

Whereas education support staff (also sometimes known as “classified school employees” or “education support professionals”) include professionals who work in elementary schools, secondary schools, or public institutions of higher education in clerical and administrative services, transportation services, food and nutrition services, custodial and maintenance services, health and student services, technical services, and skilled trades;

Whereas more than 3,000,000 paraprofessionals and education support staff are the frontline workers who transform schools in the United States from brick and mortar buildings to places of learning and support for more than 49,000,000 students across the United States;

Whereas, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, school staff employment has fallen across positions and there are still 331,000 fewer school staff than before the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving schools without the necessary staff in almost every position;

Whereas, since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, a shortage of teachers has resulted in some paraprofessionals and education support staff being expected to assume the duties of teachers without commensurate compensation or benefits;

Whereas many paraprofessionals and education support staff are undercompensated for their work, and do not receive a living wage, much less a competitive, family-sustaining living wage;

Whereas many paraprofessionals and education support staff are, as a matter of practice, laid off at the end of each school year and rehired annually, and lack job security;

Whereas, unlike most school employees, many paraprofessionals and education support staff are not full-time employees because their services, including those of bus drivers and food service workers, are time delimited;

Whereas many paraprofessionals and education support staff lack access to high-quality, affordable health care because they are intentionally hired for insufficient hours to receive health and retirement benefits, or otherwise are charged exorbitant employee premiums for health insurance;

Whereas, while paraprofessionals and education support staff are often the most diverse subset of school employees, are more likely to have grown up in the communities they serve, and are the trusted school community members for many students and parents, the voices of paraprofessionals and education support staff are not always valued in forming school policies;

Whereas paraprofessionals and education support staff often serve students facing systemic barriers, but are often excluded from professional growth and development opportunities;

Whereas, like many school employees, paraprofessionals and education support staff are too often subject to workplace violence and other safety hazards, including contaminants and extreme temperatures;

Whereas paraprofessionals and education support staff deserve real solutions that would empower them to—

- (1) work in a stable, safe environment;
- (2) have multi-year job security;
- (3) receive livable and competitive wages, access to sufficient hours, and fair compensation for their work; and
- (4) have a voice on the job and meaningful input in school policy;

Whereas respecting paraprofessionals and education support staff is essential to creating and maintaining safe and supportive school environments that are conducive to students learning and thriving; and

Whereas Congress seeks to recognize the rights, respect, and dignity that paraprofes-

sionals and education support staff deserve as they continue to care for and educate the next generation: Now, therefore, be it:

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) paraprofessionals and education support staff—

(A) should be compensated at a rate that is a livable, competitive wage;

(B) should have access to high quality, affordable healthcare and healthcare benefits at a de minimus personal cost;

(C) should be considered to be eligible employees under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.);

(D) should be entitled to 16 weeks of paid family and medical leave;

(E) should have paid leave for all planned and unforeseen school closures, including weather-related closures, professional development days, and other short-term closures;

(F) should have access to meaningful and free or affordable professional growth and development opportunities during regular paid working hours that provide a path to career advancement;

(G) should have sufficient resources and supplies to enable them to do their job effectively and efficiently, including up-to-date technology;

(H) should have access to training and appropriate personal protective equipment;

(I) should have representation in organizations that determine policies that may affect the working conditions of paraprofessionals and education support staff;

(J) should receive notification and the opportunity to provide significant input about the implementation of electronic monitoring, data, algorithms, and artificial intelligence technology in the applicable school and should receive high-quality professional development as new technologies are introduced;

(K) should have adequate notice and opportunity to participate, when appropriate, in individualized education program meetings, behavior intervention team meetings, and other similar meetings relating to the students the paraprofessionals and education support staff support, to the extent permitted by law;

(L) should experience a safe and healthy working environment free from recognized hazards that cause or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm;

(M) should experience appropriate staffing levels to ensure that students have adequate support and that paraprofessionals and education support staff can complete their jobs effectively, efficiently, and safely;

(N) should receive adequate notification regarding the duration of their employment;

(O) should have an employment contract that includes a provision for the automatic renewal of the contract at the expiration of the contract, rather than the automatic termination of the contract at such expiration, and a provision for termination of employment for just cause, rather than termination of employment at will; and

(P) should have a process for reporting workplace issues and concerns to their employer in a manner that protects paraprofessionals and education support staff and other employees from retaliation;

(2) in recognition of the importance of collective bargaining in maintaining good working conditions, employers of paraprofessionals and education support staff should—

(A) engage in good faith negotiations;

(B) strive to reach timely and just contracts that fairly compensate and protect paraprofessionals and education support staff;

(C) refrain from replacing paraprofessionals or education support staff who engage in a strike; and

(D) refrain from locking out such workers; and

(3) nothing in this resolving clause should be interpreted to supersede, or as an expression of the Senate's support for any law that would supersede, employment terms or conditions agreed upon in collective bargaining agreements that are more beneficial to paraprofessionals and education support staff than those described in this resolving clause.

SENATE RESOLUTION 451—PERMITTING THE COLLECTION OF CLOTHING, TOYS, FOOD, AND HOUSEWARES DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES IN SENATE BUILDINGS

Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mr. MORAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 451

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. COLLECTION OF CLOTHING, TOYS, FOOD, AND HOUSEWARES DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON FOR CHARITABLE PURPOSES IN SENATE BUILDINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of the rules or regulations of the Senate—

(1) a Senator, officer of the Senate, or employee of the Senate may collect from another Senator, officer of the Senate, or employee of the Senate within a Senate building or other office secured for a Senator non-monetary donations of clothing, toys, food, and housewares for charitable purposes related to serving persons in need or members of the Armed Forces and the families of those members during the holiday season, if the charitable purposes do not otherwise violate any rule or regulation of the Senate or Federal law; and

(2) a Senator, officer of the Senate, or employee of the Senate may work with a non-profit organization with respect to the delivery of donations described under paragraph (1).

(b) EXPIRATION.—The authority provided by this resolution shall expire at the end of the first session of the 118th Congress.

SENATE RESOLUTION 452—DESIGNATING OCTOBER 30, 2023, AS A NATIONAL DAY OF REMEMBRANCE FOR THE WORKERS OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS PROGRAM OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. HAGERTY, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. BROWN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. SINEMA, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. LUJÁN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 452

Whereas, since World War II, hundreds of thousands of patriotic men and women, including uranium miners, millers, and haulers, plutonium processors, and onsite participants at atmospheric nuclear weapons tests, have served the United States by building nuclear weapons for the defense of the United States;

Whereas dedicated workers paid a high price for advancing a nuclear weapons program at the service and for the benefit of the

United States, including by developing disabling or fatal illnesses;

Whereas the Senate recognized the contributions, services, and sacrifices that those patriotic men and women made for the defense of the United States in—

(1) Senate Resolution 151, 111th Congress, agreed to May 20, 2009;

(2) Senate Resolution 653, 111th Congress, agreed to September 28, 2010;

(3) Senate Resolution 275, 112th Congress, agreed to September 26, 2011;

(4) Senate Resolution 519, 112th Congress, agreed to August 1, 2012;

(5) Senate Resolution 164, 113th Congress, agreed to September 18, 2013;

(6) Senate Resolution 417, 113th Congress, agreed to July 9, 2014;

(7) Senate Resolution 213, 114th Congress, agreed to September 25, 2015;

(8) Senate Resolution 560, 114th Congress, agreed to November 16, 2016;

(9) Senate Resolution 314, 115th Congress, agreed to October 30, 2017;

(10) Senate Resolution 682, 115th Congress, agreed to October 11, 2018;

(11) Senate Resolution 377, 116th Congress, agreed to October 30, 2019;

(12) Senate Resolution 741, 116th Congress, agreed to September 30, 2020;

(13) Senate Resolution 438, 117th Congress, agreed to February 25, 2022; and

(14) Senate Resolution 785, 117th Congress, agreed to December 22, 2022; and

Whereas those patriotic men and women deserve to be recognized for the contributions, services, and sacrifices they made for the defense of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates October 30, 2023, as a national day of remembrance for the workers of the nuclear weapons program of the United States, including the uranium miners, millers, and haulers, plutonium processors, and onsite participants at atmospheric nuclear weapons tests; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to support and participate in appropriate ceremonies, programs, and other activities to commemorate October 30, 2023, as a national day of remembrance for past and present workers of the nuclear weapons program of the United States.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1362. Mr. MERKLEY proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 126, recognizing the vital importance of the Mekong River to Southeast Asia and the role of the Mekong-United States Partnership in supporting the prosperity of the region.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1362. Mr. MERKLEY proposed an amendment to the resolution S. Res. 126, recognizing the vital importance of the Mekong River to Southeast Asia and the role of the Mekong-United States Partnership in supporting the prosperity of the region; as follows:

Beginning on page 12, line 20, strike “to support” and all that follows through “to contribute to” on page 13, line 3, and insert “to encourage”.

Beginning on page 13, strike line 23 and all that follows through page 14, line 2.

On page 15, line 1, strike “to support” and insert “to encourage”.

In paragraph (2), redesignate subparagraphs (D) through (Q) as subparagraphs (C) through (P), respectively.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—H.R. 340

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I understand there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second 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. MERKLEY. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—H.R. 3774 and H.R. 6126

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I understand there are two bills at the desk, and I ask for their first reading en bloc.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3774) to impose additional sanctions with respect to the importation or facilitation of the importation of petroleum products from Iran, and for other purposes.

A bill (H.R. 6126) making emergency supplemental appropriations to respond to the attacks in Israel for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, and for other purposes.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bills will receive their second reading on the next legislative day.

READ ACT REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2023

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be discharged from further consideration of S. 41 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the bill by title. The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 41) to reauthorize the READ Act.

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

Mr. MERKLEY. I ask unanimous consent 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. MERKLEY. I know of no further debate on the bill.

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

The bill (S. 41) was passed, as follows:

S. 41

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 “READ Act Reauthorization Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

Section 4(a) of the Reinforcing Education Accountability in Development Act (division A of Public Law 115-56; 22 U.S.C. 2151c note) is amended by striking “during the following five fiscal years” and inserting “during the following ten fiscal years”.

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

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

RECOGNIZING THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THE MEKONG RIVER TO SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE ROLE OF THE MEKONG-UNITED STATES PARTNERSHIP IN SUPPORTING THE PROSPERITY OF THE REGION

Mr. MERKLEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 95, S. Res. 126.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 126) recognizing the vital importance of the Mekong River to Southeast Asia and the role of the Mekong-United States Partnership in supporting the prosperity of the region.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution, which had been reported from the Committee on Foreign Affairs with an amendment to strike all after the resolving clause and insert the part printed in italic, and with an amendment to the preamble to strike the preamble and insert the part printed in italic, as follows:

S. RES. 126

【Whereas the Mekong River supports the livelihoods of approximately 60,000,000 people, making it the most important river in Southeast Asia and one of the most important rivers in the world;

【Whereas the Mekong-United States Partnership, comprising the United States, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, and the predecessor of that partnership, the Lower Mekong Initiative, have contributed greatly to the economic, social, and human resources development of the countries in the Mekong River Basin and the protection of the Mekong River;

【Whereas the United States has longstanding diplomatic relations with the countries in the Mekong River Basin, including a nearly 200-year-old relationship with treaty ally Thailand;