

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on October 17, 2007, at 10 a.m., in order to conduct a markup on an original bill entitled the Sudan Accountability and Divestment Act of 2007; an original bill entitled the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007; and an original bill entitled the Flood Insurance Reform and Modernization Act of 2007.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 17, 2007, at 10 a.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

At this hearing, the Committee will hear testimony regarding consumer practices of the wireless industry.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a hearing during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 17, 2007, at 2:30 p.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

At this hearing, the Committee will explore the status of the digital television transition including consumer education efforts, the operation and implementation of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration converter box program, and other issues related to a smooth and effective transition from analog to digital television.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 17, 2007, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a nomination hearing.

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 17, 2007, at 10 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing entitled "Is DHS Too Dependent on Con-

tractors to Do the Government's Work?"

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on the Judiciary be authorized during the session of the Senate in order to meet to conduct a hearing on the nomination of Michael B. Mukasey to be Attorney General of the United States, on Wednesday, October 17, 2007, at 10 a.m. in the Hart Senate Office Building room 216.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs to be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 17, 2007, in order to conduct an oversight hearing on VA and DOD collaboration, the hearing will focus on the report of the President's Commission on Care For America's Returning Wounded Warriors, the report of the Veterans Disability Benefit Commission and other related reports.

The Committee will meet in 562 Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 9:30 a.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SUPERFUND AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works, Subcommittee on Superfund and Environmental Health, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, October 17, 2007, at 9:30 a.m. in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in order to hold a hearing entitled, "Oversight Hearing on the Federal Superfund Program's Activities to Protect Public Health."

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HARKIN. I ask unanimous consent that Alexander Torres and Young-Min Cho of my staff be granted the privileges of the floor for the duration of today's session.

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Leigh Ann Ross be given the privilege of the floor during consideration of the Labor-HHS bill.

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

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator BINGAMAN, I ask unanimous consent that Jeffry Phan, a fellow in his office, be granted the privileges of the floor for the pendency of H.R. 3043.

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

SUPPORTING NATIONAL IDIOPATHIC PULMONARY FIBROSIS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to H. Con. Res. 182, which was received from the House.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 182) recognizing the need to pursue research into the causes and treatment and eventual cure for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, supporting the goals and ideals of National Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis Awareness Week, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the preamble be agreed to, the resolution be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 182) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

HONORING VICE PRESIDENT ALBERT GORE, JR., AND THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to S. Res. 349.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 349) honoring Vice President Albert Gore, Jr., and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for receiving the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of their efforts to promote understanding of the threats posed by global warming.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, and any statements relating to this matter be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 349) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 349

Whereas the Norwegian Nobel Committee selected Vice President Albert Arnold (Al) Gore, Jr., and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as Nobel Peace Prize Laureates for 2007, acknowledging them "for their efforts to build up and disseminate greater knowledge about man-

made climate change, and to lay the foundations for the measures that are needed to counteract such change”;

Whereas the Nobel Committee found that Vice President Gore “became aware at an early stage of the climatic challenges the world is facing”, and that his “strong commitment . . . has strengthened the struggle against climate change”;

Whereas the IPCC, according to the Nobel Committee, is composed of thousands of scientists and officials from more than 100 countries, has sponsored research and scientific collaboration over the last 2 decades and “has created an ever-broader informed consensus about the connection between human activities and global warming”; and

Whereas the Nobel Committee stated that Vice President Gore “is probably the single individual who has done most to create greater worldwide understanding of the measures that need to be adopted” to combat global warming, Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate honors Vice President Albert Arnold Gore, Jr., and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change for receiving the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize, in recognition of their longstanding efforts to promote understanding of the threats posed by global warming.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am so pleased to rise in support of this resolution. It has now passed, and it is very important that it has. It is to honor our former colleague, the Vice President of the United States, Al Gore.

When I was first elected to the House of Representatives 25 years ago, I was placed on the Foreign Affairs Committee, which was wonderful. I loved it. Clement Zablocki from Wisconsin was the chairman of that committee. I have told people it was like going to school and not having to take the test. I was also put on the Science and Technology Committee. That was a wonderful committee. It opened my eyes to so many different things that I had not seen before and had not been exposed to before.

The first day we met on that committee for organizational purposes, a young man came up to me and he said: I am Al Gore from Tennessee. He said: There is going to be a lot of activity here, people wanting to go to subcommittees. He said: Just wait. They have formed a new subcommittee. I am going to be the subcommittee chairman. Take my word for it. It is going to be the best subcommittee. Don't try to get on all those others. Get on mine.

I did. I followed his suggestion. It was wonderful. I knew at that time that not only was he a very nice man—and I knew, of course, of him because of his father having been a U.S. Senator—but I came to learn what a brilliant man he is.

We did such outstanding things on that subcommittee. We uncovered corruption within the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We held hearings on that. He got into, for the first time, looking at how people are affected who do shift work. Those people who come from manufacturing areas are aware of that, the people who work the graveyard shift, the swing shift. For Las Vegas it is very important because it is a 24-hour town. People work 24 hours,

around the clock. He approached it from what does it do to the minds and the bodies of people who have had this shift work. It was a wonderful, enlightening hearing, not only for members of the committee but for the country.

Also, he did, for the first time, public hearings on organ transplants. Remember, this was 25 years ago. I can remember it as if it was yesterday. He brought in before our subcommittee a little girl by the name of Jamie Fisk. I will never forget this little girl. Her color was the color of a light-colored lemon. She was so yellow. She was so jaundiced. This little girl was dying. She needed an organ transplant, a liver transplant, and this wasn't done much. But she was going to die. As a result of this hearing, she was able to get an organ transplant, a liver. I don't know what has happened to Jamie. The last time I checked a number of years ago, she was doing just fine, and I am confident she is. She was able to live as a result of this hearing held by Al Gore. It really paved the way for organ transplants and what we do with people who are on a waiting list to get these organ transplants.

The former majority leader, Dr. Frist, was an organ transplant specialist. I talked to him on a number of occasions about the important work Al Gore did in that subcommittee.

That was only the beginning. Al Gore came to the Senate. I can remember coming to him when I decided to run for the Senate. He came here 2 years before I did. He gave me great advice. He was very concerned about campaign spending laws that needed to be changed. He was totally supportive of McCain-Feingold and was a real leader and a leader in so many different respects as a Senator.

President Bill Clinton, using such good judgment, chose him to be his Vice President. Prior to that, Al Gore ran for President, and I am happy to say the first time he ran for President, other than the Senators from Tennessee, I was the only Senator supporting him. I have never, ever regretted having done that. I think the world of this man. His wife Tipper, if there were an all-American boy, she is the all-American girl. She is just what you would want your daughter to be like. I have a daughter, and I certainly hope she turns out like Tipper Gore.

The Vice President and Senator Gore—I visited him in his office years ago. He had in his office a chart, and it was so unusual. It showed how global warming was taking place, what was happening in the environment, and it went way up into the ceiling. Way back then, 20 years ago, he knew it was a problem. He knew that global warming was a problem.

He is a man of humor. He is real family person. We all lived with him here when he took his little boy to a baseball game and his little boy darted in front of a car and was hit and almost killed. For me personally, he is my friend.

What he has done for the State of Nevada is remarkable. Lake Tahoe. There are only two lakes in the world like Lake Tahoe: Alpine Glacial Lake, and the other one is in Russia—Lake Baikal. Lake Tahoe that we share with California is a wonderful lake. It is almost a mile deep. It was in a state of distress. I talked to Al Gore and said: We need to do a Presidential summit at Lake Tahoe, and we did. He and President Clinton came there 10 years ago and spent 2 days at Lake Tahoe. There was international coverage of what they were doing at Lake Tahoe to show that this wonder of nature was being destroyed. As a result of their having been there—they had 7 Cabinet officers who spent time with more than 1,000 people preparing them for the summit. I thought it would be a photo-op, and it certainly was more than that. It led to our turning around the environmental degradation of that great lake, and we have made progress. Since they came there, we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on that lake, and it has been worth every penny of it.

Mr. President, Al Gore has had a pretty good year. He won an Emmy, an Oscar, and now the Nobel Peace Prize. I, of course, know he got more votes than the person who beat him in the Presidential election. We not only know he got more votes, we know the tremendous problems they had in Florida. The Supreme Court made a decision. Even though I disagreed with the 5-to-4 decision, it was made by the Supreme Court. As hard as it was for me to accept it, the minute the Supreme Court made that decision, George Bush became my President. Think about how Al Gore felt about that. Al Gore had gotten more votes than the man the Supreme Court said would be President. How did Al Gore lead the country after that disappointment to him? He didn't whine or cry or ask for there to be a contest in the House of Representatives, which he was entitled to. He led the country in saying George Bush is the President.

I say to you there wasn't a single rock thrown through a window and there were no demonstrations held; it was a changeover to George Bush being President. I give that to the greatness of Al Gore. He could have whined and cried and complained. He didn't do that. He set out, in spite of the fact that he was not President of the United States, to change the world. He has done that, earning an Emmy, an Oscar, and now the Nobel Peace Prize. It is one of the all-time great stories in history.

I have to also say that Al Gore, this very serious man, is also very funny; he has a great sense of humor. When I was first elected minority leader, and then became the Democratic leader, he is one of the first people I called. What did he do? He said: How much time do you have? I said: All the time you want. I was on the telephone and he talked to me for more than 2 hours. I took notes. I still have those notes. He gave me such a good view of my job.

I want everyone within the sound of my voice to understand what an extraordinary man he is and how much good he has done. I have watched his progress from the days we spent together on the subcommittee and the committee in the House, and we talked about the environment. This Nobel Peace Prize is a reflection of the man and his accomplishments.

Is there anyone who doubts today that global warming is real? I don't think so. If they do, they are in a very distinct minority. Global warming is here and we must act. Listen to what Vice President Gore says regarding the challenge. He says we must have optimism. He said:

We sometimes emphasize the danger in a crisis without focusing on the opportunities that are there. We should feel a great sense of urgency because it is the most dangerous crisis we have ever faced, by far. But it also provides us with opportunities to do a lot of things we ought to be doing for other reasons anyway. And to solve this crisis, we can develop a shared sense of moral purpose.

Does that depict what a great man he is? Al Gore looks at this optimistically, saying these are things we should have been doing, but we are not doing it, so let's work together to fight the scourge facing our world.

On behalf of our former colleague and my friend, Vice President Al Gore, I am so pleased to support this resolution. More important than passing this resolution, which has happened, I hope all my colleagues will honor his cause and moral purpose to continue the fight to reverse the threat of global warming and leave an Earth to our children and grandchildren that is safe, clean, and livable.

HONORING NOBEL PEACE PRIZE WINNERS IN PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 350.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 350) honoring the achievements of Mario R. Capecchi, Sir Martin J. Evans, and Oliver Smithies of the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 350) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 350

Whereas Mario R. Capecchi was born in Italy in 1937 and earned a PhD in biophysics from Harvard University in 1967;

Whereas Sir Martin J. Evans was born in Great Britain in 1941 and earned a PhD in anatomy and embryology from University College in London in 1969;

Whereas Oliver Smithies was born in Great Britain in 1925 and earned a PhD in biochemistry from Oxford University in 1951;

Whereas Mario Capecchi currently serves as Distinguished Professor of Human Genetics and Biology at the University of Utah School of Medicine;

Whereas Sir Martin J. Evans currently serves as the Professor of Mammalian Genetics and Director of the School of Biosciences at Cardiff University in Wales;

Whereas Oliver Smithies currently serves as an Excellence Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill;

Whereas Mario R. Capecchi, Sir Martin J. Evans, and Oliver Smithies have made a series of discoveries concerning embryonic stem cells and deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) recombination in mammals that have led to the creation of gene targeting in mice, a powerful technology that is now being used in all areas of biomedicine;

Whereas gene targeting technology has been used in experiments that have successfully isolated genes in order to determine their roles in embryonic development, adult physiology, aging, and disease;

Whereas gene targeting has produced more than 500 different mouse models of human disorders, including cardiovascular and neuron degenerative diseases, diabetes, and cancer;

Whereas, on October 8, 2007, Mario R. Capecchi, Sir Martin J. Evans, and Oliver Smithies were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their discoveries of principles for introducing specific gene modifications in mice by the use of embryonic stem cells: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors and recognizes the scientific work and achievements of Mario R. Capecchi, Sir Martin J. Evans, and Oliver Smithies; and

(2) congratulates Mario R. Capecchi, Sir Martin J. Evans, and Oliver Smithies for their receipt of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2179, S. 2180, S. 2184, S. 2185, H.R. 2102, AND H.R. 3678 EN BLOC

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand there are six bills at the desk. I ask for their first reading en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, the clerk will report the bills by title for the first time.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2179) to authorize certain programs and activities in the Forest Service, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Energy, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 2180) to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior, the Forest Service, and the Department of Energy, and to amend the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003, and for other purposes.

A bill (S. 2184) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently allow penalty-free withdrawals from retirement plans for individuals called to active duty for at least 179 days.

A bill (S. 2185) to permanently extend the current marginal tax rates.

A bill (H.R. 2102) to maintain the free flow of information to the public by providing

conditions for the federally compelled disclosure of information by certain persons connected with the news media.

A bill (H.R. 3678) to amend the Internet Tax Freedom Act to extend the moratorium on certain taxes relating to the Internet and to electronic commerce.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now ask for their second reading en bloc, but I object to my own request en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard. The bills will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

S. 2179 AND S. 2180

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources has reported over 70 individual bills and resolutions this Congress. Most of these bills are authorizations for specific projects and activities in the Department of the Interior, although we have also reported several measures involving National Forest lands under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture, as well as a few authorizations related to the Department of Energy.

Typically these bills would be considered in the Senate under a unanimous consent procedure. Unfortunately, although all of these bills are non-controversial and all were reported unanimously by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, we have been unable to get consent to pass these bills.

In an effort to facilitate passage of these bills, today I am introducing two bills which contain the individual measures reported by the committee. The first bill, the National Forests, Parks, Public Land, and Reclamation Projects Authorization Act of 2007, includes the text of 25 bills and 1 resolution which have been passed by the House of Representatives and which were reported, or their Senate companion measure was reported, without substantive amendment by the committee. If considered as individual bills, upon passage in the Senate, these bills would have been cleared for the President. Since they will now be included as part of this comprehensive bill, it will require additional action by the House of Representatives, but I am hopeful that because all of the measures included in this bill were previously approved by the other body that they will be able to approve this bill expeditiously.

The second bill, the Natural Resource Projects and Programs Authorization Act of 2007, includes the text of 44 bills which originated in the Senate, or which passed the House of Representatives and were substantively amended in committee. Like the previous bill, all of the individual bills were reported unanimously by the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. While the House of Representatives has not previously acted on all of the individual components of this new bill, I believe these bills are non-controversial, and I hope that the House will be able to consider this bill in a timely manner as well.