

EC-1918. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Annual Report for fiscal year 2018; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-1919. A communication from the Regulation Policy Development Coordinator, Office of Regulation Policy and Management, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Case Management Services Grant Program" (RIN2900-AQ15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on July 8, 2019; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

#### PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-110. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico requesting the United States Congress pass H.R. 2360 which seeks to establish a Renewable Energy Grant Program within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the purpose of promoting renewable energy in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

##### SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 1084

Congressman Ted W. Lieu, the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in Washington D.C., the Hon. Jenniffer González-Colón, and Congresswoman Stacey Plaskett introduced H.R. 2360 on April 25, 2019, which directs the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a Renewable Energy Grant Program for the purpose of awarding funds to not-for-profit entities so they may develop and use renewable energy systems.

This legislation, which shall be known as the "Renewable Energy for Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands Act," seeks to promote investment in renewable energy, energy efficiency, energy storage, and microgrid and smart grid projects. The organizations that are awarded these grants may receive technical assistance from the Department of Energy national laboratories. Furthermore, the measure appropriates funds for the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study regarding renewable energy and energy efficiency in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States not later than one hundred and eighty (180) days after the date of enactment of the Act. The study shall consider the potential to modify existing electric power systems, use renewable energy sources, expand the use of microgrids, and improve energy resiliency.

It is worth noting that H.R. 2360 is consistent with the recently approved Act No. 17-2019, known as the "Puerto Rico Energy Public Policy Act," which seeks to transform our electrical system into one that is robust, resilient, reliable, eco-friendly, and affordable, and that serves as the basis for the Island's economic development. Act No. 17, supra, directs the elimination of electric power generation from fossil fuels in Puerto Rico and, for such purpose, establishes a new and ambitious Renewable Portfolio Standard that requires that forty percent (40%) energy generation from renewable sources by 2025; sixty percent (60%) by 2040; and one hundred percent (100%) by 2050. In addition, it encourages the use of energy storage technology for all consumer levels, promotes the integration of distributed generation and microgrids, and seeks to attain thirty percent (30%) energy efficiency by 2040.

However, it is a fact that Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are exposed to suffering the consequences of catastrophic hurricanes such as Irma and Maria which left millions of U.S. citizens without electric power service for a long period of time. The passage of these two hurricanes in 2017 and the reality of climate change has once again raised awareness of the importance of having an electrical system that is resilient to weather events that have become stronger and more frequent.

H.R. 2360 complements the efforts made by the Government of Puerto Rico to transform our electrical system and contributes towards achieving one hundred percent (100%) energy generation from renewable sources by 2050, therefore, the Senate of Puerto Rico supports this important initiative.

*Be it resolved by the Senate of Puerto Rico:*

Section 1.—To express the support of the Senate of Puerto Rico to, and request the United States Congress to pass H.R. 2360 which seeks to establish a Renewable Energy Grant Program within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the purpose of promoting renewable energy in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States of America.

Section 2.—Upon its approval, a copy of this Resolution translated into English shall be delivered to the leadership of the United States Congress, congress members Ted W. Lieu and Stacey Plaskett, and the Resident Commissioner of Puerto Rico in Washington D.C., Jenniffer González-Colón.

Section 3.—This Resolution shall take effect upon its approval.

POM-111. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Hawaii urging the United States Congress to embrace the Aarhus Convention and make protection of the environment and decision-making on environmental policies the centerpiece of national debate and practice; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

##### SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 99

Whereas, Hawai'i is recognized as a global partner and local leader in promoting human rights to create a culture of democracy, rule of law, and protection of the planet through its adoption of global and regional standards to guide decision-making processes; and

Whereas, Hawai'i is guided by traditional Hawaiian values and emerging international human rights visions to generate good governance and ensure participation in policy-making and protection of our islands and the planet; and

Whereas, in September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the historic 2030 Development Agenda entitled "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", a comprehensive, compassionate, creative, and courageous plan of action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity; and

Whereas, in December 2015, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties agreed to the Paris Agreement, calling for the first time to limit future increases in the global average temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius; and

Whereas, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) is an important instrument for achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda; and

Whereas, the Aarhus Convention consists of numerous articles covering ideas and coordinating implementation including the following:

- (1) Access to Environmental Information;
  - (2) Collection and Dissemination of Environmental Information;
  - (3) Public Participation in Decisions on Specific Activities;
  - (4) Public Participation Concerning Plans, Programmes and Policies Relating to the Environment;
  - (5) Public Participation During the Preparation of Executive Regulations and/or Generally Applicable Legally Binding Normative Instruments; and
  - (6) Access to Justice; and
- Whereas, the parties to the Aarhus Convention:

(1) Aimed to further accountability of and transparency in decision-making and to strengthen public support for decisions on the environment;

(2) Recognized that that the public needs to be aware of procedures for participation in environmental decision-making, have free access to the political process, and know how to exercise that access;

(3) Recognized the importance of respective roles for individual citizens, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector in environmental protection; and

(4) Desired to promote environmental education to further the understanding of the environment and sustainable development and to encourage widespread public awareness of and participation in decisions affecting the environment and sustainable development; Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, that by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2019, that this body engages, endorses, accepts, and adopts the Aarhus Convention; and be it further

*Resolved*, that the Congress of the United States is requested to embrace the Aarhus Convention and make protection of the environment and decision-making on environmental policies the centerpiece of national debate and practice; and be it further

*Resolved*, that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, Vice President of the United States, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, Majority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, Majority Leader of the United States Senate, Minority Leader of the United States Senate, Hawai'i's congressional delegation, Governor, mayor of each county, Secretary General of the United Nations, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Chairs of Hawai'i's Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission.

POM-112. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Texas urging the United States Congress to enact legislation to consolidate disaster recovery housing funding into a single Disaster Housing Response and Recovery Block Grant; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

##### SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 816

Whereas, Hurricane Harvey struck the Texas coast on August 25, 2017, causing an estimated \$125 billion in damage; and

Whereas, The second most destructive storm in American history, the hurricane impacted approximately 30 percent of the population of Texas, destroying homes, damaging infrastructure, and displacing thousands of families along the coast; and

Whereas, The Federal Emergency Management Agency received nearly 800,000 applications from affected Texans for some form of assistance; as many as 83 percent of the people whose homes flooded did not have flood

insurance, creating unprecedented demand for state and federal disaster recovery assistance; and

Whereas, The FEMA application process is so duplicative and confusing, and the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations are so complex, that many survivors give up trying to navigate the system and, therefore, receive no assistance; and

Whereas, Consolidating funding for recovery housing programs into a single Disaster Housing Response and Recovery Block Grant would increase efficiency, save taxpayer dollars, and speed the recovery process by combining FEMA's short-term programs and HUD's long-term programs: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 86th Legislature, hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to enact legislation to consolidate disaster recovery housing funding into a single Disaster Housing Response and Recovery Block Grant; and, be it further

*Resolved*, That the secretary of the senate forward official copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM-113. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of Hawaii urging the United States Congress to amend federal law to ensure that victims of sexual harassment and sexual assault who might otherwise be forced into arbitration and silence instead have access to the courts; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 11

Whereas, access to the judicial system, whether federal or state, is a fundamental right of all Americans that should extend fully to persons who have been subjected to sexual harassment and sexual assault; and

Whereas, many employers require their employees, as a condition of employment, to sign arbitration agreements mandating that sexual harassment claims be resolved through arbitration instead of judicial proceedings; and

Whereas, arbitration requirements are often set forth in clauses found within the fine print of lengthy employment contracts, and that these clauses are typically presented in boilerplate "take-it-or-leave-it" fashion by employers; and

Whereas, additional concerns arise from the secrecy requirements of arbitration clauses, which disserve the public interest by keeping both the harassment complaints and any settlements confidential; and

Whereas, the prevalence of mandatory arbitration clauses and the associated secrecy requirements create a culture of silence that protects serial perpetrators at the cost of their victims; and

Whereas, the United States Senate and House of Representatives are considering legislation to address the issue of forced arbitration and secrecy in sexual harassment and sexual assault cases, and enable the victims of such egregious misconduct to seek redress in the courts; and

Whereas, the Hawaii Women's Legislative Caucus applauds the female members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives who are working in a bipartisan fashion to craft and advance this important legislation: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, By the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular

Session of 2019, that members of the United States Congress are respectfully requested to amend federal law to ensure that victims of sexual harassment and sexual assault who might otherwise be forced into arbitration and silenced instead have access to the courts; and be it further

*Resolved*, That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, members of each state's congressional delegation, and Governor.

POM-114. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Louisiana urging the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to authorize the garnishment of veterans' disability benefits to fulfill child support obligations; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

#### HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 7

Whereas, Civil Code Article 224 provides that parents are obligated to support, maintain, and educate their child, and the obligation to educate a child continues after minority as provided by law; and

Whereas, 5 CFR Part 581, Subpart A provides which moneys received by a civilian employee for services rendered to a governmental entity are subject to garnishment for the purpose of enforcing the legal obligations of obligors to provide child support; and

Whereas, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 659, the United States consents to the withholding and garnishing of income of an individual for the enforcement of the individual's child support and alimony obligations; and

Whereas, 42 U.S.C. 659 further provides that the federal government will allow under certain circumstances the garnishment of service-connected disability compensation paid by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to former members of the armed forces for the purpose of enforcing child support and alimony obligations; and

Whereas, in *Rose v. Rose*, 481 US 619 (1987), the Supreme Court held that not only could a state consider the amount of disability benefits received by a veteran in setting the amount of child support, but also, once a child support obligation had been created, the veteran's disability benefits could be used to satisfy that obligation; and

Whereas, in the same case, Justice Marshall, quoting the legislative record, describes the purpose of veterans' disability benefits as compensation for impaired earning capacity and "to provide reasonable and adequate compensation for disabled veterans and their families"; and

Whereas, as of February 2019, the current total for child support arrears in Louisiana is \$1,923,958,949.00 and less than one percent of that amount has been collected; and

Whereas, adequate child support is vital to the well-being of children and families in our state: Therefore, be it

*Resolved* That the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to authorize the garnishment of veterans' disability benefits to fulfill child support obligations; be it further

*Resolved* That a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

POM-115. A petition from a citizen of the State of Texas relative to prohibiting any potential employer from requiring disclosure of an employment applicant's Social Security number until a conditional or firm offer

of employment is formally made to that candidate; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

POM-116. A resolution adopted by the Township Council of the Township of Mahwah, New Jersey, recognizing June 7, 2019, as National Gun Violence Awareness Day; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. RISCH, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1309. A bill to identify and combat corruption in countries, to establish a tiered system of countries with respect to levels of corruption by their governments and their efforts to combat such corruption, and to assess United States assistance to designated countries in order to advance anti-corruption efforts in those countries and better serve United States taxpayers.

#### EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE

The following executive report of a nomination was submitted:

By Mr. GRAHAM for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Monica David Morris, of Florida, to be a Commissioner of the United States Parole Commission for a term of six years.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 2086. A bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to improve transparency under the national primary drinking water regulations for lead and copper, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. DUCKWORTH (for herself, Mr. YOUNG, Ms. STABENOW, and Mr. DURBIN):

S. 2087. A bill to improve the removal of lead from drinking water in public housing; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina (for himself and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 2088. A bill to amend the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to ensure community accountability for areas repetitively damaged by floods, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. BRAUN):

S. 2089. A bill to prohibit the labeling of certain opioid drugs recommending use for long-term chronic pain; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. CORTESZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. CASEY, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 2090. A bill to direct the Attorney General to submit to Congress investigative materials in the event of certain pardons granted by the President, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.