

Whereas, in October 2022, Mr. Kara-Murza was awarded the Vaclav Havel Prize honoring outstanding civil society action in defense of human rights;

Whereas the late Senator John McCain said Mr. Kara-Murza “is a brave, outspoken, and relentless advocate for freedom and democracy in Russia” and introduced Mr. Kara-Murza as “a personal hero whose courage, selflessness and idealism I find awe-inspiring”;

Whereas, in April 2023, 81 Members of Congress sent a letter to Secretary of State Anthony Blinken urging that Mr. Kara-Murza be designated under the Robert Levinson Hostage Recovery and Hostage-Taking Accountability Act (22 U.S.C. 1741 et seq.) as “unlawfully and wrongfully detained”; and

Whereas Mr. Kara-Murza remains a political prisoner and a victim of Vladimir Putin’s authoritarian state: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress—

(1) condemns in the strongest possible terms the unjust and arbitrary detention of Russian democratic opposition leader Vladimir Kara-Murza;

(2) calls on the Russian Federation to immediately release Mr. Kara-Murza and all other Russian opposition leaders, including Alexei Navalny, who are detained as a result of their opposition to the Putin regime;

(3) expresses solidarity with and calls for the release of all political prisoners in Russia and Belarus, as well as Ukrainian citizens illegally held as prisoners by Putin’s regime in violation of the rule of law as a result of their support for liberal democratic values; and

(4) calls on the President of the United States and leaders from across the free world to work tirelessly for the release of political prisoners in Russia.

VETERAN IMPROVEMENT COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSE ACT OF 2023

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs be discharged from further consideration of S. 656 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 656) to amend title 38, United States Code, to revise the rules for approval by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of commercial driver education programs for purposes of veterans educational assistance, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The bill (S. 656) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 656

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 “Veteran Improvement Commercial Driver License Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. MODIFICATION OF RULES FOR APPROVAL OF COMMERCIAL DRIVER EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR PURPOSES OF VETERANS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3680A(e) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (3) as subparagraphs (A) through (C), respectively;

(2) in the matter before subparagraph (A), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “(1)” before “The Secretary”;

(3) in paragraph (1)(B), as redesignated by paragraph (1), by inserting “except as provided in paragraph (2),” before “the course”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph (2):

“(2)(A) Subject to this paragraph, a commercial driver education program is exempt from paragraph (1)(B) for a branch of an educational institution if the commercial driver education program offered at the branch by the educational institution—

“(i) is appropriately licensed; and

“(ii) uses the same curriculum as a commercial driver education program offered by the educational institution at another location that is approved for purposes of this chapter by a State approving agency or the Secretary when acting in the role of a State approving agency.

“(B)(i) In order for a commercial driver education program of an educational institution offered at a branch described in paragraph (1)(B) to be exempt under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, the educational institution shall submit to the Secretary each year that paragraph (1)(B) would otherwise apply a report that demonstrates that the curriculum at the new branch is the same as the curriculum at the primary location.

“(ii) Reporting under clause (i) shall be submitted in accordance with such requirements as the Secretary shall establish in consultation with the State approving agencies.

“(C)(i) The Secretary may withhold an exemption under subparagraph (A) for any educational institution or branch of an educational institution as the Secretary considers appropriate.

“(ii) In making any determination under clause (i), the Secretary may consult with the Secretary of Transportation on the performance of a provider of a commercial driver program, including the status of the provider within the Training Provider Registry of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration when appropriate.”.

(b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT OF REQUIREMENTS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish requirements under section 3680A(e)(2)(B)(ii) of such title, as added by subsection (a).

(2) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to commercial driver education programs on and after the date that is 180 days after the date on which the Secretary establishes the requirements under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

WOUNDED WARRIOR ACCESS ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1226 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1226) to amend title 38, United States Code, to allow for the electronic request of certain records, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 1226) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

ENSURING THE SECURITY OF OFFICE SPACE RENTED BY SENATORS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. 3222, introduced earlier today by Senator KLOBUCHAR.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 3222) to ensure the security of office space rented by Senators, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I further ask that the bill be considered read three times and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (S. 3222) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 3222

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

SECTION 1. SECURITY OF OFFICE SPACE RENTED BY SENATORS.

Section 3 of the Legislative Branch Appropriation Act, 1975 (2 U.S.C. 6317) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (12) as subparagraphs (A) through (L), respectively;

(B) by striking “The aggregate” and inserting “(1) Subject to paragraph (2), the aggregate”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) The aggregate square feet of office space for purposes of paragraph (1) shall not include any portion of the office space used for security or safety enhancements that are—

“(A) of a kind authorized by the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate, which shall include an information technology security closet and a secure lobby or reception area; and

“(B) approved by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.”; and

(2) in subsection (c)(1)—

(A) by striking “The maximum” and inserting “(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), the maximum”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(B) The portion of the cost of a rental described in subparagraph (A) that is attributable to building security and safety measures shall not be included in determining the annual rate paid for the rental for purposes of subparagraph (A) if—

“(i) the costs are for building security and safety measures—

“(I) of a kind authorized by the Committee on Rules and Administration of the Senate, which shall include guard services, access control, and facility monitoring; and

“(II) approved by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate; and

“(ii) such costs are itemized separately in a manner approved by the Sergeant at Arms and Doorkeeper of the Senate.”.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 340

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 340) to impose sanctions with respect to foreign support for terrorist organizations, including Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Mr. SCHUMER. I now ask for a second reading, and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard. The bill will receive its second reading on the next legislative day.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, introduced earlier today: S. Res. 447, S. Res. 448, and S. Res. 449.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I know of no further debate on the resolutions en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on adoption of the resolutions en bloc.

The resolutions were agreed to en bloc.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the preambles be agreed to and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

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

The preambles were agreed to en bloc.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

DEBBIE SMITH ACT OF 2023

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of S. 499 and

the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 499) to amend the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 to reauthorize the Debbie Smith DNA Backlog Grant Program, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged, and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SCHUMER. I ask unanimous consent that the Cornyn amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to.

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

The amendment (No. 1361) was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: To improve the bill)

Strike section 2 and insert the following:

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 2(j) of the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 (34 U.S.C. 40701(j)) is amended by striking “through 2024” and inserting “through 2029”.

SEC. 3. AUDITS TO PROTECT INTEGRITY OF GRANT AWARDS.

Section 2(c)(4) of the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 (34 U.S.C. 40701(c)(4)) is amended by striking “2022” and inserting “2029”.

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

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

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate on the bill, as amended?

The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill, as amended, pass?

The bill (S. 499), as amended, was passed, as follows:

S. 499

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 “Debbie Smith Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 2(j) of the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 (34 U.S.C. 40701(j)) is amended by striking “through 2024” and inserting “through 2029”.

SEC. 3. AUDITS TO PROTECT INTEGRITY OF GRANT AWARDS.

Section 2(c)(4) of the DNA Analysis Backlog Elimination Act of 2000 (34 U.S.C. 40701(c)(4)) is amended by striking “2022” and inserting “2029”.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

TRIBUTE TO SHERRI A. BERGER

Mr. WARNOCK. Mr. President, today I have the honor of celebrating the exceptional contributions of Ms. Sherri A. Berger as she departs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Throughout her distinguished career, Ms. Berger has been a tireless cham-

pion of public health and a catalyst for positive change.

From her early days as an epidemiologist to her current role as senior counselor, Ms. Berger has been devoted to the mission of the CDC. This includes her leadership in establishing the Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics, which harnessed the power of data, expert modeling, and high-quality communication to meet the needs of public health decision-makers.

I celebrate Ms. Berger's dedication to public service, and I congratulate her on an extraordinary tenure at the CDC.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO BENSON “BUZZ” ROBERTS

• Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear constituent, Benson “Buzz” Roberts, in recognition of his imminent retirement as president and chief executive officer of the National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders—NAAHL—and his 45 years of dedicated service in the affordable housing and community development field.

Throughout his career, Buzz has been an influential voice on housing and community development policy and practices. He has been among the most important leaders in helping to advance key legislation to support the Low Income Housing Tax Credit, the New Markets Tax Credit, and more recently my Neighborhood Homes Tax Credit. As the lead Senate sponsor on legislation to expand New Markets Tax Credits and legislation to create Neighborhood Homes credits, I have personally been witness to Buzz's thoughtful leadership and relentless advocacy in support of these critical initiatives. Buzz has also been a key champion of many other key housing and community development initiatives over the years, including HOME Investment Partnerships grants, the Capital Magnet Fund, Treasury Department funding for Federal Housing Administration multifamily risk-sharing loans, and regulatory changes to the Community Reinvestment Act.

Buzz began his career as a community development organizer. He later served at a national association of nonprofit neighborhood development groups before serving for over 20 years as the senior vice president for policy and program development at the Local Initiatives Support Corporation—LISC—a leading nonprofit investor in affordable housing and community revitalization. Buzz then went on to serve as the first Director of the Office of Small Business, Community Development and Housing Policy at the U.S. Treasury Department.

In 2015, Buzz joined NAAHL as its president and CEO. NAAHL is a national association that brings together banks, Community Development Financial Institutions, and other capital providers. During his time at NAAHL, Buzz has helped further the mission of the organization, which is to expand economic opportunity through responsible private financing for affordable