

to Federal service labor-management relations that are applicable to the Senate and the employees of the Senate, and that were issued by the Office of Compliance, now known as the Office of Congressional Workplace Rights, on August 19, 1996, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 306

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. SMITH) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 306, a resolution recognizing that the United States needs to support and empower mothers in the workforce by investing in the Mom Economy.

AMENDMENT NO. 455

At the request of Mr. PADILLA, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 455 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. 523

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 523 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. 638

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 638 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. 1037

At the request of Mr. HOEVEN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1037 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. 1058

At the request of Mr. LUJÁN, the names of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Arizona (Ms. SINEMA), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added

as cosponsors of amendment No. 1058 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.

At the request of Mr. HAWLEY, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. SCHMITT) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1058 proposed to S. 2226, *supra*.

AMENDMENT NO. 1069

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1069 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. RISCH (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, and Ms. LUMMIS):

S. 2571. A bill to provide for determination of the grizzly bear species consistent with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. RISCH. Madam President, I rise today to introduce the Grizzly Bear Review and Resource Restart Act.

The grizzly bear was originally listed under the Endangered Species Act, ESA, in 1975 with the worthy intent to recover the species. The ESA has succeeded and grizzly bear populations have rebounded. However, the overly-broad listing, which covers all of the lower 48 States, has led courts to block the Fish and Wildlife Service from delisting populations which by all measures are recovered and no longer require strict ESA protections.

This has prevented the ESA from being what it is meant to be, a temporary assistance for wildlife recovery. It was never intended to provide a permanent designation for robust species. If enacted, the Grizzly Bear Review and Resource Restart Act will remove the unreachable recovery targets based on the erroneous first listing and allow wildlife managers to focus on areas in the lower 48 which actually host grizzly bears, not the 30 States currently listed where bears never were in the first place.

Giving the opportunity to “delist and relist” based on scientific and historic data rather than a panicked first plan from 1975 will help mitigate human-bear interactions, protect rural communities, and emphasize and recenter the role of science in grizzly bear recovery. It will also allow funding and focus to be given where it is needed most: to grizzly bear populations and other species actually at risk.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mr. CASSIDY):

S. 2572. A bill to amend the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to make predevelopment grants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to introduce the bipartisan Economic Empowerment Through Predevelopment Act. This legislation would improve support for capacity building and early-stage project development activities to ensure inclusive economic growth across communities.

Predevelopment activities are projects that must be completed prior to construction to advance infrastructure and development projects from concept to reality. This includes planning and design, community asset mapping, training, technical assistance, feasibility and environmental studies, demonstration projects, permitting, and organizational capacity building.

This bill would enhance the Economic Development Administration's role in the initial stages of a project by authorizing the Agency to make grants and cooperative agreements for predevelopment activities and capacity building purposes.

Many underserved, low-income, and rural communities simply do not have the institutions, expertise, or capacity to plan, design, coordinate, or implement new economic development initiatives. Building an inclusive economy requires policies for comprehensive economic development plans that better equip our communities to sustain and grow investments, leverage community-based assets, and diversify local economies to withstand potential disruptions.

Additional support for predevelopment projects would also allow for more intentional investments and longer term sustainability in local economies by preventing costly mistakes or unwise investments.

Since the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the American Rescue Plan Act, Congress, State and local governments, as well as community organizations, have increasingly turned to EDA and economic development districts for assistance in predevelopment activities. This legislation will strengthen the Agency's work in this space.

I thank Senator CASSIDY for introducing this important legislation with me in the Senate. I hope all of our colleagues will join us in supporting this bill for the economic empowerment of our communities.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2606. A bill to amend section 249 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to render available to certain long-term residents of the United States the

benefit under that section; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to introduce the Renewing Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929 Act.

This legislation would permit individuals who have lived in the United States continuously for at least 7 years to file for lawful permanent residence here.

The Renewing Immigration Provisions of the Immigration Act of 1929 Act will provide long-term residents of the U.S. a path to lawful permanent residence.

Specifically, this bill would amend the existing Registry mechanism in the Immigration and Nationality Act by opening the application to register permanent or adjust status to long-term residents who have lived in the United States for at least 7 years at the time of filing.

This bill would also allow long-term residents who have been in the United States for at least 7 years, waiting patiently for a visa number to become available, to immediately file an application to register permanent or adjust status.

This legislation has the added benefit of creating a much needed pathway to permanent residency for Dreamers and forcibly displaced individuals, such as TPS holders, who have been stuck in legal limbo for years.

By making the eligibility cutoff rolling, this bill would also preempt the need for Congress to repeatedly update the Registry's cutoff date to a specific year of entry into the United States.

There is strong precedent for Congress to advance the Registry date, which it has done on a bipartisan basis four times since it first codified the Registry in 1929. In 1958, Congress opened the Registry mechanism to long-term residents of the United States who had entered the country improperly, overstayed a visa, or otherwise violated the terms of a temporary period of entry. Congress clearly intended the Registry to allow undocumented immigrants to adjust to lawful permanent resident status.

Currently, the eligibility cutoff date for the Registry is January 1, 1972, more than 50 years ago. Just a handful of immigrants can currently satisfy this cutoff entry date requirement, rendering the 1972 entry cutoff all but meaningless. From 2015 to 2019, only 305 individuals adjusted their status based on the Registry, compared to the 58,914 individuals who did so between 1985 and 1989. If this legislation passed today, over 8 million individuals—who are already living in the United States and have longstanding ties to their communities—would become eligible to apply for permanent residency through the Registry.

Today, about 11 million undocumented immigrants live in the United States. It is not feasible or productive to remove all of them, and it would significantly hurt the U.S. economy to do

so. The overwhelming majority of these undocumented immigrants have established roots in the United States and are law-abiding citizens. They are integral parts of our communities who work essential jobs, pay taxes, and even serve in our military. Leaving them without a path to permanent residency relegates them to second-class status and denies them the opportunity to fulfill the American Dream.

It is imperative that we create a path to permanent residence status for immigrants who lack certainty about their futures.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MURPHY, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. SMITH, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, and Mr. PADILLA):

S. 2608. A bill to provide for the long-term improvement of public school facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. REED. Madam President, among the many challenges to improving educational outcomes for students and recruiting and retaining educators for our public schools is the condition of school facilities. A 2020 Government Accountability Office, GAO, report found that over half, 54 percent, of school districts nationwide need to update or replace multiple systems in their schools, such as heating, ventilation, air-conditioning, HVAC, or plumbing. These systems are especially critical to safeguarding public health, as we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic. Functioning and efficient HVAC systems and ventilation can help keep indoor air quality healthy and reduce the spread of infectious airborne viral particles.

Investing in school buildings will make them healthy and safe learning environments. It will also improve student learning, reduce carbon emissions, and create jobs. That is why I am proud to partner with Representative BOBBY SCOTT, ranking member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, to introduce the Rebuild America's Schools Act—legislation that will invest \$130 billion in fixing our schools. I would like to thank my Senate colleagues who are joining in this effort, including Senators BROWN, BLUMENTHAL, BOOKER, CASEY, CORTEZ MASTO, DUCKWORTH, DURBIN, HEINRICH, HIRONO, KLOBUCHAR, LUJÁN, MARKEY, MERKLEY, MURPHY, SHAHEEN, SMITH, STABENOW, VAN HOLLEN, and WHITEHOUSE.

Public schools play a vital role in every community across the Nation—educating the next generation, serving as polling places for our elections, hosting community meetings and cultural events, and so much more. When there is a natural disaster or an emer-

gency, people often gather at their public schools for shelter, information, and resources. They are essential facilities and should be treated as essential infrastructure.

Safe, healthy, modern, well-equipped schools are essential for advancing student achievement and ensuring that the next generation is prepared to meet the economic, social, environmental, and global challenges our Nation faces. Yet too many of the over 50 million students and 6 million staff who learn and work in our public schools spend their days in facilities that fail to make the grade. In fact, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave public school buildings across the country an overall grade of D+ in its latest report card. The 2021 State of our Schools Report identified an \$85 billion annual shortfall in school facilities investment.

States and local communities cannot bridge this gap alone, especially when many struggle to simply keep teachers and staff on the payroll. We know that budget shortfalls hit low-income and minority communities the hardest. The GAO noted that capital construction expenditures, on average, were about \$300 less per student in high-poverty districts compared to low-poverty districts. With inflation, interest rates, and extreme weather events on the rise, the gap between what is needed to maintain safe and modern schools and what communities can afford will only grow. Addressing this need with robust Federal investment is not only the right thing to do for our students; it will also give a needed boost to our economy, putting people to work in family-sustaining jobs. According to an analysis by the Economic Policy Institute, every \$1 billion spent on construction generates 17,785 jobs.

The Rebuild America's Schools Act will create a Federal-State partnership for school infrastructure. It will provide, over 5 years, a total of \$130 billion in direct grants and school construction bonds to help fill the annual gap in school facility capital needs, while creating nearly 2 million jobs.

Specifically, the Rebuild America's Schools Act will provide \$100 billion in formula funds to States for local competitive grants for school repair, renovation, and construction. States will focus assistance on communities with the greatest financial need, encourage green construction practices, and expand access to high-speed broadband to ensure that all students have access to digital learning. Our legislation would also provide \$30 billion for qualified school infrastructure bonds, QSIBs, \$10 billion each year from FY 2023 through FY 2025, and restore the qualified zone academy bonds, QZABs, that were eliminated in the Republican Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. The legislation also eases the matching requirements and expands the authority and eligible purposes of QZABs to allow local education agencies to construct, rehabilitate, retrofit, or repair school facilities. The Rebuild America's Schools

Act also supports American workers by ensuring that projects use American-made iron, steel, and manufactured products and meet labor standards.

I would like to thank the broad coalition of educators, community organizations, unions, civil rights advocates, and employers that have provided feedback and support for this legislation, including the 21st Century Schools Fund, A4LE: the Association for Learning Environments, AASA: The School Superintendents Association, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, American Federation of Teachers, American Industrial Hygiene Association, American Institute of Architects, BASIC Coalition, Council of the Great City Schools, Heart of America, International Unions of Bricklayers and Allied Craft Workers, National Association of Energy Service Companies, National Association of Federally Impacted Schools, National Council on School Facilities, National Education Association, Rebuild America's Schools Coalition, Safe Traces, Teach Plus, and the U.S. Green Building Council.

We have no time to waste in fixing our deteriorating school infrastructure. In the words of a student activist in Providence, Rhode Island: "Students cannot learn in a crumbling building, a school that isn't fit to uplift our minds." We need to listen to our students, strengthen our communities, and improve our school buildings. I urge all of our colleagues to support the Rebuild America's Schools Act and press for its passage.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2630. A bill to establish the Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area in the State of Virginia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, today, I am introducing legislation that is the product of at least 18 years of collaborative work by a diverse group of stakeholders in Virginia, including local recreation groups, conservationists, timber industry representatives, and sportsmen.

The Shenandoah Mountain Act would designate more than 92,000 acres of the George Washington National Forest lands in Virginia as the Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area, SMNSA.

Congress designates national scenic areas to protect the natural and scenic value of lands that are also compatible with recreational uses such as hiking, fishing, hunting, camping, mountain biking, among others.

The SMNSA encompasses four wilderness areas: Skidmore Fork, Little River, Ramsey's Draft, and Lynn Hollow, which in total include 10 peaks above 4,000 feet and 150 miles of trails to attract campers, hikers, mountain bikers, fishermen, birders, and equestrians. The legislation also establishes a 5,779-acre wilderness area at Beech

Lick Knob, located 10 miles to the north.

The SMNSA will protect important water resources, as it covers headwaters for the Potomac and James Rivers and watersheds that provide drinking water for Harrisonburg, Staunton, and communities farther downstream, such as Washington, DC, and Richmond. This area is also a hotspot for biodiversity. Cold mountain streams in the area are a stronghold for native brook trout. Today's legislation would permanently protect these rivers and streams from industrial development. It would also help safeguard plant and wildlife habitat for black bears, wild turkeys, more than 250 species of birds, and at-risk species like the Cow Knob and Shenandoah Mountain salamanders.

The Shenandoah Mountain National Scenic Area will provide a boost to the region's growing tourism industry. In 2021, the tourism economy directly employed 6,543 people and generated \$728.5 million in Augusta, Rockingham, Bath, and Highland Counties, as well as Harrisonburg, Staunton, and Waynesboro. In addition to the direct benefits to tourism, James Madison University scientists estimate that lands within the SMNSA proposal already generate \$13.7 million per year in other local benefits, including the value of the water supply. Designation of the SMNSA would further grow these benefits.

The challenges of the past 3 years have underscored that getting out into nature is critical to our health and well-being. I am proud that the Shenandoah Mountain Act will expand these opportunities within the George Washington National Forest for visitors near and far, while also boosting our local economies, protecting drinking water sources, and preserving the wildlife that makes this area so special.

The local governments of Staunton, Augusta, Rockingham, and Harrisonburg, along with over 400 businesses and organizations, have endorsed the new designation for the vast benefits it will have on the surrounding communities. I thank my colleague Senator MARK WARNER for joining me in introducing this legislation. I also commend our local stakeholders for working on this proposal for so many years.

By Mr. PADILLA:

S. 2654. A bill to increase efficiency and conservation in public water systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to introduce the Water Efficiency, Conservation, and Sustainability Act of 2023. This legislation would authorize \$550 million for the Environmental Protection Agency to address water inefficiencies and losses in public water systems.

Every year, household leaks waste nearly 1 trillion gallons of water nationwide, increasing water bills and

wasting water meant for critical drinking water and clean water uses.

The Water Efficiency, Conservation, and Sustainability Act of 2023 creates a suite of options for States, municipalities, water systems, and Tribal nations to address water inefficiencies and losses in public water systems and to support leak reduction as one of the most cost-effective urban water management tools we have.

Leaking pipes waste an estimated 17 percent of water before a drop reaches a consumer's faucet. In my home State of California, 8 percent is wasted in a State that cannot afford any waste as we face increasingly unpredictable weather whiplash between drought and flooding.

Water efficiency is the most cost-effective way to ensure clean, affordable drinking water for communities across the country. Much like energy efficiency measures, improving water efficiency saves consumers money, reduces demand, decreases strain on water supply systems, and saves energy.

Yet Federal spending on energy efficiency and renewable energy in outpaced spending on water efficiency and water reuse by approximately 80 to 1 since 2000, resulting in millions of gallons wasted each year that could otherwise be saved or utilized.

Achieving widespread water efficiency will require both inside-the-home and system upgrades. Fixes at the individual building level can add up to make a big difference. The EPA estimates that installation of water-efficient fixtures and appliances can reduce water use 20 percent and save money for consumers.

The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provided a historic level of water infrastructure investment—including for Bureau of Reclamation States and for wastewater efficiency—but more investment is needed in the water systems that deliver drinking water to our homes and businesses across all States.

As drought continues to impact the Western United States and regions across the country, investing in resilient water supplies is an increasingly urgent priority for States, water systems, and families facing rising water rates.

In a survey completed as part of a 2014 GAO report, 40 out of 50 State water managers expected water shortages in some portion of their State in the next decade. Improving water efficiency saves money, saves energy, and helps ensure a more resilient water supply.

I would like to thank my House colleague, Congressman LEVIN, for championing this effort with me, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact the Water Efficiency, Conservation, and Sustainability Act of 2023.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. BENNET, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. PADILLA, Mr.

KELLY, Ms. SINEMA, and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 2696. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to modify the water conservation or irrigation efficiency practice waiver authority; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise today to introduce the EQIP Water Conservation Act of 2023 and thank Senators MARSHALL, BENNET, LUJÁN, PADILLA, KELLY, and SINEMA for joining me as original cosponsors.

Our bill would clarify eligibility requirements for water conservation and irrigation efficiency practices funded under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Environmental Quality Incentives Program, EQIP, to allow irrigation districts to undertake large-scale off-farm water conservation projects that benefit many farms rather than only single-farm projects.

Drought poses a persistent and potentially lethal threat to agriculture in Western States. In 2021 alone, drought cost California's agricultural sector \$1.1 billion in direct costs and nearly 9,000 jobs, while farmers were forced to leave 400,000 acres of land unplanted. This situation is causing irreparable harm to agricultural communities across the West, and farmers need tools to adapt. EQIP is a crucial tool in the effort to combat drought, and the programs' funds must be made fully available to water agencies, which often serve hundreds of farmers.

In the 2018 farm bill, Congress authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to waive payment limitations and adjusted gross income, AGI, limitations to more effectively support water district projects that conserve water, provide fish and wildlife habitat, and combat drought. However, a subsequent USDA rule effectively nullified this provision by capping EQIP payments for water agencies at \$900,000, which is only twice the cap for projects that benefit individual farmers.

Since water agencies often serve dozens or even hundreds of farmers, this rule makes no sense and undermines the 2018 farm bill's goal of facilitating water conservation projects by water agencies.

Our bill would require the Secretary of Agriculture to waive the EQIP payment cap of \$900,000 for water agencies. To be clear, this bill does not attempt to bypass the payment cap for individual farms; rather, it would set the cap on projects based on the number of farmers it serves. For instance, if a water agency serves 10 farmers, the total payment limitation would be \$4.5 million, or \$450,000 per farmer. Our bill would also deduct for EQIP payments already made to farmers served by that agency's project.

In maintaining a per-farmer payment limitation at the same level as the limit for individual farmers, our bill recognizes that water agencies serve many farmers and that providing adequate funds to these entities will allow

USDA to more effectively meet conservation and irrigation efficiency goals.

Congress has an opportunity this year to make significant strides in improving irrigation efficiency and water conservation while more faithfully adhering to the conservation goals of the 2018 farm bill. I thank my cosponsors for their partnership on this bill, and I urge the Senate to take it up and pass it as soon as possible.

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

S. 2697. A bill to amend the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act to modify the definitions of the terms "rural" and "rural area" for purposes of grants and loans to remedy a lack of compliance with certain drinking water standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise today to introduce the Clean Drinking Water for Rural Communities Act of 2023 and thank my colleague Senator PADILLA for joining me as an original cosponsor.

Our bill would change the eligibility limit for the water and wastewater programs within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development from 10,000 residents to 20,000 residents for investments to treat contaminated drinking water that does not meet Federal and State standards. Modifying the threshold would correct an oversight that is a barrier for many rural and agricultural communities to access clean drinking water.

Many rural communities across the United States lack access to safe drinking water because their aging systems have not kept pace with worsening pollution. In many of these communities, agricultural runoff has caused nitrate concentrations to soar, which can cause cancer, thyroid disease, and developmental defects. The problem has become widespread in low-income, rural, and farmworker communities in California's Central Valley, where the majority of residents get their water from wells without any treatment system.

Unfortunately, the cost of addressing this problem can be prohibitive for small water systems that serve mostly low-income residents. Many of these communities exceed the 10,000-resident limit for USDA programs but are too small to be competitive for other drinking water assistance programs. These communities are left to rely on bottled water or drinking water that does not comply with Federal or State standards.

The small change proposed in this bill would enable more communities in the Central Valley and around the country to use USDA funds to remove contamination or connect to larger water systems.

Congress has an opportunity this year to make this small change to USDA's Water and Waste Disposal

Loan and Grant Program to improve access to safe, clean drinking water for individuals in small, agricultural communities. I thank Senator PADILLA for his partnership on this bill, and I urge the full Senate to take it up and pass it as soon as possible.

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

S. 2698. A bill to require the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out a program to provide payments to producers experiencing certain crop losses as a result of a disaster; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I rise today to introduce the Agricultural Emergency Relief Act of 2023 and thank my colleague Senator PADILLA for joining me as an original cosponsor.

Our bill would establish a consistent structure and end the delays in administering ad hoc agricultural disaster assistance by authorizing the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Emergency Relief Program. In addition to improving the distribution of supplemental disaster funds appropriated by Congress, this program would encourage participation in crop insurance by requiring producers who receive relief payments to purchase 2 years of insurance.

Every year, farmers across the country are contending with disasters of increasing severity and frequency, whether droughts and wildfires in the West, hurricanes in the Southeast, freezes in the Midwest, or flooding throughout the country. In some cases, crop insurance is able to cover the damages caused by these storms, but producers often require additional assistance due to the scale of the damage. This is especially true with specialty crops, where producers may lack affordable insurance options and, as a result, often operate with little coverage or no insurance at all. Federal disaster assistance has been a critical bridge back to production for these farmers, who are producing the Nation's food supply amid the worsening impacts of climate change.

Since fiscal year 2018, Congress has appropriated more than \$19 billion for agricultural disaster assistance. However, these funds, lacking proper authorizing language, have been distributed through four different USDA programs, with changing requirements, forms, and processes from year to year. Each time USDA has had to create a new program, administrative delays have slowed the dispersal of relief, leaving producers, their families, and their communities in limbo. Farmers deserve more reliability, which our bill would provide.

Our bill would authorize USDA's Emergency Relief Program to provide consistent, authorized guidelines for program administration of ad hoc disaster funds. Payment calculations for farmers would rely on indemnities reported to USDA or on calculation of

lost revenue. This flexibility will help support farmers producing both commodities and specialty crops. Our bill would also require producers to purchase crop insurance for 2 years after receiving a relief payment.

Congress has an opportunity to provide clarity and consistency to our Nation's farmers who have weathered disasters and delays in assistance. I thank Senator PADILLA for his partnership on this bill, and I urge the Senate to take it up and pass it as soon as possible.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2701. A bill to address the homelessness and housing crises, to move toward the goal of providing for a home for all Americans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise in support of the Housing for All Act of 2023, which I introduced today.

Our Nation's homelessness and affordable housing crises have reached a breaking point. As of January 2022, over 580,000 individuals in the United States—disproportionately people of color—experienced homelessness. The rate of homelessness has increased by 6 percent since 2017. In Los Angeles County alone, the mortality rate for people experiencing homelessness increased by 55 percent between 2019 to 2021.

The lack of adequate Federal investment in affordable housing and housing assistance programs contributes to these crises. There is currently a shortage of 7.3 million affordable and available rental homes in the United States. According to a recent National Low Income Housing Coalition report, no State or county exists where a person working 40 hours a week and earning the State or local minimum wage can afford to rent a modest two-bedroom apartment, and 86 percent of all low-income renters in the Nation are considered cost-burdened, spending more than 30 percent of their income on just housing costs alone.

The affordable housing and homelessness crises are not just a Democrat problem or an urban problem but impact every Senator's State. From our metropolitan areas to our rural heartlands, our constituents everywhere feel the real impact of housing unaffordability. And it is time for the Federal Government to step up, partner with our State and local governments alongside service providers on the ground and other stakeholders, and invest in solving these problems at a rate commensurate with the need.

I am proud to reintroduce this bill, which represents a comprehensive approach to tackling housing and homelessness. If enacted, it would invest in and align Federal resources to support people experiencing housing instability. To address the affordable housing and homelessness crises, we must

invest in proven policies that support strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and ensure quality, affordable homes for all.

Specifically, this bill will address the affordable housing shortage by investing in the housing trust fund, the Section 202 Supportive Housing for the Elderly Program, Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities Program, and the HOME Program. It establishes a commission to focus on racial equity in housing and homelessness.

The bill will address homelessness by investing in housing choice vouchers, project-based rental assistance, emergency solutions grants, and continuums of care. It also builds on locally-developed and -driven approaches by creating new grant programs to strengthen mobile crisis intervention teams; to support hotel and motel conversions to permanent supportive housing with services; to aid libraries in supporting persons experiencing homelessness; to provide people living in vehicles with a safe place to park overnight and facilitate a transition to stable housing; and to coordinate behavioral health care with homelessness services. And it commissions a report on the connection between evictions and emergency rental assistance during the pandemic, so we can make smarter policies moving forward.

When I have traveled around California—from Los Angeles County and the Inland Empire to the Central Valley, San Diego, and San Francisco—to better understand the needs for housing in different communities, some key elements stood out. On the production side, there is a need for more dedicated funding for affordable housing from the Federal Government. There is also missing middle-income housing for families, especially people of color. And there is not enough housing near transit. That is why my bill focuses on supporting inclusive, transit-oriented development. When I talked to researchers about keeping families housed, one main point they made is that we don't have enough data on renters and evictions, and that is why I wanted to include a section of the bill on data—so we can make evidence-based policies.

Right now, the cost to build low-income housing in California is very high in part because of land and material costs and the fragmented way funding is distributed in California. This is a common problem across the Nation, not just in California. That is why I included a section to provide technical assistance for localities navigating Federal and State housing funding sources.

Affordable housing is essential infrastructure. Every person deserves dignity, security, and a space of their own.

I want to thank Representatives TED LIEU and SALUD CARBAJAL for introducing this bill with me, and I hope our colleagues will join us in supporting

this comprehensive solution to our nationwide affordable housing and homelessness crises.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2702. A bill to amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to reauthorize the position of Farmworker Coordinator; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to speak in support of the Voice for Farm Workers Act of 2023, which I introduced today.

Farmworkers feed our Nation. This is especially true in California, agricultural heart of the Nation. California is the most successful State in agricultural production and has the largest population of farmworkers. During COVID-19, a time of incredible hardship, farmworkers put food on the tables of millions of Americans despite working in extreme conditions and facing deep-rooted inequities.

Right now, just one person is statutorily dedicated to serving as a liaison between farmworkers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture—the Farmworker Coordinator. While the 2008 farm bill created this position, Congress has never provided the proper resources to support or staff this position. The 2023 U.S. Department of Agriculture Equity Commission Interim Report even included a strong recommendation for the USDA to fund and elevate roles for professional staff solely dedicated to farmworkers' concerns and perspectives.

It is time that we support the USDA staff who are dedicated to integrating the valuable perspectives of farmworkers into the decisions that directly affect the lives and livelihoods of these workers.

That is why I am proud to introduce this bill, which would expand the current role of USDA Farmworker Coordinator to allow for the Coordinator to create recommendations for new initiatives and programs, collaborate within the Department on programmatic and policy decisions that related to farm and food system workers, and allow for the employment of additional staff to support the Coordinator in their duties.

This bill would include additional entities for the Farmworker Coordinator to consult with, including institutions of higher education, local education agencies, and community-based nonprofit organizations, to increase outreach efforts and ensure that more farmworkers in more communities can be heard.

As we work towards passing this year's farm bill, I urge my colleagues to consider the farmworkers who keep our families and communities fed and healthy.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN,

Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WELCH, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 2703. A bill to amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish the Office of the Farm and Food System Workforce; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to speak in support of the Supporting Our Farm and Food System Workforce Act of 2023, which I introduced today.

Farm and food system workers feed our Nation. We know this well in California—the agricultural heart of the Nation—where we have one of the largest populations of farmworkers and food system workers in the United States. Throughout pandemic, these workers put food on our tables and kept our grocery store shelves stocked—despite facing deep-rooted inequities in the workforce and often experiencing food insecurity themselves.

Right now, just one person in the entire Federal Government is statutorily dedicated to serving as a liaison between farmworkers and the U.S. Department of Agriculture—the Farmworker Coordinator. While the 2008 farm bill created this position, Congress has never provided the proper resources to support or staff this position. The 2023 U.S. Department of Agriculture Equity Commission Interim Report even included a strong recommendation for USDA to fund and elevate roles for professional staff solely dedicated to farmworkers' concerns and perspectives.

It is time that we give those who provide the food for our Nation a voice in the national conversation. We must give farm and food system workers a dedicated office within the USDA to integrate their invaluable perspectives into the decisions that directly affect their lives and livelihoods.

That is why I am proud to introduce this bill, which will create the USDA Office of the Farm and Food System Workforce to not only serve as a liaison for farm and food system workers but also to provide a platform for their concerns and interests to assist in the creation of recommendations and new initiatives for the Department.

The bill would also create a Farm and Food System Worker Advisory Committee, composed of a diverse cross-section of members representing these workers' varied interests and perspectives, such as workers themselves, labor unions, higher education professionals, civil rights advocates, women worker focused groups, and trusted community-based nonprofits.

The legislation would also establish a Farm and Food System Workforce Interagency Council comprised of representatives from various Federal Agencies to improve coordination, planning, program development, and policymaking across Cabinet-level leadership. The Office will also appoint staff to various USDA entities to serve as liaisons on matters related to farm

and food system workers within the Department.

Finally, the bill would require annual, publicly available reports in multiple languages about the Office's work in the past year, including recommendations to improve the work and livelihood of farm and food system workers, climate change impacts on the food system, and the barriers workers face in accessing Federal programs.

During this year's Farm Bill, I urge my colleagues to remember the workers behind the American food system, the workers who keep our families and communities fed and healthy. These workers deserve a seat at the table.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself and Mr. TILLIS):

S. 2704. A bill to amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to establish an exception to certain payment limitations in the case of person or legal entity that derives income from agriculture, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise to introduce the Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act of 2023. This legislation would allow specialty crop producers to access critical disaster relief programs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Increasingly frequent and catastrophic floods, fires, freezes, and other disasters are threatening the long-term sustainability of agriculture across the country.

The impact has been particularly acute for California's agricultural communities, who face year-round threats from drought, heat, floods, and fires.

To ensure producers can get back on their feet following natural disasters, the farm bill authorizes a number of safety net programs. But these programs simply don't work for specialty crop producers, who, despite facing the same challenges posed by extreme weather as other growers, are excluded from meaningful participation in USDA disaster programs based on the application of outdated adjusted gross income, AGI, limitations.

As a result, producers from California to Florida are excluded from accessing critical disaster programs.

The Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act would codify flexibility used in the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program to waive the AGI limitation for producers that derive 75 percent of their income from farming, ranching, or related farming practices.

What are referred to as specialty crops are just that—special. Specialty crops, which include fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops, are cultivated for food, medicine, and aesthetic purposes, requiring overall higher inputs and specialized processes for planting, growing, and harvesting.

Did you know that it costs more than \$30,000 to produce an acre of strawberries? The cost of production for spe-

cialty crops is typically thousands of dollars per acre.

As a result, both large and small producers of specialty crops end up exceeding the AGI limitations put in place to means-test critical disaster assistance.

That is why we need to pass the Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act to ensure farmers and ranchers can access agricultural safety net programs in the wake of increasingly more frequent and catastrophic disasters.

I would like to thank Senator Tillis for joining me to introduce this bill, as well as Congressman Panetta for championing this bill in the House.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to pass the Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act as quickly as possible.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. RICKETTS, and Mr. HICKENLOOPER):

S. 2705. A bill to grant States the authority to request additional non-immigrant visas for foreign workers in their respective States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. THUNE. 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. 2705

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLES.

This Act may be cited as the "State Executive Authority for Seasonal Occupations Needing Additional Labor Act" or the "SEASONAL Act".

SEC. 2. STATE EXEMPTION AUTHORITY FOR SEASONAL OCCUPATIONS NEEDING ADDITIONAL LABOR.

Section 214(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(g)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(12)(A) Notwithstanding the numerical limitation set forth in paragraph (1)(B), the Governor of any State may submit a petition to the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Labor for the issuance of a specified number of supplemental H-2B non-immigrant visas in a fiscal year for employers based in such State, employers based in such State that have employees who work within a specified Standard Occupational Classification Group (as defined by the Department of Labor), or employers in a specific Economic Development District designated by the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce that encompasses any portion of such State if—

"(i) the number of applications for such visas received from all employers exceeds such numerical limitation for such fiscal year;

"(ii) the State had a seasonally adjusted unemployment rate of not more than 3.5 percent in at least 9 of the 12 most recent monthly reports issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics;

"(iii) such Governor certifies that—

"(I) there is a persistent, unmet need for labor within the State, the specified Standard Occupational Classification Group in the

State, or the specific Economic Development District in the State; and

“(II) the allocation of additional H-2B non-immigrant visas pursuant to this paragraph—

“(aa) will not displace domestic workers; and

“(bb) will not negatively affect average wages in such State; and

“(iv) employers who hire H-2B non-immigrant workers pursuant to this paragraph comply with any additional requirements imposed by the Secretary of Labor, by regulation.

“(B) The Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, shall issue the supplemental H-2B nonimmigrant visas requested by the Governor of a State pursuant to subparagraph (A) to the extent that the applications for such visas submitted by employers based in such State meet all applicable requirements of the H-2B non-immigrant visa program.

“(C) If the number of employer applications from a State exceed the number of H-2B nonimmigrant visas requested pursuant to subparagraph (A), the Office of Foreign Labor Certification shall randomly assign for processing all of the remaining H-2B non-immigrant visa applications and issue supplemental visas to all qualified applicants until the number of supplemental visas allocated to such State pursuant to subparagraph (B) have been issued.

“(D) This paragraph shall cease to have force or effect on the date that is 4 years after the date of the enactment of the SEASONAL Act.

“(E) Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to prohibit the legislature of any State from setting limits with respect to supplemental H-2B nonimmigrant visas that the Governor of such State may request, including—

“(i) limiting the number of such visas that may be requested in a fiscal year; and

“(ii) limiting the allocation of such visas to H-2B nonimmigrant workers who are employed—

“(I) within such State;

“(II) within specified Standard Occupational Classification Groups; or

“(III) within specified Economic Development Districts.”.

SEC. 3. ANNUAL REPORT.

Not later than 15 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter until the date that is 4 years after such date of enactment, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Labor shall submit a joint report to Congress that includes, with respect to the preceding year—

(1) the number of supplemental H-2B non-immigrant visas issued pursuant to section 214(g)(12) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(g)(12)), disaggregated by the State in which the recipients of such visas are working;

(2) a breakdown of Standard Occupational Classification Groups or Economic Development Districts for which supplemental H-2B nonimmigrant visas were issued, disaggregated by the State in which the recipients of such visas are working;

(3) an analysis of any effect caused by the issuance of supplemental H-2B non-immigrant visas that led to the displacement of domestic workers or a reduction in the average wages, disaggregated by State; and

(4) an assessment of whether the issuance of supplemental H-2B nonimmigrant visas led to increased economic opportunities and productivity in the States in which the recipients of such visas are working.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 319—DECLARING RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

Mr. BROWN (for himself, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. PADILLA, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. SMITH, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CARDIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. REED, Ms. STABENOW, and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 319

Whereas a public health crisis is an issue—

(1) that affects many people, is a threat to the public, and is ongoing;

(2) that is unfairly distributed among different populations and disproportionately impacts health outcomes, access to health care, and life expectancy;

(3) the effects of which could be reduced by preventive measures; and

(4) for which those preventive measures are not yet in place;

Whereas public health experts agree that significant racial inequities exist in the prevalence, severity, and mortality rates of various health conditions in the United States;

Whereas examples of those inequities include—

(1) life expectancies for Black and Native American people in the United States are significantly lower than those of White people in the United States;

(2) Black and Native American women are 2 to 4 times more likely than White women to suffer severe maternal morbidity or die of pregnancy-related complications;

(3) Black and Native American infants are 2 to 3 times more likely to die than White infants;

(4) the Black infant mortality rate in the United States is higher than the infant mortality rates recorded in 27 of the 36 democratic countries with market-based economies that are members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development;

(5) Hispanic women are 40 percent more likely to be diagnosed with and 30 percent more likely to die from cervical cancer compared to non-Hispanic White women;

(6) Asian Americans face health disparities in cancer and chronic diseases, and are the only population in the United States for which cancer is the leading cause of death;

(7) Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders suffer from a number of poor health outcomes such as high rates of overweight status, obesity, hypertension, and asthma and cancer mortality;

(8) Native Hawaiians suffer from coronary heart disease, stroke, heart failure, cancer, and diabetes at a rate 3 times greater than in other ethnic populations in Hawaii and become afflicted with those diseases a decade earlier in their lives compared with other ethnic populations; and

(9) during the COVID-19 pandemic, Black, Hispanic or Latino, Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and Native American communities experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID-19 infection, hospitalization, and mortality compared to the White population of the United States;

Whereas inequities in health outcomes are exacerbated for people of color who are LGBTQIA+;

Whereas inequities in health outcomes are exacerbated for people of color who have disabilities;

Whereas, historically, explanations for health inequities have focused on false genetic science such as eugenics;

Whereas, historically, explanations for health inequities have focused on incomplete social scientific analyses that narrowly focus on individual behavior to highlight ostensible deficiencies within racial and ethnic minority groups;

Whereas modern public health officials recognize the broader social context in which health inequities emerge and acknowledge the impact of historical and contemporary racism on health;

Whereas racism is recognized in modern public health discourse as one of many social determinants of health, which—

(1) are a broad range of nonmedical factors that can enhance or hinder quality of life and influence health outcomes;

(2) are the conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live, and age, and include the wider set of forces and systems shaping the conditions of daily life;

(3) include such factors as housing, employment, education, health care, food, transportation, social support, poverty, crime, violence, segregation, and environmental toxins;

(4) are linked to a lack of opportunity and resources to protect, improve, and maintain health; and

(5) taken together, create health inequities that stem from unfair and unjust systems, policies, and practices, and limit access to the opportunities and resources needed to live the healthiest life possible;

Whereas, since its founding, the United States has had a longstanding history and legacy of racism, mistreatment, and discrimination that has perpetuated health inequities for members of racial and ethnic minority groups;

Whereas that history and legacy of racism, mistreatment, and discrimination includes—

(1) the immoral paradox of freedom and slavery, which is an atrocity that can be traced throughout the history of the United States, as African Americans lived under the oppressive institution of slavery from 1619 through 1865, endured the practices and laws of segregation during the Jim Crow era, and continue to face the ramifications of systemic racism through unjust and discriminatory structures and policies;

(2) the failure of the United States to carry out the responsibilities and promises made in more than 350 treaties ratified with sovereign indigenous communities, including American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders, as made evident by the chronic and pervasive underfunding of the Indian Health Service and Tribal, Urban Indian, and Native Hawaiian health care, the vast health and socioeconomic inequities faced by Native American people, and the inaccessibility of many Federal public health and social programs in Native American communities;

(3) the enactment of immigration laws in the United States that scapegoated Asians, separated families, and branded Asians as perpetual outsiders, such as—

(A) the enactment of the Act entitled “An Act supplementary to the Acts in relation to immigration”, approved March 3, 1875 (commonly known as the “Page Act of 1875”) (18 Stat. 477, chapter 141), which effectively prohibited the entry of East Asian women into the United States;

(B) the Act entitled “An Act to execute certain treaty stipulations relating to Chinese”, approved May 6, 1882 (commonly known as the “Chinese Exclusion Act”; 22 Stat. 58, chapter 126), which banned thousands of Chinese-born laborers, who were