

so to speak, to keep moving forward, because we need to be more than a nation in the Arctic that has the title. We need to be that active participant. We need to be the leader in the Arctic space.

So what more does that mean? It means confirming our nominee to be the first-ever Ambassador-at-Large for Arctic Affairs, a gentleman by the name of Mike Sfraga, Dr. Mike Sfraga, who is currently the head of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission. He has been nominated by the President. He has gone through the committee. We need to get him confirmed because of the immediacy of so many of these Arctic issues that are playing out now.

Every time we have national conferences and other Arctic ambassadors are there, there is a void in the U.S. space. We need to make progress on matters that have been longstanding. It has been decades now—decades—that several of us have been working to advance progress on ratification of the Law of the Sea treaty. Some on my side still have a little bit of older history, at a time—actually, during the Reagan years—when there were some concerns about ratification. I think we have tried to address them over the years.

But the world has changed up there. When I say the world has changed, the world is opening up in the Arctic: the levels of commerce that we are seeing; again, the levels of engagement from a national security perspective; other countries—China—looking to the Arctic waters for resources there, whether it be fisheries or whether it be minerals. It has changed, and so our active participation as a member of that important treaty, I think, needs to be an imperative.

We have got to figure out icebreakers. We have got to do better. We have authorized six icebreakers. We have funded—we have appropriated to three, and we still have nothing, nothing that is moving forward fast enough to satisfy anybody out there.

Other nations are not sitting still while we are trying to literally get our act together on this. This is an area where we have to keep moving. We have to keep building out our Arctic infrastructure. We are moving forward with a deepwater port in Nome that is critically important.

There are other aspects of infrastructure that we cannot assume are in place, whether it is adequate housing, water, wastewater, broadband—all of the infrastructure that is so important to live in a cold and remote area—and then recognizing the situation of the people who live and work and raise their families there and have since time immemorial and want to do so for generations going forward, making sure we are paying attention to education, to healthcare, housing, economy, jobs.

So today I have introduced legislation that would amend the Arctic Research and Policy Act with the very

fancy title “Arctic Research Policy Amendments Act of 2024.” I don’t go for the big acronyms in the titles. What we are doing is we are broadening the scope of the act to account for the Arctic’s increasing role in national homeland defense; to strengthen climate and environmental research; to establish an annual award for excellence in Arctic research—we need to support and recognize those who are doing great work; and then to reflect the essential role of the indigenous people, incorporating the wisdom and experience of those who have lived there for millennia.

So it is good to work with the Commission. They continue to do great work. It is something that I—I appreciate colleagues here also waking up to the fact that this is the age of the Arctic, and how we embrace it, how we embrace our leadership role, is critical.

By Mr. PADILLA (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 5091. A bill to provide for the basic needs of students at institutions of higher education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. PADILLA. Madam President, I rise in support of the BASIC Act, which I introduced today.

I know how important it is to help students cover the full cost of attending college, including tuition and fees, housing, food, transportation, books, childcare, healthcare, supplies, and more.

In California, even though State and institutional aid programs cover full tuition and fees for about half of the students attending California State University, University of California, and California Community College, students struggle to pay for the remaining cost of attendance. This bill will help accelerate California’s work to make college affordable and provide funding to reach more schools across California and our nation.

Last year, the first-ever nationally representative data on student basic needs was released by the National Center for Education Statistics, which indicated that nearly one in four undergraduate students across the country experiences food insecurity. We also know that rates of basic needs insecurity are much higher for historically marginalized students, including Black, Latino, and Indigenous students; parenting students; LGBTQIA+students; first-generation students; Pell Grant recipients; former foster youth; and justice-involved students.

The evidence is clear that addressing student basic needs prevents students from sacrificing their health and well-being to succeed in higher education.

That is why I am proud to introduce this bill to authorize \$1 billion for a new grant program to help institutions

of higher education meet students’ basic needs.

This funding represents an essential aspect of building more equitable paths to higher education, and it represents an investment in our students, our institutions, and our future. The legislation also helps coordinate assistance across Federal Agency lines.

I want to thank Senator WARREN and Representative TORRES for introducing this bill with me, and I hope our colleagues will join us in ensuring that no student is forced to choose between their education and their basic needs.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 824—RECOGNIZING SEPTEMBER 20, 2024, AS “NATIONAL LGBTQ+ VETERANS DAY”

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BOOKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. LUJAN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. SMITH, Mr. SCHATZ, and Ms. DUCKWORTH) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs:

S. RES. 824

Whereas lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (referred to in this preamble as “LGBTQ+”) veterans have honorably served in the Armed Forces in every war to which the United States was a party, beginning with the Revolutionary War;

Whereas LGBTQ+ veterans have served in the Armed Forces despite discriminatory policies based on who those veterans love or how those veterans identify;

Whereas, on April 27, 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed Executive Order 10450 (18 Fed. Reg. 2489; relating to security requirements for Government employment), which declared “sexual perversion” and “treatment for serious mental or neurological disorders” to be security risks and grounds for denying Federal employment;

Whereas Executive Order 10450, eventually repealed by President Barack Obama in 2017, contributed to the “Lavender Scare” of the 1950s by banning gay and lesbian people from working in the Government, including in the Armed Forces, and was similarly applied to transgender people as early as 1960;

Whereas, beginning in 1963, Army medical standards disqualified people with “behavioral disorders”, which was defined to include transgender people, from service in the Army;

Whereas, for 30 years, beginning in the mid-1980s, Department of Defense regulations declared transgender people to be both physically and mentally disordered and abnormal and continued to disqualify transgender people from military service;

Whereas, in 1982, the Department of Defense implemented a policy stating that “homosexuality is incompatible with military service”, and between 1980 and 1990, an average of 1,500 military servicemembers were discharged every year on the basis of their sexual orientation;

Whereas, in 1993, as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1994 (Public Law 103-160; 107 Stat. 1547), Congress enacted the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, which declared that the presence of gay, lesbian, and bisexual people in the

Armed Forces was an “unacceptable risk” to morale, good order, discipline, and unit cohesion, and required the Armed Forces to discharge servicemembers who—

(1) engaged in, attempted to engage in, or solicited “homosexual acts”;

(2) stated that they were homosexual or bisexual; or

(3) married or attempted to marry a same-sex partner;

Whereas the Department of Defense has acknowledged that 13,472 personnel were discharged from the Armed Forces under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy, and an additional 19,365 personnel were discharged between 1980 and 1993 under similar policies that targeted servicemembers based on sexual orientation;

Whereas the White House estimates that more than 100,000 servicemembers have been discharged from the Armed Forces for their sexual orientation or gender identity;

Whereas, on September 20, 2011, the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy was officially repealed, 60 days after President Barack Obama approved its repeal on July 22, 2011, by signing the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell Repeal Act of 2010 (10 U.S.C. 654 note; Public Law 111–321);

Whereas, on June 30, 2016, the Department of Defense announced an end to the ban on transgender servicemembers across all components of the Department of Defense;

Whereas, on July 26, 2017, President Donald J. Trump announced that transgender people would not be allowed to serve in the military;

Whereas, on January 25, 2021, President Joseph R. Biden signed Executive Order 14004 (86 Fed. Reg. 7471; relating to enabling all qualified Americans to serve their country in uniform), which repealed the 2017 ban on transgender military servicemembers;

Whereas the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs have taken steps to address the harms done to LGBTQ+ servicemembers and veterans under these discriminatory policies;

Whereas, in March 2021, the Secretary of Defense announced new policies to undo the President Trump-era rules banning transgender people from serving in the military;

Whereas those policies included a statement that the Defense Health Agency would develop clinical practice guidelines to support the medical treatment of servicemembers with gender dysphoria, a step that has not yet been completed;

Whereas, on June 19, 2021, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced that the Department of Veterans Affairs would remove the exclusion of gender-affirming surgery from the Veterans Affairs Medical Benefits package, but the Department of Veterans Affairs has yet to fulfill that promise;

Whereas, on September 20, 2021, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs issued the “Benefits Eligibility for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ+) Former Service Members (VIEWS 5810856)” memorandum detailing how certain former servicemembers discharged under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy with “other than honorable” discharges could begin to access full veterans benefits;

Whereas, on September 20, 2023, the Deputy Secretary of Defense announced that the Department of Defense would proactively review the military records of certain veterans discharged under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy to identify those who may be eligible for discharge upgrades;

Whereas, on April 25, 2024, the Department of Veterans Affairs posted a final rule eliminating the regulatory bar for “homosexual acts involving aggravating circumstances or

other factors affecting the performance of duty” as an obstacle to benefits, which could help reduce the disparity that LGBTQ+ veterans face in applying for their benefits;

Whereas, on June 26, 2024, President Joseph R. Biden pardoned veterans who had been convicted in military courts for consensual sodomy between 1951 and 2013 under former article 125 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice; and

Whereas challenges still exist for LGBTQ+ servicemembers and veterans seeking equitable treatment in service and access to benefits: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes September 20, 2024, as “National LGBTQ+ Veterans Day”;

(2) celebrates the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (referred to in this resolution as “LGBTQ+”) servicemembers and veterans who have served in the Armed Forces;

(3) regrets the harm done to LGBTQ+ servicemembers and veterans under the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy and earlier policies, bans on transgender servicemembers, and other policies that discriminate based on sexual orientation and gender identity;

(4) recognizes how “other than honorable” and “dishonorable” discharges given to LGBTQ+ servicemembers on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity—

(A) prematurely terminated the careers of LGBTQ+ servicemembers in the Armed Forces;

(B) subjected LGBTQ+ servicemembers to the trauma of investigations and criminal charges;

(C) unfairly denied LGBTQ+ servicemembers the honor associated with military service;

(D) deprived LGBTQ+ servicemembers of benefits those servicemembers have earned and deserve as veterans; and

(E) continue to cause LGBTQ+ servicemembers dignitary harm;

(5) urges the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to—

(A) continue implementing policy changes that restore justice and right historical wrongs caused by past government-sponsored discrimination; and

(B) conduct further outreach for LGBTQ+ veteran communities to ensure that those discharged based on their sexual orientation and gender identity can receive their benefits;

(6) urges the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to ensure that transgender veterans and servicemembers and their families have access to the full range of health care, including gender-affirming care; and

(7) urges the Department of Veterans Affairs to remove the exclusion of gender-affirming surgery from the Veterans Affairs Medical Benefits Package.

SENATE RESOLUTION 825—RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EQUAL PAY AND THE PAY DISPARITY BETWEEN DISABLED WOMEN AND BOTH DISABLED AND NONDISABLED MEN

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASEY, Ms. CORTEZ MASTO, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 825

Whereas, more than 60 years after Congress enacted the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (29 U.S.C. 206 note; Public Law 88–38), an analysis of data from the Bureau of the Census shows that disabled women workers overall are paid an average of 50 cents for every dollar paid to nondisabled men;

Whereas an analysis by the National Partnership for Women & Families of data from the Bureau of the Census shows that—

(1) for every dollar paid to White, non-Hispanic, nondisabled men—

(A) disabled Asian-American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women are paid 55 cents;

(B) disabled White, non-Hispanic women are paid 45 cents;

(C) disabled Black women are paid 45 cents;

(D) disabled American Indian and Alaska Native women are paid 45 cents; and

(E) disabled Latinas are paid 44 cents;

(2) disabled women are paid an average of 72 cents for every dollar paid to disabled men;

(3) disabled people overall are paid an average of 68 cents for every dollar paid to nondisabled people; and

(4) while disabled people overall experience a wage gap, disabled women, particularly disabled women of color, experience a more significant wage gap;

Whereas, of the 6 types of disability assessed in the American Community Survey—

(1) disabled women workers with each type of disability face a wage gap, as compared to nondisabled men; and

(2) the wage gap is largest for disabled women workers who have difficulty living independently, who are paid just 36 cents for every dollar paid to nondisabled men workers;

Whereas disabled women veterans are paid an average of 62 cents for every dollar paid to nondisabled veteran men;

Whereas the wage gap remains large for disabled women with more education, as disabled women workers with 4 years of college education are typically paid \$41,600 per year, which is less than nondisabled men workers with a high school degree as their highest level of education;

Whereas disabled women experience occupational segregation and are overrepresented in low-paid health care, clerical, and social service jobs;

Whereas disabled women and men workers who live in institutional group quarters are paid an average of just \$9,000 per year for disabled women workers and \$11,000 per year for disabled men workers, respectively, while nondisabled men overall are typically paid an average of \$50,000 per year;

Whereas segregated workplaces and the subminimum wage for disabled employees stifle competitive integrated employment for disabled women;

Whereas many systemic barriers affect access to livable wages and employment opportunities for disabled women, including—

(1) discrimination;

(2) public benefits work disincentives;

(3) a broken health care infrastructure;

(4) increased employment-related costs;

(5) inadequate vocational rehabilitation services; and

(6) a lack of access to supported employment services; and

Whereas LGBTQI+ disabled people face additional barriers to employment, and more inclusive data on LGBTQI+ disabled workers is needed to determine the added impact on wages and workforce participation, particularly for trans and nonbinary disabled people who are often excluded from data: Now, therefore, be it