places DeFi on a different footing than traditional financial intermediaries like banks and securities brokers, which must monitor all transactions and report suspected money laundering and financial crimes to the government. Other participants in the cryptocurrency markets, such as U.S.-headquartered centralized trading venues, are also expected to maintain AML programs and ensure that sanctioned persons do not use their services. Even casinos have these obligations. It is past time to end special treatment for DeFi and prevent this dark corner of our financial system from being used to fund crime and launder criminal proceeds.

The bipartisan bill we are introducing closes these alarming gaps facilitating narco-trafficking, WMD proliferation, ransomware attacks, and other threats to national and economic security. Our bill simply requires anyone who controls a DeFi service to meet critical—yet basic—regulatory obligations to maintain AML policies and procedures, conduct due diligence on customers, and report suspicious transactions to the government. These requirements will curtail a tool that is used to disguise ownership and movement of criminal funds.

Our legislation also makes clear that if a sanctioned person, such as a Russian oligarch, uses a DeFi service to evade U.S. sanctions, then anyone who controls that platform will be liable for facilitating that violation. If nobody controls a DeFi service, then—as a backstop—the largest investors in that project will be responsible for meeting these obligations.

Our bipartisan legislation also dramatically enhances the customer due diligence requirements for operators of virtual currency kiosks or "bitcoin ATMs." Bitcoin ATMs are typically found in convenience stores, gas stations, and grocery stores, and are used to buy, sell, and exchange cryptocurrency. According to a report by the Government Accountability Office published in December 2021, "FBI officials said they expect to see an increase in the use of virtual currency kiosks for illicit purposes, including for human and drug trafficking." To crack down on this abuse of our financial system, our legislation requires kiosk operators to verify the identities of both counterparties to every transaction. That will help prevent criminals from using cryptocurrency to profit from illegal activity and avoid detection by law enforcement.

Finally, this legislation makes important updates to the Treasury Department's authority to require participants in the U.S. financial system to take special precautions against money laundering threats. Currently, these authorities are limited to transactions conducted in the traditional banking system. But as new technologies like cryptocurrency increasingly enable new ways to conduct financial transactions, it is critical to extend Treasury's authority to crack down on illicit financial activity that may occur without customary intermediaries.

All of our constituents deserve a financial system that is protected from geopolitical adversaries and criminals. The CANSEE Act will deliver those protections by preventing DeFi services from using purported decentralization as a shield to avoid meeting obligations to prevent money laundering and sanctions evasion. That will protect the integrity of the U.S. financial system and help curtail the activities of the worst criminal organizations and malicious state actors. I urge my colleagues to support this important bipartisan legislation.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 299—SUPPORTING COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THWART HIZBALLAH'S CRIMINAL AND TERRORIST ACTIVITIES AND TO BRING HIZBALLAH OPERATIVES TO JUSTICE AND URGING THE EUROPEAN UNION TO DESIGNATE HIZBALLAH, IN ITS ENTIRETY, AS A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION

Ms. ROSEN (for herself and Mrs. BLACKBURN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 299

Whereas, in April 1983, a Hizballah terror attack against the United States Embassy in Beirut, Lebanon killed 63 people;

Whereas, in October 1983, a Hizballah terror attack against the United States Marine barracks, in Beirut, Lebanon, killed 241 American and 58 French servicemembers supporting the multinational force peacekeeping mission;

Whereas, in July 2012, a Hizballah terror attack, carried out by an operative with dual Lebanese-French citizenship, in Burgas, Bulgaria, killed 5 Israeli tourists and a Bulgarian;

Whereas, in March 2013, a Swedish-Lebanese Hizballah operative in Cyprus was convicted of planning terror attacks against Israeli tourists;

Whereas, in June 2015, a Hizballah operative was sentenced to 6 years in prison after stockpiling more than 8 tons of ammonium nitrate in Cyprus;

Whereas the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Act of 2015 (Public Law 114-102) and the Hizballah International Financing Prevention Amendments Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-272) broadened financial sector sanctions against Hizballah to compel

foreign financial institutions to refrain from supporting the terrorist group;

Whereas, in May 2018, the Department of the Treasury imposed sanctions on Abdullah Safi-Al-Din, Hizballah's representative to Iran, Mohammad Ibrahim Bazzi, a Hizballah financier, and blacklisted 5 of Mr. Bazzi's companies, including Belgian energy services conglomerate Global Trading Group NV;

Whereas, in October 2018, French police raided the Islamic Zahra Centre on suspicion of supporting Hizballah, froze the organization's funds, and seized illegal weapons;

Whereas, in September 2020, 4 former leaders of the Zahra Centre France were arrested on suspicion of continuing to run that organization and supporting Hizballah;

Whereas, in July 2019, the Department of the Treasury designated 2 Hizballah-backed members of Lebanese Parliament, Amin Sherri and Muhammad Hasan Ra'd, and Hizballah security official Wafiq Safa, stating that Hizballah uses its operatives in parliament to advance its violent activities;

Whereas, as of April 2021, officials of the Government of Germany estimated that 1,250 people with suspected links to Hizballah were living in Germany;

Whereas Europol's June 2022 European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report—

(1) outlined that Hizballah “has been using the EU as a base for fundraising, recruitment, and criminal activities”;

(2) stated that Hizballah “is suspected of managing the transportation and distribution of illegal drugs into the EU, dealing with firearms trafficking and running professional money laundering operations that include the provision of money laundering services for other criminal organizations”;

Whereas the United States-led Project Cassandra and Operation Cedar exposed the criminal-business wing of Hizballah, the Business Affairs Component (BAC) of Hizballah's External Security Organization;

Whereas, during Project Cassandra, Hizballah elements involved in drug trafficking were arrested in the United States, in South America, and in several European countries, including France, Belgium, Germany, and Italy;

Whereas Hizballah's criminal activities in Europe is run by the BAC, which reports to the External Security Organisation (also known as Unit 910) or the Islamic Jihad Organization, and Abdallah Safieddine, Hizballah's representative in Iran, is also involved in such criminal activities;

Whereas, in August 2020, United Nations Secretary General António Guterres called on Lebanon to disarm Hizballah, citing the terror group's persistent violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006);

Whereas Iran, which is the prime sponsor of Hizballah, harbors, finances, trains, and arms the terrorist organization;

Whereas the Department of Treasury and the Department of State estimate that Iran provides as much as \$700,000,000 each year to Hizballah in the form of financial and logistical support, weapons, and training;

Whereas Hizballah has an arsenal of approximately 150,000 missiles and rockets with increased sophistication, many of which can reach deep into Israel;

Whereas Hizballah fighters have been supporting the Assad regime in Syria and have often led operations in the conflict, which has left more than 500,000 dead;

Whereas Hizballah trains and provides weapons for militias in Iraq and Yemen, which further destabilizes the region, and perpetuates violence in those countries;

Whereas Hizballah activities continue to plague Lebanon with profound economic and political instability and violence;

Whereas Hizballah's cross-border illicit arms and drugs trafficking undermines the Lebanese Armed Forces, which is the legitimate security establishment of the country, as outlined in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006);

Whereas, in October 2012, Hizballah Deputy Secretary General Naim Qassem stated that “[Hizballah does not] have a military wing and a political one . . . Every element of Hizballah, from commanders to members as well as our various capabilities, are in the service of the resistance”;

Whereas the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Serbia, and Kosovo, and other countries have declared Hizballah, in its entirety, a terrorist organization;

Whereas, in March 2016, the Gulf Cooperation Council formally branded Hizballah, in its entirety, a terrorist organization, and the League of Arab States adopted the same designation shortly thereafter;

Whereas the Department of the Treasury has diligently added persons and entities to the list of Specially Designated Global Terrorists who have provided material support to the Hizballah terrorist organization, thereby hampering its financing and logistical capabilities;

Whereas the European Union, in July 2013, designated Hizballah's so-called “military wing” a terrorist organization;

Whereas, despite restrictions put on Hizballah since the designation of its military wing as a terrorist organization, Hizballah continues to conduct illicit narco-trafficking, money laundering, and weapons trafficking throughout Europe and around the world; and

Whereas in July 2016, the United States Senate, through Senate Resolution 482, called on the European Union to designate Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organization: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) applauds and expresses support for the continued, increased cooperation between the United States and the European Union in thwarting Hizballah's criminal and terrorist activities;

(2) supports transcontinental efforts within Europe to share intelligence information among police and security services to facilitate greater cooperation in tracking, apprehending, and prosecuting Hizballah operatives;

(3) encourages the European Union to implement sanctions against Hizballah-affiliated terrorists in tandem with the United States;

(4) recommends greater civil society engagement in both the United States and Europe to underscore Hizballah's malign regional influence; and

(5) urges the European Union to designate Hizballah in its entirety as a terrorist organization and to increase pressure on the group, including by—

(A) facilitating better cross-border cooperation between European Union members in combating Hizballah;

(B) issuing arrest warrants against members and active supporters of Hizballah;

(C) freezing Hizballah's assets in Europe, including assets controlled by organizations masquerading as charities; and

(D) prohibiting fundraising activities in support of Hizballah.